

EDITH STEIN'S DOCTORAL THESIS ON EMPATHY AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL CLIMATE FROM WHICH IT EMERGED

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THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTEXT FROM WHICH EDITH STEIN EMERGED

« Schlag an den Stein und Weisheit springt heraus — strike the stone and wisdom springs forth »¹. At the end of her secondary education, the Director of the Gymnasium at which Edith Stein had been studying wrote this sentence concerning her. It was customary for him to present an epigram on each graduating student and his apt and pithy choice of words demonstrated his insight into the rare intellectual gifts of his young pupil.

We can see in Edith Stein that dynamic of the human mind to know and understand, the relentless drive to reach up to the Totally Unconditioned, the Being of Beings and Final Answer of complete truth, in which the mind can repose, and inasmuch as Total Being is Love, the heart can willingly follow. She eventually allowed herself to be seized by this fountainhead of wisdom and love in Christ Jesus — a Person, through accepting the totally gratuitous gift of faith, something at which no degree of philosophical speculation can ever arrive; an arid first principle, a prime-mover — yes, God in Person — to love, no.

At the University of Breslau in 1911 where she was following a course of German Studies, history, philosophy and also psychology in the lectures of Stern and Höningswald, Stein at one point was introduced to Husserl's 'Logical Investigations' (1900-01). She read both volumes of this exceedingly difficult abstract work which was one of the cornerstones of the Phenomenological Movement. When he heard of this on meeting Stein for the first time, Husserl remarked that this reading was in itself « an heroic feat ». Philosophy of the human sciences at that time was under the influence of a fashionable psychologism, that is, a kind of view that philosophy is reducible to a factual science, in this case — psychology.

« Husserl successfully demonstrated that empirical psychology could pretend to be the basic science only on the assumption that objects of knowledge are little more than modifications of the subject's own

¹ TERESA RENATA DE SPIRITU SANCTO, *Edith Stein*, Nuremberg, 1950, p. 20-21.

awareness, aspects of psychical experience which are sometimes endowed by the mind with the character of objectivity »².

Psychologism wanted to make objective truth depend on the thinker. And so Newton's universal law of gravitation would only have been true from the time that he discovered it.

One is reminded of Jacques and Raïssa Maritain, cast down in a depression by the pointlessness of an arid reductionist school of philosophy at the Sorbonne, where:

« the scientists, insofar as they philosophized at all, were generally partisans of such philosophical theories as mechanism, epiphenomenism, absolute determinism, (...) doctrines which deny the reality of the spirit and the objectivity of all knowledge which goes beyond the cognition of sensible phenomena »³.

Just as these two friends through the influence of Bergson and Léon Bloy discovered some fulfillment in their search for the truth, similarly, Stein was attracted to the orbit of Husserl's influence and was immediately captivated by the promise that his philosophical method held in the quest for the truth.

« I was 21 years old and was full of expectations. Psychology had deceived me. I had come to the conclusion that this science was still in its infancy and lacked an objective foundation. But the little that I knew of phenomenology thrilled me, especially its objective method of working »⁴.

At Easter — 17th. April, 1913, she moved to Göttingen where Husserl was lecturing. Soon she became caught up in the philosophical climate of that university city where the new wine of Husserl's thought was so stimulating. Even though her main subjects were psychology, history and philology, it was Husserl's new world of philosophical method that held her mind enthralled. Husserl's initial impact on philosophy in Germany was minimal, but gradually as his early works were published and absorbed by minds open to the particular level at which he wrote, original and serious thinkers began to be attracted to Göttingen. By the time Stein had arrived at the university a rather select circle of philosophers had been in existence for about six years. « They used to meet at least once a week for discussions and the reading of papers outside the lecture halls and seminar rooms, mostly in Husserl's absence, and as a matter of fact with his hardly concealed disapproval »⁵. For the

² COLLINS, J., *Edith Stein And The Advance Of The Phenomenological Movement*, in *Thought* 18 (1943) 685.

³ MARITAIN, R., *We Have Been Friends Together*, New York, 1961, p. 56.

⁴ DE MIRIBEL, E., *Edith Stein*, Paris, 1953, p. 37.

⁵ SPIEGELBERG, H., *The Phenomenological Movement*, The Hague, 1960, p. 109.

Master himself, phenomenology at this stage meant a turn towards subjectivity as the basic phenomenological stratum, and in fact, Husserl's actual use of his own method was strictly limited, the one exception being his « Philosophy Of Internal Time Consciousness » (1917), the text of which was edited in part by Stein as his Private Assistant. At the beginning they met every Friday evening at the Baron Heister café and as the discussions often went on until two or three o'clock in the morning, the participants would arrive at Husserl's seminar on Saturday morning only half awake. It is little wonder then that Husserl did not exactly encourage their philosophical meetings. In fact, their lack of mental alertness on a Saturday morning — and from his best pupils — led him to veto the meetings on a Friday night!

Husserl was committed to establishing a rocklike foundation, as he saw it, for all philosophizing. On the other hand, the lively informal group students which later was to include Max Scheler did not feel constrained by the rein of Husserl's own drive for the technical perfection of his method: their own understanding took the form of turning towards analysis of objective phenomena versus subjective ones. They had been freed from the stuffy closet of psychological theory and poverty-stricken positivism. « Now they could roam freely over the wide range of new phenomena, exploring them by untutored 'intuition' in search of their essential structures and the essential connections among them »⁶.

Husserl's watchword was, « Zu den Sachen selbst — To the things themselves! » that is, taking a fresh look at ordinary everyday phenomena. There was a constant effort to prescind as far as possible from conceptual pre-suppositions and a straining to describe them with as high a degree of accuracy as possible.

Husserl's phenomenological method « resists all transforming reinterpretations of the given, analysing it for what it is in itself and on its own terms »⁷. Stein, who wrote her doctoral thesis on Empathy in 1916 under the moderatorship of Husserl kept strictly to his precise method, describing the 'givenness' of the intuited phenomena of Empathy and steering clear of all metaphysical extrapolations or deductions of an empirical psychological nature.

As Stein moved to Göttingen, Husserl's philosophical position had advanced with the publication of his « Ideas Pertaining To A Pure Phenomenology and A Phenomenological Philosophy », (1913). Following Franz Brentano's basically scholastic category of intentionality, Husserl held that knowledge is always « knowledge *OF* something. However, Husserl now introduced his pivotal phenomenological notion of 'epoché', that is, things of actual experience must be bracketed, or put in parentheses. The phenomenological 'epoché' is a suspension of judgement on the existence of things or mental processes under analysis, not a denial of their exis-

⁶ SPIEGELBERG, H., *Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁷ BIEBEL, W., *Phenomenology*, in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Vol. 14, (1974), 210-215.

tence. Thus we are forced « to view the object in the pure state to which it has been reduced by the phenomenological method. In this way the essence is allowed to display itself directly in an immediate manifestation: it appears as it is, it is phenomenally evident to our insight »⁸.

The methodological tool of the 'epoché' became an important hallmark of phenomenological method and therefore, inasmuch as Stein fully understood its subtle and varied levels of application (and, as has been noted, applied it carefully in her thesis on Empathy) it will not be out of place to seek for some further clarification on this point. 'Epoché' is the Greek word for bracketing (*einklammerung*). It involves a *reflective* or *disengaged attitude* towards experience.

« The method of phenomenology consists in focusing on any part or all of my experience, and then *observing, analysing, abstracting* and *describing* that experience by removing myself from the immediate and lived engagement in it. I must observe the experience in question *from a distance*, that is, from a state of reflection which is not unlike the conception of aesthetic experience »⁹.

THE DANGER OF SOLIPSISM IN HUSSERL'S METHOD

To the English speaking mode of philosophy all this is a strange and wonderful world and rather alien to the dogmatic entrenchment of linguistic analysis which holds sway especially over the philosophy departments of English universities. Such a concept as the « intuiting of essences » has not caused anything like the 'frisson' of excitement that thrilled the eager young philosophy students of the Göttingen circle when Stein was there. Husserl himself clearly saw the shadow of solipsism involved in his concern with the transcendental Ego. Therefore he worked on his analysis of *intersubjectivity* and of the transcendental realm (otherness) in order to make an effort to escape from that threat of solipsism. In the second part of the 'Ideas' Husserl broaches the problem of intersubjectivity. How can we know others if, through the application of the 'epoché' everything of which the Subject himself cannot directly and intuitively grasp be subject to bracketing and suspension? However, at the time when she was writing her thesis on Empathy, Stein had not seen the manuscripts of Husserl's own further thinking on the matter, for he saw in the concept of Empathy a bridge between subjectivity and transcendental objectivity. In the Forward to her published thesis, Stein writes:

« Since I submitted it to the Faculty, I have, in my capacity as private assistant to my respected Professor Husserl had a look at the

⁸ COLLINS, J., *art. cit.*, 686.

⁹ KOESTENBAUM, *Introduction To Edmund Husserl's, The Paris Lectures*, The Hague, 1970, p. XX.

manuscript of Part II of his 'Ideas' dealing in part with the same question. Thus, naturally, should I take up my theme again, I would not be able to refrain from using the new suggestions received. (...) Nevertheless, I can say that the results I now submit have been obtained of my own efforts »¹⁰.

EVALUATION OF PHENOMENOLOGY

It is perhaps too soon in the twentieth century for a definitive history of the phenomenological movement in philosophy to be written. It did not take long for brilliant minds to choose eclectically from the precise method developed by Husserl. Phenomenology as understood by Husserl eventually toppled over into Existentialism which took to itself the methodological category of phenomenological reduction. The careful analysis of perception in astonishing detail on the part of Maurice Merleau-Ponty and of the variations in human moods by Jean Paul Sartre are evidence of this. Bernard Lonergan regards phenomenology as « a highly purified empiricism ». A propos the stress laid on description, Lonergan observes that:

« It is not enough. If it claims to report data in their purity, one may ask why the arid report should be added to the more lively experience. If it pretends to report the significant data, then it is deceived, for significance is not in data but accrues to them from the occurrence of insight »¹¹.

Bernard Lonergan writes from a position of transcendental Thomism and holds that Husserl's phenomenology being scientific *description* can only be a preliminary to scientific *explanation*. « Husserl begins from relatedness-to-us, not to advance to the relatedness of terms to one another, but to mount to an *abstract looking* from which the looker and the looked-at have been dropped because of their particularity and contingency »¹². However, the fact remains that Stein was moulded and formed by phenomenology and this early influence as a young student manifested itself very distinctly in her doctoral thesis on Empathy, and indeed up to her last major work, « The Science Of The Cross ». Nevertheless, influence does not mean absorption and domination. Stein's openness to truth eventually threw a veil of suspicion on the tendency which began to manifest itself in Husserl's philosophy to develop into Idealism to such an extent that even though she held the favoured position of private assistant to Husserl, she preferred to resign from that office.

¹⁰ STEIN, E., *On The Problem Of Empathy*, The Hague, 1964, p. 4.

¹¹ LONERGAN, B., *Insight — A Study Of Human Understanding*, London, 1958, p. 415.

¹² LONERGAN, B., *Ibid.*, p. 415.

ADOLF REINACH (1883-1917)

Independently of each other, the students of the Göttingen circle of philosophy such as Dietrich von Hildebrand, Koyré and Stein, in their accounts of this period refer to Reinach as their real teacher in phenomenology. When Stein arrived at Göttingen Reinach held the position of private assistant to Husserl. Conrad-Martius (one of the circle) even went so far as to call him the phenomenologist par excellence. « Even beyond his remarkable appeal as a teacher, Reinach was developing a version of early phenomenology simpler and clearer in form and more concrete and suggestive in content than that of the 'master' »¹³. He had clearly understood and assimilated the phenomenological method as set forth in the 'Logical Investigations'. Reinach who was a Protestant was killed in action in the First World War of 1917 and in his obituary, Husserl « even credited him with having aided his own progress towards pure phenomenology »¹⁴. Apart from the direct influence of his delightfully kind personality, Stein was presented forcibly with the power of the Cross, when after hearing of Reinach's sudden death on the front in November 1917, she went to his home in order to visit his widow, Anna Reinach, prepared to do her best (insofar as an atheist can) to console her, and put her husband's philosophical papers in order for posthumous publication. On the contrary, however, it was Fraulein Stein who came away edified and enriched having encountered not a widow prostrate with grief but one whose Christian faith was of such a degree and vibrancy, that it upheld her in her sorrow and even radiated out to console those of her husband's friends who mourned for and with her. « The Cross had penetrated into the deepest part of her being [Anna Reinach's] and had at one and the same time wounded and healed her. The sacrifice carried out of love, united this soul to the crucified Saviour »¹⁵.

Reinach had come to Göttingen well equipped with Lipps' psychological technique for exact and careful descriptions of subjective phenomena. Stein, inasmuch as she chose to analyse Empathy for her thesis would have been especially receptive to these themes and would have also found the informal philosophical gatherings presided over by Max Scheler particularly stimulating. Towards the end of her first semester at Göttingen she had decided to write on the nature of Empathy, and in academic life such a decision wonderfully concentrates and focuses the powers of the mind in concentration on the chosen theme, homing in on relevant material and filtering out data that would be of no direct application.

¹³ SPIEGELBERG, H., *Ibid.*, p. 195.

¹⁴ SPIEGELBERG, H., *Ibid.*, p. 196.

¹⁵ « La croix avait pénétré au plus intime de son être, l'avait en même temps blessée et guérie. Le sacrifice, porté dans l'amour, unissait cette âme au Sauveur crucifié. Et de toute sa personne émanait un nouveau rayonnement ». DE MIRIBEL, E., *Ibid.*, p. 55.

THE PLACE OF EMPATHY IN PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

The phenomenologist's main task is the painstaking methodological study of immediate direct experience, its characteristics and structures, abjuring all philosophies which might explain and so explain away aspects of experience. As a Catholic in 1932, Stein in a conference on phenomenology said:

« Phenomenological intuition is not simply a seeing into an essence *uno intuito*. It involves a labour of the freeing of essences by means of the operation of knowing of the agent intellect — an abstraction, i.e. the action of putting to one side the contingent and releasing the positively essential »¹⁶.

It is based on the conviction that all direct intuition is one unquestionable basis for all certainty and so has supreme authority in the process of knowing. Husserl himself was given over to abstruse and extremely difficult technicalities, he was a philosopher's philosopher. Even though he introduced Lipps' concept of Empathy in the second part of the Second book of his *Ideas Pertaining To A Pure Phenomenology And To A Phenomenological Philosophy*, it was Stein, who having received Husserl's approbation and encouragement at Göttingen, carefully analysed this important dimension of everyday human experience.

At the International Philosophical Congress in 1953, H. Spiegelberg, a noted historian of the phenomenological movement observed in his own contribution, « but we still lack a phenomenological clarification of the basic phenomena in this area [i.e. of empathy] »¹⁷. It is amazing that an academic such as he with a serious interest in phenomenology could have been unaware of Stein's remarkable work on this very subject, thirty six years after its publication.

The presence of other people is a very important kind of objectivity. However, the application of the 'epoché' in phenomenological analysis cancels out their existence as entities outside the subject, leaving behind on the other hand, the undeniable subjective fact of Empathy for others which remains clear to intuition.

« The problem of the existence of other minds has meaning and makes sense only on the level of experience or phenomena, there is no other level. Consequently, the study of the nature of other minds

¹⁶ « Die phänomenologische Intuition ist nicht einfach ein Schauen des Wesens *uno intuito*. Sie umfasst ein Herausarbeiten der Wesenheiten durch die Erkenntnisarbeit des *intellectus agens*: Abstraktion im Sinn des Absehens vom Zufälligen und des positiven Heraushebens des Wesentlichen ».

Stein, E., *La Phénoménologie*, Juvisy, 12 septembre 1932, Journées D'Études De La Société Thomiste, p. 109.

¹⁷ SPIEGELBERG, H., *Towards A Phenomenology Of Imaginative Understanding Of Others*, in *Proceedings of the Congress International de Philosophie*, 1953, Vol. VIII, 235.

consists in isolating the particular kind of objectivity that these have, and analysing how that objectivity relates itself to the rest of the *Lebenswelt* »¹⁸.

Although Lonergan's critique of phenomenology as exalting scientific description over scientific explanation is a valid one, he comments as one with a strong commitment to metaphysics and believing that philosophy can and should be a one direction dynamism towards the infinite transcendency of the Totally Unconditioned, i.e. God.

A brief paper such as this is no place in which to argue the merits or demerits of phenomenology: however, the method as conceived by Husserl and applied in her thesis by Stein is a valuable contribution to human understanding of multifarious data. Why? Because language itself, it seems to me, acts as an organizing heuristic framework which helps to bring insight and understanding to birth. We live in linear time, every momentary 'now' flashes past and passes into one's personal history. All of these 'now' moments recede into the selective retention faculty of memory. Language, in scientific description helps to freeze the fleeting transiency of experience. The power of words also helps to uncover and lay bare so many a priori assumptions about which we rarely think. For the human mind is always at work organizing and synthesizing raw data. When a group of persons is asked what is printed on a page of text in a book, it would be rare indeed for one of them to say that there were — black marks on the paper. They would invariably say, it is such and such an article, or if it was a language they did not know, they might say that it was Chinese or Arabic if they recognized the script, or simply that it was a foreign language — but not just black marks. And yet, stripped of the layers of the mind's interpretation, that is exactly what appears on the page. And thus the precise uncovering and bringing to light of the hidden recesses of ordinary human relationships — as in Stein's unfolding of the concept of Empathy can help us to see our world with rinsed eyes.

Husserl wrote his *Cartesian Meditations* in 1929, (twelve years after the publication of Stein's thesis). In the fifth Meditation he writes:

For the first time, the problem of empathy has been given its true sense, and the true method for its solution has been furnished, by constitutional phenomenology. Precisely on that account all previous theories [including Max Scheler's] have failed to give an actual solution, and it has never been recognized that the otherness of 'someone else' becomes extended to the whole world, as its 'objectivity', giving it this sense in the first place »¹⁹.

I understand this quotation to be a tacit recognition of Stein's work, for Husserl's own treatment of Empathy in the second part of his *Ideas*

¹⁸ HUSSERL, E., *Cartesian Meditations* (trans. D. Cairns), The Hague, 1973, p. 147.

¹⁹ HUSSERL, E., *Ibid.*, p. 147.

is only a rough sketch of the phenomena. His pupil and Private Assistant had herself, laboriously filled in the hidden details with vibrant and lively description.

In the Cartesian Meditations, Husserl is laying stress on the *possibility* of the existence of the other, versus a phenomenological *description* of him. Even though, as has been observed, Stein said that she had *not* seen the manuscripts of the second book of Husserl's 'Ideas', relating to Empathy when writing her own thesis; nevertheless, much of the content of that work had formed the substance of Husserl's Göttingen lectures on 'Nature and Spirit' in the Summer semester of 1913 which Stein attended. But on the other hand, as her English translator remarks, «the reader must not overlook the fact that E. Stein has made some *original contribution* to the phenomenological description of the nature of Empathy »²⁰.

Stein was principally attracted by Husserl's method of phenomenology as set out in the Logical Investigations, as giving a firm foundation to all philosophizing, but another important area of interest was that of the person. That was why she selected psychology as one of her subjects as well as German Studies and history at the university of Breslau in 1911-13.

«I was twenty-one and I was full of eager anticipation. Psychology had deceived me. I had come to the conclusion that this science was still in its infancy and lacked an objective foundation. But the little I knew of phenomenology delighted me, particularly the objective method of investigation »²¹.

Attracted by the problems of the philosophy of the person, she had attended the lectures of Höningwald and Stern at Breslau but had been disappointed in them, for she formed the opinion that their positivistic and mechanistic reductionist theories made the human person into a kind of machine. Psychology, which as a science was still undeveloped, «was totally limited to observation of *exterior human acts*. The human person seemed torn between the distant world of abstract ideas and a reality limited to what the senses could directly perceive »²².

MAX SCHELER AT GÖTTINGEN IN 1913

Max Scheler's book, «Der Formalismus In Der Ethik Und Die Materiale Wertethik » which had been published in the Yearbook for Phenomenological Research under the editorship of Husserl, formed the matter for discussion among the Göttingen philosophical students during the informal meetings which took place usually in a café. Scheler had been

²⁰ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, (Foreward), p. viii.

²¹ de Fabregues, *Edith Stein*, New York, 1965, p. 21.

²² *Ibid.*

barred from formal academic involvement at the university, or indeed from using its facilities because of a scandal involving a broken marriage. He exercised a strong and fascinating influence over the young minds by the sheer brilliance of his highly original ideas. Whereas Husserl was totally absorbed with abstract concepts concerning the foundations of human knowing, Scheler who as one student expressed it, « philosophized as he spoke », probed questions which were very different, i.e. non-intellectual relationships such as love, hate, resentment and shame. He claimed to have arrived at the phenomenological method independently of Husserl, and indeed his trenchant analyses of the above mentioned emotional states are strict phenomenological examinations, in which, through a series of 'clearings', he labours to lay bare the *essence* of any particular feeling. « He said openly that love is not blind but sees and touches the loved person, just as sympathy enables us to experience in our own heart what another is feeling »²³.

Stein, who was captivated by his brilliance said that she had never come across the phenomenon of genius to such an extent before. She was especially interested in his ideas on the nature of sympathy as at that time she was engaged in preparing her own doctoral thesis on the nature of Empathy. In fact, Stein's published thesis (Halle, 1917) did not go unnoticed by Scheler, and her criticisms and observations on his work were acknowledged and incorporated by him in the second edition of his study which appeared in 1926 under the title of *Wesen Und Formen Der Sympathie*.

Scheler's treatise on sympathy was to have been the first of a series of studies including those on shame, the sense of honour, fear and reverence. Only his work on sympathy was published as a separate book as he died in 1928 at the relatively early age of 54. His analysis of shame was included in his *Nachlassband I*. It was not only Scheler's works of a philosophical nature that so enthralled the young Stein during the informal café philosophical lectures that often used to extend very late into the night, but the world of Christian faith and its transcendental horizons which hitherto had been a closed book to her.

« Scheler, to describe his way of thinking and of presenting his thought, called himself a puppeteer. His philosophical equipment — the world, and his head — he had always with him, as a strolling player his little theatre. The vagrant mummer needs no preparation, no atmosphere, none of the appurtenances of a big theatre, nor did Scheler require any special setting; given an ear, he became creative and set his ideas dancing. He might be seated with a companion, his head canted to the side, watching on the unfolded stage of his mind the drama of the world (...) It was truly magic; in an instant he could transform his surroundings and fill the room with his ideas; he made present the things of which he spoke and visible what is

²³ de Miribel, E., *Ibid.*, p. 53.

often called 'abstract'. What he called forth from the realm of spirit came, and now and then there gleamed in his eye an unchastened joy that he was so obeyed »²⁴.

Max Scheler rejected Kant's notion that the a priori was solely the domain of the rational. Rather he posited that the whole of the spiritual life has a priori features, even the emotional faculties of the spirit such as loving, feeling, hating and so on, or in Pascal's words, an « ordre du coeur ». So by way of his use of the phenomenological method, Scheler projected the Kantian a priori along new paths and opened new horizons for it. He called this doctrine, « emotional apriorism ». Values are the a priori grounds of emotion, the intentional objects of feeling. Even though the reason may be oblivious of them, nevertheless they are directly 'given' to intentional feeling, just as colours are in visual perception — they are a priori and are not reducible to anything else. The phenomenon of sympathy is one of these.

MAX SCHELER ON SYMPATHY

As has been noted above, Max Scheler saw in Pascal's « ordre du coeur », « logique du coeur », « raison du coeur », pointers to what he had planned to develop in a series of studies on different human emotional states, but only one of which actually appeared in separate book form. He thus made an attempt to prove and unfold the hidden implications of Pascal's use of these terms. Scheler's book on sympathy is written within a phenomenological reduction, that is, a freeing of the phenomena of sympathy from the conditions and involvements of any actually experienced act of sympathy.

« To liberate phenomena in this way does not imply that Scheler's analysis is abstract. To analyse phenomena within a phenomenological reduction is to 'position' oneself within the sphere of concrete lived experience. This positioning of oneself within the sphere of lived experience is an effort to achieve an attitude of openness *in* which reality (Wirklichkeit) can reveal itself as it is in itself, that is, liberated or freed from factual conditions »²⁵.

He is not trying to prove the existence of sympathy, but through his descriptive analysis dispose us to come to a « seeing » — an intuiting of the essence of sympathy, allowing it to display itself.

²⁴ KAMNITZER, E., *Erinnerung an Max Scheler*, (unpublished memoir cited in John Oesterreicher, *Walls Are Crumbling*, New York, 1952, p. 139.

²⁵ Luther, A.R., *Persons In Love, A Study Of Max Scheler's Wesen Und Formen Der Sympathie*, The Hague, 1972, p. 14.

SYMPATHY AND ITS CLOSE ASSOCIATES IN SCHELER'S ANALYSIS

It may be useful to list all the similar categories to sympathy grouped by the English translator of *The Nature Of Sympathy*, and then to concentrate attention on the areas which bear relevance to the parallel study on Empathy by Stein.

Sympathy (Sympathie)

Fellow-feeling/companionate feeling (Mitgefühl)

Community of feeling, shared, mutual feeling (Miteinanderfühlen)

Reproduced, vicarious feeling (Nachgefühl)

Empathy (Einfühlung)

Identification, sense of unity, (Einsföhlung, —geföhl)

Identification etc., with the living cosmos, (cosmovitale Einsföhlung)

Emotional infection, (Geföhl-sansteckung)

Temperament, pattern of feeling, (Gemüts-gestalt)

Co-operation, participation, conjoint performance, (Mitvollzug)

Reproduction, re-enactment, conformity of acts, (Nachvollzug)

Benevolence, humanitarianism, love of mankind, (Menschenliebe)

Rejoicing with, (Mitfreude) ²⁶.

I doubt if there would be value in even attempting any sort of overall view of Scheler's book; for I believe that in a short paper where the spotlight of attention is intended to shine on Stein's own unfolding of this complex area of human intersubjectivity, I should limit myself to areas criticized or expanded by Stein.

FELLOW-FEELING (Mitgefühl) AND COMMUNITY OF FEELING (Miteinanderfühlen)

« Two parents stand beside the dead body of a beloved child. They feel in common the 'same' sorrow, the 'same' anguish. It is not that A feels this sorrow and B feels it also, and moreover that they both know they are feeling it. No, It is a *feeling-in-common*. A's sorrow is in no way an 'external' matter for B here, as it is, e.g. for their friend — C, who joins them, and commiserates 'with' them or 'upon their sorrow'. On the contrary, they feel it together, in the sense that they feel and experience in common, not only the self-same value-situation, but also the same keenness of emotion in regard to it » ²⁷.

Scheler notes the fact that this feeling is intentional. One does not make an intellectual judgment that someone is in pain or is experiencing grief: it is given in and through the experience. The example of the two

²⁶ Scheler, M., *On The Nature Of Sympathy*, (trans. P. Heath), London, 1979, p. liii + liv.

²⁷ SCHELER, M., *Ibid.*, p. 12-13.

grieving parents is community of feeling, whereas fellow-feeling preserves a distinction between two different acts. My commiseration and the suffering of another are distinct. Both Stein and Scheler take up Lipps' example of a spectator at a circus engrossed in watching an acrobat performing a daring and dangerous high-wire act. Scheler calls the spectator's attitude, emotional identification. Lipps (who was the first to coin the term 'Einfühlung') held that there was no distinction between our own and the acrobat's 'I' — both are one; and that this emotional identification only endures for as long as I, the spectator am lost in the absorbing movements of the performer. A distinction only arises when I step out of this attitude and reflect on my real 'I'. Stein rejects this as a false description, saying, « I am not one with the acrobat but only 'at' him »²⁸. She says that Lipps confuses self-forgetfulness with a dissolution of the 'I' in any object. I shall endeavour to probe for a fuller understanding of Stein's own notion of Empathy further on. However, Scheler regards her criteria for the existence of Empathy as too stringent, making it possible to endure only for a short time, for whenever the absolute 'I' oscillates back to a self-reflective level, the empathic link is broken. Scheler notes,

« There are other cases, however, insufficiently recognised either by Theodor Lipps or Edith Stein, in which such identification is undoubtedly complete; which do not merely exemplify a moment of true 'ecstasy', but may be of long duration, and can even become habitual throughout whole phases of life »²⁹.

However, Stein would not recognize this as Empathy. Scheler goes on to quote examples of this complete absorption of the 'I' in another with illustrations taken from the anthropological researches of Lévi-Brühl.

Stein was not the sort of woman to be overawed by the mere famous reputations of outstanding thinkers whom she did not fear or hesitate to criticize in her own search and drive for truth and this included men like Lipps and Scheler. However, Chapter XI of 'Sympathy' is of such a quality that she could not fail to have been impressed by its clarity and penetrating analysis of so much of which one hardly ever thinks about in a thematized and explicit fashion; the entire field (a daily experience) of liking, loving, benevolence, pity and fellow-feeling which form the warp and woof of our waking hours. In English, even among those whose vocabularies are reasonably well-stocked, there is an extraordinary over-use of the word 'nice'. It can mean just about anything that is pleasing or gratifying to the senses or even ethically and morally of notable quality. (It is not uncommon in ordinary parlance to hear expressions such as: « so and so is a nice man, he has a nice nature and lives in such a nice little flat, and how nice and kind he has always been to

²⁸ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²⁹ SCHELER, M., *Ibid.*, p. 18.

me! »). It has taken a person like Scheler who reached a wider public than Stein and whose intellectual and spiritual development were vastly different, to make explicit in the stark frozenness of clear and concise language the stratified polyvalence of human fellow-feeling and its different modes and variations.

Scheler begins by saying that « one of the gravest errors of almost the entire school of British moralists lies in their departure from Greek and Christian ethics in seeking to derive the facts of love and hate from fellow-feeling »³⁰. Love, is an act that has the person for its centre: it is a *movement*, whereas fellow-feeling is a passive state. Love is an *emotional* gesture and a *spiritual act* which will endure even when we are made to suffer by the loved one. There is no sense of *effort* in love, no exertion, for when there is endeavour and striving there is always a *goal* in view to be attained.

« What does a mother seek to 'realize' when she gazes lovingly at her bonny child asleep? What is supposedly 'realized' in loving God or in loving works of art? Love may give rise to all kinds of effort, desire, or longing for the beloved object, but these are no part of it »³¹.

Scheler states that it makes no sense to speak of love as being satisfied and leads on from this to criticize « that concept of love as a duty upheld in part by the ethical teachings of the Church »³². Scheler may have been a brilliant phenomenological analyst of subtle human emotional states, but he was no theologian. But how are fellow-feeling and love related to each other? Love is intrinsically related to *value: it is not a feeling*, but as noted above it is an act and a movement. Fellow-feeling on the other hand:

« ...if it is to amount to more than mere understanding or vicarious emotion, must be rooted in an enveloping act of love. The effect of this addition is precisely what makes it perfectly possible to sympathize with someone we do not love; the really impossible thing is for sympathy to be lacking where love is present already »³³.

There are similar nuanced unfoldings of the intersubjective states listed above. Scheler's 'Sympathy' is not the sort of book that leaves an attentive reader unmoved. For Stein, this man was the personification of genius and indeed his conferences and talks in the Göttingen café late into the night must have held the minds of those young philosophical students under a spell that only he could weave. « Scheler's effort to clarify the meaning of phenomena such as sympathy and love is an effort to

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 140.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

re-establish on a firm phenomenological basis Pascal's insight concerning a logic of the heart »³⁴.

STEIN'S CHOICE OF THEME

In academic centres of education at a third level, that is, at universities which are truly worthy of the name and of respect, all doctoral studies are expected to culminate in a thesis which is an original contribution to the treasure house of printed human wisdom — not simply a commentary on existing work, expressed in different wording.

On 3rd. August 1916, Stein received her doctorate for her study on Empathy, awarded with maximum grades. In an autobiographical note she wrote:

« In his course on Nature and Spirit, Husserl had declared that no experience of the outside world was possible without intersubjectivity, that is, without there being a plurality of knowing individuals, bound together through reciprocal comprehension. The experience of the outside world then, demands a preliminary experience of other individuals. Influenced as he was by the works of Theodor Lipps, Husserl called this experience *Einfühlung*, but did not say in what it consisted. Therefore there was a void to fill in that area: I determined to examine what *Einfühlung* is »³⁵.

Who can probe the mystery of the complex interior process of evaluation, consideration, interest and attraction plus outside influence that issues in a concrete decision? Stein had read Scheler's first edition of his study on sympathy, and she was also well equipped to use the exacting method of phenomenological analysis. And also, although knowledge on a different level — of no less importance, there was her own direct experience of human intersubjectivity among family and friends. Prior to Husserl, German philosophy was held within the confines of Kantian and neo-Kantian formalism. The psychologism as taught by Stern and Honingswald at Breslau and to which Stein developed a distaste and then rejected, represented the staple diet offered to students of philosophy and the human sciences of the spirit.

The theme of *Einfühlung* caught by Husserl, as it were, on the wing from Lipps — by the very fact of being worthy of Husserl's attention — brought a new breath of fresh air to Göttingen and Freiburg which was soon to be scented far and wide. *Einfühlung* was an essence *to be intuited*, and here lay the magic word 'intuition'. Did not Scheler appeal to Pascal's reason and logic of the heart?

Carla Bettinelli says that it would seem that Stein's doctoral thesis did not add much of originality to Husserl's thought: one senses the in-

³⁴ LUTHER, A.R., *Ibid.*, p. 165.

³⁵ SECRETAN, P., *The Self And The Other In The Thought of Edith Stein*, in *Analecta Husserliana*, Vol. VI, 1977, p. 88.

fluence of Book II of his 'Ideas' and also that of Scheler³⁶. However, again I draw attention to Stein's opening remarks about the fact that at the time of writing her work she had not seen the manuscripts of Husserl's parallel thinking on Empathy: she must be taken at her word.

The only fairly comprehensive critique of Stein's thesis on Empathy is that of Reuben Giulead. By way of a final comment on the value and import of this first philosophical work of Stein to be published, he notes her lack of shyness in the face of well-known thinkers like Scheler, Lipps, Pfänder and her keen eye for separating the essential from the non-essential.

Even though problems of an ontological nature remain, her work has given us some valuable points on what constitutes the inner workings of the spirit. Stein's model for the understanding of others is without doubt a transcendentalist one. She sees in the complex structure of *Einfühlung* a particular act of consciousness. Later on she experienced doubts not only as regards the possibility of entering into the world of another person (s), but also Husserl's theory of constitution in general. However, that concerns a further stage in Stein's philosophical and religious evolution which does not concern us here³⁷. It was, as Hilda Graef says of Stein:

« ...characteristic that she should have chosen this particular subject [of Empathy]. For her, philosophy was not just a matter of abstract reasoning. After all, she was a woman, and she approached the problem from the point of view of the experience of her own mind and the interrelation of several minds and their experiences through Empathy — and the gift of Empathy is a specially feminine one »³⁶.

³⁶ « Pare che la dissertazione dottorale della Stein non presenti molto di originale rispetto al pensiero di Husserl. Si sente l'influsso del II libro delle *Ideen* di Scheler ».

BETTINELLI, C., *Il Pensiero di Edith Stein*, Milano, 1976, p. 19.

³⁷ « ...Signalons d'abord les qualités de l'auteur qui se font déjà remarquer dans cette oeuvre de jeunesse. Manque de timidité devant les autorités, Edith Stein provoque en duel des adversaires tel que Scheler, Lipps, Pfänder etc., regard perspicace qui discerne l'essentiel du non-essentiel; et judgment incorruptible qui ne s'en tient qu'aux choses elle-même. Or, tout en nous fournissant déjà dans son premier essai quelques indications précieuses sur ce qui constitue la personne spirituelle, Edith Stein ne reprendra d'une façon explicite ce sujet majeur de sa pensée que beaucoup plus tard, quand elle sera déjà convertie à la philosophie chrétienne.

Le modèle de l'appréhension d'autrui employé par Edith Stein est sans doute transcendantaliste. Et même en soulignant la structure complexe de l'*Einfühlung*, il n'en reste pas moins vrai qu'elle ne voit autrui se constituer que dans un acte particulier de la conscience. Des doutes s'éveilleront chez Edith Stein un peu plus tard, et qui ne regarderont pas seulement la saisie d'autrui, mais la théorie de la constitution husserlienne en général. Ce changement entraînera aussi un renversement de sa conception d'autrui ».

GUILEAD, R., *De La Phénoménologie A La Science De La Croix*. Louvain, 1974, p. 41-42.

³⁸ GRAEF H., *The Scholar And The Cross*, Westminster, U.S.A., 1954, p. 20.

The word Empathy is not very commonly used in English. On a popular level there seems to be no small degree of confusion between it and sympathy. Let us therefore present a rough definition of each, bearing in mind that just as only one third of an iceberg appears above water level, so too Stein's use of the phenomenological method in her painstaking analysis of Empathy unveils hidden dimensions which normally remain concealed to everyday consciousness.

Empathy is the ability to *feel with* another person. It is an awareness and understanding of the feelings, emotions and behaviour of another. It differs from sympathy, which is the identification with the feelings and behaviour of another. For example, a priest could empathize with a man who had committed adultery, i.e. he could understand and accept the needs, conflicts and emotions which led to the act. However, the priest's convictions would prevent him from sympathizing, i.e. emotionally agreeing with the sin. Christ empathized with sinners whose sin he condemned³⁹.

STEIN'S ANALYSIS OF EMPATHY

The other person has only been a problem in philosophy since the extraordinary upheaval and ferment caused by Descartes, when the ancient category of substance gave way to that of the human subject as a central pivot for philosophical speculation. Descartes' fundamental point was the autosufficiency of the thinking subject... (cogito ergo sum). Methodologically, everything outside this autonomous subject was made subject to doubt. The enigma in philosophy then became how is it possible to throw a bridge over to — the other. Husserl also enclosed the subject in a cage of isolation by means of the bracketing method of the epoché, thus very much following the Cartesian stream: therefore he readily incorporated Lipps' psychological category of Empathy as one indubitable subjective experience linking an autonomous subject with — the other. Stein's working of Empathy consists in a first analytical critique of parallel contemporary theories and secondly her own systematic contribution.

STEIN'S CRITIQUE OF OTHER THEORIES OF EMPATHY

Lipps used the word *Eins-fühlung* to describe the feeling of one-ness that can occur between individuals. For example, if I see someone walking or standing too close to the edge of a cliff where there is a sheer drop of hundreds of feet into the sea, something inevitably occurs in me, a

³⁹ « The scribes and the pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery. (...) Jesus looked up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' 'No one Lord'. And Jesus said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go, and do not sin again' » (Jn. 8.9-11).

going out of myself — a kind of participation in the present dangerous situation of the person at the cliff edge. Stein agreed with Lipps that in this case there is a species of interior sharing with the other.

« He [Lipps] stresses the objectivity or the demanding character of Empathy and thus expresses what we mean by designating it as a kind of act undergone. Further, he indicates how Empathy is akin to memory and expectation, but this brings us directly to a point where our ways part »⁴⁰.

So Stein refuses to confuse *Einfühlung* (Empathy) with *Einsfühlung* (feeling at one with). She asserted that there is never a complete grasp of the subjective experience and feelings of another, saying, « we do not agree that there is a complete coincidence with the remembered, expected, or empathized 'I', that they become one »⁴¹. In order to illustrate her own understanding of Empathy, Stein uses an example no doubt taken from her own personal experience as a student, this is, of the joy and happiness experienced at hearing the news of success in an examination:

« I turn to the joyful event and depict it to myself in all its joyfulness. Suddenly I notice that I, this primordial, remembering 'I' am full of joy. I remember the joyful event and take primordial joy in the remembered event »⁴².

Here primordial seems to indicate the subject's own felt experience of joy. She then transposes the same illustration to the level of Empathy by saying that a friend arrives overflowing with joy and elation to report that he has passed his own examination: « I grasp his joy empathically; transferring myself into it, I grasp the joyfulness of the event and am now primordially joyful over it myself »⁴³.

In fellow-feeling I would on the contrary be happy over the *fact* of my friend's examination success. In Empathy on the other hand, it is the joy itself that I intuit and which enkindles this particular attitude. In Stein's strictly defined sense, Empathy is the experience of foreign consciousness: it can only be the non-primordial experience which announces a primordial one. She proceeds to make a distinction between Empathy and a *feeling of one-ness*, taking Lipps to task again for confusing the two, and her exceedingly difficult and subtle distinctions are evidence of the kind of intellect with which she was so richly endowed.

Regarding the Lipps example of the spectator watching an acrobat's daring act, he would hold that there would not be any distinction between the 'I' of the performer and 'I' of the spectator. Stein said that Lipps

⁴⁰ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 13-14.

had confused self-forgetfulness « to which I can surrender myself to any object with a dissolution of the 'I' in the object »⁴⁴.

CONTRA SCHELER

We have already noted what degree of influence Scheler had on Stein. During the time that she was at Göttingen, he was absorbed by the beauty of Catholicism (and indeed had entered the Church), and his enthusiasm was infectious, opening up for the young Stein « new phenomena », which, as she said, she could not ignore. Although when I mentioned Max Scheler I observed how he used the phenomenological technique in his own analysis of sympathy, his use of it consists « not so much of arguments as of lengthy positive descriptions and negative rejection; 'a' whatever it is, is not 'b' or 'c', etc., designed to lead the reader to a 'seeing' of the phenomena in question »⁴⁵.

Scheler shared Stein's vigorously anti-psychogenetic outlook, the roots of which went back to René Descartes — that one simply cannot grasp the otherness of another person except for the intermediacy of language and bodily gesture. This current of thought in human intersubjectivity has been strong in British philosophy, especially that of John Stewart Mill. Maurice Merleau-Ponty says that « when we encounter similar bodily objects, we conclude by analogy to the existence of similar events or psychic functions »⁴⁶. Stein rejected the above kind of understanding of others based on reasoning and not on *immediate intuition*.

The intellectual relationship between Scheler and Stein with their lack of agreement on the nature of Empathy was of a gentle nature and based, rather on two differing conceptions of phenomenology: however, it would be as well to press for an insight into Stein's particular critique and variation on Scheler, for this touches on the originality of her own contribution to the field of thought under review.

Regarding Empathy, Scheler had this to say:

« It provides a hypothesis concerning the manner in which this assumption is arrived at [i.e. the existence of other selves], but it can never assure us of the legitimacy of the assumption itself. (...) Nor can the theory distinguish Empathy as a source of our knowledge of other minds from the merely aesthetic projection of content and character on the part of the self, into a portrait, for instance, or the embodiment of Hamlet, (...) in the gestures of an actor. Indeed there is no telling here, which data are supposed to set off the process of Empathy in oneself »⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁵ VON SCHOENBORN, *Max Scheler on Philosophy And Religion*, in *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 14 (1974), 286.

⁴⁶ MERLEAU-PONTY, M., *Phénoménologie de la Perception*, Paris, 1945, p. 415.

⁴⁷ SCHELER, M., *Ibid.*, p. 241.

Scheler and Stein have two different ways of understanding consciousness. With Scheler there is a flux of experience quite apart from a 'you' and a 'me'. For him we are situated in a social *mitwelt* which determines us through tradition, cultural heritage and set modes of expression, so much so that he would doubt if anyone thinks his very own thoughts or feels his very own feelings. Stein entirely repulses this theory of a flux of consciousness without an 'I', which carries them. Speaking of joyfulness over the same event, Stein says:

« If the same thing happens to the others, we empathically enrich our feeling so that 'we' now feel a different joy from 'I', or 'you', and 'he', in isolation. But 'I', 'you', and 'he', are retained in 'we'. A 'we', not an 'I', is the subject of the empathizing. Nor through the feeling of oneness, but through empathizing do we experience others »⁴⁸.

Even if there was a kind of amorphous social 'stuff' — a loose amalgam of person, how, says Stein, could individuals distinguish themselves from this undifferentiated mass⁴⁹?

SALIENT ASPECTS OF THE CONCEPT OF EMPATHY

The entire savour of Stein's first major work will be lost unless one can penetrate through the layers of phenomenological 'unfoldings' just as a geologist's drilling-bit passes through 'aeons' of stratified rock of varying composition and texture. She insists that phenomenology's fundamental axiom is that any theory claiming to be a link to the knowing of others and the sharing of their inner worlds can only be constituted on the foundation of the 'givenness' to our consciousness of an original intuition.

« So now to Empathy itself. (...) We are dealing with an act which is primordial as present experience though non-primordial in content. And this content is an experience which, again, can be had in different ways such as in memory, expectation, or in fancy. When it arises before me all at once, it faces me as an object (such as the sadness I « read in another's face »). But when I enquire into its implied tendencies (try to bring another's mood to clear givenness to myself), the content, having pulled me into it, is no longer really an object.

⁴⁸ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴⁹ « Tout en reconnaissant la finesse des analyses de Scheler ainsi que la vérité de l'affirmation que nos vécus sont pour une grande partie déterminés par ceux de la société, Edith Stein repousse entièrement la thèse d'un flux de conscience sans moi. [my Italics] (...) Et même si nous concédons à Scheler l'existence d'une pâte commune des âmes, pourrait-il répondre à la question: comment se différencient le moi et le toi de cette pâte neutre et indivise? ».

GUILEAD, R., *Ibid.*, p. 19-20.

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 »⁵⁰.

In seeing what we interpret as sadness on another's face, or joy; when I am *at* the person living in and through his own experience, I do not feel primordial joy — rather he does. It does not come from my 'I'. Empathy is in itself a kind of perceiving *sui generis*^{50a}.

Stein gives another commonly experienced example of Empathy. « A friend tells me that he has lost his brother and I become aware of his pain. What kind of awareness in this? »⁵¹. Automatically one would say that apart from our friend's message expressed verbally saying that his brother had died or been killed in an accident there would be a whole complex of transmitted signals, his demenour, perhaps a choking stifled voice, tears and sighs. Stein does not deny that all these outward signs can be investigated, but that they were not her concern. So here we observe the consistency of the ever-present phenomenological epoché, excluding everything that cannot be known irreducibly and with the utter certainty of a knowing subject itself. We all know what it means to « be had », to have our legs pulled on the first of April when seemingly genuine distress signals, for example, are only fraudulent. « The pain [i.e. my friend's grief] is not a thing, and is not given to me as a thing, even when I am aware of it 'in' the pained countenance. I perceive this countenance outwardly and the pain is given 'at one' with it »⁵². But I am forever excluded from the givenness of the experience of grief as he is experiencing it here and now. However, « though Empathy is not outer perception that is not to say that it does not have this 'primordially' »⁵³. And what is primordially? « All our own present experiences are primordial. What could be more primordial than experience itself? »⁵⁴. At this moment I am conscious of the touch and feel of typewriter keys, the sensation of sitting at a seat, my own breathing and peripherally conscious interior bodily sensations, distant traffic noises. However, they all rush into the past of linear time and then become non-primordial and retrievable only by memory.

⁵⁰ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 10.

^{50a} I have attempted so far to situate Stein's early work on Empathy within the philosophical climate of her time and place, i.e. at Göttingen and Freiburg from 1913-1916 and to make a rough sketch of the factors that helped to influence and mould her innate mental powers. However, this paper must be steered clear from a purely philosophical development, and therefore I deem it suitable to choose eclectically from Stein's thesis on Empathy those ideas and themes which might be regarded as a bridge to spirituality in its broad sense, although one could argue that Empathy is itself an eminently spiritual theme.

⁵¹ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

« But not all experiences are primordially given nor primordial in their content. Memory, expectation, and fancy do not have their object bodily present before them. They only represent it, and this character of representation is an immanent, essential moment of these acts, not a sign from their objects »⁵⁵.

Further on when dealing with the Constitution of the Psychophysical individual, Stein reinforces the above remarks in another context thus, « what became, was lived, and is finished, sinks back into the stream of the past. We leave it behind us when we step into a new experience, it loses its primordially, but 'remains the same' experience »⁵⁶.

It is interesting to note that early in the thesis when examining the essence of acts of Empathy, she seems to betray the cast of her mind and her potential openness towards the Infinite. At that time of her life, a self-proclaimed atheist, her non-acceptance of any transcendent horizon — of God, was not in her case any kind of congealed personal fixed stance — a quasi dogma and it was very far removed from the species of aggressive defensiveness one meets in certain atheistic humanists, for example, who are sometimes quick to put religion as the root cause of all the world's ills. As Stein herself said, Scheler and Reinach had opened for her new horizons of phenomena to which she could not remain ignorant. Thus there is a curious paragraph following the definition of Empathy as the experience of foreign consciousness in general.

« This is how man grasps the psychic life of his fellow man. Also as a believer he grasps the love, the anger, and the command of his God in this way; and God can grasp man's life in no other way. As the possessor of complete knowledge, God is not mistaken about men's experiences, as men are mistaken about each other's experiences. But men's experiences do not become God's own, either; nor do they have the same kind of givenness for Him »⁵⁷.

It is an amazing understanding of what knowing is in God for one whose religious sense had not yet become explicit, and reminds one of Bernard Lonergan's definition of God as Infinite Understanding⁵⁸. Regarding the last sentence of the above quotation I would surmise that Stein would no longer have agreed with what she had written above, after her conversion; for because of the Incarnation (the full meaning and import of which infused her whole being) men's experiences do become God's own and do have the same givenness for Him, for in His Humanity,

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11-12.

⁵⁸ « ...Then I have no grounds for surprise if I find myself unable to deny either that there is a reality or that the real is being or that being is completely intelligible or that complete intelligibility is unrestricted understanding or that unrestricted understanding is God ».

LONERGAN, B., *Ibid.*, p. 675.

Jesus had access to the human heart in a privileged way — access to the subject as subject⁵⁹.

THE GRASPING OF EMOTIONAL STATES OR MOODS

Stein very clearly illustrates this capacity of Empathy or another of its aspects to enter into the emotional state of another. Fields of sensation are brought to givenness for me; Empathy makes them intuitive for me, but in the mode of perception. (Here we can observe how careful she is to preserve the intuitive primordially of Empathy, steering clear of empirical psychological explanations). Here is her example:

« The hand resting on the table does not lie there like a book beside it. It 'presses' against the table more or less strongly; it lies there limpid or stretched; and I 'see' these sensations of pressure and tension in a con-primordial way. If I follow out the tendencies to fulfillment in this 'co-grasping', my hand is moved (not in reality, but 'as if') to the place of the foreign one. It is moved into it and occupies its position and attitude, now feeling its sensations, though not primordially and not as being its own. Rather, my own hand feels the foreign hand's sensation 'with'. (...) During this projection, the foreign hand is continually perceived as belonging to the foreign physical body so that the empathized sensations are continually brought into relief as foreign in contrast with our own sensations. This is so even when I am not turned toward this contrast in the manner of awareness »⁶⁰.

But what of the objection that Stein was a woman, and quite apart from the question of a hand as in the example, how can a woman empathize with a man and vice versa? She anticipates even this, thus:

« Were the size of my hand, such as its length, width, span, etc. given to me as inalterably fixed, the attempts at Empathy with any hand having different properties would have to fail because of the contrast between them. But actually Empathy is also quite successful with men's and children's hands which are very different from mine »⁶¹.

Can the act of Empathy be employed or come into play in religious devotion? For example, in meditating on the Passion of Christ in front of a photograph of the Shroud of Turin or in a reflective reading of a surgeon's description of the crucifixion⁶², what can be said of the affections of the heart — are they Empathy? According to Stein's understand-

⁵⁹ Lk.9:47, 16:15, Jn. 1:47, 2:25, 16:19 and all of Cp. 4.

⁶⁰ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁶² BARBET, M.D., P., *A Doctor At Calvary, The Passion Of Our Lord Jesus Christ As Described By A Surgeon*. New York, 1963.

ing of its nature, these and similar affections would not be Empathy; for they would be projective imaginative acts that lack the element of primordiality. Empathy is to be grasped in a direct moment of intuited 'now-ness'.

One thinks of the many examples from the lives of the saints in which a glance at a statue or picture of Our Lord or His Holy Mother can spark off a swelling of devotion that overflows unto the level of the emotions. This refers to the qualitative difference between Empathy, sympathy and love.

It might not be amiss at this point to draw attention again to the precise nature of phenomenological analysis to which Stein rigidly adhered in examination of the nature of Empathy. It is essentially different from the human science of psychology which deals with facts. Phenomenology involves itself with essences. Psychology is a science of realities understood as events which have a place in the spatio-temporal world, whereas phenomenology is supposed to 'purify' the phenomena from that which lends them 'reality', and to consider them apart from their setting in the real world.

In the section entitled Empathy as the Comprehension of Mental (Spiritual) Persons, Stein uses the metaphors of light and colour in order to illustrate the subtle nuances and grades of the ever present psychic phenomena which one experiences in oneself and empathizes in others. Consciousness is not a prisoner of the world but grounds levels of value, culture and social inter-relationships.

In her remarks about the hierarchy of values, Stein relies on Scheler's *Der Formalismus In Der Ethik*. What then is the significance of feelings for the constitution of personality?

« They not only have the peculiarity of being rooted in a certain depth of the 'I' but also of filling it out to more or less of an extent. Moods have already shown us what this means. We can say that every feeling has a certain mood component that causes the feeling to be spread throughout the 'I' from the feeling's place of origin and fill it up. Starting from a peripheral level, a slight resentment can fill me 'entirely', but it can also happen upon a deep joy that prevents it from pushing further forward to the center. Now, in turn, this joy progresses victoriously from the center to the periphery and fills out all the layers above it. In terms of our previous metaphor, feelings are like different sources of light on whose position and luminosity the resulting illumination depends.

The metaphor of light and color can illustrate the relationship between feelings and moods for us in still another respect. Emotions can have mood components essentially and occasionally just as colors have a specific brightness. So there is a serious and a cheerful joy. Apart from this, however, joy is specifically a 'luminous' character »⁶³.

⁶³ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 63.

It should be clear now how Stein employs Husserl's phenomenological method in describing and attempting to lay bare the essence of Empathy. In the above discussion of moods and feelings there is a bracketing of any mention of bio-psychic data. A day out walking on a wind-swept mountain in Summer after having been indoors for most of a week in concentrated study will induce a mood of lightness, expansiveness and freedom. Any bio-psychological attempt to 'explain' the mood in terms of the interaction of ozone in the air with the body's glandular activity would be laboured and any 'data' thus gleaned would be subject to debate. Stein progresses with her probe into feelings and moods in a way that was to become very influential in psychiatry, especially when the influence of phenomenology filtered through to it, to emerge as 'client-centred therapy'.

« I can not only experience a mood and myself in it, but also its penetration into me. For example, I can experience it as resulting from a specific experience. I experience how 'something' upsets me. This something is always the correlate of an act of feeling, such as the absence of news over which I am angry, the scratching violin that offends me, the raw deal over which I am irritated. The reach of the aroused mood, then, depends on the 'I' depth of the act of feeling correlative with the height of the felt value. The level to which I can reasonably allow it to penetrate is prescribed »⁶⁴.

The final sentence above would seem to be similar, for example, to the aesthetic stance when a particular value is highly developed and reinforced by an expanded technical knowledge. A concert violinist or seasoned music critic would be doubly sensitive to the 'scratching violin' of Stein's example; whereas a less musically gifted person might consider it quite tuneful and hardly offensive to the ear.

Regarding the 'foreign person', or in other words another person. Just as my own person is constituted in primordial mental acts, so too, the other person is constituted in empathically experienced acts.

« I experience his every action as proceeding from a will and this, in turn, from a feeling. Simultaneously with this, I am given a level of his person and a range of values in principle experienceable by him. This, in turn, meaningfully motivates the expectation of future possible volitions and actions. Accordingly, a single action and also a single bodily expression, such as a look or a laugh, can give me a glimpse into the kernel of the person »⁶⁵.

So, for example, I can see, grasp and intuit the quality of cynicism in a laugh or form a suspicion that a person may be lying or at least hesitating to reveal the entire truth in a slight delay in answering a

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

question. Consider the significance of a *look*. Ophthalmologically, eyes may vary slightly in size and the colour of the iris may vary but all human eyes inasmuch as they are part of a living human body are *bearers of meaning*. In English there are a cluster of words and expressions just to express not simply the function of the organs of sight, but as transmitters of meaning: a look of horror, a fixed stare, a vacant gaze, a wink, a glance and the « melting amorous orbs » beloved by the writers of romantic novels! There is one particularly famous look as recorded in the gospel of St. Luke: « And the Lord turned and *looked* at Peter. And Peter remembered the word of he Lord, how He had said to him, ' before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times ' »⁶⁶.

EMPATHY AND SELF-KNOWLEDGE

The final section of Stein's thesis concerns the significance of Empathy for knowledge of self. « We not only learn to make ourselves into objects, but through Empathy with related natures, i.e. persons of our type, what is sleeping in us is developed »⁶⁷. On the contrary however, with person whom we see to be very different from us, Empathy brings to light what we are not. A monk, for example, who encounters a person whose whole life is centred on the acquisition of money and worn out with anxiety over the maintenance of its value in times of fiscal inflation will inevitably be conscious of a gap in values and world-view. Stein looks upon Empathy, linked with self-knowledge as an important aid to self-evaluation. « When we empathically run into ranges of value locked to us, we become conscious of our own deficiency or disvalue »⁶⁸. A Christian will not find it difficult to make a link from the above quotation to the values of humility and openness to good example radiating from others.

The word ' edification ' which is somewhat demodé is thus reinforced with a phenomenological structure. How is one edified by another person? Through Empathy we intuit values that impress us. The impression of value as in edification is an empathized a priori apart from but woven in and through particular attitudes and deeds. Stein was herself edified by the attitude of Frau Reinach when her young husband was killed at the battle front during the First World War; the widow's attitude of inner strength and hope which suffused her grief demonstrated the power of the cross and thus deeply impressed and edified the young Stein.

The negative of edification is to be scandalized ' Here the intuition is of Stein's *disvalue* — clashing with one which, (although I may not possess its opposed value myself), I nevertheless cherish, and there can be degrees of this expressed in a slight raising of the eyebrows to outright shock. (« I was shocked at his conduct! »).

⁶⁶ Lk. 22: 61-62.

⁶⁷ STEIN, E., *Ibid.*, p. 105.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

THE PHENOMENON OF EXPRESSION

Feelings are closely allied to expression. I blush with embarrassment or shame, angrily clench my first, moan with pain, laugh at something funny. However, « feeling in its pure essence is not something complete in itself (...) it is loaded with an energy which must be unloaded »⁶⁹. This can happen in different ways, e.g. in the motivation of volitions and actions. I perceive in someone's remark a double-entendre, a calculated insult and experience hurt and resentment. (In this example it cannot be said that there is an automatic response of anger or retaliation for often one's insertion into a greater all-embracing value will prohibit a spontaneous reaction because of this value — that is, to endure, to put up with an intended humiliation as a self-discipline and conscious imitation of Christ). However, the same feeling that gives rise to a volition can also spark off an appearance of expression that is beyond the conscious control of the 'I'. Regarding the above example I may be able to control a willed, negative response to the insult but have no control over automatic bodily reactions experienced in an increased rate of heart beat, for « by its nature it [feeling] must always be expressed »⁷⁰. There is an interesting glimpse of Stein's Prussian background revealed in the following passage where she speaks about self-control:

« It could be objected here that in life feelings often arise without motivating a volition or bodily expression. As is well-known, we civilized people must 'control' ourselves and hold back the bodily expression of our feelings. We are similarly restricted in our activities and thus in our volitions. There is, of course, still the loophole of 'airing' one's wishes. The employee who is allowed neither to tell his superior by contemptuous looks he thinks him a scoundrel or a fool nor decide to remove him, can still wish secretly that he would go to the devil. Or one can carry out deeds in fancy that are blocked in reality. One who is born into restricted circumstances and cannot fulfill himself in reality carries out his desire for great things by winning battles and performing wonders of valour in imagination. The creation of another world where I can do what is forbidden to me here is itself a form of expression. Thus the man dying of thirst sees in the distance before him oases with bubbling springs or seas that revive him »⁷¹.

Thus she would regard day-dreaming or reverie as expression. « The creation of another world » which she describes so vividly represents the type of phenomena which need to be mortified or restricted as set forth in St. John of the Cross' category of the active purification of the memory.

Obviously at this time for Stein, Catholic mystical theology was a closed book. However, she distinguishes yet another grade or level of

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 48-49.

expression to which the controlled person has recourse, who « for social, aesthetic or ethical reasons, puts on a uniform countenance in public »⁷². These 'controlled' persons allow their feelings to short-circuit, so to speak, to an act of reflection that makes the feeling itself objective versus merely experienced. The feeling ends in this act of reflection instead of being outwardly expressed. This would seem to presume a rather highly developed reflectiveness. There is an 'I' which from some Olympian and inaccessible location, serenely and calmly regards the clamour of emotions and feelings 'somewhere down below', while itself remaining detached, aloof and insulated. To the objection that reflection weakens feeling and that, as Stein says: « the reflecting man is incapable of intense feelings. This inference is completely unjustified »⁷³. The type of expression signifies nothing about the intensity of the feelings expressed.

A parallel illustration of non-reflective versus reflective action is that of doodling, that is, the kind of aimless scribbling and drawing that has no consciously adverted driving force behind it. One sometimes engages in this kind of activity when in a pensive mood or engaged in an engrossing telephone conversation. The full attention of the 'I' is focused on the matter in hand, i.e. a dialogue over the telephone: however, hidden drives seem to power the hand holding pen or pencil, producing various fantastic shapes. But in the instant when one adverts to the scribbling, it is no longer just doodling, but conscious designing or drawing, the automatic dimension having been dropped.

Stein says that Empathy has the attribute of reiteration, which is the type of reflective switching of the ego to a mental act.

« Empathy has this attribute in common with many kinds of acts. There is not only reflection, but also reflection on reflection, etc., as an ideal possibility ad infinitum. Similarly there is a willing of willing, a liking of liking, etc. In fact, all representations can be reiterated. I can remember a memory, expect an expectation, fancy a fancy. And so I can also empathize the empathized, i.e. among the acts of another that I grasp empathically there can be empathic acts in which the other grasps another's acts »⁷⁴.

Stein takes this idea from Lipps' description which he terms reflexive sympathy, simply changing the name to reiteration of Empathy. This 'other' can be a third person or myself and in the latter « we have reflexive sympathy, where *my* original experience returns *to me* as an empathized one »⁷⁵.

Stein does not develop the implications of the above as she is dealing strictly with the essence of Empathy, but it should be clear how strong are the implications of even this partial aspect or facet of Empathy for

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

spirituality. These invisible but embodied and expressed states which are empathized flash to and fro in the give and take of human relationships, when tones of voice, slight eye movements and silence, all contribute to fill in what the full dimension of being together means.

CONCLUSION

Stein shares with Scheler a reluctance to define Empathy just as the latter did not actually define sympathy, that is, in any neat verbal package but rather gradually led a thoughtful and reflective reader to 'see' what these concepts were, by a phenomenological process of laying bare or uncovering the essence of it. Let us imagine some rare work of art which has been prepared for transport to a foreign country for an important exhibition, e.g. the glorious death mask of Tutankhamen (1361-52 B.C.) at the Royal Academy in London about ten years ago. It was quite small compared to the vast packing container housing other crates, all having specialized protective and security functions. It is a very rough simile indeed, because many of Stein's layers of meaning which she peels away are so subtly close to Empathy itself, that it is like mistaking two water thin pages of a breviary for one. She distinguished fellow-feeling from Empathy and it takes no small effort of concentration to actually see the distinction; in everyday consciousness one hardly does this. Empathy, it would seem, in Stein's analysis is a cognitive function, albeit linked with feeling. I can 'feel for' the suffering of someone I heartily dislike. Stein focusing precisely on her theme says of it: « Empathy in our strictly defined sense as the experience of foreign consciousness can only be the non-primordial experience which announces a primordial one. It is neither the primordial experience nor the 'assumed' one »⁷⁶, as, for example in memory, when I put myself into another's place, and surround myself with his own situation. (For example, imagining oneself being Vladimir Horowitz having played a vastly complicated Liszt piano concerto to a packed concert hall and basking in the tumultuous applause, even though one might be incapable of putting two notes together on a piano keyboard in harmonious succession).

Stein notes that Empathy deals with the here and the now, a grasping of what is immediate. « Empathy is a kind of act of perceiving *sui generis* »⁷⁷. Outside the arena of immediacy, this capacity of feeling into another with understanding falls into the category of either memory or imagination or projection.

As to a personal evaluation. I must confess that while on the one hand I stand spellbound by the analytical power of Stein's mind bringing to bear the full weight of Husserl's phenomenological method on an

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

elusive yet universal human experience, I nevertheless feel some resistance to the notion of an inner intuition of essences, as for example, « we must press forward to their [phenomena's] essence. Each phenomenon forms an exemplary basis for the consideration of essence »⁷⁸.

Knowledge must come through the senses, all knowledge, including knowledge of others and insight into the inner state of another seems to me to come about through a tremendously complex but rapid sifting of embodied data such as strength tone and modulation of the human voice, facial movements and sundry gestures. However, Stein would be forced to exclude these data by the very nature of the phenomenological method and its epoché which would exclude psychologically empirical data or even ordinary human observation. Evaluation of her thesis necessarily entails evaluation of the phenomenological school of thought from which she eventually extracted herself.

I conclude with a further quotation from *On The Nature of Empathy*, which, while not dispelling serious questions (basically stemming from the nature of the phenomenological method itself), nevertheless leaves Stein with the last word:

« I not only know what is expressed in facial expressions and gestures, but also what is hidden behind them. Perhaps I see that someone makes a sad face but is not really sad. I may also hear someone make an indiscreet remark and blush. Then I not only understand the remark and see shame in the blush, but also discern that he knows his remark in indiscreet and is ashamed of himself for having made it. Neither this motivation nor the judgment about his remark is expressed by any 'sensual appearance' »⁷⁹.

Furthermore there could be the commonly experienced 'double-mirror' effect — my knowing that he knows that I know that he is embarrassed or ashamed; and all happens at once, in a moment of time. Data may come through the senses, but it is thoroughly processed by the immaterial powers of the mind, not just the instantaneity of electro-bio-chemical nerve synapse inter-reactions, but by a purely spiritual faculty.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.