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## PHENOMENOLOGY WITHOUT EGOLOGY: EDITH STEIN AS AN ORIGINAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL THINKER

*TIMOTHY BURNS*

PhD in Philosophy, Clinical Faculty Member.  
University of St. Thomas (Minnesota), Dougherty Family College.  
55105 St. Paul, Minnesota, USA.  
E-mail: burn6925@stthomas.edu

Edith Stein is considered a leading figure in the early phenomenological movement and the disciple who performed in the best way the phenomenological method proposed by Husserl, and yet her relationship to phenomenology remains unclear in the literature. This article seeks to add clarity to her relationship to phenomenology while considering three inescapably related questions. (1) What did Stein conceive phenomenology to be? (2) How should we understand Husserl's influence on Stein? (3) Was Stein an original phenomenological thinker? I argue that Stein conceives of phenomenology as an epistemological critique that aims to clarify the essential foundations of knowledge. It involves intentional analysis that proceeds by way of essential-seeing (*Wesensschau*), which can be brought about through the method of free imaginative variation, and its intentional analysis involves close attention to the relationship between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. I argue that the primary influence Husserl exerts on Stein is in the development of phenomenology as conceived in his *Logical Investigations*. Finally, I offer an understanding of how Stein conceived of her differences with Husserl on the issue of idealism in order to argue that Stein's phenomenological writings in *On the Problem of Empathy* and "Sentient Causality" offer us a novel phenomenological account of the human being that begins with the ego but escapes being a mere *egology*. Edith Stein's phenomenology of the human person begins with the ego and its experiences, and yet, she identifies within those experiences a certain kind of extra-egoic content, viz. experiences of my sentient states.

*Keywords:* Edith Stein, Edmund Husserl, Phenomenology, Realist Phenomenology, Göttingen Circle, Early Phenomenology, Sentience, Lifepower.

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# ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЯ БЕЗ ЭГОЛОГИИ: ЭДИТ ШТАЙН КАК ОРИГИНАЛЬНЫЙ ФЕНОМЕНОЛОГИЧЕСКИЙ МЫСЛИТЕЛЬ

ТИМОТИ БЕРНС

Доктор философии, член клинического факультета.  
Университет Св. Томаса (Миннесота), семейный колледж Догерти.  
55105 Сент-Пол, Миннесота, США.  
E-mail: burn6925@stthomas.edu

Эдит Штайн считается ведущей фигурой в раннем феноменологическом движении, и все же ее отношение к феноменологии остается неясным в литературе. Цель этой статьи заключается в том, чтобы внести ясность в отношении Эдит Штайн к феноменологии. Для этого необходимо рассмотреть три тесно связанных друг с другом вопроса. (1) Как Эдит Штайн понимала феноменологию? (2) Как мы должны понимать влияние Гуссерля на Эдит Штайн? (3) Была ли Эдит Штайн оригинальным феноменологическим мыслителем? Я утверждаю, что Штайн рассматривает феноменологию как эпистемологическую критику, направленную на прояснение сущностных основ познания. Такая критика включает в себя интенциональный анализ, который осуществляется посредством созерцания сущностей (*Wesensschau*). Указанное созерцание сущностей может быть достигнуто с помощью метода свободных вариаций воображения и его интенциональный анализ предполагает пристальное внимание к взаимосвязи между интенцией смысла и осуществлением смысла. Я утверждаю, что основное влияние, которое Гуссерль оказывает на Штайн, заключается в развитии феноменологии в том виде, в котором она была задумана в его *Логических исследованиях*. Наконец, я предлагаю интерпретацию того, как Штайн воспринимала свои разногласия с Гуссерлем по вопросам, связанным с понятием идеализма. Эта интерпретация дает основания для доказательства того факта, что феноменологические работы Штайн, посвященные проблеме эмпатии и “Разумной причинности”, предлагают нам новое феноменологическое описание человеческого существа, которое начинается с эго, но стремится избежать участи остаться простой эгологией.

*Ключевые слова:* Эдит Штайн, Эдмунд Гуссерль, феноменология, реалистическая феноменология, Геттингенский круг, ранняя феноменология, чувствительность, жизненная сила.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In a footnote to her unfinished autobiography, Stein is the first to refer to members of the Göttingen phenomenological circle as “realists” (Stein, 1986, 250). The moniker, “realist phenomenology,” would later come to identify one half of the great phenomenological divorce. Though she is considered a leading figure in this split, at least one scholar argues that Stein is the disciple who performed in the best way the phenomenological method proposed by Husserl (Ales Bello, 2002). This despite the fact that she published her dissertation on empathy in 1917, some four years after Husserl’s idealist “heresy.” This suggests a series of questions for scholars investigating Stein’s phenomenological

works. What did Stein conceive phenomenology to be? And, how are we to understand Edmund Husserl's influence on Stein? Was Stein an original phenomenological thinker?

The third is likely the most important question. If there is nothing original in Stein's thought, then I would argue that there is no reason to waste ink and paper publishing about it. The third question, though, cannot be answered without an adequate sense of how to reply to the first two. If we have an amorphous idea of what Stein understood phenomenology to be and cannot isolate the sense in which Husserl influenced her, then we are likely to conclude that she has nothing original to add to phenomenology. On the other hand, if we have even provisional answers to the first two questions, then an affirmative answer regarding Stein's originality is at least possible. The goal of this essay is to present Edith Stein as an original phenomenological thinker. The structure of her dissertation sketches the beginning of a novel approach to phenomenology that begins with the ego but moves beyond it to examine the human being in regards to its conscious and physical nature in an absolutely anti-idealist way. Her later phenomenological publications fill in this picture. I will consider how her conceptions of sentience and lifepower do so in "Sentient Causality."

Husserl's influence on Stein is a difficult matter. It is both difficult to understate and easy to overstate. I propose that we best understand Husserl's influence on Stein if we understand what drew her to phenomenology in the first place. This necessitates our examining her work for its roots in *Logical Investigations*, for this is the work that drew her to Husserl. Stein chose to move to Göttingen and study with Husserl based purely on the strength of *Logical Investigations*. She had no contact with Husserl, nor with any of the members of the Göttingen circle, prior to her arrival. She knew someone who could introduce her to Adolf Reinach and hoped that Reinach would recommend her to Husserl (Stein, 1986, 239–317). Thus, I begin by locating Stein's conception of phenomenology within *Logical Investigations*. She understands phenomenology as a critique of knowledge that seeks to clarify and illuminate essential structures of the intuitions that ground objective knowledge. Because Stein's conception of phenomenology is distinctively Husserlian in this sense, I must consider the nature and extent of Husserl's influence before I can present Stein as an original phenomenological thinker.

## 2. THE MOBIUS STRIP: WHAT IS PHENOMENOLOGY, AND WHAT IS HUSSERL'S INFLUENCE?

Edith Stein was attracted to phenomenology's potential *qua* critique of knowledge. Stein herself tells us that *this* is what drew her to Husserl's phenomenology. She writes:

All my study of psychology had persuaded me that this science was still in its infancy; it still lacked clear basic concepts; furthermore, there was no one who could establish such

an essential foundation. On the other hand, what I had learned about phenomenology, so far, fascinated me tremendously because it consisted precisely of such a labor of clarification and because, here, one forged one's own mental tools for the task at hand. (Stein, 1986, 222)

The critique of knowledge was, for Husserl, “the science that specifies the a priori conditions for the possibility of both the objects of knowledge and the acts of knowing” (Moran, 2005, 26). In other words, *Logical Investigations* is first and foremost a contribution to epistemology. It was an effort to clarify the foundation of scientific knowledge by establishing on what grounds knowledge may be called objective (Moran, 2005, 9). Phenomenology enticed Stein *precisely because* it could clarify the concepts of, and provide a rigorous foundation for, the new science of psychology.

The epistemological impulse toward grounding scientific knowledge correlates with Stein's realist leanings and aversion to neo-Kantianism. The appeal of *Logical Investigations* lie in its “radical departure from critical idealism, which had a Kantian and neo-Kantian stamp. It was considered a ‘new scholasticism’ because it turned attention away from the ‘subject’ and toward ‘things’ themselves” (Stein, 1986, 250). In particular, Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* had attempted to provide an ultimate ground for metaphysical knowledge while “bifurcating” reality, leaving the subject only able to know objects *as they appear* (phenomena) and never *as they are in themselves* (noumena). Furthermore, Kantian epistemology places tremendous importance on the activity and structure of the knowing subject. Time and space are the forms of inner and outer intuition for Kant, and many concepts crucial to science and philosophy—such as cause and effect, reality, existence and nonexistence—appear as structural categories of the understanding, which it brings to experience rather than receives from it. Husserl's phenomenology appealed to Stein because it rejected these views. She writes, that in phenomenology, “Perception again appeared as reception, deriving its laws from objects not, as criticism has it, from determination which imposes its laws on the objects” (Stein, 1986, 250). All of this is to say that before she arrived in Göttingen Stein interpreted phenomenology as a critique of knowledge and a strong rejection of Kantian idealism.

Stein believed phenomenology could ground scientific knowledge in *things themselves*, i.e., in *reality*. The radicality of phenomenology consisted in its call to “return to the things themselves” (Husserl, 2001, 168). Read in a broader context, this return consists of a grounding of the laws of logic in experience. Husserl writes, “We desire to render self-evident in fully fledged intuitions that what is here given in actually performed abstractions is what the word-meanings in our expressions of the [logical] law really and truly stand for” (Husserl, 2001, 168). The novelty of *Logical*

*Investigations* consists in grounding logic in real, concrete intuitions in which the laws of logic themselves are actually given. This is a rejection of the inaccessibility of things in themselves. No more must the world be torn in two. We have access the world and the laws that govern it as they really are.

As, I stated above, it would be difficult to underestimate the influence Husserl had on Stein. At the same time, though, it is easy to overstate. A robust understanding of the issue requires an attempt to answer our other two questions. What did Stein understand phenomenology to be, and is Stein an original phenomenological thinker? If we claim that in her dissertation Stein is involved in a completely different project from what Husserl envisioned phenomenology to be, we would be lying. It is also lie, however, to characterize her work, in her dissertation and beyond, as unoriginal or as an amplification of what Husserl had already said.

Stein's understanding of phenomenology is not easy to isolate. Aside from a few remarks at the beginning of *On the Problem of Empathy*, she has little to say regarding her own take on phenomenology and how it may or may not differ from Husserl's. In her phenomenological treatises, she sets to work doing phenomenology under the assumption that her readers are familiar with its methods and purpose. To understand phenomenology as Stein conceived it we must return to the *Logical Investigations*.

There is, of course, a historical barrier to all of this. Husserl's explanation and development of phenomenology is ever evolving and difficult to pin down. In Breslau, Stein could only have been in possession of the first edition of *Logical Investigations*. The second edition was published in 1913, the same year that Husserl published *Ideas I* and that Stein began her studies with him. Husserl's description of phenomenology undergoes significant change between the first and second editions of *Logical Investigations*. For example, the introduction to Stein's original copy would have contained the following sentences: "Phenomenology is descriptive psychology. Epistemological clarification is therefore in essence psychology" (Husserl, 2001, 176). Husserl repents of this claim in the second edition. He deletes it and instead asserts that "if psychology is given its old meaning, phenomenology is not descriptive psychology: its peculiar 'pure' description, its contemplation of pure essences on a basis of exemplary individual intuitions of experiences (often freely *imagined* ones) [...] is no empirical, scientific description" (Husserl, 2001, 175)<sup>1</sup>. Stein was in Göttingen studying phenom-

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<sup>1</sup> Though Husserl deleted his identification of phenomenology with descriptive psychology from the second edition of *Logical Investigations*, the editors of the 2001 reissue understood the historical importance of this note as it relates to the development of Husserl's thought. Thus, they include the note from the first edition along with an explanatory addendum indicating that Husserl removed it from the second printing.

enology as Husserl finalized this second edition. Whether it was decisive for her that phenomenology is descriptive psychology is therefore relevant to the sense in which her dissertation is phenomenological.

Descriptive psychology is how Husserl would have referred to the psychology emerging around the turn of the twentieth century, that which is associated with philosophical *cum* psychological pioneers such as Wilhelm Wundt, Theodor Lipps, Carl Stumpf, and William James. A key factor in Husserl's understanding of descriptive psychology was the desire to establish psychology as an empirical science. In efforts to do so, the early pioneers of psychology adapted methods from the natural sciences to the study of consciousness. This is anathema to the direction in which Husserl would develop phenomenology. Consciousness is not an object in the world but rather a condition of the possibility of the appearance of a world at all. Thus, it cannot be studied by methods developed to study objects in the world. Doing so misses the point.

Rather than descriptive psychology, Husserl is already engaging in transcendental philosophy in *Logical Investigations*—insofar as he is inquiring into the conditions of the possibility of objective knowledge. To do so, he realizes, phenomenology cannot proceed from empirical observations of mundane pieces of knowledge. Rather, it must

deal with general questions regarding the possibility and manner of a knowledge or rational surmise about 'real' objective things, things in principle transcending the experiences which know them, and regarding the norms which the true sense of such a knowledge requires: *it will not enter upon the empirically oriented question as to whether we as men really can arrive at such knowledge from the data we actually have, nor will it attempt to realize such knowledge.* (Husserl, 2001, 178, my emphasis)

Phenomenology is after the "Idea of knowledge," which Husserl so frequently invokes in *Logical Investigations* (Husserl, 2001, 170 ff.). He draws a sharp distinction, in other words, between phenomenological analysis of pure experiences on one hand and the study of experiences from a scientific standpoint on the other. Phenomenology pursues the conditions of the possibility of experience; whereas psychology qua natural science investigates a posteriori experience from a scientific standpoint. Another way to express the difference is to say that phenomenology and psychology study different domains of reality.

I will now review some—rather well known—aspects of Husserl's phenomenology with regard to their influence on Edith Stein and her way to conceive of phenomenology. The difference between the domains of psychology and phenomenology qua theory of knowledge are decisive for Husserl and Stein as well. Science takes the world as existing. This is what Husserl will come to call the general thesis of the natural at-

titude in later writings (Husserl, 1982, 51–62). Phenomenology cannot afford such a presupposition (Husserl, 2001, 177–179). A goal of the phenomenological method(s) is to put this thesis out of play. Science seeks to explain the world. Phenomenology seeks to describe what necessarily must be in order for those explanations to hold. The latter, Husserl asserts tirelessly, “precedes all empirical theory [...] precedes all empirical knowledge of the real” indeed precedes all science and psychology (Husserl, 2001, 178). Phenomenology understood as epistemological critique attempts to put into words “the *ideal* sense of the *specific* connections in which the objectivity of knowledge may be documented” (Husserl, 2001, 178). I repeat. Husserl was doing transcendental philosophy in *Logical Investigations*. We cannot help but see here the classic differentiation between knowledge and the conditions for the possibility of knowledge that marks transcendental inquiry. In distancing his philosophy from descriptive psychology, Husserl is creating space between his methods and natural, scientific methods while also planting his flag squarely in the camp of transcendental philosophy. Although phenomenology is a rigorous science, it is not *natural science*.

Grant that this is so. To pose the question bluntly, so what? What is Husserl on about? In his eyes, the science of psychology, still in its infancy, was ignoring a critical task and racing ahead recklessly. It required an epistemological foundation. Establishing this foundation would delimit the kinds of knowledge that psychology could hope to discover and the manner in which it could rightly proceed. Herein lies the danger of running headlong into scientific inquiry without an epistemological foundation. You build a house of cards. It looks great for now, but eventually the wind will blow and it will all come tumbling down. Scientific knowledge needs a philosophical foundation.

Stein was uninterested in the definition of phenomenology as descriptive psychology. Already in her reading of the first volume of *Logical Investigations*, she was seeking a foundation for psychological knowledge. Phenomenology offers this foundation, and we saw in the previous section that it was the prospect of providing this foundation for psychology that enticed Stein. She was attracted to phenomenology as a critique of knowledge not as descriptive psychology. We can say more, though, about phenomenology qua method in Husserl’s breakthrough publication, and doing so will shed more light on how Stein conceives of phenomenology.

At the time of publishing *Logical Investigations*, Husserl had not yet spent years developing his system of phenomenology. Dermot Moran observes that the word, “phenomenology,” does not even appear in the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, and the bulk of the term’s explication is found in the introduction to the second volume (Moran, 2005, 10). Nonetheless, there is evidence in the investigations of what phenomenology would become. Phenomenology involves investigation into essences. It also

involves intentional analysis and research into the relationship between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment. In the space that remains, I provide some sense of what I mean by these two features before I connect these characteristics of phenomenology to *On the Problem of Empathy* in order to show how Stein is operating within the framework of phenomenology as a method.

The first enduring characteristic of Husserlian phenomenology is that its descriptions aim for the essential and invariable. Consider the following passages from *Logical Investigations*:

This phenomenology must bring to pure expression, must describe in terms of their essential concepts and their governing formulae of essence, the essences which directly make themselves known in intuition, and the connections which have their roots purely in such essences. (Husserl, 2001, 166)

and

Proceeding in purely intuitive fashion, it analyses and describes in their *essential generality*—in the specific guise of a phenomenology of thought and knowledge—the experiences of presentation, judgement and knowledge. (Husserl, 2001, 166, my emphasis)

and

We must deal with them in new acts of intuition and thinking, we must analyse and describe them in their essence. (Husserl, 2001, 170)

and

[Phenomenology's] peculiar pure description, its contemplation of pure essences on a basis of exemplary individual intuitions (often *freely* imagined ones), and its descriptive fixation of the contemplated essences into pure concepts, is no empirical, scientific description. (Husserl, 2001, 175)

The task is to bring essential structures to the forefront and provide a presuppositionless description of them. Husserl's many attempts to introduce phenomenology and to define its method in later years follow from this difficulty.

For Husserl, describing essential structures means bringing essences to a kind of intuition. Husserl will dub this *Wesensschau* or 'essential seeing.' In the first volume of *Logical Investigations*, at section Sixty-Seven, he speaks of fixing the concepts of pure logic with "insight into the essence of the concepts involved," which requires "intuitive representation of the essence in adequate ideation" (Husserl, 2001, 154). Just below, he declares the necessity of distinguishing and clarifying concepts to "ideational intuition" (Husserl, 2001, 154). One way to bring about essential seeing is the method of eidetic variation, also called imaginative free variation. This method involves holding



an object in consciousness while varying one property of it. If I can imagine away, or vary in phantasy, a property or structure of my intentional object then this is an accidental trait. If, on the other hand, I find I cannot hold an intentional grasp on the object while varying a property or structure, then I have hit upon something essential.

Finally, for now, phenomenology involves intentional analysis. Moran declares phenomenology “essentially is intentional description, i.e., it aims to describe every kind of object or ‘objectual’ situation or state of affairs, in terms of its correlation with an apprehending subjectivity” (Moran, 2018, 75). Phenomenology does not seek to clarify essences of objects that exist independently of my knowing them. It concerns itself with the structures of consciousness’ intentional awareness of meanings, relations, objects, the world, etc. Neither is phenomenology a fancy word for introspection. It is not examining and describing my own internal mental processes. Far from being a turn inward, phenomenology is a turn *toward* the way in which consciousness *is turned toward* the world. Beginning from Brentano’s thesis that consciousness is always “consciousness of,” phenomenology thematizes and describes intentional relationships and structures always present in a subject’s lived experiences of the world. It is correlational. Things get decidedly more complex over the years, but the initial structure of intentional analysis in phenomenology takes the tripartite form of subject-act-object.

This structure debuts in *Logical Investigations* and Stein makes use of it throughout her dissertation. One example will have to suffice here. Stein’s descriptions of the essential structure of empathy begin by contrasting it with outer perception, memory, expectation, and fantasy (Stein, 1989, 6–11). These analyses display both how Stein utilizes imaginative free variation to arrive at *Wesensschau* and how she puts the subject-act-object structure to work in intentional analysis. She emphasizes that the “subject of the empathized experiences, however, is not the subject empathizing, but another. And this is what is fundamentally new in contrast with the memory, expectation, or fantasy of our own experiences” (Stein, 1989, 10). As regards the acts of empathy, perception, memory, expectation, and fantasy she writes, “[In empathy], too, we are dealing with an act which is primordial as present experiences though non-primordial in content” (Stein, 1989, 10). And contrasting the objects of these acts she writes, “while I am living in the other’s joy, I do not feel primordial joy. It does not issue live from my ‘I.’ Neither does it have the character of once having lived like remembered joy. But still much less is it merely fantasized without actual life” (Stein, 1989, 11). We see here Stein’s use of the subject-act-object trichotomy to analyze the intentional structure of empathy and her contrasting it with other intentional structures in order to arrive at *Wesensschau*.

Another way in which phenomenology, qua intentional analysis, proceeds in *Logical Investigations* is to emphasize the “structure of the transition between mean-

ing-intentions and the experience or recognition of those meanings as intuitively fulfilled” (Moran, 2005, 27). Since Stein too will involve herself in careful analysis of the structure of intention and fulfillment in empathy, it behooves us to examine this here.

We must distinguish between a) intentional acts in which consciousness bestows or imparts meaning emptily, b) acts in which an initially emptily intended meaning is fulfilled, and c) further acts in which that fulfillment is recognized. Our meaning-intentions, often linguistic expressions but also lived experiences, “become cognitions (*Erkenntnisse*) only when they are ‘confirmed’ or ‘illuminated’ by fulfilling intuitions. To know something is to be able to verify it, by tracing it back to some evident experiences that ground it fully [...] and evidence involves the intuitive fulfillment of an empty intuition” (Moran, 2005, 10). Stein’s dissertation exemplifies this approach with careful descriptions of the meaning-fulfillment of which our empathic meaning-intentions admit and provides explicit distinctions between these and similar, but not identical, meaning-intention / meaning-fulfillment structures.

Consider the first example of empathy Stein offers. “A friend tells me he has lost his brother and I become aware of his pain. What kind of awareness is this? [...] I would like to know, not how I arrived at this awareness, but what it itself is” (Stein, 1989, 6). Stein contrasts the intention-fulfillment structure of “outer perception” with empathy (Stein, 1989, 6). Outer perception is the perception in bodily givenness of “concrete being,” something with the character of being *right here, right now*. My friend’s pain, though, is not given in such a way. “The pain is not a thing and is not given to me as a thing, even when I am aware of it ‘in’ the pained countenance” (Stein, 1989, 6). The important difference lies in how they differ in their meaning-intention / meaning-fulfillment structure. I can bring the averted side of a physical object to perceptual givenness by walking around it. The non-primordially given, emptily intended backside of an object can be brought to givenness through a series of further interconnected experiences. In outer perception, each new fulfilled intention confirms what was only emptily intended before. This is not the same with the perceived pain. “[I]n principle, I can never get an orientation where the pain itself is primordially given” (Stein, 1989, 7). There is no perspective on my friend’s pain where its givenness becomes primordial. This is only the first instance of Stein exploring the relationship between meaning-intention and meaning-fulfillment in her dissertation. She goes on in this chapter to extend her contrasting analysis to include the examples of memory, expectation, and fantasy and the theme is prominent throughout the rest of the work<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>2</sup> For instance, she highlights these structures again when investigating the nature of the living body (*Leib*) (Stein, 1989, 41–48).

In this section, I have endeavored to answer two interrelated questions. What did Stein conceive phenomenology to be? And, how should we understand Husserl's influence on Stein? They are like "opposite" sides of a Mobius strip. If you spend much time answering one, you are apt to find yourself discussing the other. I conclude that Stein conceived of phenomenology very much as Husserl did when he penned *Logical Investigations* and that the development of this conception of phenomenology was Husserl's most lasting, academic influence on Stein.

Before I continue, a brief aside is in order regarding Stein's reading of *Ideas I*. We will see below that she professed dissatisfaction with *Ideas I* and thought much of it would need to be rewritten. Stein, however, did not completely reject *Ideas I*. Indeed, the introduction to her work "Sentient Causality" locates the "guiding principles" of phenomenology there (Stein, 2000, 5). What I am suggesting here is that Stein read *Ideas I* in light of *Logical Investigations* and her antipathy toward idealism. She located within the *Ideas* the same structures she found in *Logical investigations*, and these became the enduring features of phenomenology as she practiced it.

### 3. IS STEIN AN ORIGINAL PHENOMENOLOGICAL THINKER?

The preceding section may seem to imply that Stein was more of a mouthpiece for Husserl's phenomenology than an original thinker. She would be first to acknowledge Husserl's impact on her, perhaps to her detriment. The foreword to *On the Problem of Empathy* is too self-deprecating and probably over deferential to his influence (Stein, 1989, 1–2). Perhaps it is because of this that she was treated for years as an unoriginal and minor figure in the phenomenological movement (though we should not underestimate the role of sexism as well). Carla Bettinelli (as cited in Hughes, 1985, 496) alleges "that Stein's doctoral thesis did not add much of originality to Husserl's thought." Herbert Spiegelberg's comprehensive review of the phenomenological movement dedicates a mere three paragraphs to its entry on Stein (Spiegelberg, 1994, 238–239). Though he assesses her work in a positive light, he emphasizes that her fame is very much due to the story of her conversion, her decision to enter religious life, and the tragedy of her murder in Auschwitz. He devotes as much ink to her turn to Thomism as he does to evaluating her phenomenological contributions. The superficial nature of Spiegelberg's entry on Stein reveals how important he considered her to be.

There have always been philosophers willing to defend Stein's originality though. In the same year as her death, James Collins published "Edith Stein and the Advance of Phenomenology" in which he praises the insight of her phenomenological treatises and examines the way her roots as a phenomenologist affect her transition to

Thomistic metaphysics (Collins, 1942, 685–708). Roman Ingarden, a long-time and cherished friend, writes in defense of Stein’s originality in “Edith Stein on Her Activity as an Assistant of Edmund Husserl” (Ingarden, 1962, 155–175).

My argument will be that Stein’s work is an original development of Husserl’s phenomenology as she understood it from her interpretation of *Logical Investigations*. Stein’s phenomenological analyses are original, I will argue, insofar as they begin with the ego but are not *egology*. Rather, they anchor the human being in an absolutely existing physical world. In order to establish this claim, I begin with a close look at the structure of *On the Problem of Empathy*. I will then turn to her letters to Roman Ingarden to infer what corrections she thought she was making to Husserlian phenomenology before taking a brief look at *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* to indicate how this correction played out in her own writing.

The overt organization of *On the Problem of Empathy* is clear enough. A reader may easily glean it from the table of contents. The work comprises the three surviving chapters of Stein’s dissertation. Chapter Two consists of Stein’s treatment of “The Essence of Acts of Empathy.” Chapter Three investigates “The Constitution of the Psycho-Physical Individual.” The closing chapter considers “Empathy as the Understanding of Spiritual Persons.” This structure makes sense from a bird’s eye view. Contemporary academics may recognize it as it is one of many possible structures available to the authors of dissertations. Chapter One, review the literature (it is really too bad this chapter is lost to history). Chapter Two, break new ground. Provide original analysis of your dissertation topic while fending off objections. Stein’s approach to objections is to accentuate the advantages of her analyses over rival accounts of empathy. In Chapter Two, she engages Scheler, Münsterberg, Lipps, Mill and others. Chapter Three, elucidate the way in which your contributions make headway in a philosophical *cause célèbre*—in Stein’s instance, the phenomenology of embodiment. Chapter Four, indicate areas for future research. Stein’s fourth chapter leans into the impulse that we saw above drew her to phenomenology. It begins to establish a framework for the grounding of the humanities (*Geisteswissenschaften*) in general and psychology in particular. There you have it. Four neat chapters. An original contribution to the philosophical literature. What more could a dissertation hope to do? However, a more careful look at the structure of her dissertation also reveals a more subtle, almost hermeneutical, treatment of self-understanding that requires a genuine going out of oneself into the world. She shows us that authentic self-understanding eschews *egology*.

*On the Problem of Empathy* begins with phenomenological analysis of the act of empathy. These are acts of consciousness in which one experiences the experiences of *another self*. There are varieties of empathy though. Sensual empathy, which is my em-

pathic apprehension of the other's body qua living body (*Leib*), is of importance here. My own body is first constituted for me as a *living body* (*Leib*) in sensations. Stein lists sensations "among the real constituents of consciousness" (Stein, 1989, 42). The other's living body is constituted for me via my empathic ability to co-perceive the other's "fields of sensation" that are given along with it. "The hand resting on the table does not lie there like the 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" she writes (Stein, 1989, 58). Constitution of my own body as both a physical body (*Körper*) and a living body (*Leib*) is a condition for the possibility of this "sensual empathy." Sensual empathy, though, has immediate consequences on my self-understanding by revealing that "my physical body and its members are not given as a fixed type but as an accidental realization of a type that is variable within limits" (Stein, 1989, 59). This constitutional move is subtle but of enormous importance because it situates the self amidst a community of other persons and in so doing links other-understanding to self-understanding.

By empathizing with others who have bodies of different sizes, shapes, etc. from my own, I come to constitute *my own* body as belonging to a kind. My body is the body of a person. Others' bodies and my body exist together in the world in communion (community) with one another. Our relations, that is, the communities we constitute, thus become enduring features of the world. Self-knowledge leads to knowledge of the other, which leads us to knowledge of the world.

The following four sections in Chapter Three demonstrate the self-other-world model with beautiful clarity. Through constitution of my own psycho-physical individual I came to know myself as being embodied and my body itself serves as my zero-point of orientation on the world. Sensual empathy allows me to begin the project of constituting the other as an also embodied psycho-physical individual for whom the body is also a zero-point of orientation on the world. Because Cartesian space will not admit of multiple zero-points of orientation, the world in which my living body travels is not made up of Cartesian space. It is a world that a community of individuals who know and perceive each other as persons constitutes as a realm of possible experiences. There are projects in the world other than my own. Fundamentally, there *are* others and we are sharing a space. The world in which we live is one of *mutual* projects.

Empathy allows me to understand that the other has a perspective on the world, has a "foreign world image" in Stein's terms (Stein, 1989, 62). She declares at this point that the other's world image *is* a modification of my own. This could lead one to all kinds of accusations about solipsism and charges similar to those leveled against Hus-

serl's account of empathy in the final section of *Cartesian Meditations* (Husserl, 1999, 89–148)<sup>3</sup>. This would miss the mark. Stein is here discussing the other's world image as constituted in sensual empathy, not as it is for the other. The world image I ascribe to the other is, in some sense, a modification of my own since I come to know what it is like to live and move in the world as embodied and intelligent through my own case first. I can certainly never have the other's perspective as she has it for herself. I experience this inability to bring my empty intentions of the others experiences to full givenness. This is an essential characteristic of my experience of the other qua other (Stein, 1989, 57). This is yet another example of the aforementioned analysis of the relationship between meaning-intentions and meaning-fulfillments in my experiences and not an assertion that the other's perspective *really is* just a modification of my own.

In Chapter Two, Stein analyzes a third variety of empathy, viz., reiterated empathy<sup>4</sup>. Reiterated empathy is *my* empathic experience of *another's* empathic grasp of *me*. For instance (and this example is completely fictional of course), I embark on an explanation of reiterated empathy to my wife and get very excited as I do so. As I am watching her face, I notice her eyes begin to widen a bit, she visibly holds her breath, her forehead crinkles, face turns a light shade of red, and her lips begin to purse upwards at the corners. I empathize that she is amused. I experience not only her amusement but also her amusement *at me*. In this (purely fictional) example, my wife thinks I am a huge nerd! Here I was, thinking of myself as intelligent and worldly when I was just coming off as an over enthusiastic bookworm. Such experiences are, Stein argues, the first in which I grasp myself fully as an individual. I experience another person experiencing me. I am the object of the other's empathic gaze. The term "individual" makes no sense unless I am one amongst others. In a truly solipsistic world, there would be no individual. I can hold other's experiences of me in mind as I make judgments about the kind of person I am. This makes me an object in the world, though it must be emphasized that this is not *all* I am. Others experience my empirical person and personality. My personality is thus open to intersubjective verifiability. I can be wrong about me. Of course, so can others. Self-other-world-self.

I have argued that a close examination of *On the Problem of Empathy's* organization reveals that there is something akin to a hermeneutic model of understanding as well as an account of the intersubjective constitution of the objectively existing world at work in the movement of Stein's thought. We move from knowledge of self, to oth-

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<sup>3</sup> For a development of the manner of objection to which I refer, see (Ricoeur, 1967).

<sup>4</sup> The other two are empathy *per se* and sensual empathy.

er, to world, back to self endlessly again all the time garnering fuller and more robust experiences of others, the world, and ourselves.

It is worth taking a moment to note what we have in Stein's account of empathy. I contend it is a phenomenology that begins with the ego but is not *egology*. By this I mean that Stein's phenomenological analyses are markedly a going out from the self to discover the world in which the ego finds itself. While Husserl would maintain that, "a concrete, phenomenological *egology* would include the study not only of the ego and its experiences, but of the world as experienced by an ego," we must also admit that Husserl had an incessant habit of *returning* to the ego (Drummond, 2008, 63). I hope to have shown that Stein's work escapes this by developing a hermeneutic circle moving from self, to other, to world, to self, and back out again to the other. The circle never ends.

#### 4. HOW TO BEGIN WITH THE EGO AND AVOID EGOLOGY

An understanding of Stein's phenomenology as one that begins with the ego but does not recommend *egology* must also take into account Stein's disagreement with Husserl over idealism and her phenomenological publications after 1917. This is my task in the space that remains. I will sketch an outline of Stein's divergence from Husserl on the issue of idealism. I will then offer a brief overview of the concepts of sentience and lifepower as she develops them in "Sentient Causality" to suggest that these concepts exemplify Stein's attempt to overcome idealism by developing a phenomenology that begins with the ego but is adamantly *not egology*.

I wish to articulate as lucidly as possible Stein's complaint against Husserl's idealism. In order to do this, I will not be entering into the debate over whether and to what extent Husserl's phenomenology is "realist" or "idealist." Because this paper is addressing the relationship between Stein and Husserl, I will not attempt to adjudicate whether or not Stein was correct in her assessment. Instead, my guiding question will be, "In what did Stein think Husserl's idealism consisted?" "What did Stein think she was correcting in her account of the human person?"<sup>5</sup>

Stein's letters to Roman Ingarden are a fertile resource for this. Recounting the beginnings of her work for, and frustration with, Husserl, Stein writes to Ingarden:

Then, when I explained specific difficulties I had encountered, he decided (with justification) that the entire doctrine of constitution needed to be rethought and, to that end,

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<sup>5</sup> My inspiration to approach the topic in this way is Sebastian Luft's article "Husserl's Concept of the 'Transcendental Person': Another Look at the Husserl-Heidegger Relationship" (Luft, 2005).

part 1 of *Ideen* reexamined. After two days on that project, boredom again set in. (Stein, 2014, 27)

Idealism remained on her mind. In a letter to Roman Ingarden, dated February 3, 1917, Stein writes:

I think I now have a reasonably clear understanding of ‘constitution’—but outside the context of idealism. Prerequisites for an intuitive nature to constitute itself are: an absolutely existing physical nature and a subjectivity of a precise structure. (Stein, 2014, 39–40)

A year and four months later, she writes, again to Ingarden:

I have turned over a new leaf when it comes to idealism and believe that it can be understood in a way that is metaphysically satisfying. It appears to me, however, that much of what is presently in *Ideen* has to be composed differently, though in Husserl’s sense [...] (I think, for example, of the recasting of the concept of consciousness that results from a consideration of the constituting of consciousness—something you also wish). (Stein, 2014, 110)

I will highlight four issues found in these three short passages. First, Stein’s objection to Husserl’s idealism was metaphysical, rather than, say, epistemological. That is, her objection has to do with the “absolutely existing physical nature” she judges necessary in order for an intuitive being to constitute itself. It is not about trying to prove that *we know* that the world exists independently of consciousness. Second, the self-constitution of consciousness is at the root of the issue. Third, Stein identifies *Ideas I* as a chief perpetrator of Husserl’s idealism<sup>6</sup>. At the very least, the content of *Ideas I* would require serious overhaul in order for Stein to find it a “metaphysically satisfying” variety of idealism. Fourth, it is intriguing to note that she does not abandon completely the idea that consciousness must have a specific structure in order to experience and know the world and the self. Rather, her suggestion is that consciousness requires *both* an absolutely existing physical nature and a subjectivity with a particular structure. She indicates a shift toward an idea of consciousness as radically embodied without abandoning the role of phenomenology as investigation into the correlations between *noesis* and *noema*.

Thus, I conclude that Stein’s interpretation of Husserl suggested the following two theses belonged to Husserl’s presentation of phenomenology. (1) An intuitive na-

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<sup>6</sup> Earlier in the same letter, Stein indicated that idealism was again on the agenda in Freiburg and that she’d set about rereading *Ideas I* to note what she found objectionable. Neither *Ideas II* nor *III* were in a state of needing to be rewritten since neither had yet been completed.



ture can constitute itself wholly without reference to any absolutely existing physical nature. (2) As a corollary to (1), physical nature depends for its existence on intuitive nature—or mind. Stein’s unwillingness to accept these positions lie at the heart of her disagreement with Husserl over idealism.

She also thought she could correct the course of phenomenology, that she could do phenomenology without committing to these theses. Her concepts of “the sentient” and “lifepower,” found in “Sentient Causality,” are attempts to do this (Stein, 2000, 2–128). They are an attempt to root the human person’s being in an absolutely existing physical world. The human person is not, at bottom, a constituting subjectivity. Rather, it is a sentient individual. Stein’s analyses begin, in *On the Problem of Empathy*, with the self-constituting, transcendental ego but they go out from there and stay out. This is best seen in her treatment of sentience and lifepower in “Sentient Causality.” Stein understands sentience (*das Psychische*) as the total set of “peculiarities” shared by “human beings and beasts” and is a phenomenon in the natural attitude (Stein, 2000, 6–7). It is the object of psychology considered as a natural science (Stein, 2000, 7). Most importantly, it must be distinguished from consciousness as a realm standing over and against consciousness.

Stein distinguishes between sentience and consciousness on the basis that it is possible to be *in* a living state without being *aware* of that state (see Stein, 2000, 21). For example, if a student is thoroughly engaged in a metaphysical problem that keeps her awake all night, it is possible that she will not notice the weariness of her body. This weariness is there, even though she is not conscious of it. It is a sentient state. Only when she allows herself to stop thinking about the problem, or when a state of complete and utter exhaustion sets in, does she become conscious of her sentient state. Another, albeit pathological example, may be seen in the experience of a person with bipolar disorder who is under the sway of a full-blown manic episode. She feels full of vigor, even euphoria. All the while, her state is quickly deteriorating. One may or may not be conscious of a sentient state, and one may be mistaken about one’s actual sentient state *just because* one may be having a conscious feeling of, for example, vigor when one is actually at the edge of exhaustion. Given this, there is a distinction to be drawn between a living state and the *feeling of* a living state. In other words, there is a distinction between sentience and consciousness. The sentient state is “something transcendent over against experience that manifests itself in experience” (Stein, 2000, 22).

Sentience manifests something to consciousness though. Seeing color is her example. A thing’s color manifests itself in sensations of color, thereby disclosing “the enduring optical property” (Stein, 2000, 22). Using this analogy, Stein locates an “en-

during real property” of the sentient subject that is revealed in one’s experiences of life feelings, *viz.* lifepower. To revisit the above example, in my conscious experience of weariness (a life feeling), a “momentary determination of my ego,” is experienced, and this discloses lifepower as a property of the ego (Stein, 2000, 22). The table below may be useful in understanding her analogy.

Determination of a Reality	Conscious Experience	Property Disclosed
Color of a thing	Color Sensations	Optical Property
Life Status	Life Feeling	Lifepower

Stein differentiates the real, sentient self from the transcendental ego (Stein, 2000, 22). She does this not as though they are two separate and unrelated things. Rather, she does it as a moving-beyond. Sentience is the conscious, embodied ego that we experience ourselves as. It is the ego as we experience ourselves and others, and she designates “the real ego, its properties and statuses, as the *sentient*” (Stein, 2000, 22).

Lifepower is an enduring real property of the sentient. It is the “properly generative occurrence” in and of experience, and it is manifest to us in life feelings (Stein, 2000, 24). It has modes inasmuch as it can increase and decrease and we experience these modes through the changing conditions of our life experience. It is easy to mystify this conception of lifepower, but it is really a rather simple phenomenon. It is the energy required to drive the current of consciousness. All experiences that we have require a certain amount of energy. Some take more; some take less. Sometimes we do not have enough available energy to perform a task. For example, if I am tired after a long day of work, I may not have the requisite energy to concentrate on a dense piece of philosophical literature. Lifepower is used up in experience, but it can also be replenished by sleep and food, to say nothing of the possibility of sharing lifepower. It is essentially the battery that drives conscious experience and its levels are knowable inferentially from the pace and texture of experience.

Stein’s analyses go on to distinguish between natural causality and sentient causality, and she anticipates and responds to objections that such a picture of the human person leads to determinism. It would take us beyond the scope of this paper to discuss them. For our purposes, I would like to reflect on what Stein offers us as it relates to the assertion that her phenomenology begins with the ego but avoids *egology*.

Stein offers a genuine picture of a human person whose consciousness can be examined beginning with the transcendental ego, but who must nonetheless be tied to an absolutely existing physical nature and whose consciousness is regulated by a

causal mechanism. Lifepower and sentient causality provide the power by which consciousness proceeds. No lifepower, no consciousness. Or, as Stein writes, “no sensate reality without causality” (Stein, 2000, 32). Therefore, *egology* alone is inadequate to capture both the sense of Stein’s phenomenology and our nature as human beings. *Egology* alone would miss out on the sentient nature of the human being.

I conclude this section and this essay with consideration of the following quotation:

The real sentient subject is constituted on the basis of causal relationships. And in that fact, what appears now is the total experiencing, which we can consider in its purity, regardless of all reality, in altered apprehensions: the current of consciousness turns into a series of states of the real subject; it enters fully and completely into reality. Everything that we can establish in pure reflection upon the experiences therefore transfers without further ado onto the sensate conditionalities that now are designated as ‘experiences’ in the usual manner of speaking. (Stein, 2000, 77)

In this crucial passage, Stein claims to have demonstrated by method of eidetic variation, the fact that the current or stream of consciousness is causally conditioned by something beyond itself, that is to say by the *contents* of experience. The contents of experience are transcendent to consciousness, on phenomenological analysis, and my sentient nature is among those contents. The sentient state is transcendent in much the same way that an object of experience is transcendent, and is given to consciousness “through manifestation” (Stein, 2000, 77). Sentient states are “extra-egoic contents of experience” and as such are manifestations of the outer-world (Stein, 2000, 78).

## 5. CLOSING REMARKS

If the foregoing has been persuasive, then I have argued that Husserl’s greatest influence on Stein was the development of phenomenology qua the *Logical Investigations*. It is possible to trace back many of the elements of Stein’s conception of phenomenology to the second volume of *Logical Investigations*. This is what she took phenomenology to be and it is in this light that she read Husserl’s further publications and developed her own phenomenological analyses. Furthermore, I have offered textual evidence to support the thesis that Stein understood phenomenology in the following way. Phenomenology is an epistemological critique that seeks to clarify the essential foundations of knowledge. It is transcendental philosophy insofar as it delves into the conditions for the possibility of knowledge. We observed one way it accomplishes this is through the method of free imaginative variation. Furthermore, phenomenology is research into the correlations between being and knowing. It describes neither mind

independent objects nor the mind as it is in and for itself. Phenomenology involves explication of the embodied, reflectively self-conscious subject's comportment on the world. This is especially apparent in examples that involve analysis of an experience under the formula subject-act-object. Finally, phenomenology demands careful analysis and description of the relationship between meaning-intentions and meaning-fulfillments in experience.

Nevertheless, Stein demonstrates her originality as a phenomenological thinker by utilizing the tools that Husserl gave her in *Logical Investigations*. She develops a phenomenological picture of the human person, a phenomenological path to the other, intersubjectivity, community, and the objectively existing world that *begins* with the *ego* but is not *egology*. Put another way, her phenomenology of the human person begins with the *ego* and its experiences, and yet, she identifies within those experiences a certain kind of extra-egoic content, viz. experiences of *my sentient states*. These states belong *to me*, and they transcend consciousness. In this way, Stein's analyses anchor the human person to a transcendent reality beyond the *ego*—in an “absolutely existing physical nature” (Stein, 2014, 40).

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