

**Individuality and Community.
Construction of Sociality in Edith Stein's Early Phenomenology**

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Abstract: The problem of individuality lies at the basis of phenomenological investigations both in Edith Stein's earliest and mature works. Her doctoral thesis, the *On the Problem of Empathy*, focuses on the phenomenological acts of perceiving persons in an intersubjective situation. She aims at a conception of the person beyond a construction based on the pure "I" or the stream of consciousness. According to her, the psycho-physical subject can comprehend the foreign living body as an individual. Dilthey is not interested in the individual in a phenomenological sense, but rather in the question as to what constitutes value in the society. Although all of Stein's references to Dilthey's views in her doctoral thesis are of critical nature, there is still a connection between the two thinkers. In this paper, I would like to investigate the relationship between Edith Stein's critique of Dilthey's understanding of the individual with a particular focus on Stein's conception of empathic act as the founding act for the community.

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Edith Stein's beginnings in philosophy used to be characterized as being influenced by Husserlian phenomenology. Furthermore, it is also remarkable that her philosophical intention was influenced by other philosophical impulses. On the other hand it is to be noted that, from the start, she aimed at a phenomenological method of her own, even if her philosophical theses, especially in her early years, betray a clear Husserlian effect. In the following essay, I will investigate the specific phenomenological method of Edith Stein, starting from her first methodological question on the problem of empathy, which leads to her later work on the phenomenological aspects of the social experiences. While reflecting on the contemporary impulses of the early texts *On the Problem of Empathy* and the *Individual and Community*, the following text will examine how the phenomenological method becomes a method for the ontology of sociality. It is also noteworthy that Edith Stein's interest in Dilthey was guided by the problem of the community, and what she found in Dilthey's descriptive psychology was an alternative for her first investigations on empathy. In my opinion, it is not only in her first philosophical work that Edith Stein pays attention to empathy as a phenomenological act, but she also considers it the basic act of experience in her

later investigations. Dilthey's theory of the community becomes the guiding thread for her to investigate the transition from the individual experience to the experience of the community life. According to my thesis, this subjective act presupposes a collective world experience that makes it possible to experience the subject as a subject. This two-sided interpretation of the act of empathy as, first, the founding act of community life, and, furthermore, something that is founded on co-subjectivity, is what constitutes the essential phenomenological method of Edith Stein.

The empathy as the basic act of experience

Stein's first philosophical work, the *On the Problem of Empathy*, aims both at a historical reconstruction and a philosophical interpretation of empathy. She analyzed the problem of empathy in Theodore Lipps's works and transformed her historical interpretations into the systematical analysis of methodical questions. Stein tried to arrive at a systematical elaboration of the problem of empathy both by reviewing the prevailing views and by applying the Husserlian phenomenology. She started to work on her doctoral thesis while she participated at Husserl's lecture *Nature and Spirit* in 1913. In his lecture, Husserl emphasized that the world is constituted intersubjectively, "through a plurality of perceiving individuals who relate in a mutual exchange of information. Accordingly, the experience of other individuals is a prerequisite. To [this] experience, an application of the work of Theodore Lipps, Husserl gave the name *Einfühlung* [Empathy]."¹ In her doctoral thesis, Stein refers twice to Husserl's phenomenological thesis of the world constitution. Firstly, in the *Foreword* of her work, as she defines empathy as the perceiving of foreign subjects and their experiences², and secondly, as she attributes the intersubjective world constitution to the individuals. According to Husserl, Stein remarks, "the empathy as the basis of intersubjective experience becomes the condition of possible knowledge of the existing outer world."³ These two constituents of the world constitution, the empathy as the act of the experience of foreign subjects, on the one hand, and the individuality that is the basic component of intersubjectivity, on the other hand, form the two segments of Stein's work.

Since in the second chapter of her dissertation Stein analyses the empathy in contrast to other acts, in the last two chapters she then focuses on the individuality of foreign persons. The latter theme serves as a bridge from Edith Stein's doctoral thesis to her *Individual and Community* in 1922. This essay is concerned with the connection between the eidetic analysis of the act of empathy and the life in the community. The life of the community was investigated by Edith Stein in the second chapter of the doctoral thesis, and the life in the community becomes the primary question of the constitution of the community by the individuals in her later work. According to this division, the central question is how Edith Stein can convert the

1 Edith Stein, *The Collected Works of Edith Stein. Life in a Jewish Family*, eds. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koepfel (Washington, 1986), 269.

2 Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. W. Stein (Hague: Nijhoff 1964), 3.

3 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 60.

phenomenological act of empathy to an act of the community life.¹ This question leads to a second problem concerning the type of act: do the act of empathy and the act of the community differ from each other (the one derived from the other by a transformation), or are the two the same? Considering that Edith Stein approaches both the individuality and the community life in a phenomenological and not a psychological way, her inquiry of community leaves open two ways of interpretation. According to this direction, Edith Stein's thinking raises the question whether there is exactly a phenomenological relationship between individual life and community life; and, accordingly, she saw in the act of empathy a solution to Dilthey's problem of individuality and community.

The second chapter of the doctoral thesis is concerned with the phenomenological acts in contrast to the act of empathy. Stein's central statement and initial point of her analysis are the participation of the subjects in a phenomenological act. In the case of empathy, it implies a mutual phenomenological experience: "The world in which we live isn't only a world of physical bodies but also experiencing subjects external to us, of whose experiences we know. This knowledge isn't indubitable. Precisely here [we] are subject[ed] to such diverse deceptions that occasionally we are inclined to doubt the possibility of knowledge in this domain at all. But the phenomenon of foreign psychic life is indubitably [there], and we now want to examine this a little further."² Stein focuses on examining the empathy on the ground of two elements of the experience, which play a basic role both in intentions at objects and the intentions of subjects. She distinguishes the content of the act from the object of the act and attributes a temporal dimension to every intentional act, which determines the experience in its primordially or non-primordially. Both in object experience and subject experience, the experience has a temporal dimension that constitutes a correlation between the object and the content of the experience. Across

1 It must be remarked here that the notion of social act, adopted by Stein from Adolf Reinach, is not identical with her notion of the act of community. Reinach interprets the social act as the communal experience of feelings, while Stein calls these acts as free acts, because of their freedom from the objectivity. This means that Stein focuses on the content of the act, while Reinach is interested in the intention of the act. The scholarly literature is divided by the evaluation of the relationship between Stein and Reinach: some regard Stein's interpretation of Reinach's social acts as a misunderstanding of Reinach's ideas. Others, however, claim that Stein understands free acts as the act of love, hate etc. which are aimed at single phenomena in the common life. My article focuses not on these single acts but on the perception of the community as a basic phenomenon of our life. Cf. Beate Beckmann, *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnisses. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluss an Adolf Reinach und Edith Stein* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann 2003); Adolf Reinach, "Nachgelassene Texte. Nichtsoziale und soziale Akte," in Karl Schumann and Barry Smith, eds. *Sämtliche Werke. Textkritische Ausgabe in zwei Bänden. vol. 1.* (München: Philosophia, 1989), 355–361.; Adolf Reinach, "Die apriorischen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Rechts. Die sozialen Akte", in *Sämtliche Werke*, 141–335.; Alessandro Salice, *Urteile und Sachverhalte: ein Vergleich zwischen Alexius Meinong und Adolf Reinach* (München: Philosophia, 2009); Karl Schumann, "Edith Stein und Adolf Reinach," in Reto Luzius Fetz, ed. *Studien zur Philosophie von Edith Stein. Internationales Edith Stein Symposium Eichstätt 1991*, Phänomenologische Forschungen 26/27. (Freiburg: Alber, 1993), 53–89.

2 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 5.

the temporality, there is an analogy between considering the memory, expectation and fantasy and acts of empathy in which the experiences are given non-primordially. Edith Stein regards primordially as the main term characteristic of the different types of acts: the memory of joy, for example, is primordial as a representational act, but non-primordial in its content, since its content belongs to a situation in the past. “This act has the total character of joy which I could study, but the joy is not primordially and bodily there. Rather, it has once been alive (and this ‘once’, the time of the present experience, can be definite or indefinite).”¹

The experience of empathy is similar both to the memory and to the fantasy in presenting the content of experience. Similar to them, the act of empathy has a temporal dimension both as an acting process and in its experience. “When I inquire 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. 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.”² According to Stein, there is a transition between the experience of the foreign person (which is my non-primordial experience) and my experience of the others (which I conceive as my primordial experience). As Dan Zahavi says concerning the intersubjective life-constitution, there is a smooth transition from the experience of the others to the other forms of personal experiences as imagination and recollection, but it must be realized that the empathy is the irreducible form of intersubjectivity.³ Thus there is a twofold level of time constitution that belongs to the primordial experience of the others on the one hand and to the fulfilling explanation of a foreign personal experience on the other hand. By this way, Stein distinguishes three grades of the representation of experiences: the emergence of the experience, the fulfilling of explanation, and the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience. “This other subject is primordial although I do not experience its primordially; his joy is primordial although I do not experience it as primordial. In my non-primordial experience I feel, as it were, led by a primordial one not experienced by me but still there, manifesting itself in my non-primordial experience.”⁴

Stein distinguishes the theoretical and the so-called sentient acts (*Gefühlsakt* as translated in the works of E. S.), which leads her thinking to value ethics. She asserts that the value ethics is grounded on the act empathy, and this way it is constituted by the individual. From this point, Stein concludes, the present experiences overwrite the experiences of the past. Based on this statement of Stein,

1 *Ibid.*, 8.

2 *Ibid.*, 10.

3 Dan Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, (London: MIT Press 2008), 155.: “To be more specific, empathy has typically been taken to constitute a unique and irreducible form of intentionality, and one of the classical tasks of phenomenological analysis has been to clarify its precise structure and spell out the difference between it and other forms of intentionality, such as perception, imagination, and recollection. In the fact, the empathic approach has occasionally been assumed to constitute the phenomenological approach to intersubjectivity.”

4 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 11.

Alasdair MacIntyre argues in an essay on Edith Stein's *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* that Stein's sentient act is an affective act through which the individuals encounter values, but earlier experiences always presuppose this experience.¹ The sentient acts could augment or overwrite the content of earlier experiences. The fact that the experiences are rebuilt in the stream of consciousness every time indicates us the inadequate form of the pure I. The "I", taken in the sense of the stream of consciousness, is always in contrast with the Other, whose "I" is at the same time the subject of experience. "This otherness is apparent in the way than 'I'. Therefore, it is 'you'. But, since it experiences itself as I experience myself, the 'you' is another 'I'. Thus, the 'I' doesn't become individualized because the Other faces it, but its individuality, or as we would rather say (because we must reserve the term 'individuality' for something else), its selfness is brought into relief in contrast with the otherness of the other."² The constitution of experience indicates the possibility of experience of community in the stream of consciousness.

Stein asserts that the individual experience is manifested not only in the bodily experience of the others but also in the form of the givenness which refers to a foreign "I" that is not mine. Therefore, a conscious unity of "I" and physical body belongs to the individual "I". The perception of the foreign "I" in virtue of the experiences of the others is simultaneous with the experience of the foreign physical body that is analogue to my own. Following Husserl, Zahavi remarks that the problem of the perception is just the embodiment of the person, (embodiment, however, can have two distinct meanings indicated by the German nouns *Körper* [physical body] and *Leib* [living body]).³ The physical body behaves like a living body that can have sensations from the outer world. "Thus the foreign living body is 'seen' as a living body. This kind of givenness that we want to call 'con-primordially', confronts us in the perception of the thing."⁴ The perception of the foreign body as a living body is realized in the mutual psychological act in which my own physical body is perceived as a living body belonging to the outer world. Stein

1 Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, (London: Continuum 2006), 119.: "Of central importance are Gemütsakte, affective acts, for it is through these that individuals encounter values. Such acts have two elements. In them we are presented with objects as bearers of value, as goods, and those values elicit from us affective attitudes. Our states of feeling are responses to and presuppose the value of the objects presented to them."

2 Stein, *On the problem of Empathy*, 36.

3 Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, 156.: "How and why should our subjective embodiment prepare the way for an encounter with the other? If we begin with Husserl, one of the issues explicitly emphasized in his phenomenological analysis of the body is its peculiar two-sidedness. My body is given to me as an interiority, a volitional structure, and as a dimension of sensing, but it is also given as a visually and tactually appearing exteriority. What is the relation between that which Husserl called the "Innen-" and the "Aussenleiblichkeit," that is, what is the relation between the lived bodily inwardness on the one side, and the externality of the body on the other (Hua 14/337)? In both cases, I am confronted with my own body, but why is the visually and tactually appearing body at all experienced as the exteriority of my body? When I touch my own hand, the touched hand is not given as a mere object, since it feels the touch itself."

4 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 53.

called this co-givenness of the physical and psychical attributions of the “I” as a psycho-physical individual. This is not merely a pure “I” separated from the psychical elements of experience, but rather, “my own hand feels the foreign hand’s sensation ‘with,’ precisely through the empathy whose essence we earlier differentiated from our own experience and every other kind of representation.”¹

The transition from the act of empathy to the act of community

This leads us to the question as to how empathy and individuality could belong together if both presuppose each other in the perception of subjectivity? Stein claims that the object of the perception is always determined by the types of more fundamental cognitions. My perception and my imagination are guided by the typical elements of earlier experiences which, however, could overwrite the present experience. The individual is thus developed by a community or by the bodily givenness of the foreign living body in the outer world. Since the pure “I” is a stream of consciousness, the constituent or the internal carrier of experiences, it is unable to express the correlation between the bodily objects and living bodies. The living body as the zero point of orientation finds itself between other zero points of physical bodies which determine each other’s world experiences. The world is given for us in an intersubjective form, whose perception includes the empathic contact of the living individuals with each other. “From the viewpoint of the zero point of orientation gained in empathy, I must no longer consider my own zero point, but as a spatial point among many. By this means, and only by this means, I learn to see my living body as a physical body like others. At the same time, only in primordial experience is it given to me as a living body. Moreover, it is given to me as an incomplete physical body in outer perception and as a different from all others. In ‘reiterated empathy’ I again interpret this physical body as a living body, and so it is that I first am given to myself as a psycho-physical individual in the full sense.”² The psycho-physical individuality is given to me in the intersubjective world constitution, and I can perceive my own bodily givenness only intersubjectively, which means that the world is not constituted for me without a reflexion to my bodily conditions. According to Zahavi, the understanding of intersubjectivity calls for an examination of embodied subjectivity, and this way the possibility of intersubjectivity is rooted in the bodily constitution of intersubjectivity. “Many phenomenologists have also argued that a better understanding of the relation between subjectivity and world will increase our comprehension of intersubjectivity. More precisely, they have argued for intersubjectivity to be granted a place in the intentional relation between subjectivity and world, be it in the social character of tool use, in the public nature of perceptual objects, or in the historicity of our understanding.”³ I should not perceive myself as a psycho-physical individual, unless I participate at the intersubjective world constitution by the act of empathy. In experiencing the outer world, I must at first discover this analogy between my own

1 Ibid., 54.

2 Ibid., 58.

3 Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, 163.

bodily life and the living bodies of the foreign subjects. “Corresponding to the individual personality, which is constituted in the individual experiences and out of which in turn the individual experiences are to be understood, there could very well be a collective personality as that whose experiences the communal experiences are to be regarded as.”¹ This analogy, the discovering of the community feelings between two bodily expressions, is the guarantee of the act of empathy, and vice versa. But is it possible at all, and if so, then exactly how could we talk about the common sense of the community? These are the questions raised by MacIntyre, relying on Stein’s notion of community feeling. “Two sets of questions arise. The first concerns what it means to speak of the purposes or hopes or fears or grief of a community. What is the relationship between the purposes, hopes, fears, and griefs of individuals which are theirs qua individuals and those which are theirs qua members of a community. A second set of question concerns the differences between the two imagined individuals. What is it for an individual to be open or not to be open to those experiences that are communal? What is it for an individual to identify or to fail to identify with the purposes of a community? What kind of changes in an individual might membership in a community bring about?”²

The dissertation of Edith Stein investigates the relation between empathy and other psychical acts by elucidating the perception between the psycho-physical bodies. Since the development of the individual takes place in the life of the community, every bodily effect manifests itself as an interior psychical causality, which is at the same time responsible for individual development. The aim of the first part of *The Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, the “Sentient Causality”, is to show how psychical effects determinate the whole constitution of experiences and delineate the core of the person. The causality of the physical impact could be the same for different individuals, but it may involve different psychical causalities for the different individuals. “Along with these effects of outer causes, we grasp effects within the individual himself. For example, we may see a child actively romping about and then becoming tired and cross. We then interpret tiredness and the bad mood as the effect of movement. We have already seen how movements come to givenness to us as alive movements and how tiredness comes to givenness. As we shall soon see, we also grasp the ‘bad mood’ empathically.”³ The observation of an event in the outer world causes the same experience in its object, but it can refer to different content for the participants at the same time. MacIntyre asserts that, for Stein, empathy is always directed at a concrete situation, the meaning of which is defined by earlier experiences.⁴ The foreign living body as a

1 Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, ed. Marianne Sawicki, transl. Marie Catharine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki (Washington, 2000), 135.

2 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 109.

3 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 66.

4 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 112.: “Here Stein first recognizes that what is given in experience sometimes can only be characterized adequately in term that takes us beyond that experience, in terms that presuppose some external point of view from which what is given in experience has to be understood. And so it is with another aspect of psychic causality.”

conveyor of psychic life is surrounded by other background experiences as well, which determine its present experience.



The way she opened the door made him realise
there was something going on.
Something she kept silent until her thoughts were clear

Patricia Todoran, *The Door*,
40 cm x 50 cm, lambda print, 2015

This means, on the one hand, that the psychic causality is not limited to the experience, but the experience of now is motivated by the future and the past, expectation, fantasy and memory. According to MacIntyre, this is the life-feeling and life-power which influences our experiences: “The changing life-feelings that have effects on how we experience what we experience are to be understood as manifestation of life-power, the power that we draw upon as living beings. Among the effects of variations in life-power is varying receptivity of experience. The powers that I bring to my discriminations of features of my experience are themselves manifestations of another and more fundamental power, that of life itself. And this stands as cause to effects that encounter in experience.”¹ An individual is not only a closed conveyor of experiences but also an expression of his life. Stein

¹ Ibid., 112.

considers the reaction of the individual and the causal chain of his expressions as the personal character of an individual. You can read the sorrowfulness of a person from his or her face, I express my cheerfulness by my smile. These common emotional expressions belong to the present situation, but their experience introduces other non-primordially experiences. “Meaning is always a general one. In order to grasp the object intended right now, we always need a givenness of the intuitive basis of the meaning experiences. There is no such intermediate level between the expressed experience and the expressing bodily change.”¹ According to MacIntyre, Stein makes a difference between the act of the person as an intersubjective act of empathy among subjects and between the act of community which is turned to the upper-subjective horizon of the community.” So once again, when she discusses the ebb and flow of life-power within communities and between individuals and communities, she once again treats these phenomena as susceptible of causal explanation. And, as she did with individuals, she understands life-power as informing a range of communal acts and experiences, including those forms of cooperation through which communal experience is constituted. Many individuals may by their actions contribute to a common and communal goal.”²

The language as the transition between the expression of personal effects and the communication channel of the community symbolizes the mental life of the psycho-physical individual. This linguistic expression is not primordial but can be empathized. “I can bring the circumstances of which the statement speaks to givenness to myself. If I hear the words, ‘It is raining,’ I understand them without considering that someone is saying that to me. And I bring this comprehension to intuitive fulfillment when I look out of the window myself.”³ As Zahavi says: “On the one hand, there is something right about the claim that the feelings and thoughts of Others are manifest in their expressions and actions. In many situations, we do have a direct, pragmatic understanding of the minds of the Others. We see the anger of the Other, we empathize with his sorrow, we comprehend his linguistically articulated beliefs; we do not have to infer their existence. On the other hand, there also seems to be something right in the Cartesian idea that the mental life of another is, in some respect, inaccessible.”⁴ All our outer perception is carried out in mental acts. We interpret the foreign living body as an “object-constituting consciousness” and consider the outer world as its correlate. The transition from the individual experiences to communal world constitution is realized in values which are constituted by the mind in the acts of feeling. According to Edith Stein, “Our whole ‘cultural world’, all that ‘the hand of man’ has formed, all utilitarian objects, all works of handicraft, applied science, and art, and reality, they have become the correlate of the mind.”⁵ This whole value system of the human life is grounded on the individual experiences, and the cultural sciences constitute the second level of the human life. Stein claims that the elements of the cultural sciences, facts and

1 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 75.

2 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 121.

3 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 76.

4 Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, 154.

5 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 84.

historical events, are not in causal contact with the personal life of the individual, but they are in genetic correlation with the life of the community. “The *Geisteswissenschaften* (cultural sciences) describe the products of the mind, though this alone does not satisfy them. They also pursue, mostly unseparated from this, what they call history, literary history, history of language, art history, etc. They pursue the formation of mental products or their birth in the mind.”¹ These two functions of the cultural sciences, the formative process of the mental products, on the one hand, and the succession of the mental acts of the individuals, on the other hand, raise the question, whether there could be a connection between the methodology of the cultural sciences as a scientific formation of the community and the act of empathy on a subjective level of the community.

As we saw, the last chapter of Edith Stein’s doctoral thesis aims to establish the empathic act as an act of the mental person. This raises the question, whether the act of empathy is only applicable at the experience of the outer world and the interconnections of foreign individuals or whether it can be also understood as a value constituting act that can re-actualize non-primordial experiences. It is precisely this latter sense in which Stein discusses Dilthey’s theory of the cultural sciences. Stein’s excerpts refer only to Dilthey’s *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, *Ideas about the Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*, the *Contributions to the Study of Individuality*, and *The Imagination of the Poet*,² and she leaves the theoretical improvement of Dilthey untouched. Starting from Dilthey’s *Ideas*, Stein formulates her own question as to whether it is possible to arrive at the act of empathy from the cultural sciences. “Empathy was necessary for the constitution of these objects, and so to a certain extent our own individual was assumed. But mental comprehension, which we shall characterize in still more detail, must be distinguished from this empathy. But from Dilthey’s mistaken exposition, we learn that there must be an objective basis for the cultural sciences beside the clarification of method, an ontology of the mind corresponding to the ontology of nature.”³ When Dilthey, claims Stein, finds in the *Idea* the connection between the individual’s life and the cultural sciences by a psychological method, then it is, according to Stein, a science of nature: “‘descriptive’ is not the proper word, for descriptive psychology is also the science of the soul as nature.”⁴ Stein advocates a more phenomenological approach to the psychological causality as she claims that mental acts are in “mental” relationship to each other, the ‘I’ “passes over from one act to another” in the form of motivation.⁵ According to the second part of the *Philosophy of Psychology and*

1 Ibid., 84.

2 Cp. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften. Versuch einer Grundlegung für das Studium der Gesellschaft und der Geschichte*. ed. Bernhard Groethyßen, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1914); Wilhelm Dilthey, *Die geistige Welt. Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. Erste Hälfte: Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften*. ed. Georg Misch (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1924); Wilhelm Dilthey, *Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften*. ed. Bernhard Groethyßen (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1927).

3 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 87.

4 Ibid., 86.

5 Ibid., 87.

the Humanities, titled the “Individual and Community”, every psychical act is constituted phenomenologically as a mental act and these mental acts of psychical experiences ground the stream of experiences in the consciousness. “With the individual ego we didn’t distinguish between a current of consciousness and a current of experience, because here the originally productive flow of experiencing and the series of persistent experiences that is constituted within it as a unity came into congruence, and because the term consciousness in the usual manner of speaking extended from the moment of the experience that we so designate to the overall experience. But with communal experience, we’ve got to distinguish strictly: here there’s no current of consciousness as an originally constitutive flow.”¹ This “meaning context” of consciousness builds the basic element of the mental world, which is achieved by theoretical acts that incorporate the structure of all feelings. “It is possible to conceive of a subject, only living in theoretical acts, having an object world facing it without ever becoming aware of itself and its consciousness, without being there for itself. But this is no longer possible as soon as this subject not only perceives, thinks, etc., but also feels.”² When I am turning towards an object, then it is pre-given to me in theoretical acts, but the value realm belonging to this act is acquired only in the realm of our personality. Following Stein, MacIntyre raises the question as to what the difference is between the community sensation and the feeling of the individual, if the community sensation is grounded on the personal expressions. We can talk about both the joy and grief of the individual, but also about the common understanding of feelings. “The intentionality of the mental acts and states of individuals can be directed towards common objects, objects of shared feeling, objects of common understanding, objects of shared values. So individuals may share grief or joy, may understand some task in which they are engaged with others by exchanging views of that task from different standpoints, may use a common idiom to describe and analyze what they are doing together, and may find it worthwhile for the same reasons. But individuals can share in these ways without considering a community. What then is specific to communal sharing?”³

Stein finds a mutual transition between the perception of the cultural objection, the communal appreciation of cultural phenomena and their individual interpretation. The last chapter of her doctoral thesis will be elaborated in her “Individual and Community” by her interpretation of the individual life in the community. According to the communal life, mental life is already presupposed by attitudes that hold for an objective fact. The apprehension of an objective phenomenon is not possible without an “act-realization”, i. e. the mental connectivity of the individuals. According to Zahavi, intersubjectivity is already present as consubjectivity even prior to my concrete empathic encounter with another subject.⁴ This remark of Zahavi attests that the intersubjective life-perception occurs in a face-to-face dimension between two individuals which is grounded on the historicity of understanding, the basis of which is the act of empathy that is a fundamental act for the community life. “It is natural to conclude that a reflection on the intersubjective

1 Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 140.

2 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 89.

3 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 117.

4 Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, 167.

nature of tool-use, perception, and the historicity of understanding reveals that intersubjectivity cannot be reduced to a thematic and concrete face-to-face encounter between two individuals. In other words, there are modalities of intersubjectivity that cannot be accounted for by means of a theory of empathy. However, as we have also seen, some have sharpened this criticism and gone on to claim that empathy is, in fact, derived form of intersubjectivity.”¹

Since the empathy is a derived form of intersubjectivity, Stein finds a difficulty in Dilthey’s approach to the cultural sciences taken as an approach to the entirety of cultural sciences. The basic element of cultural sciences, according to Dilthey, is the soul that absorbs the psychical effects of the outer world. If analytical psychology is the foundation for the natural sciences, then there is a connection between descriptive psychology and cultural sciences. The difference between the two psychological sciences is merely methodological. According to Dilthey, there is a circular reference between the psychical-emotional experiences and their mental forms in the mind. Both the descriptive and the analytical psychology are grounded on psycho-physical experiences, but, if the analytical psychology is looking for a relation between the physical life and its real assumptions, then the descriptive psychology is engaged in the typical elements of the soul’s life.² The first part of the *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* presents the phenomenological approaches of the individual to the ontology of the mental and physical world. According to Stein’s thesis in her dissertation, there is a smooth transition from the feeling of physical bodies to their constitution in various levels on the mind. “There are essential relationships among the value feeling and the feeling of the value of its reality and its “I” depth.”³ It is clear that the constitution of values depends on the constitution of the individual and the psycho-physical empirical person, which is a more or less complete realization of the mental one, but this does not solve the problem of difference between cultural sciences and value ethics. Edith Stein’s question to Dilthey is how we can distinguish between rational lawfulness of the mind and the constitution of values. Since the experience of values is realized in the empathic acts and the value of personality is given by the acquisition of its type, there is also a value constitution of the communal life by the individual. “The communal intention, toward which the intentions of the single members furnish contributions, rests upon the communal content, which is constituted as a communal experience, corresponding to the value as a communal object on the basis of the same individual data.”⁴ The connection between value ethics in the communal life and the constitution of the cultural life will be investigated in the *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*. The two components of the investigation, the sentient causality, on the one hand, and its mental constitution, on the other hand, constitute the relationship between individual and communal life. MacIntyre points out that Stein, in order to grasp the psychical acts of

1 Ibid., 167–168.

2 Cf. Wilhem Dilthey, *Die geistige Welt. Einleitung in die Philosophie des Lebens. Erste Hälfte: Abhandlungen zur Grundlegung der Geisteswissenschaften*. Gesammelte Schriften V. ed. Georg Misch, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1924), 186, 194.

3 Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 93.

4 Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 165.

the individual, adopts from Dilthey the vocabulary of ‘life-feelings’ and ‘life-power’. Life-power is at this point the name of an otherwise unknown cause, whose variation produces variations in its effect. “Life-power is not completely under the subject’s control. And so a consideration of life-power raises the question: how far is the life of the psyche causally conditioned.”¹

The first part of the work, the “Sentient Causality”, shows us how the core of the person is formed by the psychical affects and how the physical and the mental experiences control this core. The mental world, which is the unity of living persons’ value configurations, is an independent entity, which, however, consists of the actual living personalities. “Before anything else, if you want to understand in what sense you can talk about the universe of sentient reality into which the lone psyche fits as a member, you’ve got to clarify a determinate form of living together of individual persons.”² The community life and the consciousness of the community are not identical with the life of the subject and at least the subject has a private life without a reflection on the community. To speak of communal consciousness is to speak of the consciousness of those individuals who are members of some community and who constitute it by what they share.³ According to Edith Stein, I can have individual experiences and communal experiences as well, which constitute the universal mental life and the value system of the community. The individuals constitutively connect to the community in the common experience, but this experience is different for each: “Communal experiences, as we saw, are constituted by solitary experiences both as to their content and as to their being experienced.”⁴ Stein clearly distinguishes the experiences of the individuals from the experiences of the communal life, and she claims that we can distinguish between the act of the intersubjective world constitution and the reflexion on the experience of the communal-cultural life. Zahavi interprets the act of the community as a mental act, which makes impossible to realize the object of the act. “In sort, the basic idea is that we should avoid construing the mind as something visible to only one person and invisible to everyone else. The mind is not something exclusively inner, something cut off from the body and the surrounding world, as if psychological phenomena would remain precisely the same even without bodily and linguistic expression.”⁵ The constitution of the intersubjective life is realized in the acts of the empathy, in which every individual is developed during the empathic act. On the other hand, there is the community as a super-individual which also has a personal life different from my individuality and the individuality of others. My participation in the life of the community is a very special kind of participation, which is coextensive with the life of the community. “Exchanges between individuals are effected for the most part in ‘social acts’ in which the one act is pointed at the Other, turned toward it. One is speaking and the Other is understanding him. And it belongs to the sense of these acts that the material content pronounced, and accordingly heard, is not only meant but also imparted and received.”⁶ Not only the primer social phenomena – like the everyday

1 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 112.

2 Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 129.

3 MacIntyre, *Edith Stein. A Philosophical Prologue*, 117.

4 Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 141.

5 Zahavi, *Subjectivity and Selfhood. Investigating the First-Person Perspective*, 152.

6 Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 210.

interactions – constitute an ontology of the community life, but all scientific activities are performed in this form. “That which I contribute to it ‘on my own’, achievements of original thinking, arise on the basis of the already accumulated repertoire of thought that take over; and for its part, it becomes the basis upon which others build further. And with this mental doing of mine, I find myself inserted into a great network of motivation, the knowledge-process of humanity.”¹ This remark of Edith Stein indicates a mutual transition from the intended empathic act of the individual to its act of the community, which is always intended at the mental phenomenon of the community. “It’s a peculiarity of ‘social’ acts (in the broadest sense) that they cultivate new objectivities: relations between persons like friendship, enmity, companionship, authority, and the like. And these exhibit both an individual and a typical side, just like the sources from which they spring. These types, moreover, have an influence upon the behavior of the individuals that enter into them, behavior that’s motivated by the types in a typical way. Indeed, the most general mode of social relationships of all – the mere being together of persons – determines a modification of the total course of experience, as opposed to the solitary life of the soul.”²

Regardless of the involvement of the two types of acts in both the experience of the Other and the experience of the community life, Stein made a sharp difference between the individual experiences and that of the communities. While communal experiences are not the sum of single experiences and single effects, but rather arise from those as something new and unique beyond them,³ we can talk about the different acts in the two kinds of experiences. Against Dilthey, who connects both the individual life and the cultural life to the psychical acts and who explains the cultural development by the spiritual effects on the individuals, that is, he does not make a real difference between the experience of community and the experience of individual life, Stein argues for social acts of communal life: “These typical manners of behavior aren’t ‘masks’ that the individual takes up and under which the individual conceals his ‘true face’ (although that can be the case too). Rather, the individual renders himself in the ‘social perspective’ which is required by the ‘social slant’ of the moment, and which at each moment corresponds to one or another of his essential traits. For in every single case, the typical behavior and the type itself receive their individual imprint from the persons who enter into them.”⁴ According to Stein, there is a smooth transition from community life to individual life, but they are on the reflexive level. The reflexion on the individual life is realized in empathic acts, and the community life is apprehended in the social acts of friendship, hostility, companionship, etc. Edith Stein considers the act of the empathy as a basic act of the community which grounds the social elements of the community. The connection between empathy and social act, according to Stein, is secured by the value constitution, which is realized by the individual act of empathy whose meaning is achieved by the reflection on the community life, and this way it turns beyond the individuals.

1 Ibid., 170.

2 Ibid., 292.

3 Ibid., 190.

4 Ibid., 293.

**The Nihilist as a Not-Man.
An Analysis of Psychological Inhumanity***

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Keywords: E. M. Cioran, F. Nietzsche, Osamu Dazai, antihumanism, overman, nihilism, literature, existentialism, philosophy

Abstract. A new philosophical and anthropological-psychological concept is needed for the alienated and radically different human being according to the nihilist Romanian-French philosopher E.M. Cioran. This concept of the *not-man* describes a post-anthropological subject, which is “inhuman” from a psychological point of view, emphasizing estrangement and otherness in the definition of humanity. I have compared Cioran’s provocative and unusual term with Nietzsche’s analysis of the overman – the difference between the two concepts proceeding from two conflicting nihilist perspectives – and I also have identified the not-man in the novel of the Japanese writer Osamu Dazai, *No Longer Human*.

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“I was man and I no longer am now...”
(E.M. Cioran, *The Twilight of Thoughts*)

1. Cioran’s Not-Man

In his first Romanian book, *On the Heights of Despair* (1934), Emil Cioran constructs, in his ambiguous and lyrical style, a definition of a new concept, the *not-man*: “There are among men some who are not far above plants or animals, and therefore aspire to humanity. But those who know what it means to be Man long to be anything but ... If the difference between Man and animal lies in the fact that the animal can only be an animal whereas man can also be *not-man* – that is, something other than himself – then I am *not-man*.”¹

Cioran seems to be saying that there are undeveloped human beings, who are not at the level of mankind. The pride of being human is a symptom of the lesser men, who worship their deficit. Exaggerating, Cioran notes that these creatures are

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¹ E. M. Cioran, *On the Heights of Despair*, trans. Ilinca Zarifopol-Johnston (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 68–69.