Edith Stein's philosophy of education:
Einfühlung, Phronesis, and the Bonum Commune

Filosofía de la educación de Edith Stein:
Einfühlung, Phronesis, y la Bonum Commune

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Abstract: This paper investigates how Edith Stein's anthropology makes possible a philosophy of education that takes seriously dialogical reciprocity and discernment as co-constitutive elements of every act of genuine human understanding. For Stein, education provides conditions of possibility of shared values amongst individual human persons, the community and/or State (including law, culture, language, etc.), and values of infinite (eternal) concern. Through a careful reading of several of Stein's texts, we will explore how Stein's philosophy of education functions as a kind of hermeneutic, or capacity of interpretation, with particular reference to Husserl's understanding of Einfuhlung, Aristotle's and Gadamer's notions of phronesis, and Thomas Aquinas' description of the bonum commune. In effect, I submit that the philosophical and theological bases of Edith Stein's philosophy of education are rooted in her anthropological description of the human person as act-being and in terms of a more personalist conception of social ontology and intersubjectivity.

Keywords: *Bonum Commune* ("the common good"), Education ("*e-ducere*"), *Einfühlung* ("empathy"), Intersubjectivity, Phenomenology, *Phronesis* ("practical wisdom").

Resumen: Este artículo investiga cómo la antropología de Edith Stein hace posible una filosofía de la educación que toma en serio la reciprocidad dialógica y el discernimiento como elementos co-constitutivos de todo acto de entendimiento humano genuino. Para Stein, la educación proporciona condiciones de la posibilidad de valores compartidos entre las personas humanas individuales, la comunidad y/o el Estado (incluyendo la ley, la cultura, la lengua, etc.), y valores de interés infinito (eterno). A través de una lectura cuidadosa de varios textos de Stein, exploraremos cómo la filosofía de la educación de Stein funciona como una especie de hermenéutica, o capacidad de interpretación, con especial referencia a la comprensión de Husserl de la Einfühlung, las nociones de Aristóteles y Gadamer sobre la frónesis, y la descripción de Tomás de Aquino del bonum commune. En efecto, sostengo que las bases filosóficas y teológicas de la filosofía de la educación de Edith Stein están enraizadas en su descripción antropológica de la persona humana como acto-ser y en términos de una concepción más personalista de la ontología social y la intersubjetividad.

Palabras clave: *bonum commune* ("bien común"), educación ("*e-ducere*"), *einfühlung* ("empatía"), fenomenología, *frónesis* ("sabiduría práctica"), intersubjetividad.

1. Introduction

Edith Stein's philosophy of education offers complex and creative opportunities to better understand the significance of social ontology in relation

to the emergence of alterity in every act of givenness. Grounded in an anthropological description of human being-in-the-world, Stein's analysis describes education as a value-oriented phenomenon that draws upon two currents related to critical phenomenology, one descriptive and the other teleological. The first current involves a phenomenological description of the human person in terms of empathy and the social-political implications of the givenness of foreign experience in every act of perception. The second current entails a teleological description of the human person in terms of transcendence, complementarity, and permeability. By human person, Stein does not mean an anonymous, disembodied, third-person entity or category of substantial being, an "it" or *res cogitans*. Rather, Stein understands human person in terms of action and selfhood. Consequently, she interprets the human self not merely as a finished or passive product that possesses a fundamental, unchanging or essential human nature, but as a developing and reciprocal process of ongoing value-orientations that is always shaping and being shaped by the lifeworlds we inhabit.[2] I submit that, for Stein, the human self is a "who," not a "what;" the self is not merely a some*thing*, but the "I am" constituted as *that individual* of whom I am striving to *become*.

The capacity to engage the activity of thinking in terms of the phenomenology of empathy is what I refer in this paper to Stein's philosophy of education. By "education," then, I do not mean to imply a set of impersonal categories that constitute ethical or metaphysical principles foundational to a particular system or curriculum. On the contrary, Stein's notion of education requires practical application by which phenomena are grasped through encountering givenness in the lifeworld, similar to what Aristotle termed *phronesis*, rather than mere educational *theoria*. Through a careful threading of social ontology and philosophical application, Edith Stein weaves a phenom-

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[2] Although beyond the scope of this paper, several important similarities can be drawn between Edith Stein and Hannah Arendt, especially comparing Stein's definition of "community" based on her descriptive analyses of empathy and reciprocity in *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, on the one hand, and Arendt's notion of the *vita activa* from *The Human Condition*, on the other hand. For both philosophers, the human person is defined by action, that is, by the life of social and political activity, which includes always the life of thinking and community engagement.

enological array of insights from which emerges the constitution of intersub-
jectivity amidst a plurality of contemporary expressions of community life.[3]
My argument is that Edith Stein's philosophy of education presents neither a
systematic definition nor a methodological framework that fully articulates
how meaning in comprehended and shared. Rather, what Stein points to is a
unique approach to the meaning of being concerning myriad structures and
orientations of sociality and ethical life. Stein's social ethics emerge through a
phenomenological description of the human person, which is itself based in a
value-oriented philosophy of education.

For Stein, a phenomenological description of the philosophy of education
should take into account the human person in his or her full array of social and
historical phenomena, including Christian anthropology. This means that hu-
man identity can never be grasped in the abstract but must include structures
of self-understanding that include both concrete embodiment as well as open-
ness to transcendent being. What Stein wants to provide is an anthropology of
the human person that underlies a comprehensive theory of practical educa-
tion while also accounting for infinite value. The scope of providing a compre-
hensive philosophy of education that can provide an account of finite and
eternal being cannot be limited to psychologism or the natural sciences alone.
The human person as a transcendent being must also be included in every
description of authentic human being-in-the-world. A proper philosophy of
education must thus be able to provide a proper balance between scientific or
natural knowledge on the one hand, and cultural or spiritual knowledge on the
other hand. What emerges through Stein's anthropology, then, is a philosophy
of education that takes into account inherent tensions between (1) the person-
al identity of every human member of a community or communities and the
shared values of persons living within particular communities; and (2) the in-
dividual's infinite sense of value grounded in one's self-awareness of being a
finite creature called to live in absolute relation with eternal being.

In this paper, I will investigate how Edith Stein's anthropology makes
possible a philosophy of education that takes seriously the interdisciplinarity
between (a) dialogical reciprocity and (b) transcendence as co-constitutive

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[3] Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 226-227.

elements in every act of genuine human understanding. For Stein, education provides conditions of possibility of shared values amongst individual human persons, the community and/or State (including law, culture, language, etc.), and values of infinite (eternal) concern. Through a careful reading of several texts, we will explore how Stein's philosophy of education functions as a kind of hermeneutic, or capacity of interpretation, with particular reference to the practical notion of *phronesis* in terms of a revaluation of the teleological principle of *bonum commune* or the "common good." In effect, I submit that the anthropocentric basis of Edith Stein's philosophy of education is rooted in (1) her phenomenological description of the human person alongside (2) her descriptive analysis of empathy as the emergent givenness of foreign experience amidst encountering traces of transcendence.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPATHY AND EDUCATION

Exploring the relationship between empathy and education, especially in terms of philosophical anthropology, is not a wholly new endeavor. While its roots reach back, in phenomenological terms, to Scheler[4] and Husserl's[5] genetic projects, the roots of education as empathy can be found in Platonic literature, including the Christian neo-Platonic tradition of reminiscence and recollection. Championed by St. Augustine,[6] these early tenets concerning education were later re-examined by Jean Jacques Rousseau, who argued that education should focus on developing a person's child-centered appreciation

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[4] Max Scheler, *Mensch und Geschichte*, Vol. 1 of *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. M. Frings, 1971, see 120ff.

[5] Husserl, Edmund, see especially the theme of philosophical anthropology which looms large throughout *Ideas II*, originally edited by Edith Stein.

[6] For St. Augustine, "education," including Christian education, involves a theory of knowledge, based largely on Platonic texts, which can never be reducible to doctrinal or catechetical practices. Rather, education is grounded in Platonic notions of illumination, reminiscence, and *eloquentia*. This includes the activity of teaching-itself (*docere*), the teacher or person who guides students (*magister*), and the proper attitude of students engaging learning (*studium*). Similar to Stein, Augustine does not present a formal "theory" of education but rather engages various themes in multiple texts, notably *Confessions*, *Civitas Dei*, *De Trinitate*, and *De Doctrina Christiana*.

of nature, innate good character, playfulness, and moral integrity rather than focus on a predetermined litany of state-sanctioned ideological and metaphysical themes.[7]

Such understanding of education, hence described as an Augustinian turn of inwardness by the individual in relation to the whole, is significant. Walt Whitman, for example, by singing "the Body electric" in the 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass*, in effect describes a model of education that encompasses marked playfulness between individual subjectivity and the inter-connected human community:

> The armies of those I love engirth me, and I engirth them […] I go with them, respond to them […] discorrupt them, and charge them full with the charge of the Soul.[8]

In similar manner, Edith Stein also articulated a philosophy of education in terms of empathy and grounded in psychology and the humanities. Stein notes that such a complex interface between the material world on the one hand, and the world of personal value on the other hand, constitutes the wellspring of community.[9] Stein describes the ebb-and-flow of communal energy as lifeforce [*Lebenskraft*] and likens it to a kind of current, or flow or stream of experience [*Erlebnisstrom*]. The implications of Stein's dynamic model of flowing or "reaching out" are vast and inclusive in terms of the collective emergence of cultural phenomena. As Antonio Calcagno notes, such "building of a collective culture of a people is viewed by Stein as a kind of existential justification of freedom, understood in terms of sovereignty itself."[10]

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[7] See, in particular, Rousseau's description of "negative education" as depicted in his classic examination of human development, *Emile*.

[8] Walt Whitman, "I Sing the Body Electric," from *Leaves of Grass*, 1855.

[9] The theme of the founding of the humanities and social sciences, as depicted by Edith Stein in *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Volume 7 of *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*, ICS Publications, Washington, DC: 2000), will be a point of focus for this essay.

[10] Distinctions for Stein between definitions regarding race, state, culture, people, nation, etc. are complex and reflect her own experiences as a woman, a philosopher, a Jew, and a cloistered member of the Carmelite Order, living under the Aryan Laws imposed by the German National Socialist Party, beginning in 1933. For a thoughtful overview of important distinc-

Edith Stein's justification of the possibility of a genuine human community comes to expression through an inclusive we-unity based on reciprocal relations between persons, a kind of collectivity. Turning again to Whitman, we see in *Leaves of Grass* an anticipatory celebration of the transformative song of empathy that is highlighted in Stein's own project, a dual-treatise on sentient causality and community as her *Habilitationsschrift* in 1919. The "we-world" initially described by Whitman gets re-cast in phenomenological terms nearly sixty years after Whitman's poem. The building of a collective culture described by a kind of reciprocal co-constitutive relationality between every I and Thou offered an attractive model of social *wholeness*, not only to Stein, but to Scheler and other phenomenologists influenced by the Göttingen school, including Reinach, Conrad-Martius, and even Husserl himself. Trembling before the dark clouds of civil war looming on the horizon, "I do not ask the wounded person how he feels," Whitman wrote in 1855, "I myself become the wounded person […] I see and hear the whole."[11]

For well over a century, philosophers and poets alike have been attempting to describe the foundations of the humanities and later the psychological sciences in terms of existential wholeness and as a kind of social ontology, which Stein herself undertook as her primary project in 1919.[12] Of course, the originating vision of Stein's analysis is based in large part on reactions to Husserl's description of transcendental phenomenology. Husserl's task was to provide a philosophical approach to qualitative research that sought to understand the whole of human experience by describing the structures of pure conscious-

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tions of these terms by Stein, see: Calcagno, Antonio, "People and the State Community: Two Conflicting Forms of Sociality in Edith Stein's Conception of A Priori Law," from *Ethics and Metaphysics in the Philosophy of Edith Stein*, Michael F. Andrews and Antonio Calcagno, ed., Switzerland: Springer Nature (2022), 173-185.

[11] Whitman, "Song of Myself," section 33.

[12] Edith Stein's *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* explores several themes regarding social ontology; it was published shortly after she resigned her role as assistant to Husserl. Her primary responsibility as Husserl's research assistant was to help place Husserl's hand-written lecture notes research notes exploring the Lifeworld in order. This project remained incomplete by Husserl during his lifetime, who famously argued that he remained unsatisfied by the manuscript despite numerous attempts by several editors to finish the work that Stein had initiated. The text was finally published by the Husserl Archives Leuven as *Ideas II* in 1952.

ness by which the world is given in its entirety to the pure ego.[13] Husserl's transcendental description of the origin of geometry, for example, proposes an ontological inquiry that sets forth the necessary, universal, eidetic structures of perception and all fields of inquiry on the one hand, alongside a transcendental inquiry that describes how things are made intelligible by explaining how geometry must have been constituted through historical reduction, on the other hand. Husserl saw this tracing of a return or "reduction" as an infinite task.

My argument is that such "tracing back" by historical reduction, however, is not reductionistic. Rather, such "tracing back" is indicative of a constitutive kind of epistemological phenomenology or an expression of a particular sense of hermeneutic that belongs to a living present and which orients the "leading-out" implied by the constitutive process of education [*e-ducere*] itself. Husserl is not interested in reporting on the origin of geometry factually, as if the goal of education was to provide a recapitulation of specific social events and political structures of the past that in effect gave rise to particular educational models or institutions. On the contrary, Husserl is interested in describing education as a process that exposes the origin of meaning *qua* meaning. In effect, Husserl wants to describe what are the necessary, *a priori* beginnings of thought as they must have been. By analyzing the origin of geometry as a phenomenon,[14] Husserl offers a descriptive account of the tracing back of ideas in the history of perception by means of deciphering deeper layers of meaning associated with the emergence of education and other forms of social phenomena. Husserl's model thus offers a description of the transition from "perceptual life" to "idealization of perceptions" similar, in significant ways, to Stein's own analysis of empathy and the emergence of social ontology.

I submit that the phenomenology of education, described transcendentally in terms of social givenness, offers important insights into processes of recovery and the re-activation of founding acts of perception implicit in every act of knowing. The phenomenology of education explores the originally contribut-

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[13] Husserl largely understood the main project of phenomenology in terms of transcendental philosophy, inclusive of the publication of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology*; *Ideas II* (published posthumously); *Cartesian Meditations*; *The Crisis of European Sciences*, etc.

[14] See, in particular, Appendix IV (353ff) of Husserl's *The Origin of Geometry*.

ing acts, hence layered archeologically and historically, from which contemporary ideas were born, along with their subsequent cultural manifestations. In effect, these subsequent manifestations, namely, what modernity calls "secondary qualities," is what Husserl means by *Lebenswelt*, which given perceptually is the only world we know. By exploring the constitutive relationship between empathy on the one hand, and the emotions, physiology, psychology, humanities, and the natural and social sciences on the other hand, I submit that what emerges is a keen sense about how education opens-up the entirety of this "secondary world" hence grasped and formulated by way of transcendental phenomenology.[15]

In other words, the theme of empathy provides important insights into the origin and structures of consciousness. Proponents of the new sciences, beginning chiefly with Renaissance scholars (such as Galileo and Leibniz) whose insistence that everything could be mathematically measured and therefore drives towards infinite perfectability, in effect, sought to know nature, as it is, in-itself. Such scientific realists argued that the structures of mathematics are the very ground of the structures of the world. Hence, for Leibniz, mathematics is what nature would say if Nature could speak. Subjectivity, therefore, would appear to include all those structures of meaning that do not yield to indubitability and mathematical knowability.

The worry, of course, in terms of the phenomenology of education, is that science will eventually observe symbols as objective and the concrete world as subjective –which is precisely how "modern science" functions. What modern science appears to have forgotten is the life–world. Mathematics does not describe the origin of geometry, let alone the origin of the world. On the contrary, mathematics merely offers a limited way of *thinking about the world* on account that mathematics arises from the matrix of the world and is a thought experiment conducted by human beings living in the world. Mathematics does not offer an objective account of Being nor does mathematics emerge from a pre-conditional or pre-linguistic origin. Mathematics elicits is

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[15] What is at play here and in the following paragraphs is my attempt to offer a summary interpretation by way of practical application of Husserl's complex account of the sedimentation of meaning in light of Husserl's description of consciousness in *The Origin of Geometry*, now set in terms of empathy and the emergent phenomenality of education.

a construction of a particular kind of seeing, it proffers a grammatical set of rules that at times mistakenly takes natural science as the pure expression of the Being of the world. In this sense, mathematics is another word for metaphysics; whereas phenomenology –unlike mathematics and the natural sciences– does not have any metaphysical assumptions or aspirations.

Consequently, one goal of the phenomenology of education is to expose every form of hyper-essentialism in order to restore foundations to their intuitive content that have been replaced over years of sedimentation and the measurability of everything by way of formal structure. In effect, the phenomenology of education manifests a kind of functioning subjectivity that does not succumb to scientific objectivism. The task of education, described in terms of de-sedimentation, is neither to relegate consciousness as an immaterial thing (a *res cogitans*) nor as a psychically reducible object of the natural world, whether a physical thing (empiricism) or a metaphysical thing (rationalism). Phenomenologically speaking, mathematics articulates a formalized way of speaking about the natural world. Mathematics and by extension the natural sciences, therefore, can offer no adequate theory or basis of education because mathematics is itself primarily a way of interpreting and describing the world.

Edith Stein's description of empathy offers one attempt amidst a notable assemblage of attempts by a number of early twentieth-century phenomenologists who were also exploring the necessary conditions of grounding a universal and fundamental methodological principle of knowledge in order to study the essences of things by way of eidetic reduction. Variations of the phenomenological method in fact dominated much of the intellectual landscape in Germany and France throughout the first quarter of the twentieth century. Initially attracted by Edmund Husserl's analysis of how the reduction reveals the ego for which everything has meaning, early phenomenologists, including Edith Stein but including as well Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, Adolf Reinach, Hedwig Martius, and others, attempted to describe phenomenology by providing an account of the conditions of possibility of knowledge in general, including the natural and social sciences. Early phenomenological attempts to describe education shared two fundamental principles. First, it was a commitment that what is needed in order to provide an adequate philosophy of education is a transcendental accountability for consciousness. Second, any

transcendental methodology would need to be impervious to claims of psychologism. Consequently, a proper phenomenological account of education must remain irreducible to both scientific rationalism (Newton) on the one hand, as well as radical skepticism (Hume) on the other hand.

It is my contention that Edith Stein's description of empathy, which draws in great part on Husserl's lifelong task to describe the origin of intersubjectivity, offers a significant attempt to fulfill both these requirements. Empathy as "foreign experience" in effect reveals an encounter with transcendence that is required in every act of human knowing and yet remains outside every attempt to comprehensively describe such radical alterity in its phenomenal givenness. Empathy opens-up meaning, it acknowledges the Other as different, it makes the world possible as a shared value, a "we-world," a complex nexus of connectivity and ever-expanding horizons. Indeed, the very notion of empathy for Stein constitutes a non-primordial experience which announces a primordial experience.[16] Contrary to what is generally described as "empathy" in popular culture, what is given *via* empathy [*Einfühlung*] for Stein is not a growing sense of identification between I and Other, but rather dis-identification. Empathy is a condition of possibility of difference. Empathy is a condition of possibility that ensures my own primordial experience is different from every foreign (non-primordial) experience of every other. In other words, Stein's phenomenology of empathy does not bridge the gap between self and other, such as Theodor Lipps and Scheler had argued, for example, in Lipps' admonition that I project myself into the object of perception, such as when I "lose myself" by following the motions of an acrobat swinging on a trapeze; or Scheler's descriptive account of how my own sense of "I" merges with others through empathy in an undifferentiated stream or current of conscious life experience.

Rather than constituting a blurred reality between "self" and "other," Stein argues that empathy in fact gives me a felt sense of foreign subjectivity outside myself. Stein defines empathy as "the experience of foreign consciousness."[17] Empathy thus discloses the existential gap between every self and the other.

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[16] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 14.

[17] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 11.

What is given in empathy is a self-sense of givenness of a subjectivity outside myself, that is to say, a subjectivity that I experience non-primordially precisely as *not*-myself. I experience the other in my perceptual field as an embodied consciousness, a foreign experience that is like me, only different. What I experience, however, is not a dualism between mind and body. For Stein, I do not see the body of the other and then infer that they must be a subject like me. Rather, I experience their subjectivity directly as something that I am receiving by virtue of being in the presence of it.

Phenomenologically speaking, empathy offers an account of radical subjectivity grounded upon that which is objective, but which is subjectively given. Empathy entails a sense of encountering the Other that is built-up over time, that exposes or reveals alterity, that is given as an object, yet always experienced by me as given-*to*. The other is always and already present as a trace of alterity or transcendence in every act of givenness. The Other is never given in-itself. Empathy describes the Other as that which is pre-given and, thus, constituted or built-up. Consequently, even causality (like mathematics) constitutes a way of speaking, it presents a kind of metaphysical grammar, a way of constituting the world. In reciprocal mode, alterity is both constitut*ed* and constitut*ing*. Phenomenologically speaking, "education" built-up over time, experience, and sedimentation of meanings. Education therefore offers an account of how the natural world must have been built-up over time in terms of meaning, culture, language, science, and art. The phenomenology of education thus describes how every pre-scientific, natural, concrete lifeworld is constituted or built-up upon layers of meaning and sedimentation. As one lifeworld amongst others, education engages alterity as a condition of its own possibility. "*E-ducere*" [etymologically meaning: "to lead out"] describes the process by which the self is "led out" from ignorance to knowledge.[18] Through empathy, the self-encounters a non-primordial experience, a lifeworld constituted by foreign subjectivity. This experience of alterity is constitutive of education, in that foreign experience leads the self out of itself in order to reflect back upon itself by an emerging and enlarging self-awareness of its own pri-

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[18] The etymological directionality of education as "leading out" is Platonic in origin, for example, the process of being "led out" from ignorance to real knowledge in Plato's cave allegory.

mordiality through engaging the Other as an encounter with foreign experience.

Significant connections between education and empathy were explored by a number of early phenomenologists (including Edith Stein) in terms of constitution and primordial and non-primordial experience. In the 1910's and 1920's, for instance, Husserl's pronounced interest in describing the founding of the natural and social sciences by the phenomenological method set the tone for subsequent discussions involving intersubjectivity and the lifeworld. Max Scheler and Theodore Lipps were influential through their contributions of exploring the relationship between education and empathy, as well. By "empathy" –*Einfühlung*[19]– Husserl meant that the Other's body is given perceptually, whereas the other's conscious life [*Erlebnis*] or "stream of consciousness" is given apperceptively. This definition, in great part, grew from Husserl's growing frustration with Theodore Lipps's problematic notion that empathy implies an experience of oneness between myself and the other; alongside Scheler's notion that "I" and "Other" are at first undifferentiated in a stream or nexus of social consciousness.[20] Although this essay does not provide adequate opportunity to delve into these theories with great depth, Lipps and Scheler provide important background and rich perspectives for exploring complexities that examine the relationship between education and embodiment, empathy, and intersubjectivity.

An exhaustive phenomenological description of education would thereby need to take into account the genesis, constitution, intentionality, and coherence of the givenness of foreign experience as such. Consequently, the phenomenology of education must include a description of how experiences of what is new and different are constituted by consciousness. This description of the appearance of alterity is thematically opposed to offering an account of

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[19] The theme of *Einfühlung* ("empathy") occupied much of Husserl's writing from *Ideas II* to *Cartesian Meditations*. It is through empathy that the Lifeworld becomes accessible.

[20] For a fuller description of Scheler's account, and how it contrasts with Stein's account, see: Andrews, Michael F., "Edith Stein and Max Scheler: Ethics, Empathy, and the Constitution of the Acting Person," *Quaestiones Disputatae: A Journal of Philosophical Inquiry and Discussion: The Early Phenomenology of Munich and Göttingen*, Vol 3, No.1, ed. Kimberly Baltzer-Jaray (Franciscan University Press, Steubenville, OH, Fall 2012), 33-47.

how information is assimilated in terms of simulacrum, coherency, and identification. What empathy must take into account is the coming to consciousness of difference itself. For example, in *Perception, Empathy, and Judgment: An Inquiry into the Preconditions of Moral Experience*, Arne Johan Vetlesen argues that, "empathy establishes a reciprocal relation between ego and object, as opposed to the one-way relation of elementary identification. […] Empathy differs from identification" –and, by "identification," is meant knowledge as mere fact– in that it (empathy) "rests not on infantile dependence but on mature independence, not on the introjected similarity of two persons involved, but on their difference. This brings out the link between empathy and love."[21] In terms reminiscent of Emmanuel Levinas, Vetlesen describes empathy as involving "proximity and face-to-face interaction, insofar as it implies the direct, meaning unmediated, physical co-presence of the acting individuals."[22] Consequently, empathy pertains something of a "moral impact" or ethical context to it.

Quoting from Mistcherlich's *The Inability to Mourn*, Vetlesen notes that, "true empathy involves conscious awareness of the difference and the uniqueness of the love object."[23] Phenomenologically speaking, this means that empathy is not merely concerned with similarity and identity, "but the other's *difference* from me, the other's *otherness*."[24] In terms of contemporary debates about the nature and intent of education and its varying social and political impact, I submit a more provocative and robust understanding of the impactful role that empathy plays in articulating the methodology and purposefulness of education is needed than we may be accustomed or comfortable admitting. What is meant by education must ensure that *Einfühlung* not be consigned to mere theoretical functioning that reduces political and social implications of education to coherence theories or mere epistemological abstractions, that is to say, to *theoria*.

What I want to propose in this essay is the idea that Edith Stein's phenomenology of empathy, while at times painstakingly precise in its level of de-

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[21] Arne Johan Vetlesen, *Perception, Empathy, and Judgment: An Inquiry into the Preconditions of Moral Experience*, 201.

[22] Vetlesen, 201.

[23] Mistcherlich and Mistcherlich, *The Inability to Mourn*, 158.

[24] Vetlesen, 196.

scriptive analysis, nevertheless contains a profoundly practical element for understanding the roles that alterity and "foreign experience" play in contemporary education. Drawing on Stein's analysis, by empathy I mean to describe a condition of possibility of a particular kind of understanding, one that Vetlesen characterizes in terms of "understanding of the foreigner [*Fremdvertstandnis*]."[25] As noted earlier, such an understanding of empathy is defined by Stein as a non-primordial experience of a primordial experience. Foreign experience thus implies a kind of "hermeneutics of empathy," to coin Heidegger's phrase. Empathy is therefore more akin to *phronesis* than *theoria*.

A number of questions can now be raised, though a full articulation and review of these questions and their possible responses falls outside the limits of this paper. How might empathy make education possible? What does empathy contribute towards understanding the role of education in terms of ethics, intersubjectivity, and shared meanings between persons, communities, nations, and even whole cultures? As Vetlesen notes, empathy means, first and foremost, "a willingness to put oneself in the other person's place, and critically to reflect on the 'situation' – his situation, my situation, our relationship."[26] To what extent might empathy enrich our understanding of how education shapes the human sciences, spiritual values, and cultural embodiment? How might empathy enrich what is meant by "philosophy of education," especially in terms of learning to live with others who are often designated as stranger, suspect, different, alien, foreigner, infidel, enemy? In terms of philosophy of education, empathy names the capacity by which we must learn how to put ourselves at risk.

3. EDUCATION AND EMPATHY AS SOCIAL PHENOMENA

In *Ideas II*, Husserl expands his analysis of genetic constitution to include how every psycho-physical thing "is given and is to be given only through appearances […] which do not belong to an individual consciousness *but to a soci-*

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[25] Vetlesen, 201.

[26] Vetlesen, 201.

etal consciousness as a total group of possible appearances that is constructed out of individual groups."[27] Husserl describes givenness in terms of the spiritual and cultural worlds, not primarily in terms of the concrete individual monad as is the case, for example, in the fifth Cartesian Meditation. For Husserl, empathy describes a nexus of social relationships that exist between individual egos and groups of egos.[28] Especially higher-order values such as culture, art, language, ethics, and religion are products of social constitution. Consequently, the task of phenomenology is to, "gather up into unity all the social Objectivities […] that are in communication with one another. It should be noted here that *the idea of communication* obviously extends from the single personal subject even to the *social* associations of subjects, which, for their part, present personal unities of a higher level."[29] This shared world of intersubjective constitution reaches to ever-higher order levels of meanings and significations. In terms of strict epistemology, this means that empathy is a founding or originary mode of social constitution:

> [I]t is characteristic of empathy that it refers to an originary Body-spirit consciousness, but one I cannot myself accomplish originarily, I who am not the other and who only function, in regard to him, as a comprehending analogon.[30]

In a subtle, yet related way, Dan Zahavi, in his essay, "First Person Thoughts and Embodied Self-Awareness," argues that perception similarly involves the adumbrational givenness of the perceptual (that is, spatio-temporal) object as it is given or presents itself to embodied subjects: "The object is never given in its totality, but always appears from a certain perspective. That which appears perspectivally always appears oriented. Since it also presents itself from a certain angle and at a certain distance from the observer, the point should be obvious. Every perspectival appearance presupposes that the experiencing subject

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[27] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 93. The emphasis here is my own.

[28] I think it is important to note that the basis for such a study of social constitution is laid out by Husserl in the fifth Cartesian Meditation (which, interestingly, was written in 1929, almost a decade after he had worked on this problem in his notes to *Ideas II*.) Here, Husserl accomplishes in *Ideas II* what he said *could* be done in the *Cartesian Meditations*.

[29] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 206.

[30] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 208.

has itself a relation to space, and since the subject only possesses a spatial location due to its embodiment" (Husserl 1976, 116; 1952, 33; 1973a, 239), Husserl argues that spatial objects can only appear for embodied subjects.[31]

If we combine these two themes together, namely, that (1) the Other is essential in order for there to be an Objective world as such; and (2) embodiment is an active (rather than merely passive) condition of possibility for perceptual intentionality, then we might begin to catch an observant sense of what is meant by empathy in terms of *pre-social subjectivity*.[32] "I can have a 'direct' experience of myself," Husserl argues, "and it is *only my intersubjective form of reality* that I cannot, in principle, experience. For that I *need* the mediation of empathy. I can experience others, but only through empathy."[33] Phenomenologically speaking, empathy [*Einfühlung*] is a condition of possibility of experiences of alterity and transcendence on the one hand, and Objectivity on the other hand. Empathy essentially describes the manifestation of two different types of givenness: (1) *inner experience*, which is absolute, originary, and contains no elements of presentification; and (2) *external experience*, such as alterity and transcendence, which is mediated experience of a non-primordial presence of foreign experience.

Since perception is correlated to and accompanied by the self-sensing or self-affection of the moving body,[34] Dan Zahavi notes that the subject can perceive and use objects only if it itself *is* a body. In other words, I can know an object in the world only insofar that I know this object and its position in relation to myself. For example, when I sit at my desk, I perceive that a particular book or manuscript is to the left (of me), that my telephone is directly in front (of me), that my computer screen is to the right (of me). Zahavi correctly notes that, "every perspectival appearance implies that the embodied perceiver is itself co-given as the zero point, the absolute indexical 'here' in relation to which every appearing object is oriented."[35]

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[31] Dan Zahavi, "First-Person Thoughts and Embodied Self-Awareness," from *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, Volume 1, No. 1, 2002. N. Depraz and S. Gallagher, editors. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 19).

[32] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 209.

[33] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 210.

[34] Zahavi, 19.

[35] Zahavi, 20.

As an experiencing subject I am the point of reference in relation to which each and every of my perceptual objects are uniquely related. I am the center around which and in relation to which ego-centric space unfolds itself. Husserl consequently claims that bodily self-awareness is a condition of possibility for the perception of and interaction with spatial objects.[36]

What is given in empathy, then, is not merely the Other *qua* other, but the Other as an embodied non-primordial experience of transcendence. In both *Ideas II* and *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl speaks of the reciprocal co-dependency that exists between the constitution of spatial objects and the constitution of the body.[37] He claims that what I am aware of when I become aware of the world, is not simply my own body as it interacts with other physical objects, whether thematically or unthematically. As Merleau-Ponty points out, my body is not a "permanent perceptual object" that perceives an extrinsic world. Rather, my lived-body itself is always present as my very perspective on the world.[38] I do not merely *have* hands: rather, *I am my hands*; I do not merely "see" the apple before me, but –and this is true even if I simply imagine an apple in my mind's eye or glance at an apple from a distance away– I "see" the apple by "feeling" its skin, its redness or greenness, I do not merely see the apple but "taste" it *in my seeing it* as crisp or tart or sour. In fact, even as I merely *think* of biting into a sour apple, my body flinches, my eyes wince, my mouth salivates. Embodiment, therefore, is not merely a type of object-consciousness or a perception of a body as object. On the contrary, every act of seeing as knowing implies a form of immediate, pre-reflective, embodied self-awareness.[39]

Consequently, if this is the case for isolated, empirical, perceptual objects, how much more so is a plurality of bodies necessary for the constitution of higher-order spiritual values? In other words, if empathy implies the intersubjectivity of egos in the binding of a community, then it seems to follow that the condition of possibility of education –namely, the emergent and shared knowledge of the humanities and social sciences– can be accessible only through

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[36] Zahavi, 20.
[37] Zahavi, 20.
[38] Zahavi, 21.
[39] Zahavi, 21.

Einfühlung. No objectivity of meanings or judgments can be constituted apart from their practical applications as acts of empathy. Such "practical application," I submit, is what Aristotle (and even more so, Gadamer) means by *phronesis*, a condition of possibility of the givenness of values of meaning amidst practical action in particular situations. In terms of applicability, we could say that empathy is generative, it constitutes acts of meaning and genesis. In this sense, empathy comprises a manifestation of phronesis, it marks the emergence of a kind of hermeneutics of facticity, it opens-up communal dimensions regarding the historicity of layers of sedimentation of understanding. Effectually, empathy manifests not merely a willingness to put myself in another person's place, that is, to walk in another person's shoes, so to speak. As a kind of reciprocity, empathy invites me to live vice-versa by re-orienting my "here" and the other's "there." Empathy thus makes possible solidarity and genuine friendship, it involves the givenness of an intersubjective communal life constituted by reciprocity and co-perception. The phenomenon of empathy constitutes an experience of alterity as embodied subjectivity; a subjectivity that is like me, only different. Empathy makes possible the conditions of transcendence by which self and Other are co-given.

My ego and the Other's ego do not merely cohabit a singular world made up of an infinite number of possible life-worlds. Rather, I experience my self as a living Body [Leib] in an analogical way that the Other's living Body is given to me in terms of an intentional center of orientation that is not my own, a co-embodied subject who exists in the same world *with* me. By "life-world" is meant the inter-subjective, inter-corporeal world that is mutually agreed upon. Hence, because what I experience in terms of the Other's lived experience is always experienced in terms of the Other's body, the body [*Korper*] of the Other is as essential to empathic apperception as is my own. Accordingly, the constitution of *Leib* is founded on the primal tactile experiences of my own body as a play of surfaces that interacts with other bodies already existing in the world. The elemental founding sense of the *Here* and *There* of my own living Body implies the real possibility of other concrete centers of orientation. This sense of the "relativity of the near and the far" permeates all experience. Sociality is thus constituted by specifically social, communicative acts.

These acts are valuations by which the Ego "turns to others and in which the Ego is conscious of these others as ones toward which it is turning."[40]

Structurally speaking, empathy takes place only once the alter ego has been constituted by analogical apperception. Reciprocity cannot be a founding mode of constitution, otherwise the primordial being of the constituting ego would be violated such that "self" and "other" would be indistinguishable amidst an undifferentiated stream of conscious life.[41] The process of reciprocity is thus found*ed* upon the prior experience of localizations of physical and psychic processes. Even the sphere of ownness is constituted by retention and pretension, just as my body is constituted by apperception and the coordination of sensory data around a *Nullpoint* of orientation. This *Nullpoint* is not merely embodied; it *is* my body, insofar as *I am*:

> I place myself at the standpoint of the other, any other whatever, and I acknowledge that each encounters every other as the natural being, man, and that I then have to identify myself with the man seen from the standpoint of external intuition. Man as Object is thus a transcendent external Object, an Object of an external intuition; that is, we have here an `experience of two strata: interwoven with external primally presenting perception is appresenting (or introjecting into the exterior) empathy, in an apperception, specifically, which realizes the entire psychic life and psychic being in a sort of unity of appearance.[42]

4. PHRONESIS: A PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Empathy discloses to us something about another person. Phenomenologically speaking, empathy discloses to me a non-primordial experience of another person's primordial experience through the (non-)givenness of alterity. What appears by not appearing is thus constituted non-primordially as the experience of transcendence, since the phenomenal appearance of the non-appearance of transcendence always exceeds my grasp.

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[40] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 204.

[41] This, in a nutshell, is Edith Stein's response against Scheler in defense of Husserlian phenomenology.

[42] Husserl, *Ideas II*, 178.

Empathy describes a non-primordial experience of another's primordial experience that appears to me precisely as *not*-mine. In other words, what I encounter in empathy is the Other, never given primordially, but rather given as a non-primordial experience of *his or her primordial experience*. This is what Stein refers to as "foreign experience," as noted earlier. I submit that, for Stein, empathy manifests a similar structure as education, in the sense that education is a leading or reaching out [*e-ducere*] towards that which is unknown and ungraspable. Turning again to Vetlesen, we may thus designate empathy as "a necessary prerequisite for the development of an awareness and understanding of the emotions and feelings" of other persons. Genuine education elicits a process of leading-out from ignorance towards infinite horizons of understanding. Such infinity constitutes a real infinity: by definition, it must remain always radially other.; otherwise, it would be subsumed by that act of consciousness which grasps *the idea of transcendence* as such.

On the contrary, empathy posits a more radical sense of alterity. While empathy can thus be described as an encounter with transcendence itself, such encounter remains bound in terms of finite being even as it hints in anticipatory expectation at eternal being. Empathy preserves the value of *this* individual as the condition of possibility of the personal grasping of genuine alterity. The human person is thus recognized as a "who" and can never be absorbed into the "what" of mass anonymity.[43]

Significantly, as Stein adheres, becoming aware of another person's emotional experience is not the same as sharing another's feeling, that is, as experiencing it oneself. Following Stein's analysis, Vetlesen notes, "What empathy basically facilitates is my reaching out toward the other person's situation. Thanks to my faculty of empathy, I become aware that the other is in a situation of, say distress."[44] Reaching or "leading out" [*e-ducere*] towards the other

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[43] For a more detailed analysis of Heidegger's rejection of empathy on the basis of inauthenticity, see: Andrews, Michael F., "Religion Without Why: Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger on the Overcoming of Metaphysics, With Particular Reference to Angelus Silesius and Denys the Areopagite," from *Analecta Husserliana: Logos of Phenomenology and Phenomenology of the Logos*," ed. P. Johnstone and A.T. Tymieniecka (Lancaster Publishing Ltd., Lancaster, U.K., 2006), 399-427.

[44] Vetlesen, 205

constitutes a practical applicability of what Gadamer calls *phronesis*, by which
the other is grasped *as other* and puts the self at risk. In order to preserve al-
terity in its otherness, empathy entails an element of *phronesis* in the realiza-
tion that my first -–and only– access to and grasp of another person's interior
life, as with any process of judgment, understanding, or interpretation is
through empathy. "Empathy," Vetlesen concludes, "entails an intuitive and
tentative judgment about the other's situation."[45]

Such judgment, I submit, is not grasped primarily as theoretical but prac-
tical. Phronesis functions as a practical manifestation of experiences of empa-
thy, similar to how Edith Stein described empathy as the non-primordial expe-
rience of a primordial experience, that is, as the givenness of foreign
experience. What is "other" appears as the non-appearance of alterity, a (hid-
den) trace that cannot be bridged in its entirety by judgment. Hence, against
Lipps, Stein wrote, "Strictly speaking, empathy is not a feeling of oneness."[46]
Rather than describing how foreign consciousness becomes "one" with me,
empathy describes how I and Other are *different*. Following Husserl and *con-
tra* Lipps, Stein acknowledges that empathy does not mean that I can "get in-
side" the other's head (Lipps's position), but rather that I can only appercep-
tively posit another primordial sphere to which I cannot –in principle– have
primordial access. Empathy announces what is Other by announcing *what
cannot be announced* within the realm of reason and thought. What is given in
empathy is the experience of a non-experience, the experience of the impossi-
ble, the experience of a genuine encounter with alterity, with foreign experi-
ence *as such*. Consequently, insofar as empathy describes an experience of
non-understanding [*Verstehen*] of a foreign subject, empathy is marked by
uncanniness and mystery. To speak of empathy as a 'blind' or 'empty' mode
of knowledge that 'reaches' the experience of others without possessing it, in
effect embraces alterity as an unfulfilled intuition [*Anschauung*].[47]

Stein's description of empathy as the givenness of foreign experience
implies that the subject undergoing an experience of empathy incorporates

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[45] Vetlesen, 205.
[46] Stein, *Empathy*, 17.
[47] Rudolf Makkreel, "How is Empathy Related to Understanding?," from Issues in *Husserl's
Ideas II*, ed. Nenon and Embree. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 200.

particular aspects of the environment into one's bodily schemata. Similarly, Merleau-Ponty describes the lived body as not limited by flesh. The body necessarily extends to "the world beyond," to an array of values and life-worlds that constitute myriad cultural environments within which the lived body moves, sways, holds itself, and acts. Constituted by a fusion of outer [mental] and inner [bodily] perception, Stein notes that embodiment becomes manifest in terms of its self-phenomenal givenness "by the interpretation of our own living body as a physical body and our own physical body as a living body."[48]

Of course, what is given by the Other's body is never given apodictically, since even the Other's tears may hide a secret which, *in principle*, I may never know. The other is a concrete individual who announces to my own primordial experience the embodied manifestation of a non-primordial, foreign, constitutive phenomenon. The Other is an embodied and mediated givenness who possesses his or her own particular psycho-physical unitive identity in the same way I possess mine. Phenomenologically speaking, this means that I experience the Other as a non-primordial (hence: foreign) givenness that is like me, only different. The givenness of foreign experience necessitates that the Other announces to my own primordial experience the embodied manifestation of a non-primordial phenomenon. Consequently, in terms of empathy the lifeworld is always encountered as a public phenomenon and never merely private.

For Stein, this means that empathy is a condition of possibility of meaning itself. As a kind of hermeneutic, empathy in effect seeks to understand *how we understand* values and meanings through practical applicability [*phronesis*], it looks to enrich "our own world image through another's."[49] Stein acknowledges that empathy is constitutively *other*-directed. In its social phenomenality, *Einfühlung* constitutes both sameness and difference in a similar way that education leads-out [*e-ducere*] from ignorance to knowledge. In terms of directionality, both education and empathy point beyond the self to the other.

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[48] Stein*, Empathy*, 58.

[49] Stein, *Empathy*, 61-62.

5. CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

As a way of drawing several observations together, in these concluding reflections I wish to return to my opening comments. There, I said that what I wanted to pursue in this paper is an exploration of ideas that, based on Edith Stein's complex description of the phenomenology of empathy, contain a profoundly practical element of application. By describing empathy as a condition of possibility of understanding, a sort of hermeneutics that is more akin to *phronesis* than to *theoria*, we are now in a better position to explore how genuine empathy can occur between persons, nations, and even whole cultures that view one another with suspicion, that is, as strange, different, alien, foreign, infidel, enemy.

My argument is that genuine understanding of what is meant by the "common good" (in terms of spiritual and cultural values) becomes possible only by describing education as "leading out" [*e-ducere*] from ignorance towards new horizons of understanding in the self's encounter with alterity. In an engaging essay entitled, "Edmund Husserl's Contributions to Phenomenology of the Body in *Ideas II*," Elizabeth Behnke points us in an interesting and, I think, quite positive direction to help explore the constitutive relationship between empathy and education. She notes, for example, that "constitutive phenomenology is not merely some sort of abstract intellectual enterprise; it is a demonstration that at very deep levels, the world we encounter is traceable to the attitude we bring to it. […] And at the heart of this partnership is the moving, sensing Body."[50] Behnke notes the all-important role that the Body plays in modern fields of medicine, such as somatics, experiential anatomy, and sensory awareness.

What I find interesting is Behnke's suggestion that the recovery of one's own Body as sensed from within contains both ethical and political implications. For example, if we correctly infer that my perception of another human being as a living, feeling person –a fellow creature who suffers, for instance,

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[50] Elizabeth Behnke, "Edmund Husserl's Contributions to Phenomenology of the Body in *Ideas II*," in Issues in Husserl's Ideas II, ed. Nenon and Embree. (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 156.

when in pain, 'just as I do'– is based on my own ability to feel my own Body, then we may expect a culture of violence to be based on practices of *dis*embodiment."[51]

I submit that this practical application of empathy is indicative of what Edith Stein also described in terms of givenness of foreign experience. In a similar way that Stein's practical application of empathy describes empathy as a non-primordial experience of a primordial experience in a way that is more akin to Aristotle's notion of *phronesis* than *theoria*, so too Behnke notes that victims of sexual abuse, for example, often survive by not feeling their own pain and suppressing past and present trauma. Such a practical application of dis-association between the victim's "self" and the victim's "body" in effect perpetuates the same kind of dis-association that makes violence against the other possible in the first place.

Political acts of violence, sexual and racial discrimination, gross economic disparity, abuse of the earth's resources, the weaponization of education, "smart bombs" and wars of "shock and awe," and acts of domestic terror (regardless whether waged in the name of religion, the state, or a negligent doctrine of pre-emptive justification), contribute to spiraling and destructive processes of alienation. These forces share one common precept, namely, a lack of empathy based on dis-association between "I" and "Thou." Such dis-association marks a decidedly pernicious disregard for humanist education in general, based scathingly on the debasement of social manifestations of genuine acts of empathy. In terms of practical applicability, the proliferation of a lack of empathy has come to define growing manifestations and acts of violence and intolerance fueling an increasingly isolationist, popultarist, post-September 11th world.

And that is why I believe Stein's phenomenological description of empathy offers important and practical twenty-first century applications concerning education "for the common good." Genuine education is humanistic at heart and therefore proposes an expression of empathy that can only be grasped through the givenness of social phenomena. As the expression of givenness of intersubjectivity, empathy remains rooted in the "leading out" from ignorance

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[51] Behnke, 155.

to knowledge, that is, in the practical applicability of *phronesis*. How might
Edith Stein's understanding of empathy point towards a deeper and richer
understanding of education as "leading out" [*e-ducere*]? What lies both hid-
den and exposed in every act of understanding? How might we dream of a
post post-September 11th world in which empathy is celebrated as a condition
of possibility of alterity itself? What might such a "we-world" world look like
in which every person-to-person encounter retains much of the originating
capacity to recognize the givenness of genuine transcendence? How might a
deeper understanding of the phenomenology of empathy lead to a revaluation
of education as a form of social ontology? To what extent does Edith Stein's
phenomenology of education nurture a body of compassion of what may be
properly called an "embodied ethics?"[52] Phenomenologically speaking, I sub-
mit that a primary goal of authentic education is to explore and re-evaluate
empathy as a social phenomenon, a non-primordial experience of givenness
and collective intentionality. Brought to fullness through the givenness of
community, what emerges through the phenomenology of empathy is a de-
scription of the constitution of the lifeworld as phenomenon. Empathy de-
scribes an originary and founding mode of constitution, it grasps the given-
ness of traces of alterity and transcendence amidst pluralities of pluralities of
values. The intersubjective constitution of the we –world thus makes genuine
education– and, with it, the manifestation of givenness of genuine alterity
possible on account of its practical applicability [*phronesis*].

For Edith Stein, empathy does give the other to me. The phenomenology
of empathy describes how the other is both constitut*ed* and constitut*ing* in
terms of the givenness of life worlds and my coming-to-be as an ethical sub-
ject, an act-being whose self-experience or subjectivity is constituted through
an embodied encounter with foreign experience as such. Similar to Martin
Buber's and Max Scheler's emphases on reciprocal constitution, so too Edith
Stein acknowledges that the "I" comes to itself only in an I-Thou relationship.
Such reciprocity co-privileges alterity, dialogue, and mutuality as experiences
of transcendence. In effect, it is the other *qua* other that leads me to grasp
myself as embodied subjectivity.

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[52] Behnke, 156.

Without a non-primordial experience of a primordial experience, I would remain anonymous and insignificant, tossed in an undifferentiated stream of conscious life, a mere cog in an increasingly non-personal systematization of simulacra and identity politics. The notion of being-*for*-the-other is what makes empathy an ethical phenomenon. Education is essential for empathy, since it "leads out" [*e-ducere*] from the self towards the other through experiences of transcendence that shake the self to its core. Experiences of alterity entail givenness of practical application [*phronesis*] between I and Thou. Hence, alterity constitutes a particular kind of education or "leading out" by which the self finds itself both at home and adrift in every act of authentic self-givenness.

Edith Stein's phenomenological description of empathy takes into account kinds of constitutive differences that make genuine education possible through the productive givenness of values transcendentally constituted as a common good. My argument is that leading-out [*e-ducere*] "opens" new horizons of understanding. Experiences of foreign givenness are grasped as apprehensions of alterity and transcendence; hence, the phenomenology of education is a condition of possibility of every interpretation of value-acts by which meaning is constituted. Empathy is irreducibly other-directed. In empathy, I do not abolish the self-awareness of my own finite being by losing myself in the eternal being of the Other's transcendence. Rather, I come-to-myself as *this* person through the particular applicability of time, embodiment, and space. Education describes the process of sedimentation of understanding this radical opening-up of self to other.

This description of empathy as a kind of "leading-out" [*e-ducere*] from self to other is engendered through practical application [*phronesis*] that encounters the transcendence of the other as a source of ethical subjectivity that, in turn, ground the emergent givenness of notions of the common good. In effect, Edith Stein's phenomenological description of empathy offers an opportunity to expand our understanding of the importance of the phenomenology of education as a particular kind of leading-out [*e-ducere*] from presence to transcendence.

Education is thus a kind of "event," a condition of possibility of encountering the impossible. Similarly, what is encountered in empathy is also an

experience of the unknowability of foreign experience –alterity, transcendence, otherness– constituted non-primordially. Hence, what is given in terms of presence in the phenomenology of empathy shares a similar structure of givenness to what is given in acts of genuine education, namely, the emergence and concealing of a non-primordial experience of primordial experience. Alterity names the givenness of the particular embodied manifestness of the *this-ness* of this human person, encountered in *this* body, and grasped in terms of radical individuality on the one hand, and also in terms of a "good" that is shared intersubjectively, on the other hand.

The Other, therefore, is not the subject of empathy, but its effect through an encounter or "leading-out" from manifest ignorance to ignorant manifestness. What is given in every act of empathy, then, is precisely what cannot be given, what leads out, what remains always and already a trace of what cannot be given. Edith Stein's phenomenology of education in effect names this manifestation in its practical applicability, that is, as the sedimentation of meanings given to it through the history of ideas, even as a metaphysical principle. The givenness of such radical otherness, therefore, has many names: infinity, transcendence, alterity, the eternal. The intersubjective description of empathy, however, is not merely relegated to historical speculation. It is constitutive. As a rupture in meaning and expectability, the transcendence of the Other "calls" me into a reciprocal and dialogical relationship with "the community of all affected parties."[53] And so it is through, with, and in this ever-expansive understanding of education as encompassing a community of inter-relationality that the self becomes itself, a for-itself constituted as both I and Thou, with-and-for-others.

Edith Stein's phenomenological description of empathy as non-primordial experience takes seriously the Other as an embodied other like me, only different. This sense of alterity impels me to recognize foreign subjectivity as a givenness that commands me to act as a moral and ethical agent. Through the emergence of a shared, common good, the Other leads-me-out [*e-ducere*] of my own solipsistic indifference towards encountering a lifeworld constituted by alterity and transcendence, a lifeworld of inherent differences and reciprocities in which I affect and am affected by every other.

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[53] Vetlesen, 332.

Empathy engenders a kind of ethical command by which I am invited to envision a different kind of world, a world of *difference*, a world without violence, without dogmatism; a truly *post*-post-September 11th world. To my mind, Edith Stein's description of empathy –and by extension her account of the phenomenology of empathy in terms of foreign experience– offers a "twenty-first century" practical application of education as a condition of possibility of a good that is shared and constituted in common through the de-sedimentation of established principles and powers. Such a "common good" would be truly and radically other, daring to share in common what is uncommonly shared: namely, difference-itself.

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