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Edith Stein's Philosophy of Personal Becoming:
On Her Theory of Values, Gender, and its Relevance for Feminist and Critical Phenomenology

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M.A., Western University, 2016
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An abstract of
A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the
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Abstract

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By Rachel Bath

This dissertation recuperates marginalized philosopher Edith Stein's philosophy of personal becoming to intervene in contemporary debates in feminist and critical phenomenology. To effect this intervention, the first three chapters of the dissertation develop a three-part systematic treatment of personal becoming as it is variously figured in the thought of Edith Stein. First, I argue that we as psycho-physical individuals are *formed* by the world and by lived experience through various material, psychical, and spiritual forces. Our personal character is produced (and revised) by the way formation, as a set of ongoing processes, realizes the inner and outer circumstances of our lives; thus, our subjectivity is always revisable, emergent, and contingent. Second, I show that we are not passively shaped by experience but *self-form* according to our values and based upon what we learn about ourselves through empathic experiences with others. This self-formative activity has an ethical dimension that is fulfilled when we become our fullest selves by unfolding our souls, which provide the innate core or essence of who we are. Third, I demonstrate the role of gender and education in Stein's account of personal becoming. I argue that while Stein's vision of gendered development promisingly entails unfolding our gendered essence (masculine or feminine) in highly specific and personal ways throughout our lives, she compromises her account with a vision of girls' education that encourages girls to develop so-called 'feminine' traits that ultimately encourage self-displacement, submissiveness to men, and complicity with the oppression of other girls and women. In the fourth and final chapter, I draw on elements from Stein's philosophy of personal becoming to identify and ameliorate shortcomings in feminist and critical phenomenology. Feminist and critical phenomenologies both seek to produce social, cultural, and political change in individuals and in the world, but neither methodology has sufficiently addressed how individual or systematic change is affected. I argue that Stein's understanding of *motivated value change* is a crucial supplement that illustrates how individuals integrate and mobilize changing social and political values. This concept may be recuperated to assist feminist and critical phenomenologies in realizing their transformative aim.

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I come at last to the person for whom words can never be sufficient. Thank you to my partner and my love, Thomas, for all that you are and all that you have been. I wouldn't be here without you. Sorry, no, *we* wouldn't be here without you. There is no accounting for the ways you've shaped this project, although your profound and selfless dedication to helping me with my thinking and writing surely stands out, as do the thinking walks, the tasty meals, and the ability to play video games to decompress on the computer you built me. It has been my life's pleasure to be your partner and to grow with you. I look forward to much continued smeshing of the air.

Contents

Dissertation Introduction

> Human existence is an existence that is broken open inwardly, that is opened up for itself, but precisely with this it is an existence that is broken open and opened up outwardly, that can receive a world into itself. What all this means: to be in oneself, to be open to oneself and to others, [as well as] how the experience of oneself and the experience of external being, above all of other human beings, intertwine: these are topics for great investigations.[1]
>
> – Edith Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person*

This dissertation recuperates marginalized philosopher Edith Stein's philosophy of personal becoming in order to intervene in contemporary debates in feminist and critical phenomenology. To effect this intervention, the first three chapters of the dissertation develop a three-part systematic treatment of personal becoming as it is variously figured in the thought of Edith Stein. First, I argue that we as psycho-physical individuals are *formed* by the world and by lived experience through various material, psychical, and spiritual forces. Our personal character is produced (and revised) by the way formation, as a set of ongoing processes, realizes the inner and outer circumstances of our lives; thus, our subjectivity is always revisable, emergent, and contingent. Second, I show that we are not passively shaped by experience but *self-form* according to our values and based upon what we learn about ourselves through empathic experiences with others. This self-formative activity has an ethical dimension that is fulfilled when we become our fullest selves by unfolding our souls, which provide the innate core of who we are. Third, I demonstrate the role of gender and education in Stein's account of personal becoming. I argue that while Stein's vision of gendered development promisingly entails unfolding our gendered essence (masculine or feminine) in highly specific and personal ways throughout our lives, she compromises her account with a vision of girls' education that encourages girls to develop so-called 'feminine' traits that ultimately encourage self-displacement, submissiveness to men, and

[1] Edith Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, vol. 14, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 32.

complicity with the oppression of other girls and women. In the fourth and final chapter, I draw on elements from Stein's philosophy of personal becoming to identify and ameliorate shortcomings in feminist and critical phenomenology. Feminist and critical phenomenologies both seek to produce social, cultural, and political change in individuals and in the world, but neither methodology has sufficiently addressed how individual or systematic change is affected. I argue that Stein's understanding of *motivated value change* is a crucial supplement that illustrates how individuals integrate and mobilizing changing social and political values, and, thus, can be used to help feminist and critical phenomenologies realize their transformative aim.

Before I can say more about the intervention that this dissertation accomplishes, however, it is important that I introduce Stein herself to readers. In the following short biography, my goal is not only to depict the major intellectual achievements and events of Stein's life, but also to share some specific details about her life that reveal *who Stein was as a person* and specifically *her style or way of living*. These details, in my view, *depict and illustrate* some of the major themes that constitute her philosophy of personal becoming. In other words, the way Stein lived her life shows how we can respond to the contingency that shapes us and our lives through a resolute willing, and in so doing, she depicts what it means to be a person that 'carries its own center of gravity inside itself,' which she understands as the ethical goal of personal becoming.

A Stylized Introduction to the Life of Edith Stein

To introduce the life of Edith Stein, it is necessary to begin with the recorded facts. But these facts of Stein's life, although they may chronicle her major accomplishments, achievements, and events, ultimately do not bring us nearer to who she was. Indeed, there is what happens, and there is the matter of how a person chooses what they do in the face of those facts. Thus, to get a better sense of Stein *as a person*, we ought to also consider the choices she made, and how those choices reflect

her style of living. These choices, to my mind, serve as the best introduction to her life and philosophy, for they demonstrate how Stein personally grappled with her philosophical notions of what it means to be *free*, what it means to *become a full person*, and what it is to *be responsible to and for others*.

Edith Stein was a German Jewish woman born to an observant Jewish family in Breslau, Prussia on October 12, 1891. She became an atheist in her teenage years and was dedicated to her studies, passing the *Arbitur* examination with excellent results. She began her university studies at the University at Breslau in 1911 but transferred to the University of Göttingen to study phenomenology under Edmund Husserl in 1913. During her tenure under Husserl, she became a central member in the early phenomenological circles. Moved by Germany's declaration of war, in 1914 Stein returned to Breslau to complete nursing training, eventually taking a post at a Red Cross lazaretto in Mährish Weißkirchen on April 7, 1915. After the lazaretto closed, she resumed her studies, completing her dissertation on empathy at the University of Freiburg (where Husserl had moved during the war) to become the second woman in Germany to have ever achieved a philosophy doctorate in 1916. This dissertation was partially published under the title *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917). She worked as an assistant for Husserl from 1916-1918, during which time she compiled and significantly edited the manuscripts that became *Ideas II* and *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness* from Husserl's Gabelsberger scraps. Stein ultimately resigned from her position, citing Husserl's refusal to see her as an interlocutor. She herself wished to become a professor of philosophy, and accordingly applied to habilitate in 1919, a process which involved writing a *Habilitationsschrift, Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (1922). However, her application was rejected before consideration by the Freiburg

faculty because of her sex.[2] Stein continued to write independent works, including *An Investigation Concerning the State* (1925) and *Introduction to Philosophy* (1920/1924).

In 1921, Stein read St. Theresa of Avila's autobiography. This encounter, which Stein understood as an encounter with "the truth," motivated her conversion to Catholicism in 1922. She wished at this point to enter the Carmelite order as a nun but was dissuaded by her spiritual advisors and by how her mother would be impacted by the decision to cloister. Stein then committed herself to an intensive study of St. Thomas Aquinas, and her intellectual work sought to reconcile phenomenology with scholasticism. She translated Aquinas' *De Veritate* into German (1931-1932/2008ab), and in time completed a second *Habilitationsschrift*, *Potency and Act* (1931).[3] Alongside these intellectual activities, she worked as a teacher, first hosting lessons on phenomenology in Breslau, then finding employment in a Dominican girls' school. She eventually became known for her work as a teacher, scholar, and an advocate for education reform in Germany. In the 1930's she was a frequent invited lecturer at large Catholic organizations, where she would speak on the topic of girls' education, women's vocations, and women's nature, often highlighting the failings of the political reforms of the Weimar Republic with regards to women, the shortcomings of bourgeois German feminism, and the negative rising influence of National Socialism on women's experiences. Eventually, she prepared a second application for Habilitation (1930-1931), but her plans to apply were suspended when she accepted what would ultimately be a short-lived teaching post at the Institute for Scientific Pedagogy (1932-1933).

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[2] To become a Full Professor in Germany, two different qualifications must be achieved: the completion of a PhD and the completion of Habilitation. Habilitation is earned through achievements in research and teaching, as well as the completion of a *Habilitationsschrift*, which is a written thesis with high methodological and content demands.

[3] The Thomas translation, entitled *Thomas von Aquin: Über die Wahrheit 1* and *2*, was written in 1931-1932, but published in Stein's Gesamtausgabe in 2008.

National Socialists seized power in Germany in January 1933. On April 19, 1933, Stein was dismissed from her position at the Institute due to the passing of the antisemitic "Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service," which banned Jewish people from civil service. She now moved to fulfil her long-held desire to join the Carmelite order, entering the Carmelite convent at Cologne in October 1933. She entered the novitiate in April 1934, taking on the religious name Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She took her perpetual vows four years later. During her time in the convent, Stein began the incomplete autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family*, and she also wrote *Finite and Eternal Being* (published posthumously in 1950), *The Science of the Cross* (published posthumously in 1950), and *Ways to Know God: The 'Symbolic Theology' of Dionysius the Areopagite and Its Factual Presuppositions* (published posthumously in 1946). Rising antisemitic aggression by the Nazis motivated Stein's transfer from the convent in Cologne to a convent at Echt, Holland in 1938. Dutch bishops condemned Nazi antisemitism on July 26, 1942, which led to retaliatory arrests by the Gestapo of "non-Aryan" Roman Catholics. Stein and her sister Rosa were arrested in Echt on August 2, 1942. They were shipped by cattle train to Auschwitz, where they likely perished on August 9, 1942. For her sufferings and her sacrifice, Pope John Paul II later named Stein a martyr for the Catholic faith. He beatified her in 1987, before canonizing her as a Catholic saint in 1998.[4] She is now known as one of the six patron saints of Europe.

With these details of Stein's life in mind, I will now provide a series of partial sketches of Stein with the intention of forwarding more about her as a person. Each will also show how she grappled with the meaning of her commitment to the philosophical ideals embodied in her account of personal becoming. First, across her life Stein demonstrated a resolute willing, insofar as she

[4] There is some controversy regarding this choice, for it appears to reject the argument that Stein was killed for her Jewish ancestry.

consistently rejected passive resignation to circumstances outside her control; second, Stein consistently demonstrated deep a commitment to social and political change, even if her understanding of what that change entailed dramatically shifted across her life; and third, testimonials of Stein's final days attest to her commitment to service for humanity via service to others, and her self-grounded and self-aware bearing.

Leading historian and scholar of Stein, Joyce Avrech Berkman, argues that "whenever she experienced a major reversal in her plans, Stein eschewed a passive, resigned response in favor of active reevaluation of her direction and reassertion of personal freedom."[5] Time and again, Stein was forced, by circumstances outside of her control, to reconstruct her life's path and the goals she had set for herself along that path. For example, when her first application for Habilitation was summarily rejected, Stein was confronted with the unceremonious termination of her goal of becoming a philosophy professor. She did not then abandon her intellectual goals, for she understood then, as she had understood earlier in her life when awaiting the results of her *Arbitur* examinations, that "we are in the world to serve humanity … this is best accomplished when doing that for which one has the requisite talents."[6] Despite bouts of depression, and serious, debilitating questions about how she could move forward, Stein responded to the obfuscation of her goals by seeking out different direction for her intellectual gifts and ambitions. She began teaching, first private classes on phenomenology and later general education classes in a girls' Dominican school. Her conversion to Catholicism ultimately opened new avenues for her to develop and apply her intellectual gifts in the service of others. Stein's self-professed quest for "truth" aside, I appreciate Stein's move towards Catholicism as an exemplary instance of her encountering the contingency

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[5] Joyce Avrech Berkman, "Edith Stein: A Life Unveiled and Veiled," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 82, no. 1 (2008): 9, https://doi.org/10.5840/acpq200882117.

[6] Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: 1891-1916*, ed. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koeppel, vol. One, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1986), 177.

of her own existence, and then deliberately seeking out a space for agency elsewhere, one that would allow her to develop and apply her best talents. Stein similarly positively appropriated deeply distressing circumstances when she was dismissed from her teaching post at the Institute for Scientific Pedagogy. She made the deliberate choice to enter the convent at a time when it had been made "luminously clear to me that once again God's hand was heavy on his people, and that the destiny of this people was my own."[7] For Stein, it was Jesus' cross that was laid on Jewish people, and she wished to help by accepting his cross "willingly in the name of all" Jewish people, even those who did not recognize it as such.[8] Although her choice to enter the convent appeared an abandonment of her Jewish communities in a perilous time, Stein understood it as a form of service for humanity, as well as for her Jewish people, one that would allow her to bring all of herself to her service.

Part of Stein's vision for how she could serve humanity through the application of her personal talents entailed a commitment to social and political change throughout her life. As a university student, Stein was passionately involved in political organizations, including the Prussian Society for Women's Right to Vote and the Women's Student Union. In her youth, she identified as a "radical feminist."[9] She actively campaigned for women's right to vote, and when she was denied habilitation based on her sex, in 1919 she appealed to the Prussian Ministry of Science, Art, and Education to address sexual discrimination in the Habilitation process. One year after her letter, the Prussian Ministry ruled that sexual discrimination could not impede Habilitation. Later, as she established herself as a teacher, Stein became involved in advocating

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[7] Edith Stein, "The Road to Carmel: How I Entered the Carmel in Cologne," trans. C. Hastings, *Life of the Spirit (1946-1964)* 4, no. 44 (1950): 355.
[8] Stein, 356.
[9] Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters: 1916-1942*, ed. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koeppel, The Collected Works of Edith Stein, V (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1993), 99.

education reform, especially for girls' education. She revised curriculum, presented her curriculum proposals, and developed and shared a gendered metaphysics that belied her pedagogical interventions. Her goal here was to better prepare girls for a professional future in Germany, and, further, to give them what she believed were the necessary tools to unite their feminine essence with their personal talents so that they can bring those talents to the world (a topic I will explore and contextualize in Chapter 3 of this dissertation). Much later, when Stein was dismissed from her position at the Institute, she knew yet again that she needed to act, this time for her Jewish people, and so she requested a meeting with Pope Pius XI to express her concerns. When she could not meet with him, she wrote a letter to him in April of 1933 requesting an encyclical condemning the actions of the National Socialist government, which purported to act in line with Christianity.[10] Her letter was forward by the Archabbot Raphael Walzer of Beuron Abbey, but Stein only received a written blessing from the Pope for her and her family in response. In each of these instances, we see Stein employing different means of accomplishing social and political change, thereby remaining faithful to her sense that one develops oneself to become oneself with and for others.

Eyewitness accounts of Stein's final days further underscore the depth of her commitment to her chosen way of life. Accounts demonstrate that when Stein and her sister Rosa were arrested by the Gestapo, Stein soothed a disoriented Rosa by telling her, "Come, Rosa. We're going for our people."[11] Stein was fully aware of their future, speaking plainly about it with officials who recognized her at train stations and detention camps along the way to Auschwitz. Yet she saw her death as one that she could bear for their people, in solidarity with them, and as an expression of her Catholic faith. In this regard, Stein demonstrated a literal Levinasian substitution. As a Dutch

[10] An encyclical is a papal document sent by the pope to bishops or a wider audience.
[11] Herbstrith Waltraud, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, trans. Bernard Bonowitz (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1985), 180.

official at Westerbork detention center testified, Stein refused any special treatment based on her Catholicism, understanding herself instead as sharing "in the fate of her brothers and sisters."[12] Survivors testify that Stein cared for the other prisoners during the train ride, especially caring for women and children, as well as washing clothes and cleaning quarters when they stopped along the way to Auschwitz. Survivors and officials who encountered here all remarked that she was distinguished from the others in the way she held herself—with a resolute awareness, a deep sense of compassion, and with unwavering faith. Many years later, a Jesuit friend of Stein's, Father Hirschmann, reflected on Stein's final choices, noting that she believed "that as a Jew she was being called to share in her people's sufferings, and she solemnly committed herself before God not to let her vows or baptism give her the slightest advantage of the most wretched of her persecuted people."[13]

As her philosophy of personal becoming underscores, Stein viewed us all as essentially free—but also only insofar as we are *essentially responsible for others*. And so, we assume our freedom through the way we become ourselves, regarding both the ways we choose to shape ourselves, and the ways we are shaped by circumstances and forces outside of our control. We are each born with innate predispositions and talents, and we become most fully ourselves when we develop and unfold those talents, through the proper application and exercise of those talents. By facing life with a resolute willing, refusing passive resignation and instead choosing to exercise agency in whatever ways possible, Stein demonstrated throughout her life what she believed it meant to be human, namely, to continually develop and to apply *yourself towards the exercise of those talents in the service of others particularly, and humanity broadly.* It is by following Stein

[12] Waltraud, 187.
[13] Waltraud, 194.

in this regard that my dissertation aims to both restore Stein's philosophy to its rightful place in the history of early phenomenology, and to demonstrate its persisting relevance for us today.

Dissertation Methods, Aims, and Contributions

This dissertation performs both a *historical recuperation* and a *contemporary application* of Stein's work. Stein's work, along with the work of many women in the early phenomenological movement, including Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Gerda Walther, Erika Gothe, Else Voigtländer, among others, has been neglected in academic scholarship and in the tradition of phenomenology. (Many of these names are entirely unknown not only to philosophers in other fields, but also to expert scholars in phenomenology.) This neglect, while in part due to the destructive impact of World Wars I and II on the movement, was also due to the legacy of sexism and racism that permeated the academic discipline of philosophy. The first aim of my dissertation is thus to contribute to our understanding of phenomenology by recuperating the work of Stein.

My historical recuperation of Stein's work advances a systematic treatment of her theory of personal becoming. To gain a philosophical understanding of Stein's theory of personal becoming, it was important to reconstruct what I see as her most significant views on the subject. To identify those claims, I organized my inquiry into and across Stein's work according to her established views on the dimensions that constitute the human person. Stein understands personhood not as a juridical concept, nor as commensurate with the concept of human being, but as the unity of body, psyche, and spirit. These dimensions are integrated within and communicate amongst one another; their exchanges unify into a self. For example, if I stub my toe, I register this pain at the somatic, psychic, and spiritual levels, and through the processes, functions, and faculties appropriate to each. Thus, while my perceptual sensibility registers the pain, my psyche processes the impact of that pain (e.g., my vision dims and I feel briefly woozy), and my spirit grasps the

meaning or sense of the event for me (e.g., I henceforth move more gingerly around the coffee table). I employed Stein's concept of the person as a unity as a tool to isolate, elaborate, and distinguish the processes that belong to each dimension of the person (i.e., body, psyche, and spirit) and to determine how each of these processes contributed to the ongoing higher-order process of personal becoming. To this end, although my treatment of personal becoming in this dissertation is perhaps not complete (I fear the length of the book that attempts to calculate every element), I nevertheless present a systematic account that explains each of the *major* processes and moments that are involved in personal becoming.

Through this systematic framework, I determined that the developmental processes that belong to the realm of causality (both natural and psychic) are the *formative* processes that *shape* us, and the developmental processes that belong to the realm of spirit are the *self-formative* processes that we use when shaping ourselves. I also determined that there are elements that *modify* the process of personal becoming for each individual, such as gender, education, the circumstances of one's life, and one's lifepower. Ultimately, my historical treatment of Stein's understanding of personal becoming resolved into three chapters, which I will outline at the end of this Introduction. For now, it is sufficient to indicate that in chapter one, I cover her understanding of how we are formed by the facticity of experience; in chapter two, I demonstrate how Stein articulates our participation in our own becoming based upon acts of empathy; and in chapter three, I show how Stein, anticipating later feminist interventions in phenomenology, emphasizes the role of gender and education in the process of personal becoming.

While my explicit goal in this dissertation is neither to rethink nor reconstruct our understanding of the phenomenological canon, foregrounding Stein's original philosophical contributions necessarily presents us with a different picture of the early phenomenological

movement than the image we are familiar with, and thereby contests our familiar understanding of this tradition. As Dan Zahavi notes, the common narrative of the history and legacy of the phenomenological movement focuses on post-Heideggerean phenomenology, finding in Heidegger and subsequent others a corrective to Husserl's supposed failure to think embodiment and intersubjectivity due to his transcendental idealism and methodological solipsism.[14] However, this understanding of the movement focuses almost exclusively upon the contributions of male phenomenologists (e.g., thinkers like Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty) and marginalizes the original contributions of women active in the early phenomenological movement. Recuperating Stein's work encourages the emergence of a different narrative about early phenomenology in Germany, one that moves beyond the Heidegger-Husserl split, and foregrounds an entirely different set of concerns than the usual debates around intersubjectivity, embodiment, idealism, and solipsism. While developing this different narrative is outside the scope of my dissertation project, I ultimately understand my dissertation as contributing a parallax view on the picture of the early phenomenological movement, one that may help ameliorate its assumed androcentric trajectory.

And so, building from the implicit work my systematic treatment accomplishes, the second explicit aim of my dissertation is to demonstrate the ongoing relevance of Stein's philosophy today. In my view, Stein's phenomenology is an original and insightful development that not only transforms our understanding of the tradition, but which also introduces concepts and issues that bear on the concerns of phenomenology today. While there is some other contemporary philosophical research that mobilizes Stein's philosophy in order to address current problems in

[14] Dan Zahavi, "Intersubjectivity, Sociality, Community: The Contribution of the Early Phenomenologists," in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Phenomenology* (Oxford University Press, 2018), 1, https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780198755340.013.29.

philosophy (for example, Stein's work is now circulating in philosophy of mind, especially in debates regarding emotions, consciousness, empathy, and mental illness), much of the scholarship on Stein is dedicated to ongoing efforts to recuperate her work and revise our understanding of the history of philosophy. My second aim in the dissertation is thus to go beyond this kind of historical recuperation by demonstrating the relevance of her work today for contemporary debates. This aim guided the historical work from the outset and resolved into a sustained engagement with contemporary feminist and critical phenomenology in chapter four.

Contemporary feminist and critical phenomenologists have argued that experience is not neutral but is shaped in advance by systems of power. For example, when the sexist belief that women are not physically capable is internalized, it leads to women underperforming in physically demanding situations, which in turn reinforces the initial sexist belief.[15] While contemporary feminist and critical phenomenological discourse convincingly demonstrates that we are shaped by oppressive social, cultural, and political forces, there is not yet a satisfying answer in these discourses as to how we can respond to the way these oppressive forces shape experience and subjectivities. In my view, what is needed is an explanation of how personal change occurs, so that we can be attentive towards the work required to become oriented towards contesting internalized hegemonic visions of the world. My dissertation intervenes at precisely this point, by showing how Stein's philosophy provides an account of not only of *how we change*, but more specifically, *how through self-formation we determine ourselves to live ethically in relation to our values, especially if those values run counter to dominant ideals or expectations.*[16]

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[15] Iris Marion Young, *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*, 1st ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/0195161920.001.0001.

[16] I provide a preliminary version of this argument in a published article for *Puncta*. In this article, I argue that Stein's concept of attitudinal intervention is a useful strategy for actively self-forming our values according to the demands changing social and political values place on individuals. Cf. Rachel Bath, "Edith

At present, work on Stein belongs to a small but burgeoning field. Much of the scholarship on Stein either emerges from Religious Studies and focuses on her theological contributions, or it emerges from Philosophy and directly contributes to current efforts to revise the standard narrative of the phenomenological movement by incorporating women's voices back into the tradition. In both cases, scholarship on Stein focuses on her views on empathy and community (Calcagno, 2007, 2014; Vendrell Ferran, 2015), her philosophical anthropology (Moran and Magrì, eds., 2017), her writing on women (Baseheart, 1989; Borden, 2006; Calcagno, ed., 2016), and her synthesis of Thomism and Phenomenology in her later work (Baseheart, 1997; Lebech, 2010; *Quaestiones Disputatae*, 2013). Intellectual biography is another major area in Stein studies, often but not exclusively written from a theological perspective (Herbstrith, 1985; Posselt, 2005; MacIntyre, 2006). Surprisingly, despite ongoing efforts to recuperate women's voices and contributions in philosophy, feminist philosophy has largely had little to do with Stein (exceptions include Baseheart, 1989; Brenner, 1994). Feminist and critical phenomenology likewise have not had any sustained engagement with Stein, except for my *Puncta* article (Bath, 2019), and some brief references to Stein (Stoller, 2017; Al-Saji, 2017).

My dissertation intervenes in each of these fields. My approach emphasizes Stein's *phenomenological* work over the theological. When I turn to her theological work, I do so in order to elaborate concepts initially developed in the phenomenological work or to critically contest the later turns that Stein's thinking takes in her development of her view of personal becoming. The latter approach is particularly evident in chapter three, which, from the perspective of some Stein scholars, may be heretical. Given this concern, allow me a short *apologia*.

Stein's Contribution to Critical Phenomenology: On Self-Formation and Value-Modification," *Puncta* 4, no. 2 (December 2021): 24–42, https://doi.org/10.5399/PJCP.v4i2.3.

There is a *manner* appropriate to traditional philosophical endeavors in the history of philosophy, and chapter three violates some of the conventions of that manner. For example, the principle of charity advises generous readings; the value of the intervention is measured by characteristics like precision and correctness of interpretation and analysis; we as historians and philosophers are expected to project ourselves into the author's place to inhabit their thinking, thereby suspending our own contexts and subjectivity in order to discover the 'truth' of their work; and finally an affective stance of reverence is expected to characterize our relationship with the philosopher, their philosophy, and the canon. These conventions are common in Stein scholarship, which is no surprise: in attempting to elevate Stein to the ranks of established philosophers—a rank she surely deserves but was denied—many scholars adopt the classic conventions that defined how we do 'real' philosophy, even though these conventions have ultimately contributed to the androcentrism of the field. Indeed, it is not uncommon to see literal expressions of praise and gratitude to Stein in published scholarship. While these expressions may be appropriate to theological accounts that approach her works as the words of a venerable saint, I find they all too often get in the way of philosophical accounts. Because of this, there is often an implicit in-group expectation of readership that characterizes philosophical work on Stein. Most of the scholarship on Stein is written in a way that is difficult for someone who is not an expert in early phenomenology to follow, which is an ironic outcome given that we in Stein studies are attempting to help make Stein and her work known, certainly to other philosophers but (hopefully) also in general.

The critical tone and analysis I develop in chapter three is thus a break from the inherited forms of analysis and rhetorical choices common in Stein scholarship. I justify my choices in this chapter by aligning my work with the work performed by feminist philosophers in feminist history

of philosophy. Feminist history of philosophy as a field often does away with charity, precision, correctness, fidelity, and reverence. Instead, it provides deliberate mis-readings, investigations into the unspoken or invisible elements and beings in texts, and affective positions like outrage, dismay, irony, and humor. It frequently rejects the ideal of imaginative projection that characterizes traditional history of philosophy, recognizing instead the importance of situated readings that implicate the researcher and make explicit their historical inheritances and their complicity with the social, cultural, and political legacies that define their worlds. In these regards, feminist history of philosophy frames the responsibility philosophers have when doing historical work as a responsibility that attends in different ways to the past, the present, and the future. As Cynthia Freeland notes, feminist philosophers have a responsibility to ask, "what should a feminist philosopher do with the past in order to achieve feminist goals of the present and the future?"[17]

Feminist history of philosophy is ultimately no longer merely about discovering the past, but also about bringing the past into the present to change what may come. In chapter three I follow these gestures: in place of reverence, I substitute a fond but critical approach to Stein; and in place of imaginative projection into Stein's mind via the words of her texts, I attempt to achieve a historical sensitivity to Stein's work that draws out elements previously undertheorized, like her engagement with National Socialism and her critique of German feminism, while also recognizing the pressing demands of our time. Indeed, this chapter reckons with Stein's articulation of women's becoming as a way of (implicitly) responding to the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* in America, which had previously guaranteed women's bodily autonomy by law and played a fundamental role in protecting equal citizenship for women in America. In the wake of this

[17] Cynthia A. Freeland, "Feminism and Ideology in Ancient Philosophy," *Apeiron* 33, no. 4 (January 2000): 390.

fundamental change in women's status and autonomy, I could not ignore what I saw as concerning elements in Stein's discussion of what it means to be a woman and how girls should be educated.

Ultimately, my point is precisely that if we systematically construct and think through Stein's own philosophy of personal becoming, there need not be limiting concepts that pre-define womanhood or girlhood. Rather, gendered personal becoming is about becoming who we are as a manner of negotiating our responsibility to and for others, in the face of the facticity of experience which forms us we also self-form. To explain how I cash this out, in the next section I provide an overview of the structure of my dissertation.

An Overview of the Structure of the Dissertation

My dissertation recuperates Stein's work and addresses its contemporary import across four chapters. Because Stein's thinking of formation and self-formation developed across her life, my project involves syncretizing the principles and descriptions of formation and self-formation as Stein developed them over time. In this regard, my dissertation examines Stein's early phenomenological writings and her writings from what is characterized as a middle comparative period, during which she sought to reconcile phenomenology with St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy. My interpretation of Stein's account of formation and self-formation foregrounds her early writings, especially *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917), *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (1922), and *Einführung in die Philosophie* (Introduction to Philosophy) (1918-1920, rev. 1931). I further consult her middle work to flesh out the principles and descriptions detailed in the early work. In this task, I turn to *Der Aufbau der Menschlichen Person* (The Structure of the Human Person) (1932) and *Essays on Woman* (1928-1933). *Einführung* and *Aufbau* remain untranslated; I work with the original German and translate these texts into English as needed. The dissertation as a whole is weighted towards the historical work, as chapters one-three each develop

a part of the picture of Stein's vision of personal development. However, these recuperative efforts are guided at the outset by the intervention I am making in feminist and critical phenomenology in chapter four.

Chapter One

This chapter provides the first half of Stein's phenomenological account of personal becoming. Here, I focus on formation, or how we are shaped throughout our lives by various formative forces. I argue that we as *psycho-physical individuals* are subject to formation, and that formation occurs through the dual processes of *bodily and psychic development*, and *the unfolding of the soul*. These processes are differentially influenced by individual life circumstances, our experiences, and by the lifepower we each experience at every passing moment. Formation involves complex, interacting processes that never resolve and are always ongoing throughout out lives: for example, the soul unfolds by trafficking in values and through the production of personality; the psyche develops as character with relation to values but based also upon psychic causality; the body is formed by material forces, and so on. The takeaway of this chapter is that there are a myriad of forces that can form us throughout our lives, and that these forces work upon us at many different levels. In the end, what is produced is a certain character, which is part of the raw material that self-formation acts upon.

Chapter Two

This chapter provides the second half of Stein's phenomenological account of personal becoming. Here, I focus on self-formation, or how we participate in our own personal becoming throughout our lives. Self-formation is a *spiritual* activity, and thus involves the exercise of a free ego that makes its self. Self-formation is possible thanks to empathy, which introduces us to the perspective others have on us, verifies that we are in an intersubjectively constituted world, and teaches us

how to assume a position of objectivity vis-à-vis ourselves. In each of these ways, empathy provides the self-knowledge that partially motivates our self-formative efforts. Self-formation is ultimately accomplished thanks to motivation, for all change involves and emerges from a successful motivational context. This means that we need to want to change, etc., for it to happen according to our own willed intentions. Finally, self-formation is our ultimate ethical imperative as persons, as our freedom entails our responsibility for who we are and who we become; thus, who we become is not simply a personal or aesthetic project, but it is also an ethical project that necessitates our becoming our 'fullest' self, that is, a version of ourselves that allows for the fullest unfolding of the soul possible.

Chapter Three

This chapter introduces a modification of Stein's phenomenological account of personal becoming, by attending to her later conceptualization of the role of gender and education in personal becoming. Unlike the first two chapters, this later chapter focuses upon Stein's phenomenological-theological account of personal becoming. As I demonstrate in the chapter, there is a great deal to admire about this account: Stein is the first phenomenologist to consider the role of gender, which was an accomplishment incorrectly assumed to belong to feminist phenomenologists of the 1980's. In addition, Stein is actively responding to challenges facing women during this time, including, (1) the failure of the Weimar Republic to actually change the condition of women, despite a great deal of change regarding the status and opinion of women, and some significant policy and legislative activities that aimed to make women equal citizens to men in German law; (2) the range of general sentiments concerning women that were common in Germany during this time, including romanticized and idealized projections of womanhood; (3) changing national values and feminine values (for example, the increase of sexual activity outside

of marriage, decreasing rates of childbirth and marriage, etc.); (4) what she sees as the failure of German feminism, namely, its lack of consideration for woman's essence; (5) rising National Socialism, along with the growing sentiment that women should return to the domestic realm and be the guardians and promulgators for Aryan values and National Socialism's racial-eugenical policies and visions. However, I think that Stein's theory of gendered personal becoming is ultimately rather unsatisfactory today. I argue that Stein's account of woman's essence as a spiritual disposition and a principle of organization is itself acceptable, but her concretization of this conceptualization in her theory of education is not. For while Stein initially seems to present an account of womanhood that accommodates diversity, her positioning of Mary and Eve as the respective archetypes of positive and failed femininity, and her installation of these archetypes as the guiding model for girls' education, betrays the promise of her promises for diversity. I claim that Stein's account destines girls to be wives and mothers, and we end up with a vision of ideal femininity that honors and elevates specific qualities of the feminine soul that, when concretely embodied, require women to displace and empty themselves of themselves, so that they may give themselves up and over to men and to God, thereby subjugating themselves, and participating in the subjugation and oppression of other women.

Chapter Four

This chapter provides an initial approach to a Steinian feminist and critical phenomenology. Here, I apply what I see as the most promising parts of Stein's theory of personal becoming to a problem I identify in the methodologies and accomplishments of both feminist and critical phenomenology. While feminist and critical phenomenology are different fields, they share the same mission, and many of the same values. Both are socially and politically oriented and aim to identify oppressive habits, structures, institutions, and conditions of experience in order to transform them and

ultimately change the world. However, both, in my view, move too swiftly from description to prescription. A consideration of what is needed to accomplish actual change has not yet been given, despite the myriad of prescriptions proposed by feminist and critical phenomenologists. To address this gap, I argue that a Steinian intervention in feminist and critical phenomenology can attend to how individuals undergo and even initiate personal change in line with changing social, cultural, and political values. Personal change, on this account, is a *motivated change in values* that is highly individual. This means that if the strategies developed by feminist and critical phenomenologists are to enact change, they cannot do so in an abstract way; that is, strategic intervention is truly only helpful when concretely applied. By articulating *motivated change as a change in our value systems*, through Stein's account of personal becoming we can provide a reflexive and individuated account for how we as persons can both become the *type* of people who will change in relation to changing social and political values, and how we can account for the differential ways that general social and political values can be applied to diverse types of people.

Chapter 1: Forming the Psycho-Physical Subject: On the Developmental, Emergent, and Revisable Nature of Human Subjectivity

Introduction

If someone were asked about the notion of subjectivity in the phenomenological tradition, they may respond with one or many caricatures. They may describe Edmund Husserl's *transcendental subject* or *pure ego*, which apparently defines everything existent in relation to itself via its constituting activity, rendering objects, others, and the world nothing in-themselves.[18] Or they may describe post-Husserlian developments in subjectivity as a critical response to Husserl that began with the Husserl/Heidegger split. These critical developments reckon with Husserl's perceived failure to think embodiment and intersubjectivity properly due to his transcendental idealist commitments.[19] In this gesture, they may recall a series of alternative phenomenological subjects: for example, Martin Heidegger's *Dasein*, which although not a subject (yet commonly mis-portrayed as such) depicts finite human existence as being in the world; or Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *embodied subject*, which is geared into and understands the world via *sens*, the direction and meaning of perceptual sense; or Emmanuel Levinas's *sensible subject*, which highlights the limits of phenomenology through the ethical injunction posed by the other, for whom one is responsible; or Jean-Paul Sartre's *existential subject*, which foregrounds the subject's transcendental overcoming of their factical situation.

While each of these caricatures are reductive (and some even unfair), one major weakness of this narrative of the history and development of phenomenology is that it fails to consider the

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[18] Shlomit Baruch, "Transcendental Subjectivity in Husserl's *Ideas I*," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 35, no. 2 (January 2004): 204, https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2004.11007436; Roman Ingarden, *On the Motives Which Led Husserl to Transcendental Idealism*, vol. 64, Phaenomenologica (Dordrecht: Springer Netherlands, 1975), 21, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-010-1689-6.

[19] Zahavi, "Intersubjectivity, Sociality, Community: The Contribution of the Early Phenomenologists," 1.

contributions of early phenomenologists who, from the beginning, took issue with the seeming metaphysical consequences of Husserl's transcendental idealism and his concept of transcendental subjectivity.[20] One such challenge comes from the work of Edith Stein, a significant, albeit marginalized figure from the early phenomenological movement. Stein's realist phenomenology maintains "[a]n absolutely existing physical nature on the one hand" and "a distinctly structured subjectivity on the other," which entails that the subject must, in her view, be understood via *its being in the world and its relations with others*.[21] While Stein does not abandon Husserl's notion of the pure ego, nor his commitment to phenomenology as a method for gaining clarity of essences, for Stein the pure ago alone is no longer the ground for subjectivity. To seek clarity regarding the essence of subjectivity, Stein moves instead toward the phenomenology of the *person* (and in this, she anticipates some of Husserl's final developments).[22] The essence of the person is more than its ego; the essence of the person rather includes its ego-life, its body, soul, and spirit, as well as

[20] Early fractures in the phenomenological movement developed around Husserl's move toward transcendentalism in *Ideas I*. Many of Husserl's earliest students were dismayed by the perceived difference between Husserl's call to return to the things themselves in *Logical Investigations*, which was taken by many of Husserl's students to mean a return to actual objects, and his idealist turn in *Ideas I* that seemed to render objects dependent upon transcendental consciousness. The phenomenological community was divided in 1913 by this event, and camps developed between realist and idealist phenomenologists. For more on this historic event in the phenomenological movement, see Rodney K. B. Parker, "The Idealism-Realism Debate and the Great Phenomenological Schism," in *The Idealism-Realism Debate Among Edmund Husserl's Early Followers and Critics*, vol. 112, Contributions to Phenomenology (Switzerland: Springer, 2021).

[21] Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters: Letters to Roman Ingarden*, ed. Maria Amata Neyer, trans. Hugh Candler Hunt, vol. 12, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C: ICS Publications, 2014), 39–40.

[22] Colin J. Hahn argues that Husserl's late work on transcendental personhood offers a corrective to the caricature that Husserlian transcendental phenomenology is in tension with cultural, political, and embodied treatments of subjectivity. Addressing Husserl's work on personhood would take us too far and thus must be set aside. Cf. Colin J Hahn, "The Concept of Personhood in the Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl" (Wisconsin, Marquette University, 2012), 2.

its character that "*develops* itself or its qualities under the influence of external circumstances, and in this *development* brings an original disposition to unfold."[23]

This *dissertation* develops Stein's depiction of human subjectivity as a *developmental subjectivity* through an encounter with her philosophy of personal becoming. While Stein's realist phenomenology anticipates with many later developments in phenomenology, especially as regards her appreciation of intersubjectivity, affectivity, embodiment, and materiality, her understanding of the developmental character of humans (what she calls the *Entwicklungscharakter der Menschen*) is, to my mind, one of her most original and interesting contributions to the phenomenological tradition. As Stein understands it, humans develop in the tension between inner nature and circumstance. As she puts it, humans, as living beings, are in "a constant *process of development*, a constant *changing* (*Sich*-verändern), in which the variation of the external nature has its origin in the nucleus."[24] It is precisely this developmental character that distinguishes Stein's conception of subjectivity from other phenomenological accounts.

I argue that Stein's understanding of the developmental character of human subjectivity is best elucidated by her philosophy of personal becoming. Personal becoming involves two processes, namely, formation and self-formation. The concepts of formation and self-formation show how we become ourselves when shaped by inner and outer circumstances. Formation describes this process in correspondence with the inner and outer circumstances of one's life (i.e., the particular material, psychical, and spiritual forces respectively which shape individuals owing to their existence in the place and time in which they find themselves), whereas self-formation describes this process as one wills, desires, and chooses who they want to become.

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[23] Edith Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, vol. 8, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2004), 103. Italics added.
[24] Stein, 8:117.

This *chapter* develops the first part of the picture of personal becoming in Stein's philosophy by focusing on the process of *formation*. Formation is a process that shapes each of us as *psycho-physical individuals*.[25] This means that formation works across the *physical* and *psychical* dimensions of our being, but not the *spiritual* dimension (self-formation is the process that works upon our spiritual dimension, as I will argue in Chapter two). In other words, it is our *body* and *psyche* that are subject to formation. While our physical body, *Körper*, is part of our material facticity, our living body, *Leib*, may be formed or shaped through experience and in encounters with the world. Similarly, while our soul, *Seele*, is part of our psychical facticity, our psyche, *Psyche*, can be shaped through formative processes.

Formation thus names the process by which our bodies and psyches are developed by incorporating various formative "materials" over the course of our life. Our living body or *Leib* is formed by its contact with the physical world, and our psyche is shaped by its "intellectual environment," specifically "the world of people" and "the values which nourish it."[26] Thus, while we are born with the bodies we have, our bodies are capable of being shaped: they are subject to illness and injury, and can be nourished, deprived, strengthened, and weakened. So, too, is part of our psychic life capable of being shaped: the environments we move through, the people we encounter, and the events of our lives all influence our personality, our character, our desires, our values, our dislikes. Our body is formed through the tension between its factical nature and our encounters with the world, and our psyche is formed through the tension between an inborn soul and a psyche that interfaces between the soul and the world. Ultimately, both *Leib* and psyche are *realizations of our facticity*, insofar as they are the products of the tension between, and negotiation

[25] Edith Stein, *Essays on Woman*, ed. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Freda Mary Oben, 2nd ed., vol. 2, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington: ICS Publications, 1996), 130.
[26] Stein, 2:130. Italics added.

of what occurs to us from within and without. What is at stake in all these different manners of formation for Stein, thus, is the way that formation produces our *character*.

In this chapter, I argue that for Stein, formation reveals how human subjectivity is developmental, emergent, and revisable. To do so, I examine Stein's views on formation as found in her phenomenological writings, especially her 1917 dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy*, her 1922 *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*,[27] and her manuscript *Einführung in die Philosophie*.[28] In these early writings, Stein sketches the initial outlines for her theory of formation, particularly focusing on the development of the psyche and the unfolding of the soul in formation, and the way these two faculties in correspondence with one another lead to personal development in the form of character development. While her treatment of formation in these texts is rich with

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[27] Stein's *Habilitationschrift, Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften* (translated as "Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities" in English), was submitted in 1919 to the University of Göttingen. This second thesis was written to support her application for Habilitation. Included in her application was a letter from Husserl; in it, he wrote "If the career of university teaching were supposed to be open for ladies, then I would be the very first to recommend her warmly for admission to *Habilitation*" (as cited in MacIntyre, 106). Originally Husserl attempted to dissuade Stein from applying for Habilitation but conceded and wrote the aforementioned letter for her application after his daughter persuaded him. Unfortunately, Husserl's sexism was mirrored in other philosophers at Göttingen: upon receiving Stein's application, they met informally not to evaluate her work, but to decide if they should meet formally at all to consider her application. A letter of rejection drafted by the head of the Philosophy department was the outcome of this informal meeting. Realizing afterwards that this letter of rejection was out of procedure (it implied that she had been formally rejected, which did not happen), the department head met with her and explained that she was rejected at the preliminary stage in order to be spared a confrontation with Georg Müller and Georg Misch. Despite his lukewarm letter of support for her application, Husserl elected to publish Stein's *Beiträge* in his 1922 *Jahrbuch*, thereby signaling his intellectual support of her work. Cf. Alasdair Macintyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue* (New York: Continuum, 2006).

[28] According to Christof Betschart, in her editor's comments for *Einführung* Claudia Mariéle Wulf documented that Stein wrote much of *Einführung* between 1916 and 1918 when she was teaching the beginner's course to phenomenology for Husserl, the "Philosophical Kindergarten." Stein revised this document until 1921. She added additional corrections in 1931. Wulf's edition of the text was published in 2004. There is no English translation available yet. Cf. Christof Betschart, "The Individuality of the Human Person in the Phenomenological Works of Edith Stein," in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. Antonio Calcagno, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life 4 (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 78.

possibility, these accounts are not yet robust; in particular, it is not yet clear from these accounts how the various faculties of the human being work together in order to create a person. For insight into this matter, I also examine some of her later phenomenological-theological writings, especially the 1932 lecture *Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, and various treatments on girls' education from the 1930's, compiled in *Essays on Woman*. While these later works are influenced by her theological commitments, her emphasis in these is on developing a philosophical anthropology suitable to serve as the basis for pedagogical theory and practice. The texts from the 1930's thus provide insight into her mature philosophical views on formation, elaborated through a discussion of pedagogy, which Stein understands as the "theory of human shaping" (*die Theorie der Menschenformung*) or the "educational work that endeavors to form people" (*Alle Erziehungsarbeit, die sich bemüht, Menschen zu formen*).[29] These lectures therefore serve the two-fold purpose of filling in some gaps from Stein's earlier phenomenological treatment of formation and providing concrete discussions of how formation unfolds in an educational situation. By bringing together her early phenomenological account and her later phenomenological-theological account, in this chapter I present a systematic treatment of the *process* of formation.

To explore how formation works across the physical and psychical dimensions of the human being, I begin in section 1 with an elucidation of how formation shapes the body. There, I argue that the lived body is subject to formation due to its contact with a material world and its relationship with the soul, which expresses itself through the body. I move next to a consideration of how the psyche is formed. However, before I can spell this account out, it is important to clarify relevant conceptual distinctions for psychic formation. Accordingly, in section 2, I unpack how Stein envisions the psychic dimension of the individual to be composed of two parts, namely, a

[29] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:2.

soul and a psyche. While the psyche is a substrate of consciousness that is the "result of the interplay of different types of powers," especially affectivity, motivation, and lifepower,[30] the soul is the seat of the personality and personal core and constitutes the unique irreducibility of the individual.[31] According to Stein, the psyche is subject to development or formation, whereas the soul is not; however, the soul's inherent qualities—its original predispositions, as they compose a personal core—are both the blueprint for future development of the psyche and impress themselves upon the development of our psychic traits or capacities.

Having explicated the conceptual distinction between the soul and psyche, in sections 3 and 4 I develop an account of how formation occurs as psychic development, namely, through contact with values. In section 3, I argue that values shape the psyche through the psyche's causality. As the seat of affectivity, the psyche is structured by motivation. Broadly construed, values are "objective motivating powers" that pertain to material things, persons, events, and so forth.[32] By motivating us, values structure not just what we experience but *how* we experience, largely by influencing the sense we make of the objects of consciousness and by constituting the temporal link between those objects. In addition, and as I argue in section 4, values also produce who we are as persons, by revealing our personality and shaping our character. This is because our personality is composed of our personally held values.[33] The values we hold shape who we are by

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[30] Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, ed. Marianne Sawicki, trans. Mary Catharine Baseheart, vol. 7, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000), 99; Antonio Calcagno, "Edith Stein: Psyche and Action," in *The Routledge Handbook of Phenomenology of Agency*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 2020), 111.

[31] Later, Stein will expand this concept of the soul in theological directions, arguing that it is an interior realm wherein one encounters oneself and God. Cf. Antonio Calcagno, "Soul in Edith Stein (1891–1942)," in *Encyclopedia of Concise Concepts by Women Philosophers* (Paderborn: Universitätsbibliothek, 2019); Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, trans. Kurt F. Reinhardt, vol. 9, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C: ICS Publications, 2002).

[32] Mette Lebech, "Why Do We Need the Philosophy of Edith Stein?," *Communio: International Catholic Review* 38 (Winter 2011): 703.

[33] Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 3rd ed. (Washington: ICS Publications, 1989), 101.

motivating how we as persons act, perceive, even experience the flow of consciousness. Our value responses thus reveal our personality through our character traits.

Ultimately, Stein's account of the subject shows that all subjects are incomplete, vulnerable, revisable, emergent, and not self-contained. All subjects develop as a realization of the negotiation of their facticity and their circumstances, and this process is ongoing throughout their lives. Yet, thanks to their soul and personality core, there is something intrinsic and essential in each individual. Each individual is thus a singular realization of their inner and outer circumstances, such that each individual brings what is personal to them into the world.

Formation of the Body

To understand how the body is formed, we must better understand Stein's view of the body. Stein's analysis of the body owes much to Husserl. During her time as Husserl's first paid editor, Stein worked through various notes by Husserl on *Körper* and *Leib*, notes which ultimately became part of the manuscript she edited as *Ideas II.*[34] This work formed a foundation for her deployment of a rich understanding of embodiment across various works. Like Husserl, Stein emphasizes *Leib* over *Körper* in her account of the human being. Indeed, she writes that it is only if you disregard what makes a body (*Leib*) a body, that you can see the human body as a material body (*Körper*).[35] The material body is thus, on the one hand, an abstraction from the living body proper, yet on the other, it is the material substrate for *Leib*, the living body, which is a part of the material world. Accordingly, I argue that understanding how the body is formed thus requires understanding how formation occurs at the level of *Leib* but is simultaneously influenced by our facticity and by the material world.

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[34] Dermot Moran, "Edith Stein's Encounter with Edmund Husserl and Her Phenomenology of the Person," in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*, ed. Elisa Magrì and Dermot Moran, vol. 94, Contributions to Phenomenology (Cham: Springer, 2017), 40.
[35] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:113–14.

I will begin by looking at the facticity of our material body (*Körper*). Having abstracted the concept of the material body from the body proper (*Leib*), Stein notes that it is a material body like other material bodies in the world. It is a three-dimensional spatial thing (*Raumding*) that occupies a place in space and is distanced from other things.[36] It is subject to the laws of Euclidean geometry.[37] It bears sensual qualities (such as color, hardness, smoothness, etc.). Those sensual qualities, as well as the spatial shape and position of the body, are subject to change, although such change is a change in *context* rather than a change in the thing itself (insofar as changes in the state of the body reflects its interdependent and causal connection with the world).[38] For example, someone can walk across the room, which is a change in position through movement that means that the body takes up a different place with respect to its environment.

While the human body is part of the material world insofar as it is *Körper*, it is also *Leib*, *a living body bound to a subject*. This is indeed the primary way we 'encounter' the body, both our own and the bodies of others. We do not encounter our bodies or other bodies as inanimate physical entities, but as living bodies tied to a subjectivity. And in living through the body particular to oneself, we experience this body as uniquely our own, and we experience ourselves as the center of orientation in space, a "here" that is capable of sensing, feelings, and moving. Indeed, the unity of the living body with subjectivity is attested to by the body's sensibility.[39] Sensations are bodily experiences (e.g., slicing my finger while cutting vegetables leads to a localized experience of pain) and subjective experiences (e.g., *my* finger was cut; *I* experience the pain). In other words, sensations can cause changes in the state of the body, which changes the

[36] Stein, 8:114.
[37] Stein, 8:114.
[38] Stein, 8:114.
[39] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 42.

state of the subject; this series of chain reactions results from a psycho-physical causality that shores up that *it is the living body that is affected by the encounter with the world*.

Formation of the body thus affects the living body, not the material body. While our material bodies can change, this change is meaningful *for* the living body; it registers at the level of the living body. Some examples are helpful here. At first glance an injury may appear to be a mere change in the material body. However, injuries can have far-reaching psychical consequences. For example, some traumatic brain injuries result in personality change, including shifts towards irritability, aggressiveness, disinhibition, apathy, and paranoia.[40] Similarly, traumatic loss of limb doesn't just change the materiality of the body; it may undermine one's body image and one's sense of security, in turn changing how one understands and negotiates their position in the world.[41] Failing organs and organ transplants can similarly challenge one's sense of an "I" in relation to one's body, as Jean-Luc Nancy indicated in his reflection upon his failing heart and heart transplant ("If my heart was giving up and going to drop me, to what degree was it an organ of 'mine,' my 'own'?").[42] Finally, on a more positive register, one may think of the experience of being in a flow state.[43] In this experience, one's material body works in absolute consonance with, rather than in resistance to, one's intentions, such as finding one's stride while running in a marathon or achieving a state of utter absorption and fluidity while writing.

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[40] Jeffrey Edwin Max, Brigitte Anna Marie Robertson, and Amy E. Lansing, "The Phenomenology of Personality Change Due to Traumatic Brain Injury in Children and Adolescents," *The Journal of the American Medical Association* 13, no. 2 (May 1, 2001): 164, https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.1992.03490110111047.

[41] Janet K. Cater, "Traumatic Amputation: Psychosocial Adjustment of Six Army Women to Loss of One or More Limbs," *The Journal of Rehabilitation Research and Development* 49, no. 10 (2012): 1443, https://doi.org/10.1682/JRRD.2011.12.0228. As Carter notes, women in particular acknowledge having to mentally prepare to go out into the world after loss of limb, in part because of how social stigma intersects with expectations around femininity to produce a sense of "ugliness" following the loss of limb, and in part because they discover themselves more vulnerable due to a reduced ability to defend themselves.

[42] Jean-Luc Nancy, *L'Intrus* (Michigan State University Press, 2002), 3.

[43] Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, "Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience," 1990.

In all these cases, changes in the material body extend beyond the body's materiality by transforming how one lives, how one acts, and even who one is or understands themselves to be. For Stein, this means that *material changes themselves do not rise to the level of formation*. Rather, *they initiate formation.* As Stein puts it,

> In the course of its development, the living being carries out a series of "activities" (nutrition, respiration, and the like), which are not themselves to be regarded as phases of the development process, but all agree in that they serve it, that they are initiated from the core and enable an approach to the goal. In addition, there are changing states (health, illness, freshness, languor), which neither belong to the unfolding process nor serve it, but nevertheless have an inner connection with it…[44]

In this description, Stein claims that the various activities of life that sustain the material body all 'serve' or participate in formation by *enabling* formation. The material changes that occur based on, say, eating, are not themselves formation, but they have an inner connection with formation because they enable it. Similarly, just as the slice of a knife was a cause for a physical sensation of pain and a psychic experience of "I am hurt," becoming injured is the cause for bodily changes which, in turn, promote psychic changes, changing how we live our bodies. In this regard, material change is, ultimately, not merely material, but is a change in how we live as subjects; thus, formation properly occurs through and for the lived body, or *Leib*. And so, while *Körper* can experience physical change and development, formation as such occurs not to the material body but to the body as a *whole* or *unity*—that is, the body as *Leib*, the living body.

My argument that it is not the material body *as such* that is the site of formation, but rather the living body, might seem to suggest that *the material body never changes*. Stein would disagree with this point. There are material changes that our body undergoes, through aging, injury, and of course the various activities that enable life as described above. Moreover, the body can be shaped not just by physical events, but also by its relationship with its soul. Because the soul expresses

[44] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:118.

itself in and through the body, Stein argues that the soul 'imprints' itself onto the body through its expressions, almost as though the body is a *bodily surface*. Stein specifically notes that emotions and will have a strong formative power in this regard and that they can cause correspondingly deep impressions in the body. For example, "Whoever observes keenly and thinks deeply, this speaks from his look, and also the forehead shows a corresponding imprint."[45] If we follow Stein here, we might similarly think of laugh lines as expressions of a soul that tends towards merriment, expressions which are so habitual and powerful that they have shaped the body. In short, the expressions of the soul imprint the body because they become habitual dispositions that meaningfully form the body in correspondence with the soul's character. These kinds of psychical influences *do* make changes in the material body, just as physical occurrences can, but the key point is that *when material body is shaped, this is a material change that promotes formation at the level of Leib, the living body, insofar as it is a change in how we live our bodies.*

In sum, the bodily dimension of the psycho-physical subject can undergo formation because of its double nature as *Körper* and *Leib*. As *Körper*, the body belongs to a material world, and is thus effected by it. The material body undergoes material changes, and while those changes are not themselves formation, they serve formation by enabling it. It is rather our body as *Leib* that undergoes formation, which is to say that it is the body as we live it that is formed. Formation of the living body occurs through both material and psychical changes in us, insofar as those changes enable development and transform how we live, who we are, and what we do. In this regard, formation of the body occurs through the constant, evolving negotiation between our material facticity and our developmental capacities.

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[45] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:89.

Formation of the Psyche: The Unfolding of the Soul and the Development of the Psyche

The story of formation is more complicated when it comes to the psychic dimension of our psycho-physical being, namely, our Psyche.[46] The formation of the Psyche is like the formation of the body insofar as one element of the Psyche is factical and unchanging (i.e., the soul), and one is capable of being formed (i.e., the psyche). It is also like the formation of the body insofar as formation occurs on the basis of the interaction of the Psyche with the world, albeit in this case the world of persons and values. However, the formation of the Psyche is complicated by the relation between the soul and the psyche internal to the Psyche. These two "parts" of the Psyche (i.e., soul and psyche) are each, due to their respective natures, differentially engaged in formative processes. The *soul* on the one hand does not develop, but it *unfolds*, and in so doing it acts like a 'blueprint' within us, determining the direction and the limits of our development. The *psyche* on the other hand does *develop*, sometimes in accordance with the unfolding of the soul, although not necessarily. Stein specifies the difference in these processes with the language of *Entwicklung*, which specifies psychic development, and *Entfaltung*, which specifies the soul's unfolding. Before we can become clear, then, on how *the Psyche develops in interaction with the world*, we must see *how the soul and psyche bear upon each other and are differentially implicated in formation*.

There is a great deal of ambiguity in Stein's writing when it comes to the relationship and distinction of soul, psyche, and Psyche. As early as her dissertation, Stein introduces the concepts of the soul and the psyche in the same setting and without fully differentiating the meaning of each term. Indeed, it sometimes seems as if psyche is simply another name for soul, or vice versa. For

[46] There is a terminological issue with Stein's usage of the German term *Psyche*. At times, this term denotes the *psychic dimension of the human individual as a whole*. At other times, it denotes one of two 'parts' of the psychic dimension. In this chapter I introduce Psyche with a capital P to specifically denote *the psychic dimension of the human individual*. Psyche with a capital P is to be distinguished from psyche with a lower-case p, which signifies instead *the "part" of the Psyche called psyche.*

example, when setting up a discussion of the soul in a section entitled "*Die Seele*," in the first sentence Stein writes that it is possible to examine the individual unity of the psyche (*Psyche*) without considering its relationship with a living body.[47] This implies that an elucidation of the concept of the soul will take place through an examination of the Psyche as such. But Stein's immediate claim that we can examine the Psyche to elucidate the soul fails to clarify for the reader the difference between the two concepts, if there is one. Is Stein suggesting that an examination of the Psyche is an *entry point* for examining the soul? Or is she implying that we can learn about the soul by studying the Psyche because the soul *is* the Psyche (i.e., the soul composes the psycho-dimension of the psycho-physical individual)? In other words, is the Psyche defined by the soul alone? Is there an equivalence between these concepts? Or is the Psyche a dimension in which the soul is embedded and through which the phenomenologist travels to discover the soul?

As both Antonio Calcagno and Angelo Ales Bello note, the term "soul" in Stein is polysemantic.[48] At times, the term "soul" denotes the Psyche. She writes in her dissertation that "the soul together with the living body forms the 'psycho-physical' individual."[49] This reads as an endorsement that the soul composes the psychic dimension of the individual, and that it, when coupled with the living body, amounts to what we recognize as the psycho-physical individual. However, at other times, the term "soul" can also refer to an autonomous dimension.[50] For example, the "soul" is distinguished as an autonomous part of the Psyche in the following quote: "The soul, or as we prefer to say from now on, because we still need the term "soul" in another

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[47] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 39.
[48] Antonio Calcagno, "Edith Stein: Is the State Responsible for the Immortal Soul of the Person?," *Logos - Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 2002, 68, https://doi.org/10.1353/log.2002.0001; Angela Ales Bello, "The Human Being and Its Soul in Edith Stein," in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, vol. 1, Islamic Philosophy and Occidental Phenomenology in Dialogue (Springer Science+Business Media, 2003), 61.
[49] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 50.
[50] Bello, "The Human Being and Its Soul in Edith Stein," 61.

sense: the psyche is not to be identified with consciousness...."[51] From this, we see that there is a usage of "soul" that is equivalent to the term Psyche, and a usage that specifies an autonomous part of the Psyche.

To summarize these belaboured terminological points, then, I am operating with the following interpretation. First, I employ the term "Psyche" to refer to the whole psychic dimension of the psycho-physical individual. At times, Stein uses the term "soul" to refer to the "Psyche," but at other times the word "soul" refers to an autonomous "part" of the Psyche. This means that the soul proper is a part of the Psyche but is not the whole of the Psyche. The soul is not the whole of the Psyche because there is another part of the Psyche, namely, the *psyche*, with a lower-case p. Given this, to be clear on how psychic formation, it is important to clarify what exactly each of these parts of the Psyche are, as well as how each functions in psychic life. As I will show in the following, the soul, by virtue of its unchanging and innate core, composes our personality, and acts as a principle of formation. The psyche, by contrast, is a substrate of consciousness that traffics in affectivity, causality, lifepower, and our sense of our subjectivity. The two are differentially implicated in psychic formation, insofar as the soul unfolds, but the psyche develops.

According to Stein, what makes the human soul significant is that it is a unity that possesses a "core" or "kernel" within itself, and this core gives rise to personality by providing the individual with a "personal structure."[52] The personality core (*der Persönlichkeitskern*) is the "invariable repertoire of being that is not the result of development but, on the contrary, prescribes how the development proceeds."[53] It itself is unchanging, but insofar as it "marks off a range of possibilities of variation within which the person's real distinctiveness can be developed 'ever according to

[51] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:134.
[52] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 110.
[53] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:92–93.

circumstances,'" it determines how our personality unfolds.[54] This core provides us with our "original predispositions," which are the personal potentialities latent within the core which can be actualized (or not) throughout the course of one's life. The core thus provides us with a developmental character, for the person develops throughout life in correspondence with lived experiences and in accord with the personality core, which lays out in advance the personal possibilities that can be realized (or not realized) based upon our life experiences. This means that the core provides us with both our developmental *possibilities* and our developmental *limitations*. By saddling us with our innate predispositions, our soul determines the direction our development can go in, just as much as it determines the direction in which it may *not* proceed. In this regard, the personality core singularizes the self without determining it fully, which is why Stein views the soul as the individuating factor and principle of formation.

The psyche, by contrast, is ultimately a substrate of consciousness. As the inner dimension or realm of the psycho-physical individual, it is marked by affectivity, causality, life power, and a sense of one's own subjectivity. It itself does not appear to consciousness, but it is *apparent in* consciousness thanks to the influence it has upon experiencing.[55] The psyche influences *how* consciousness makes sense, by shaping how it grasps the data of consciousness (noema) and how it experiences the unfolding of the sense of things (noesis).[56] It accomplishes this through affectivity and in a causal manner. Stein gives the example of weariness to illustrate this point. If we are tired, then our life current seems to slow down, and everything we experience is diminished: "The colors are sort of colorless, the tones are hollow, and every 'impression'—each datum that is registered with the lifestream against its will, so to speak—is painful, unpleasant."[57] In this case,

[54] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 110.
[55] The psyche also manifests in empathy, but I set aside this possibility in the chapter.
[56] Calcagno, "Edith Stein: Psyche and Action," 113.
[57] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:14.

because we are *feeling* tired, our weariness (which is a manifestation of the psyche) shapes how we experience the data of consciousness, changing the sense of what is given (i.e., 'slowing' the current; rendering colors colorless, tones hollow, and sensory impressions painful.

Briefly summarized, then, while the soul is the principle of formation for the individual thanks to its core, the psyche is the substrate of consciousness that influences how consciousness makes sense of what it experiences. Based on their different functions, the soul and the psyche are each differentially implicated in formation. In *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, Stein clearly distinguishes between the psyche and the soul in formation, arguing that the former can undergo formation, while the latter does not. In this regard, just as the material body participates in formation and the living body undergoes formation, the soul participates in formation and the psyche undergoes formation.

The differential engagements of soul and psyche in formation is described most pointedly in a rich subsection of *Philosophy of Humanities and Psychology* entitled "The Specific Character Properties, "Soul" and "Core" of the Person." Here Stein makes three major claims about the soul and the psyche in relation to formation. First, she claims that while our psyche develops, our core or soul does not. Second, she claims that while the soul is not subject to formation or development, it *does* grow and mature. And third, she claims that these processes are often interrelated—that is, the soul frequently matures 'beneath' psychic formation, supporting the formative processes of the psyche, although it is not formation proper.[58] I will examine each of these claims in turn.

First, Stein argues that the soul does not develop in psychic formation. We can see this conclusion in the following quote:

[58] I say that these processes are *often* interrelated because it is possible for psychic formation to occur in such a way that your soul fails to unfold. While I largely set aside this possibility in the present chapter, I will treat this matter at length in Chapter 2.

> In contrast to the psychic abilities, the lower as well as the higher, no development is exhibited by the core of the person or by the being of the soul that's determined by it. The living of the psyche is a developmental path in which [psychic] abilities get training.[59]

Here, Stein contrasts the development of psychic abilities with the lack of development of the soul. The Psyche is generally portrayed as a developmental structure in the individual. Its development is seen to consist in the development of psychic abilities (an example of which is a character trait, which is not a static quality but is rather an ability for value experiences and value-determined ways of behaving).[60] While the soul belongs to the Psyche, it, unlike the psyche, does not develop. Thus, formation or development occurs to the psyche, but not the soul.

Second, Stein argues that the soul does experience a growing and maturing, even though it does not 'develop.' She writes:

> If we have to reject the thought of a 'development' (*Entwicklung*) of the soul, a formation (*Ausbildung*) or reorganization (*Umbildung*) of properties of your soul according to category of psychic capability, still there's a growing (*Wachsen*) and maturing (*Reifen*) of the soul completely removed from such development (*Entwicklung*)…. Beneath the surface of psychic development (*psychischen Entwicklung*), your soul is maturing and imprinting that development (*Entwicklung*) with its trademark (*Stempel*), without the soul's being determined itself by the psychic development.[61]

Here, Stein contrasts the language of development with the growing and maturing of the soul. Development, specified by the language of *Entwicklung*, does not belong to the soul. Rather, the soul grows (*Wachsen*) and matures (*Reifen*). It ultimately unfolds its 'interior end,' which Stein will specify with the language of *Entfaltung*. The growth, maturation, and unfolding of the soul is "removed" from psychic development, which means that formation does not change the soul in any substantial way. Despite this, the soul itself nonetheless "matures" in a process that involves the unfolding of the core. Recalling our discussion from earlier, the innate predispositions of the individual are given by the soul's core. These predispositions decide how one's development can

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[59] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:231. Translation modified.
[60] Stein, 7:231.
[61] Stein, 7:233. Translation modified.

proceed, by providing something like a 'blueprint' for our personal possibilities. The maturation of the soul, then, is the process by which the predispositions of the soul, as determined by the core, unfold in one's life. This process is altogether different than the development of the psyche.

But how do the soul's predispositions blossom? Here, I approach Stein's third claim, which is that the soul's maturation occurs *beneath* processes of psychic formation. In psychic formation, the psyche develops various psychic traits. However, those traits are rooted in our soul's original predispositions. This means that when the soul unfolds, the predispositions blossom and this motivates the development of our psychic traits. There is thus a correspondence between these two processes: the soul's maturation enables and participates in the psyche's formation, although it itself is not psychic formation. In so doing, the soul "imprints" upon psychic development, giving psychic development an individual character without determining psychic development.

From these quotes, we can see that Stein's intention is to differentiate the formative and developmental capacity of the psyche from the "unfolding" nature of the soul with its capacity to "flourish." In short, formation works upon the psyche, but does not penetrate to the soul nor its core. The formation of the Psyche thus involves the development of the psyche, but the soul remains unchanged in its core by formation. However, the soul's "unfolding" occurs beneath formation and provides psychic formation with an individual quality by outlining "directions" for psychic development (i.e., by providing predispositions that psychic development can actualize). To understand the difference here, it is useful to attend to Stein's vocabulary. The soul 'blooms,' 'unfolds,' 'swells,' 'ripens,' and 'awakens.' The psyche 'develops' or can be 'trained' through processes of formation. When a predisposition unfolds through development, the soul 'imprints' our development with its 'trademark,' which provides the psychic ability with individuality. When our psyche develops, our soul ripens, blossoms, and unfolds, but the soul's unfolding is not

determined by the development of our psyche, nor is our psyche wholly determined by our soul. The soul's core provides a blueprint that the psyche can follow, but it need not.

An example is helpful at this point to clarify Stein's distinction between the growth and unfolding of the soul and the development of the psyche in formation. Imagine a person born with a core that includes within it a predisposition towards courageousness. This predisposition is essentially a potentiality for the person—it is the individual's possibility to become a courageous person in life based upon their experience and their personal development. This individual later decides to become a firefighter and trains their body and mind for this job. In so doing, they develop not only their courageousness, but their ability to physically carry the weight of the equipment and emotionally and mentally carry the weight of the event (i.e., stemming the spread of the fires, risking one's life to prevent as much loss and damage as possible, coping with loss of limb or loss of other lives, etc.). Through training to become a firefighter, they experience both physical and psychic formation; that is, they train their bodies for strength and endurance, and they train their psyche to be able to perform as required. In so doing, their predispositions unfold. In Stein's view, not everyone is suited to be a firefighter—that is, not everyone has the core predispositions that facilitate their psychic development in this direction, nor can they "learn" those predispositions (because predispositions are innate to the soul). However, just because one has the predisposition to be courageous does not mean that they are suited to be a firefighter either, due to the other qualities this job demands. Finally, not everyone will have the chance to develop their courageous predispositions based upon their experiential circumstances.

To reiterate my arguments, then, we as psycho-physical individuals are capable of formation on multiple levels. While our bodies can undergo formation, so, too, can our Psyche. We are born with our souls innate within us, and the core of our soul remains unchanged

throughout our life. In this regard, our soul is part of our facticity, and our development must negotiate with the limits and possibilities this facticity imposes upon us. However, our psyche develops through formative processes, and when this occurs, the predispositions of our soul can be unfolded in correspondence with the development of our psyche. Formation thus concerns the overarching development of the psyche, although the soul participates insofar as it provides a blueprint for psychic development.

Now that we have clarified the state of affairs internal to the Psyche, we can look at how psychic formation occurs through the integration of formative materials from the world. While Stein specifies that the other people and values are formative for psychic development, in the rest of this chapter I focus on the role of values in psychic development. (I will turn my attention to the role of others more fully in Chapter two.) What is crucial at this point is understanding the complex role values play in psychic development, a role that includes a profound formative influence on *our experience of reality*, as well as a formative influence on *who we are as persons*. In what follows, I examine these different formative functions of values for psychic development in turn.

Formation of the Psyche: The Formative Power of Values on our Experience of Reality

Values form the psyche in two ways according to Stein. First, they shape our experience of reality, and second, they shape who we are as persons. In this section, I argue for the first claim, namely, that values shape our experience of reality. However, to understand how values can be formative influences upon the psyche in this regard, we must understand, first, what values are, and second, their function in the psyche. As I show in this section, values, ultimately, are motives, which means that they play a role in psychic causality, such that they effectuate not only *what* we experience, but *how* we experience.

According to Stein, there is no value-free world.[62] When we are going for a walk on a breezy day, we smell the plants and the exhaust of passing cars; we feel the gazes of others; we admire some of the houses in the neighborhood; we experience the sensation of fresh air upon our skin; our muscles burn as they propel us up a long hill; our respiration and heart rate increases commensurate with the intensity of the activity. During this activity, our perceptual acts constitute the physical objects we experience (e.g., the plants, the cars, other people, nearby houses, the pavement beneath our feet, the loose gravel that threatens to turn my ankle and thereby demands my attention). Those objects affect us through physical causality. However, we also have *affective* responses during our walk. Perhaps the smell of plants brings us joy, the houses are pleasant to look upon, the steepness of the hill evokes frustration, the loud roar of passing vehicles annoys us, and the gazes of others intimidate us. Those affective responses constitute values and reveal the world as valuable. In this example, the joy from the smell of plants reveals the plants as something joyous, the hill is revealed as something frustrating, and the annoying vehicles as annoying. In this way, there is no merely material world as such, nor any value-free reality; everything is always interpreted in a more than material manner, which is to say, everything is interpreted in terms of values.

What, then, are values? [63] According to Stein, values are objective qualities that are actual objects of experience. Values are objective because they are *felt*, much as physical objects are perceived. That is, values are given to us in acts of feeling, which means that all acts of feeling are

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[62] Stein, 7:160.

[63] Drummond argues that phenomenological axiology generally tends in two directions: either toward value realism, as was common in early phenomenology, or toward value subjectivism, which depicts values as created by human subjects (Sartre and Merleau-Ponty are cited as examples of this latter tendency). John J Drummond, "Introduction: The Phenomenological Tradition and Moral Philosophy," in *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy: A Handbook*, ed. John J Drummond and Lester Embree, vol. 47, Contributions to Phenomenology (Springer Science+Business Media, 2002), 8.

founded; value-feelings are *responses* to some value-content. For example, when I perceive a maple tree's leaves changing colors in Autumn, I feel delighted by it, and in this feeling, discover its beauty; this beauty is the tree's value, which was conveyed by my joy. Because this joy was motivated by some content (the beauty value of the tree), the value is not invented, but founded. Thus, as Íngrid Vendrell Ferran argues, for Stein, "Values are not creations, constructions, or projections of our feelings, they are entities that present to us with enough authority to demand a specific answer."[64] Our feeling responses to valuable entities thus conveys their value. This is why Stein does not see values as entirely created by the human being, unlike later phenomenologists who situates value creation as the absolutely free activity of the human.[65]

While Stein does see values as objective, she does not see them as existing independently of the I.[66] Stein argues that the object (in this case, the tree) is not beautiful because of its assemblage of objective properties. That is, it is not that the *extra-egoic* data that composes the object also composes its value, such that object-constitution produces value-constitution. If this were the case, then "beauty emerges with respect to the color and shape, for example, and in short,

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[64] Íngrid Vendrell Ferran, "Intentionality, Value Disclosure, and Constitution: Stein's Model," in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*, ed. Elisa Magrì and Dermot Moran (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 80.

[65] Stein *does* argue that *the human's* highest *value* lies in its ability to create values, which resonates with the later existentialist phenomenologists. Cf. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 103; Antonio Calcagno, *Lived Experience from the Inside Out* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2014), 102. However, unlike these later value subjectivist accounts, Stein sees values as objective rather than subjective.

[66] There are unsettled debates regarding Stein's value theory. Stein synthesizes various aspects of the value theories of her contemporaries—Reinach, Husserl, Van Hildebrand, and Scheler in particular—while also navigating various Brentanian influences. Vendrell Ferran's carefully researched essay nicely lays out the various influences Stein negotiates in her value theory, while ultimately arguing that Stein is situated within the "value realist" camp in phenomenology. In this regard, Vendrell Ferran argues against other Stein scholars—Mette Lebech in particular—who describe her value theory as not falling with value realist, value idealist, or value subjectivist camps. CF. Mette Lebech, "Edith Stein's Value Theory and Its Importance for Her Conception of the State," in *Europa Und Seine Anderen: Emmanuel Levinas, Edith Stein, Jozef Tischner*, ed. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, Rene Kaufmann, and Hans Rainer Sepp (Dresden: Thelem, 2010), 145–54.; Íngrid Vendrell-Ferran, "Intentionality, Value Disclosure, and Constitution: Stein's Model," in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*, eds. Elisa Magrì and Dermot Moran (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 65-85.

with respect to the qualities of the object perceivable by the senses, as something accruing to those qualities themselves."[67] This would mean that everyone capable of perceiving the extra-egoic data of the tree would then see the tree in the same way and, accordingly, would *feel* the same way about that tree. However, while different people can perceive the same factual qualities of the tree, they may not perceive the same value. The tree may be beautiful to me, but another person might be entirely indifferent towards it. The tree's beauty is thus not dependent upon its sensible qualities, but is due to its value, which is constituted by an individual in their feeling response to the tree. While we may experience object-constitution and value-constitution simultaneously, value constitution is ultimately dependent upon the activity of the I, which is to say that the values we experience are largely due to the valueswe bring to our experiences.

Stein's unique value theory thus situates values as both *objective* and *dependent upon the constitution activity of the I*. That is, while values may not be dependent upon *extra-egoic* content, they *are* dependent upon *egoic* content. This is so for two reasons: "One, they [egoic data] are the material on the basis of which values come to givenness for us. And two, they deliver up the stuff for the corresponding affective attitude."[68] Put otherwise, values are dependent upon the activity of the I insofar as values are given in acts of feeling. Feeling acts give values, and those values evoke attitudes and emotions within us.[69] In this regard, and as Vendrell Ferran notes, this position means that the subject constitutes values, and, thus, valuing requires the activity of an I, even though the values that the I discloses are objective values. Yet those objective values *do* correspond to the object in question, whether that be a physical object or a pure mental construct. After all, it is the tree that motivates our joy, and our joy communicates the beauty of the tree. Or, as Stein

[67] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:160.
[68] Stein, 7:160.
[69] Stein, 7:159. In this regard, Stein separates acts of feeling (*Fuhlen*) from feelings proper (*Gefuhlen*). Cf. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 98–99; Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:159.

puts it, "Feelings are by their nature founded acts, just as values do not exist independently in the world, but occur as qualities of their carriers, the goods. These value-qualities form a new state of being compared to the material qualities and make the 'mere things' 'goods.'"[70]

Values ultimately convey "the meaning of the object in its relation to the person."[71] They reveal the meaning objects have for us, and we *feel* our relationship to those objects based on our value responses. How, then, do values become formative for the psyche? I argue that there are two major reasons why values are formative. The first, which I will unpack in the rest of this section, concerns how values become *motives*, which influences our psyche's causality and thereby shapes our experience of reality. The second, which I will argue for in the following section, concerns how values also compose the structure of the person, specifically, their personality and character. Looked at from this side, values are seen to influence our inner life, our actions, and our desires by virtue of their personal meaning for us. Before turning to this matter, however, we must first see how values shape our experience of reality. To do so, we must first understand what psychic causality is and how it influences our experience of reality.

Recalling my definition of the psyche from section 2, the psyche—understood as the substrate of consciousness—manifests as an influence upon consciousness by shaping how consciousness makes sense. The psyche's influence in this regard manifests as a causal influence on consciousness. This causality involves both lifepower and motivation. Lifepower (*Lebenskraft*) is a form of psychic energy that provides the vital force of life. It 'powers' our experiencing. While lifepower does play a significant role in formation, specifically by powering our formative processes, it is unfortunately outside the scope of this section to examine this process in depth,

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[70] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:129.
[71] Mette Lebech, "Study Guide to Edith Stein's Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities," *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society*, 2004, 28.

although I do provide a brief sketch in this regard in footnote 57.[72] What is more relevant for our understanding of the role values play in formation, by contrast, is motivation. Motivation is the name given to describe how our psychic causality connects acts and experiences and thereby shapes the flow of our consciousness. In what follows, I will focus on how motivation functions in psychic causality, in order to argue that values affect this causality and thus influence experience.

According to Stein, motivation is the psychic causality that establishes the temporal connection between the acts that compose consciousness, thereby establishing a link between the objects of consciousness. As Stein defines it:

> Motivation, in our general sense, is the connection that acts get into with one another: not a mere blending like that of simultaneously or sequentially ebbing phases of experiences, or the associative tying together of experiences, but an emerging of the one out of the other, a self fulfilling or being fulfilled of the one on the basis of the other for the sake of the other. The structure of experiences, which can enter into relationships of motivation all by themselves, is decisive throughout for the essence of those relations: that acts have their origin in the pure ego, emanate from it phenomenally and aim toward something objective. The "pivot" at which the motivation starts, so to speak, is always the ego. It executes the one act because it has executed the other. But the "execution" need not be taken in the sense of a genuine spontaneity. It's characteristic of the relation of motivation that it can proceed in various forms. It can come to pass explicitly, but it can also be present only implicitly.[73]

Motivation describes the connection between and amongst our acts, insofar as it structures the arising of experiences. In short, each mental act is motivated from another. We have a particular

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[72] Lifepower is an "enduring real property" of the ego that governs how experiencing proceeds (*Philosophy of Psychology and* Humanities, 22). It is not a static property but fluctuates according to how we have expended or consolidated our lifepower in each moment. It functions a lot like an electrical current. As Marianna Sawicki notes, it must be continually generated, transformed, and allocated ("Editor's Introduction," *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, xviii). Because life requires the expenditure of lifepower, all experiencing 'costs' and/or 'replenishes' lifepower. For example, if we caffeinate, we experience a heightening of experiencing, where impressions are received more easily, consciousness is wakeful and bright, and so forth. When it comes to formation, all development requires lifepower. Without sufficient lifepower, we are not able to generate formative experiences. If our lifepower is divided in multiple directions, we have less power for formation than we would if it were channeled in one direction.

[73] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:40–41.

mental act *because* we had a previous act: "the ego executes the one experience—or the experience accrues to the ego—because the ego has the other, for the sake of the other."[74] By explaining how sequential mental acts connect, motivation further clarifies how our unique flow of experiences become unified in the *one* stream of consciousness that is *my own*. As Ales Bello writes, "the passage from one act to another takes place thanks to motivation and it is for this same reason that the flow of lived experiences becomes configured as the sum total of acts and motivations that underlie lived experiences."[75] Our whole flow of experience is structured according to motivation, which gives, as Calcagno argues, calls a "strong connectivity" between our acts across our lived experience.[76] This is why Stein describes motives as "direction-giving factors that determine how psychic [*psychisch*] occurrence runs;"[77] motives direct the flow of consciousness, by structuring the arising of mental acts, and unifying the various acts within one flow.

An example is helpful here. In *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, Stein provides a phenomenological description of 'paying attention' that, when coupled with a concrete example, nicely illustrates how motivation functions to produce an experience. She writes:

> First we look at paying attention, in which objectivities come to givenness for us: the perception of a thing, the grasping of a state of affairs, and the like. Here we have just a simple accepting that itself has no motive in the same layer of consciousness, but only in its sensory substratum. But for its part, the accepting can become motivating (and accordingly, its sense content can become a motive) for a further accepting. The ego does nothing that it could abstain from doing; rather, it receives the one bit of information for the sake of the other. However, joined with this receptive acceptance, other acts emerge

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[74] Stein, 7:42.
[75] Angela Ales Bello, "Causality and Motivation in Edith Stein," in *Causality and Motivation*, ed. Roberto Poli (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2010), 142, https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110329575.135.
[76] Calcagno, "Edith Stein: Psyche and Action," 117.
[77] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:116. Translation modified. A motivated connection between acts is a strong one, albeit not as strong as the connection established via natural causality, which *necessarily* produces effects following a cause (for example, I let go of a ball and it necessarily falls to the ground—gravity is the cause of the ball dropping). Rather, motives "*permit* certain modes of behavior without *requiring* any one of them" (44). By contrast to physical causality, we can think of motivation as a form of causality unique to the psyche that encourages a finite range of possible acts and which establishes a temporal link between acts.

> that are placed within the discretion of the ego: paying attention to the object about which I already had some information, and going on to further data. A certain uptake must already have happened so that the attention-paying can ensue. What has been taken up, in the entire determinate manner of its givenness that is proper to it before the attention-paying, serves as a motive for paying attention, or, better, as an incentive for paying attention. It exerts a pull upon the ego, which the ego can obey, but which the ego can also fail to register. The "freedom" of paying attention subsists in this twofold possibility. It does not amount to total motivelessness.[78]

Let us flesh out Stein's description here with reference to an account of paying attention to sensory perception. Imagine the experience of something 'catching your eye.' Something catches your eye, so you pause to take a closer look, perhaps even move closer to whatever object has caught your eye. When your eye has been caught, you have perceived the object as something with a certain sense and you seek more data to further fill out this sense. This seeking-more is *motivated*: you have already received the initial data in such a way that it motivates you towards further acts that provide more information about the object; you *pay attention* to it, and by paying attention, you receive further data. The object in this case was *the motive* for paying attention, and the paying attention was the *motivated series of acts* due to the eye-catching object catching my eye. Accordingly, the content of one moment of lived experience—i.e., the sense-content of the eye-catching object as it caught our eye—directly brought about the content of later moments of lived experience via motivation—i.e., the further perceptions of the object in the mode of paying attention. These accumulated senses synthesize in the successive acts of perception, providing a fuller sense of the object in question on the one hand, and providing the strong temporal connection between the acts which the name 'motivation' characterizes, on the other hand.

Values are motives in the sense described just above. That is, just as the sense of the eye-catching object served as a motive, for it motivated our subsequent perceptions, our values also motivate acts. More specifically, *felt values are motives of affective attitudes and can also be*

[78] Stein, 7:47–48.

motives of judgements, beliefs, desires, and especially action. As Stein writes, "The grasping of a value can motivate a disposition (for example, joy in beauty) and, accordingly, a wanting and doing (perhaps the realizing of a state of affairs recognized as morally right)."[79] In other words, when we grasp a value, we experience the corresponding value-feeling, which, in turn, motivates a wide-range of subsequent acts.

Through their function as motives, values accordingly participate in shaping our sense-making processes. This means that they influence the sense made of the objects of consciousness and the connection between the various objects of consciousness. For example, if one person experiences joy before a tree, a joy that conveys the beauty of the tree, they may then experience an appreciative attitude. This might encourage them towards a particular kind of relationship with the natural world or inspire various acts, be it further perceptions, painting a tree, etc. Another person, however, might feel indifferent towards the tree. They are not motivated by the particular 'beauty' value of the tree, nor do they personally hold values that motivate them to perceive the tree's beauty. They may instead be motivated in different directions by different values. In any case, as a result of their particular motivational context, the tree's beauty is not disclosed to them, and thus, the tree has a different sense to them. It is in this regard that one's experience of reality is shaped by the sense-making processes which motivation influences; values are motives that shape that sense-making process.

Values accordingly become formative for the psyche insofar as they provide some of the motives for psychic causality. As motives, values influence the connection between acts, and, thus, the sense made of objects of consciousness. By motivating various attitudes and emotions, values can also shape our life-feeling or the "coloring" of consciousness. For example, when we

[79] Stein, 7:42.

experience joy thanks to a joyous object, the joy "is a new current, as it were, that gushes into the lifestream from elsewhere, "stirs it up," influences its subsequent flow, and colors it in a determinate manner."[80] Thanks to the joy, the flow of consciousness is "brighter," a sense of vitality may be felt, and all this increases our intensity of experiencing, as well as the amount of lifepower we draw on. In any case, these emotional attitudes become the motivating sources of our actions and desires. Because we see the world and interpret reality based upon how we are motivated to do so, our motives are reflected back to us in what and how we see. Values are part of this process: the values we hold shape what and how we perceive and are reflected back to us in our experience of the world. Thus, values are formative for us insofar as they shape how we experience reality and then confirm or challenge that experience.

However, values as motives do more than just shape our experience and interpretation of reality. They also compose who we as persons are. As Mette Lebech writes, "… our acceptance of the motivation issuing from them [values] makes up our substance and forges our very being as individual persons."[81] In the following section, I shall show how our value responses shape our character and personality, for it is by understanding how we internalize and externalize values that we see how values influence us as individuals.

Formation of the Psyche: The Formative Power of Values on our Personality and Character

In the preceding, I argued that values reveal something of the objective world, namely, that the world is beautiful, ugly, noble, ignoble, frustrating, exhilarating, and so forth. As our value-feelings are grounded on intentional objects, our feelings disclose objective values and thereby shape our experience of the world. From this perspective, values are motivations that come from

[80] Stein, 7:75. Translation modified.
[81] Lebech, "Edith Stein's Value Theory and Its Importance for Her Conception of the State," 142.

the objective world, motivations that the individual grasps and follows out. Through our affective life, we receive and are motivated by values, and that shapes how we live.

However, Stein attributes a "double intentionality" to our value-feelings.[82] By this, she means that our feelings not only have an objective correlate in the world, but that they also have a *subjective* correlate in our own individual. In other words, our value-feelings convey objective values, *and* they reveal something of ourselves. Our feeling responses reveal our personal characteristics by showing what and how we value, and in this way our feelings provide insight into our personality and character. To this end, I argue that values are also formative for us insofar as they reveal and shape our personality and character. To show how values are formative in this regard, in this section I first differentiate Stein's concepts of personality and character, before showing how values intervene in the formation of the psyche by contributing to the unfolding of the personality in the development of one's character.

Just as there is no value-free world, there are no persons without values. As Stein writes in *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, "A person doesn't confront us as a value-free being, but rather as a value-tropic being…. As it were, we see what the person *is* when we see which world of value she lives in, which values she is responsive to, and what achievements she may be creating, prompted by values."[83] We all live in worlds of values, and we all personally hold values. We cannot imagine a person divorced of their values, because persons are inherently valuing creatures. Rather, the values each of us hold show who we are by motivating our responses, desires, and actions. Consider the experience of sharing a viral video you find online with a friend. Perhaps you found the video humorous and wanted to share it with others. Your friend, however, is unimpressed. The *objective* intentional correlate—the viral video—hasn't changed, but the

[82] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:81.
[83] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:227.

subjective correlate has. Because of this, each person has a different value-response to the video, as captured in our value-feelings. In turn, those differing value-feelings in response to the video reveal something of who each of us is. But what, precisely, is revealed?

I argue that in our respective value-responses to the video, our character is constituted, and our personality is revealed. However, before entering this discussion in full, a recollection of some terminological distinctions is useful. In section 2, I argued for a distinction between Stein's concepts of soul and psyche. There, I indicated that unlike the psyche, the soul has a personality core, which distinguishes it from the psyche, and which gives the soul its function as a principle of formation. I further argued that the soul exhibits maturation when the personality core unfolds, but that the soul's unfolding is not equivalent to the development or formation of the psyche—although the process of the unfolding of the soul can enable the formation of the psyche, and vice versa. Now, as I turn my attention to the place and role of personality and character in formation, I expand on this previous discussion. As I argue in the rest of this section, personality corresponds to the soul, and character to the psyche. Hence, the distinction between soul and psyche, and thus unfolding and formation, is retained in Stein's account of psychic formation via values.

To unpack how values respectively relate to personality and character, it is crucial to differentiate these two concepts. Unfortunately, Stein never fully disambiguates the relationship between character and personality. For example, while in *On the Problem of Empathy* and *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities* Stein describes personality as a unity which provides qualitative individuation of the person, in her later work she emphasizes character in this regard and appears to reduce or subsume the concept of personality into the concept of the personal core. Perhaps these ambiguities are due to key conceptual revisions across Stein's work, for as both Calcagno and Christof Betschart note, Stein's later work revises several concepts, including her

concepts of soul, psyche, and personal core, all of which are central to her thinking of character and personality.[84] Despite these challenges, however, to clarify the issue of how values compose personality and character, it is important to distinguish character and personality as much as possible. In what follows I draw upon *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities* and *Einführung in die Philosophie* to construct an interpretation of the relationship between personality and character.

In *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, Stein claims that the personality is a "unity of qualitative distinctiveness that is fashioned out of a core, a formative root."[85] By this, she means that our personality is a unity of our personal properties, and it grows out of our personality core. Because the personality grows out of a core, it is highly individual and linked to the soul. As the personality core both provides the possibilities and limits of our possible development, the presence and influence of the core gives our personality the personal note or pattern distinctive of our individuality.[86] In short, the personality core gives a perceptible uniformity and distinctness to one's personality. Thus, Stein often describes personality in terms of an individual form,[87] or as providing a trademark,[88] an individual stamp or an individual note,[89] as giving a "simple quale" of personal singularity (*persönliche Eigenart*) to the person,[90] and as composing a recognizable and understandable unified pattern.[91]

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[84] Calcagno, "Soul in Edith Stein (1891–1942)"; Betschart, "The Individuality of the Human Person in the Phenomenological Works of Edith Stein," 82.
[85] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:238.
[86] As Christof Betschart points out, Stein's early work emphasizes how the core places limits upon development, whereas her later writing emphasizes the core as the source of growth. Cf. Betschart, "The Individuality of the Human Person in the Phenomenological Works of Edith Stein," 83.
[87] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 110.
[88] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:229.
[89] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:132.
[90] Stein, 8:132.
[91] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:228.

Stein also describes the personality in terms of depth. Our personality is composed of levels of values, and each different level of value discloses how we are personally motivated towards the world. The personality core is the "root" of the personality, and the personality grows out of this core. The core, thus, is at the bottom of the personality: it is the core or kernel level. What grows out of the core, however, are different "levels" of the personality. These levels are hierarchically structured and composed of our personally held values. At base are the most important values, and at the surface are the least. These different value-levels of the personality create the depth that characterizes the human person. We come to know ourselves and others based upon their demonstration of the personal value levels, as revealed through value-feelings.[92]

Let us consider Stein's comparison of our value-feelings over three different kinds of loss as an illustration of how our personality is composed of different value levels. In this example, we suffer three losses: first, we lose a piece of random jewelry; second, we lose a souvenir from a loved one; and third, we lose the loved one themselves. Stein suggests that our feeling of anger over the first lost piece of jewelry is likely more superficial than the feeling that we experience when we lose the souvenir from a loved one. The latter feeling penetrates more deeply than the former because the souvenir was more deeply valued than the random piece of jewelry. Because the souvenir belonged to a loved one, and thus carries the value of their person as well as its own, we valued the souvenir more highly than the random piece of jewelry, and our feeling of loss reaches a deeper value level in us. Deeper still, however, would be our pain over the loss of the loved one themselves.[93] This is because the loved one is more deeply valued than both the souvenir and the lost jewelry.

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[92] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 108.
[93] Stein, 101.

Our differing valuations here show how we as persons are composed, by revealing the levels that compose our personality. As Stein writes, "this [variation in our emotional experiences] discloses essential relationships among the hierarchy of felt values, the depth classification of value feelings, and the level classification of the person exposed in these feelings."[94] In other words, our value feelings not only reveal what values we personally hold, but, further, how we value those values, and how those valuations compose our person. While the jewelry, the souvenir, and the loved one were all valuable to us, they were valued in different ways; the loss of each reached a different level in us and disclosed not only what is meaningful to us but how meaningful each is. This, in turn, reveals how those values structure our personality.

To say, then, that personality is a unity of personal properties is to say that our personality is the unity of our value levels. The hierarchical arrangement of our value levels provides depth to our personality. These levels arise out of a core, which provides the personality with its qualitative individuality. What, then, is character, and how does character relate to our valuing activity?

In contrast to personality, character is a "complex" (*Komplex*) composed of the characteristics and qualities that is relevant to one as a person. One's "sensing" characteristics are not "included" in one's character, for, as Stein notes, "it does not belong to the character of the person whether he sees well or hears well and the like,"[95] although these characteristics do have a functional role in the development of character. Similarly, one's intellectual qualities are not included in one's character, although they can functionally shape its development. What is properly relevant for character is one's disposition (*Gemüt*) and one's will. Accordingly, as Stein writes, character is "the ability to feel and the driving force with which this feeling is translated

[94] Stein, 101.
[95] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:127.

into will and deed."[96] As the ability to feel, character is intimately linked to our valuing activity (since feeling conveys values); accordingly, character is "the openness (possibly also the closedness) for the realm of values and the way of working for their realization."[97] In short, character is constituted by the peculiar sum of one's dispositional qualities as those disclose one's valuing activity and promote further willing and acting.

We can now distinguish between personality and character. In *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, Stein clearly separates character from the soul and its core, which means that character and personality are distinguishable, at least at this point in her thinking. As she puts it, "Since the *character properties* are abilities for value experiences and value-determined manners of behavior, *they don't themselves belong to your soul or to the core of your person*. Yet in them, the core blooms outward. And they allow what inwardly fills up your soul to become visible."[98] Here, Stein is saying that while our character traits do not belong to the soul, through them the soul "blooms outward" or manifests. In this regard, while the personal properties of the personality do not themselves constitute character traits, the development of character traits allows them to unfold. Personality is thus the unity of personal properties that is grounded in a core and composed of various levels of personally held values, whereas character is the ability for value experiences that translate into feeling and doing and, in so doing, allow personality to unfold.

My argument that personality can unfold into character traits recalls the discussion of the soul and psyche from section 2, where it was established that psychic development allows for the soul to unfold, but neither the soul's unfolding nor psychic development can be reduced to the other. In this regard, *character appears to be the 'outward facing' development of the psyche in*

[96] Stein, 8:128.
[97] Stein, 8:128.
[98] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:231. Italics added.

value experiences. Character develops—or is formed—through the combination of external and internal circumstances in psychic development. By contrast, because our personality is tied to the personal core, *our personality appears to be linked to the soul; thus, instead of developing through psychic development, our personality unfolds in correspondence to experience*. By unfolding, our personality expresses the individual note of our personal singularity, but such unfolding does not amount to the development or formation of our soul or even our psyche.

To illustrate how character and personality can operate *distinctly* with regards to formation, consider an example Stein gives that depicts how it is possible that we can develop character traits without unfolding our personality:

> If he who has been educated in "moral principles" [through authoritative moral education] and who behaves according to them looks "into himself," he will perceive with satisfaction a "virtuous" man. This is true until one day, in an action bursting forth from deep inside of him, he experiences himself as someone of an entirely different nature from the person he thought himself to be until then.[99]

In this example, the indoctrinated man inherited his values, and these inherited values were the ground of his ambitions and his self-opinion. However, they were not won for himself, but were installed within him from without. These inherited values obscured his true personality. Then an unexpected, entirely personal action 'burst forth' from within him one day and disclosed his true values—and, thus, his true personality. Until that moment, he had experienced himself as someone else, and as a result he was surprised by his own actions. While there is more to say about this experience (and, indeed, I will say more about it in Chapter two, when I examine the possibility of what Stein calls *pseudo-formation*, of which this is an example), what is important for our purposes is identifying that for this individual *formation had occurred*—i.e., his psyche had developed via the cultivation of various character traits—but his soul had not unfolded through

[99] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 110–11.

that development. Thus, his character had developed while his personality remained latent within him.

My interpretation of the dynamic between personality and character in formation is borne out through the terminological distinction between *Entwicklung* and *Entfaltung* introduced earlier in this chapter. In *Einführung in die Philosophie*, Stein differentiates character and personality in terms of their different developmental patterns. She describes character development in terms of psychic development (*psychische Entwicklung*). By contrast, the 'development' of personality is attributed to the 'unfolding' (*Entfaltung*) of the core throughout experience. When it comes to formation, then, we see that psychic development involves the development of character but does not imply a development of personality. While our character allows our personality to be revealed, our personality is not itself subject to formation. Rather, personality unfolds into character traits. From the elaboration of these different processes vis-à-vis character and personality, we can see why Stein argues that character is not something "ready-made, but in constant development, constantly transforming itself under the influence of the external circumstances in which its life takes place, and in the movement of its interior, which these circumstances cause."[100] By contrast, personality is inherent within the person from the beginning and subsequently emerges throughout life.

Given my account of Stein's concepts of character and personality, we can now consider how values relate to each. Values are central for both character and personality: whereas our character is formed by and as our value responses, our personality is composed of the levels of values we personally hold. Our actions and feelings (as motivated by our values) thus reveal our personality, which is to say that they reveal what values we hold and how we value them. In so

[100] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:103.

doing, those same actions and feelings compose our character, insofar as our character expresses our values through our responses. This means, then, that our value responses reveal our personal meaning relation to objects in questions, which allows us as persons to be understood through our value responses. Or as Mette Lebech explains,

> We experience concrete human persons to be carriers of value in a variety of ways. We evaluate their character, for example, which we constitute from our understanding of their value-response, in particular from the order in which we see them place the values, their value-hierarchy. The personality of a person is, according to Stein, the specificity of the person determined or stamped by its character… Personality is not however, like the person, pure spiritual capacity: it is this capacity as already determined in certain ways by typical or decisive value responses… The personality reflects the choices of the person and marks what he has done with himself as a person; it is the source of the specificity of the person's spontaneity and the first expression of the person's creativity as such.[101]

In other words, whenever we encounter other people, we encounter them as valuing persons. We learn who they are through their value-responses, or their character, as those express the values they personally hold and which compose their personality. Thus, each personality is defined by the values that composes it *as those values are expressed* in character. In this regard, insofar as values are motives for us, they motivate how we experience and live in the world, including our desires and actions. The values we find in the world thus disclose the values we hold, insofar as the values we hold motivate what and how we encounter the world. Understanding others, and even ourselves, thus requires understanding the specific individual's value responses.

To summarize my argument up to this point, in this chapter I have argued that the psyche draws formative materials from the world of values because those values are motives. The psyche picks up values, integrates them, and is shaped by them. We become aware of our values and of ourselves as valuing persons through our emotional life, which shows us which values we hold and how we value those values. Hence, our feelings, as the medium that conveys our values, reveal

[101] Lebech, "Edith Stein's Value Theory and Its Importance for Her Conception of the State," 147–48.

something about who we are as persons. They show us how the values we hold constitute our personalities, making us who we are and shaping how we live. They also show us how we express our unique personalities through our value responses, which compose our character. Thus, values are formative for the psyche because they are motives, and as motives, they shape who we are as persons by shaping our value-responses or our character. On my reading of Stein, values allow for psychic development (*Entwicklung*) in the form of developing character traits via value responses, and they allow for our soul to unfold (*Entfaltung*) in correspondence to the limits and possibilities laid out by our personal core.

Conclusion: Formation and Stein's Developmental Subject

At the outset of this chapter, I argued that one of Stein's unique contributions to the phenomenological tradition can be found in her view of the developmental character of human subjectivity. For Stein, the general structure of development is shared by all human subjects, although the content of that development—i.e., the person that emerges from development—is singular. As she writes in *Einführung in die Philosophie*, "A general structure recurs in every developmental process: it begins with a becoming, a coming into life of the living being, continues in a growth (ascent) up to a peak of development (a full unfolding of the living being), to pass over into a descent of the living being and to end with its demise. This general form of the development process now shows very different filling, depending on what comes to unfold in it."[102] Thus, while all humans demonstrate a developmental character, the person that they become is highly individuated, in part because of how they bear external circumstances, and in part due to their innate nature, as delimited by their soul.

[102] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:118.

I further claimed that formation, one of two processes identified with personal becoming, demonstrates *how* the person manifests their developmental character through their personal becoming. Through life, all persons are subject to formative influences that shape their development. These influences arise from within and without, and together combine to create each unique individual person. Formative influences and materials effect our *psycho-physical* being, which is to say that they form our *body* and our *psyche*.

In section 2, I argued that formation of the body formation occurs through contact with the material world and through the body's relationship with the soul. Because the body is a material body (*Körper*), it is subject to physical effects as produced by its contact with the world; injury is an example in this regard. However, because our soul inhabits our body, our soul can also influence our body's development, especially through willed action. For example, we can nourish or deprive the body as regards nutrition and activity, which effects its material development. Formation of the living body is thus a realization of the tensions between our soul, our material body, and contact with the world.

However, just as our physical life exhibits a factical moment and a formative moment, so too our psychic life contains a factical and formative moment. The soul is the factical element of our psychic life, which means it is not subject to formation, although the psyche can be formed. In this regard, in section 3, I argued that there are two distinct but related processes in psychic life. That is, while the soul can mature and unfold, the psyche is subject to development. The soul, however, does not develop, nor does the psyche unfold. While the soul's unfolding can motivate or be motivated by the psyche's development, these processes need not occur in tandem. Ultimately, these are two distinct but related processes.

When it comes to the formation of the psyche, then, I argued that whereas the development of the living body involves contact with a material world, the development of the psyche involves contact with values. This is because values serve as motives for us. First, as section 4 argued, values motivate *how* we experience the flow and content of consciousness. In this regard, values influence the sense-making activities of our consciousness by shaping how objects are given, specifically by helping to constitute the temporal link between objects of consciousness and the felt meaning of those objects. In short, our values shape how we see the world and interpret reality. This means that values motivate us to see the world *according-to-our-values*, a personalized view which is then confirmed or challenged in experience. Second, and as section 5 argued, values influence our formation insofar as the values we hold constitute who we are as persons. While our personality, which is linked to our soul, is composed of layers of values, those values are expressed in the value responses that compose our character. Values are formative for the psyche because we *are* our values and our value responses. Our psychic development thus culminates in character development, or in our value-responses, which can also motivate the unfolding of our personality.

Formation thus produces each psycho-physical individual by developing their living body and their psyche. On my reading of Stein there are ultimately two ways formation 'develops' this individual, namely, in terms of *Entwicklung* (developing) and *Entfaltung* (unfolding). Our factual development is *Entwicklung*: this is the development of body and psyche in correspondence to inner and outer circumstances and as a realization of our facticity. However, the unfolding of our soul, while part of our general development, is not itself included in psychic development, although it does correspond to it. In this regard, through *Entwicklung* our soul can unfold and 'develop' in its own manner (what Stein terms *Entfaltung*). *Entfaltung* is soul's unfolding in accordance with the core, which produces limits and possibilities for both our unfolding and our development.

It is my view that the distinction between *Entwicklung* and *Entfaltung* gets to the core of Stein's theory of formation. Under the rubric of *Entwicklung* we have physical and psychic development, insofar as our living bodies and psyches are subject to a factual development that encourages change in response to inner and outer circumstances. By contrast, under the rubric of *Entfaltung* we have the unfolding of the soul, as circumscribed and encouraged by the presence of a personality core that simultaneously provides limits to our development and encourages our growth. In this regard, the core establishes an inherent inner 'goal' for our development, one that is not installed from without because the core is inherent within us. As Stein writes, "But already from the beginning of the development it 'slumbers' as 'original predisposition' in the core or—more correctly—the nucleus has an inner nature, which gives all its 'doing' a certain direction, gives it the character of aiming at exactly this goal."[103] Nonetheless the soul's unfolding is only able to be met *through* formative contact from without insofar as this contact allows for our physical and psychic development (in terms of *Entwicklung*) to occur. Hence, "from the external circumstances it depends on whether this direction is kept unaltered, whether the development leads to a full unfolding or only to a more or less approximated one."[104]

Both forms of development work together to produce a person as Stein understands it. Our physical development ultimately produces a meaningful experience of our unique lived bodies as they are situated in this time and place. It is in part because we live as *this* particular body *here and now* and have experienced all that we have *through and as this body* that we are who we are. Similarly, our psychic development produces our character and shapes our experience of reality. Our experience of reality then folds back upon itself to confirm or challenge our character, producing a developmental loop in which meaningful personal growth is made possible and who

[103] Stein, 8:118.
[104] Stein, 8:118.

we are is constituted. Finally, our soul's unfolding encourages and delimits the possibilities of this process, providing a direction to our development and producing the 'individual note' of our personal singularity.

When it comes to conceptualizing Stein's view of human subjectivity, then, what we discover is that the subject is incomplete, vulnerable, not self-contained, revisable, and emergent. While a core is innate within each of us, and while this core does prescribe limits and directions for our development, ultimately, who we become is dependent upon the inner and outer circumstances of our life. Our development is never "complete," as we are always vulnerable and open to formative influences shaping us. We are also not self-contained, because who we are is shaped by the myriad of encounters with others, with the world, and with the circumstances of our lives. Ultimately, this means that our subjectivity is always in a process of becoming, such that who we become throughout our life can change in accordance with other life events.

But can we actively participate in the process of our subjective becoming? Can we exercise some agency over the process and self-direct our own development toward our own aims, or are we passively shaped in accordance to the inner and outer circumstances of our life? In the next chapter, I explore the possibility of exercising freedom over formation in order to *self-form*; there, I show how, thanks to *self-formation*, it is possible for us to deliberately intervene in the shaping of our lives and thereby participate as agents in composing who we as persons are.

Chapter 2: Forming Oneself on the Basis of Empathy: Self-Formation and the Ethical Imperative to Become Ourselves

Introduction

In chapter one, I argued that Stein's psycho-physical individual is a developmental subject shaped by both its facticity and circumstances. Because the psycho-physical individual is shaped by inner and outer processes, it may appear that it is a passive subject, one that emerges *because* of facticity and circumstance. However, this is only part of the story. Indeed, since in chapter one I examined how the *psycho-physical* individual was *formed*, I asked after the way the body and psyche are causally shaped by nature. However, Stein makes it clear that we are more than simply psycho-physical subjects. Rather, as *whole persons*, we are *spiritual* psycho-physical subjects.

Spirit according to Stein is the domain of willing, acting, and freedom. Whereas the psycho-physical individual is subject to nature, the spiritual subject is free, such that they step outside nature and face it. In so doing, consciousness becomes more than just a conditioned occurrence.[105] In other words, the I that knowingly and willingly executes its acts, rather than merely acting responsively to stimuli, is the I of a spiritual subject.[106] Therefore, when we reframe the conversation about the developmental nature of the subject in light of our spiritual personhood, we move beyond the characterization of a passive subject formed by facticity and circumstance. Rather, we discover the extent to which we *participate in* our own development through a spiritual activity that Stein names *self-formation*.

In this chapter, I read across *On the Problem of Empathy*, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, *Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, *Essays on Women*,

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[105] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 91.
[106] Angela Ales Bello, "The Spiritual Life and Its Degrees According to Edith Stein," in *Listening to Edith Stein: Wisdom for a New Century*, ed. Kathleen Haney, Carmelite Studies XII (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2018), Ch 2.

and *Finite and Eternal Being* to develop Stein's account of self-formation. While Stein's conception of self-formation is frequently referenced in the scholarly literature, there has been a dearth of systemic treatments of it. To remedy this oversight, I argue that self-formation is an exercise of our freedom that takes the form of a principled self-shaping in which one strives to become who they want to be by suppressing undesirable traits and developing desired traits. Ultimately, I argue that what Stein's conception of self-formation teaches us is that we each have a responsibility to bring our empirical lives in accord with our personal essence. Failure to do so will result in what Stein calls "superficial" living, that is, a condition of mere mimicry of ready-made social values. By contrast, if we live soulful lives, then we can become 'authentic' versions of ourselves through the activity of self-formation.

In section one I first consider how while self-formation is a subjective exercise we each undertake, the very possibility of self-forming in the first place is grounded in and by our intersubjective life. As I shall show, this is because we learn to see ourselves as whole individuals through acts of empathy, insofar as empathy teaches us who we are to others. In section two, I argue that once we can see ourselves objectively, we can choose how we want to develop ourselves, and we can subsequently initiate processes of self-formation to achieve this goal. The activity of self-formation is then facilitated by the ego, which, with the support of an adequate motivational context, acts according to an adopted principle of self-design and in consultation with the soul's conscience to create (and recreate) the self. Finally, as I argue in section three, because we are born with a personality core that sets out our essence, self-formation can either result in us actualizing our predispositions and becoming our 'true' selves, or it can take us away from who we truly are. Each of us has a moral responsibility to bring our empirical lives in accord with our personal essence, and the activity of self-formation allows us to achieve this obligation.

What makes Self-Formation possible? Empathy as the Intersubjective Ground of Self-Formation

When we consider our activities of self-formation, or the way we work on ourselves and thereby participate in our own development, we may think that self-formation is merely an individual activity done on ourselves, by ourselves. After all, each of us seemingly intervenes in our own development every day, be it through the small decisions of the day (e.g., oatmeal or omelet for breakfast?) or the active formation of new habits (e.g., quitting smoking, exercising for 30 mins five times a week, etc.). In these ways, we contribute to the development of our own personhood. Stein, however, underscores that this *subjective* process is not simply an individual pursuit, but instead is grounded in our *intersubjective* life. As I show in this section, if not for experiences of intersubjective empathy, that is, experiences where we perceive other experiencing subjects, none of us would be capable of viewing ourselves in the light needed to critically examine, evaluate, and transform ourselves. In other words, I argue that self-formation is only possible thanks to empathy, because we only know ourselves through others. Empathy teaches us to see ourselves from the perspective of others, which enriches our self-knowledge, and self-formation in turn acts upon our self-knowledge. In this regard, the major insight of Steinian self-formation is that the objective self-knowledge needed in order to develop ourselves is not simply an isolated, introspective exercise of ratiocination, but is rather dependent upon our sociality and our particular intersubjective experiences.

In what follows, I unpack Stein's definition of empathy to show how empathy enables self-formation. In subsection one, I first contextualize and define Stein's account of empathy. In subsection two, I examine how empathy enriches self-knowledge, first by comparing the knowledge we derive of ourselves from both inner and outer perception, before turning to empathically-derived self-knowledge. In subsection three, I consider some limitations of

empathically-derived self-knowledge, namely, the threat of error and deception. Finally, in subsection four, I illustrate how self-formation depends upon empathy by showing how self-formation acts upon self-knowledge. I conclude this section by considering what the limited self-knowledge we act upon in self-formation means for our self-creating activities.

What is Empathy?

As is well documented, Stein chose the issue of empathy for her dissertation topic following Husserl's remarks in his 1913 lectures on Nature and Spirit. As she relates in her autobiography, *Life in a Jewish Family*, she was struck by Husserl's otherwise unelaborated claim that an objective world could only be experienced intersubjectively.[107] As Husserl then noted, to experience an objective world, we first need to experience other individuals. Husserl named this experience *Einfühlung* (empathy), but beyond indicating the work of Theodor Lipps he did not clarify empathy itself, nor how it gives us access to an objective world. Stein took note of the need for a clarification of empathy, and, with Husserl's approval, assumed the topic in her dissertation.[108]

Before turning to Stein's account of empathy, to understand her contribution it is crucial to distinguish her concept from our colloquial understanding of the term. The colloquial North-American understanding of the word "empathy" tends to name our experience of feeling another

[107] Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: 1891-1916*, One:269.

[108] Stein's work on empathy is her best-known contribution to the phenomenological tradition. Scholarship on Stein's contributions is dominated by historical treatments of her work, often focusing on how her account is influenced by Scheler and conversant with Husserl's concept of empathy (Andrews, 2012; Jardine 2014; MacIntyre 2006; Magrí and Moran, 2017; Zahavi 2008, 2010). In similar vein, scholarship often focuses on explicating Stein's concept of empathy (Borden 2003; Calcagno 2007; 2014; Dullstein 2013; Thompson 2001; Sawicki 1997; Svenaeus 2018), especially in relation to values and affectivity (Magrí 2015; Vendrell Ferran 2015, 2017). Most frequently, scholars have engaged with her account of empathy as spelled out in her dissertation, *On the Problem of Empathy* (*Zum Problem der Einfühlung*), which Stein successfully defended in 1916 and published in 1917, in no small part because the development of empathy in this work is her most elaborated account and, more crucially, because it is the ground for her later work, including her theological writing. For my part, in what follows I, too, shall focus on Stein's early development of the concept of empathy, in order to set up the larger discussion of how empathy serves as a condition of possibility for self-formation.

person's feelings and thereby understanding their experience. To say "I empathize with you," would be similar to saying "I feel—or have felt—what you are feeling, and thus understand it." Such a statement would indicate that you are projecting yourself into the other person's place, perhaps based on your own personal experience, to understand theirs. By contrast, when Stein uses the word *Einfühlung*—which is typically but not always translated into English scholarship as "empathy"[109]—she is designating a more fundamental mental act.[110] Empathy is not merely feeling another's experience; it is the mental act by which the experience of others is comprehended by us *as* other. In this regard, empathy for Stein names our experience becoming aware of another subject and their experiencing *as* other than ourselves and our own experiencing *within* the flow of *our* consciousness. As Patrick H. Byrne indicates, Stein indicates these different modes of experiencing by contrasting the German terms *Erfahren* and *Erlebnis*.[111] We experience (*erfahren*) other subjects and their experience (*Erleben*), which is to say that we have a perception of the lived experience of the other subject. In this regard, empathy (*Einfühlung*) for Stein is not the same as a feeling of oneness with another person (*Einsfühlung*); it is the experience that a distinct I has when it encounters another I and perceives that the other I has its own experiential flow.

Empathy is therefore a distinct kind of perceptual act. It is similar to outer perception, or the perception of external objects, insofar as both empathy and outer perception intend an object

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[109] In an attempt to dissuade readers from misunderstanding Stein's understanding of the term in light of colloquial North American meaning of empathy, scholars sometimes use the original *Einfühlung*, or, more rarely, provide their own translation of the term (for example, Angela Ales Bello suggests *Einfühlung* is better translated as "intropathy," although she occasionally continues to use the commonly accepted "empathy" in her own writing). Cf. Angela Ales Bello, "Dual Anthropology as the Imago Dei in Edith Stein," *Open Theology* 5, no. 1 (January 1, 2019): 98, https://doi.org/10.1515/opth-2019-0007.

[110] According to Stein, sharing another person's feelings is an instance of "emotional contagion," not empathy (1989, 23).

[111] Patrick H. Byrne, "Empathy, Insight and Objectivity: Edith Stein & Bernard Lonergan," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 51, no. 1 (January 2, 2020): 56, https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2019.1630906.

that is given in a here and now (in this case, the experience of another person who is presently in front of me).[112] However, empathy differs from outer perception insofar as what is intended is given as belonging to someone else (i.e., it is *their* experience, not *mine*).[113] In other words, the other's experience given in empathy does not emerge from my "I." For example, imagine you are in line at a grocery store. The person directly to your left appears impatient. Their arms are crossed, and their toes are tapping as they shift their weight restlessly. They cast their gaze about as they compare the various check-out lines to estimate which one will have the shortest wait time. Through empathy, you perceive their impatience without participating in it yourself, and in your perception of their impatience, you recognize that it is their experience—not yours—although you discover their experience in the flow of your own experience. As Dan Zahavi notes of Stein's view, this recognition of their experience is not a process of *inference* or *imagination*.[114] You don't *infer* from their crossed arms that they are impatient, nor do you *imagine* that they are impatient. Nor is it a process of *projection*, which, as Sarah Borden notes, would mean that we "suppress the other and appropriate their experience" (i.e., you don't project *your* feelings about waiting onto them and assume you both are having the same experience).[115] Rather, according to Stein, in empathy you *perceive* their impatience in their countenance and their bodily expressions, although you lack first-person experience of their impatience (i.e., it is their impatience, not yours). In this regard, empathy allows you to experience the content of another person's experience in the third-person.

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[112] Stein defines outer perception as "acts in which spatio-temporal concrete being and occurring come to me in embodied givenness." For example, perception of external objects happens through outer perception. The object is spatially and temporally present to me. When I perceive it, I immediately perceive one of its embodied aspects. Cf. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 6.
[113] Stein, 6–7, 10–11.
[114] Dan Zahavi, "Empathy, Embodiment and Interpersonal Understanding: From Lipps to Schutz," *Inquiry* 53, no. 3 (June 2010): 294, https://doi.org/10.1080/00201741003784663.
[115] Sarah Borden, *Edith Stein* (New York: Continuum, 2003), 28.

You don't feel *their* impatience, and you don't identify with them. Rather, you perceive their impatience.

Stein argues that our experience of empathizing with another takes place in three steps. First, the other individual appears to the empathizer as someone with an experience to be empathized. Second, the empathizer follows the experience of the other through. Third, the empathizer returns to their own experience with a richer understanding of the experience of the other.[116] Stein considers encountering a sorrowful friend to illustrate this process. When you see your friend, their sadness appears before you as an object. Moved by their sadness, you may try to better understand it. To do so, you try to bring it to clear givenness, which "draws" you into their experience of sorrow. You no longer perceive the experiential state of the other as an object, or as something merely present before you; the intentionality of their experience pulls you into it and you are turned towards its intentional object. At this point, you are no longer turned towards your friend's sorrow, but rather the content of your friend's experience that has caused them sorrow. Say that they have recently lost a person dear to them. Their loss is given as the intentional object of their sorrow through this deeper level of empathy. With the matter thus clarified, you again face the other and their experience as an object, only it is given with a fuller and more comprehensive sense. You feel their sorrow, but not as *your* sorrow; it is their sorrow, a sorrow they live but which manifests in your experience as their sorrow. Thus, (1) the sorrowful friend appeared, and their sorrow was something to be empathized; (2) you were drawn into their experience and followed this pull in order to grasp your friend's sorrow; (3) having discovered the contours and cause of

[116] While all three steps are possible in empathy, not all empathizers will pursue an empathic act to its fullest depths, especially if they are satisfied by what they grasp in the earlier levels. Cf. Fredrik Svenaeus, "Edith Stein's Phenomenology of Sensual and Emotional Empathy," *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 17, no. 4 (2018): 742, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-017-9544-9; Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 19.

their sorrow (in this case, their loss), you return to your experience with a richer understanding of your friend's experience.

But why does Stein insist that the experience we perceive in empathy is necessarily the experience of another I, and not my own? In other words, why does the shopper's impatience remain their impatience, or my friend's sorrow their sorrow, even though we perceive it and often have our own response to it, sometimes a response that appears affectively identical to their experience? Is it possible that via empathy *I* feel *their* impatience or sorrow, or can I only feel *my perception of their impatience and sorrow* (and, perhaps, experience a resultant stirring of my own impatience or sorrow at the sight of theirs)? In other words, why doesn't empathy necessarily involve *identification* with another person?

Stein flatly rejects the possibility that in empathy we identify with another person, on the grounds that living another person's experience in the first person would require distinct I's to merge or fuse into one I. Indeed, Stein criticizes Theodor Lipps' account of *Einfühlung* as "inner participation" in the experience of another on these very grounds.[117] Stein's interpretation of Lipps' circus acrobat is helpful here.[118] Lipps suggests that when we watch an acrobat, we inwardly participate in their movements, and only return ourselves if we step out of the empathic experience and reflect upon our real I. According to Stein, here Lipps is suggesting that in the empathic experience, the distinction between my I and the other's I is dissolved, and I live in the acrobat's body in the same way I live in my own.[119] Stein, however, refutes this point, arguing that Lipps

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[117] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 11–18.

[118] It has been argued that Stein has misinterpreted Lipps' theory of *Einfühlung* (cf. Karsten R. Stueber, *Rediscovering Empathy : Agency, Folk Psychology and the Human Sciences* (London: The MIT Press, 2006), 8.). Stein's discussion of Lipps is nonetheless useful here, insofar as it allows us to more clearly understand why she thinks that empathy entails *individuation*, rather than *identification* with others.

[119] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 16. Stein acknowledges that it is possible *to feel a feeling of oneness* with another, but she claims that this feeling does not imply the actual merging of my I with another I: "I feel my joy while I empathically comprehend the others' and see it as the same. And, seeing this, it seems

has overlooks the difference between primordial and non-primordial experience, and thus fails to see that my I is always distinct from the I of another.[120] Let us examine this point more closely in order to see why it is that I's remain distinct in the empathic experience.

Stein's argument for why two distinct I's cannot merge in empathy is grounded upon two crucial distinctions, namely, (1) the distinction between primordial and non-primordial experience, as well as (2) the distinction between act and content. According to Stein, what is *primordial* is what is immediately given within experience. For example, outer perception yields spatio-temporal objects immediately.[121] *Non-primordial experience* by contrast involves what is not immediately given in experience. Memories are good examples of non-primordial experience, because while a memory recalls something that was once primordial, it is now only represented in experience.[122] Empathy is a unique phenomenon because it is *both* primordial and non-primordial. It is a primordial *act*, insofar as it occurs as present experience.[123] However, the *content* of this act is non-primordial because this content is lived experience not immediately issuing from my I (rather, it issues from another person's I). Because empathy is a primordial act that features non-primordial content, that is, because empathy is an act within our experience that conveys the experience of

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that the non-primordial character of the foreign joy has vanished. Indeed, this phantom joy coincides in every respect with my real live joy, and theirs is just as live to them as mine is to me. Now I intuitively have before me what they feel. It comes to life in my feeling, and from the "I" and "you" arises the "we" as a subject of a higher level…. But "I"," "you," and "he" are retained in "we." *A "we," not an "I," is the subject of the empathizing*. Not through the feeling of oneness, but through empathizing, do we experience others" (1989, 17, 18). Italics added.

[120] Stein will remain consistent on the point of the unity of the I throughout her work. Other phenomenologists will take issue with this point, however. For example, Gerda Walther will argue that the I can merge with another I, especially in experiences of telepathy or elevated "we-experiences." Cf. Gerda Walther, *Phänomenologie Der Mystik* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Olten, 1976).

[121] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 6.

[122] Stein, 7.

[123] Stein, 10.

another person, our I is always retained in empathic experiences; thus, empathy does not lead to our merging with another.[124]

We might be tempted to think that because empathy provides us with special (albeit limited) access to the experience of others, its most notable—or perhaps its only—achievement is intersubjective experience. However, according to Stein empathy is not only limited to our ability to perceive and know the experiences of other people. Rather, empathy, as an experience of other people, *makes objective knowledge in general possible*. This is because empathy is a "founding" act rather than a "founded act."[125] Unlike values, for example, which are *founded* acts, or responses to an object, empathy is a *founding* act that constitutes objects. To be specific, *empathy as a founding act constitutes others, ourselves, and the world*. We individuate ourselves only after becoming aware of other experience, and by becoming aware of other experience, we become acquainted with a shared world.

It is helpful to illustrate this claim. To see how empathy makes objectivity possible, we can examine Stein's claim that we can only have knowledge of the outer world based upon intersubjective experience. While the *appearance* of the world is dependent upon our individual consciousness, the *appearing* world is independent of consciousness.[126] In other words, the world appears to me in such and such a way; if I only had access to my own consciousness, I would be trapped in the world as I perceive it. However, empathy lets us go beyond our own individuality

[124] If we do not merge with another I in experiences of empathy, then empathy as Stein defines it is a way of perceiving others without reducing or subsuming them into our I. While I do not have the space to develop this point here, Steinian empathy could serve as a way of thematizing phenomenological intersubjectivity without some of the baggage attributed to classical phenomenological intersubjectivity. That is, through Steinian empathy we can think about how we experience the *appearance* of others in our consciousness without reducing their individuality and irreducibility to that appearance.
[125] Michael F. Andrews and Catholic University of America, "Edith Stein and Max Scheler: Ethics, Empathy, and the Constitution of the Acting Person," *Quaestiones Disputatae* 3, no. 1 (2012): 36, https://doi.org/10.5840/qd2012314.
[126] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 64.

to *perceive the world as it appears to others*, and, further, to *perceive the world as intersubjectively constituted*. This empathically received world image is not a fantasy world but is the real existing world that others experience, and that I likewise perceive primordially. And as a real, existing world, it is a social world that is mutually constituted. Thus, intersubjective experience establishes that we share the world, and, further, provides us access to knowledge of it. In this regard, empathy as the basis of intersubjective experience becomes the ground for all our knowledge of others and even the world.[127]

While Stein does not linger on this point, it is useful to affirm that Stein's account of empathy as a founding act shows that for her objectivity is socially dependent. Objectivity is not established via mathematical measurements of length, height, width, etc. Rather, objectivity involves the subjective experience of other people, insofar as it is constituted via the intentionality of multiple subjects. In other words, it is thanks to empathy, as a form of other-oriented intentionality that involves our experience of other people and their experiences, that we can get outside of our individual consciousness and experience a shared reality and objective world. In this regard, Stein anticipates Hannah Arendt's later formulation that "although everything that appears is perceived in the mode of it-seems-to-me, hence open to error and illusion, appearance as such carries with it a prior indication of realness…. The reality of what I perceive is guaranteed

[127] As Alasdair MacIntyre notes, even the enterprise of phenomenology itself is dependent upon the empathic act, for only via empathy is there a ground for knowledge of others, of the world, and even of the self. However, by establishing empathy as the ground for phenomenology, Stein's work raises questions about the nature of phenomenology herself, as Sarah Borden indicates: "Thus, Stein's study of empathy concerns not simply empathy as one kind of experience, but also how the phenomenological project itself should be conceived: should we understand experience as *my* experience of the world or as *our* encounter with the world?" (27). This challenge remains alive today in critical and feminist phenomenologies, which directly address the challenge of describing how the social structures of our shared social world produce radically divergent subjectivities and experiences. Cf. Macintyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue*, 75–76; Borden, *Edith Stein*, 27.

by its worldly context, which includes others who perceive as I do, on the one hand, and by the working together of my five senses on the other."[128]

Because empathy makes objectivity possible, one of its most important contributions is to our self-knowledge. Through empathy, we bring ourselves and our experience into relief with the experience of another, and in so doing we may also develop a richer sense of our own self as well as of our experience. As I develop more fully in the next subsection, it is empathy's capacity to enrich our self-knowledge in this regard that makes it essential to our self-formation. More specifically, our ability to see ourselves from the perspective of others, which is a possibility ascribed to empathy, provides the self-knowledge that our self-formative activities are predicated upon.

Empathy and Self-Knowledge

As we have just seen, by allowing us to grasp another's experience, empathy provides knowledge of their experience. However, part of their experience includes *their* empathizing of *us*. The capacity to empathize another's experience of ourselves is what Stein names *reiterative empathy*.[129] Reiterative empathy is the pathway to a rich sense of self-knowledge, for it provides a fuller picture of who we are by allowing us to see *who we are to others*. This depiction of our self ultimately goes beyond what I can grasp of myself from inner and outer perception alone. As I will later argue, it is this rich sense of self-knowledge that self-formation acts upon.

In reiterative empathy, we empathize the content of another person's empathized act, which can give us insight into their comprehension of us (or of other persons). Say that I am the one being empathized by another. In this case, I am a part of what the other has intended. Accordingly, when

[128] Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, One-volume Edition (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 49–50.
[129] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 18.

I grasp their experience through empathy, I also receive the part of their experience that includes their empathized experience of me. This means that when *my* empathy intends *their experience*, I am given *their* empathized content of *my experience*. Such content is, in short, *their* perception of *my* experience. In this way, reiterative empathy allows me to receive my original experience as an empathized one. Because the other has constituted me as an individual based upon the life exhibited by my bodily expressions, actions, statements, and my countenance, when I empathize their image of me, I see how I appear to them.

Reiterative empathy is key for self-awareness and self-knowledge. To see why this is so, first consider what we would know of ourselves without empathy. For the most part, we don't even experience ourselves or our experience as objects of knowledge. Rather, we are absorbed in experience. But if we take a step back and reflect upon our experience—which, as we shall shortly see, is a process Stein doesn't even think is possible unless we have already experienced empathy[130]—we discover that inner and outer perception provide incomplete knowledge of ourselves. For example, when we reflect upon our inner experience, we discover that we are embodied beings who live in the world. We are oriented spatially, we think, we feel, we experience sensations, and we are expressive. What we can learn from reflecting upon this source of experience is not to be underestimated—our feelings and thoughts, for example, demonstrate what is of value to us—but this is not the whole of what we are. Similarly, outer perception informs us of the appearance of our bodies, but even this knowledge is limited; as I type this sentence, I bear witness to my hands moving across the keyboard and can see the front of my body, but I cannot see my face or the back of my body. Thus, the picture of myself derived from outer perception is an incomplete vision of my body. However, when we combine the knowledge gained from inner

[130] Stein, 88.

and outer perception with the knowledge earned from empathy, we come to a much richer sense of our selves. This is because the empathized image of ourselves as given in reiterative empathy allows us to see ourselves as we appear to others.

By allowing us to see ourselves as we appear to others, empathy contributes to self-knowledge in two ways. First, it is only because others perceive us as an object that we learn to see ourselves in the same manner.[131] This is because in the natural attitude we are absorbed in experience, such that we ourselves do not become an object of that experience. However, when we encounter others, we evaluate their experience and see in it what kind of person they are (i.e., what kind of character their expressions and actions manifest). It is by seeing that person as a person like me, that I then learn to see myself as I have seen them—as an object of perception. Accordingly, when we stand back from ourselves and learn to see ourselves as an object, we can evaluate ourselves from a different point of view: we can consider ourselves in the empathic mode.

The second way reiterative empathy contributes to self-knowledge is found in the way it provides us with multiple viewpoints on ourselves, which we can then compare with our inner and outer experience of ourselves. This multiplicity of viewpoints becomes a source for the material we need to reflect upon, evaluate, and critique ourselves, thus contributing to richer self-knowledge. For example, when we compare our personal experience of ourselves with the experience that we perceive others to have of us, we might discover that we are more—or less—than we believe ourselves to be. We might discover deficiencies in our character, or, more positively, we may discover characteristics that others find in us for the first time.

In both of these ways, empathy allows us to identify and correct errors in our self-knowledge as well as reveal moments of self-deception. For example, we may have established

[131] Borden, *Edith Stein*, 29.

interpretations of ourselves and our actions which, when looked at from the perspective of another, prove false. As Stein writes, "[i]t is possible for another to 'judge me more accurately' than I judge myself and give me clarity about myself."[132] Robin DiAngelo describes such a moment for herself in *What does it mean to be white?*. When planning a group exercise with a colleague of color, she shared with her colleague how she tries to be thoughtful about the language she uses to not expose and reproduce stereotypes. Her colleague, however, pointed out that this apparent thoughtfulness may be better understood as carefulness, and that carefulness can lead to disingenuous engagement. This interaction prompted DiAngelo to reflect upon herself—a reflection based upon the content of her reiterated empathy—and to see how what she construed as thoughtfulness was actually a carefulness at not making a racist mistake, one which expressed her own internalized racism by motivating reserved and cold behavior toward people of color.[133] In this regard, the content of DiAngelo's reiterated empathy suggested an alternative interpretation of her behavior based upon the same act, which allowed her to discover an instance of self-deception.

Ultimately, Stein's development of reiterative empathy shows that self-reflection and self-knowledge is based upon empathy. We come to know ourselves as whole persons through empathy. We learn to see ourselves as objects due to our empathic experiences of other persons, and we see who we are to them through reiterative empathy. In this regard, I can never fully know myself based upon my own inner and outer perception. I need others to show me who I am to have objective knowledge of myself.

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[132] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 89.

[133] Robin J. DiAngelo, *What Does It Mean to Be White? Developing White Racial Literacy*, Revised edition, Counterpoints: Studies in the Postmodern Theory of Education, vol. 497 (New York: Peter Lang, 2016), 241. Here, I set aside the question of the extent of DiAngelo's self-deception, as alleged by John McWhorter. Cf. John McWhorter, "The Dehumanizing Condescension of 'White Fragility,'" *The Atlantic*, July 15, 2020, https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/07/dehumanizing-condescension-white-fragility/614146/.

Error and Deception in Empathy

I have argued that we learn who we are through others. Yet it is an inescapable truth that intersubjective perception is often flawed. How often do we feel misunderstood, or unrecognized, by others? Indeed, it may even feel as though being seen, heard, and understood is the exception to the rule—not the norm. How, then, can we rely upon such faulty information for self-knowledge, especially if this source for self-knowledge is ultimately the source for our self-formation?

To exemplify the concern here, consider how racialized perception sets out in advance an interpretation of the racialized body, one that prohibits an actual encounter with the other. According to Frantz Fanon, intersubjective perception is never neutral but always proceeds according to a pre-existing framework. For example, in "The North African Syndrome," Fanon describes how North African men were received by the medical staff in France in the 1940's and 1950's. The North African attends the doctor complaining of pain and says that he is dying. His descriptions of his illness, however, do not conform to the expected behavior of a patient. The doctors do not find a lesional basis for his illness and judge his pain to lack consistency and reality. In their uncertainty, they grasp for what they feel certain about: "[T]he North African *is* a-man-who-doesn't-like-work," summarizes Fanon, "so that whatever he does will be interpreted *a priori* on the basis of this."[134] In this instance, the appearance of the North African in the medical situation in France is always interpreted through a racial and colonial European framework, and this way of interpreting him sets out in advance the meaning of his appearance. The event occurs so commonly that the mysterious illness is named: the North African Syndrome, a syndrome which diagnoses the North African as someone who feigns his illness.

[134] Frantz Fanon, *Toward the African Revolution: Political Essays*, New Evergreen ed (New York: Grove Press, 1988), 6.

Fanon's discussion of the pathologization of the North African man raises questions about the power of Steinian empathy. The doctors in France have perceived the appearance of a patient, which means they have engaged in an act of empathy as Stein defines it, yet they have deeply misinterpreted the meaning of the patient's appearance. Rather than perceiving the North African man as he is, they project their interpretative frameworks upon his appearance, and make sense of him within those frameworks. When his appearance does not initially fit into their pre-established expectations, they force a label upon him that re-establishes the meaning of his appearance within the margins of their frameworks: he is an imposter. How can Steinian empathy account for this experience?

If we recall my discussion above about the 'levels' of empathy, it appears that the doctors only successfully achieved the first level of empathy—that is, they have only perceived that another is present before them—without completing the other levels. In other words, the doctors failed to follow the empathic pull into the North African man's experience to see the object of his suffering, and thus, they could not return to their experience with a fuller sense of why the North African man presents the way he does. Indeed, rather than fully empathizing with the patient, they *project* onto him, which precludes the possibility of making sense of the patient's appearance in a way that is proper to his individuality.[135]

While the doctors certainly failed to reach the deepest levels of empathy, it is important to note that even if they had, they still may have misinterpreted the North African man's experience. While we might hope that Steinian empathy can 'get beyond' the evident interpretive errors demonstrated by the French doctors, in fact there is nothing in Steinian empathy itself that

[135] Stein's description of the levels of empathy can be usefully turned towards understanding how the non-neutrality of intersubjective perception is deployed in sexism, racism, etc. However, space does not permit a full development of the idea here.

guarantees correctness of empathic perception. Rather, Stein acknowledges that there can be both error and deception in empathy. We see this in her description of her experience as a nurse tending a wounded individual in World War I. She writes:

> When I empathize the pain of the injured in looking at a wound, I tend to look at his face to have my experience confirmed in his expression of suffering. Should I instead perceive a cheerful or peaceful countenance, I would say to myself that he must not really be having any pain, for pain in its meaning motivates unhappy feelings visible in an expression. Further testing that consists of new acts of empathy and possible inferences based on them can also lead me to another correction: the sensual feeling is indeed present but its expression is voluntarily repressed; or perhaps this person certainly feels the pain but, because his feeling is perverted, he does not suffer from it but enjoys it.[136]

Stein describes here a series of errors in empathy, each of which is ultimately overcome and corrected by subsequent acts of empathy. The point here is that there is nothing in the empathic act itself that guarantees a correct inference about the individual empathized or their experience. Rather, empathy is the perceptual opening unto their experience, and it affords the possibility for us to interpret their experience, hopefully correctly. Empathic errors and deceptions themselves can have a variety of origins: for example, we can be mistaken if we take our individual as a rule and infer their experience on analogy to our own. Or the person we are empathizing with can deliberately seek to deceive us, by telling us one thing but demonstrating another with their body language. Or, finally, as Fanon teaches us, our intersubjective perception is always framed by pre-existing normative frameworks, which can inhibit genuine intersubjective encounters by motivating misinterpretation and foreclosure towards others.

Stein claims that the initial empathic act cannot itself overcome these errors and deceptions. Instead, we must be guided in empathy by outer perception and inner perception, and we must query the results of empathy against further empathic acts.[137] In the case of outer perception, by

[136] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 84–85.
[137] Stein, 87.

truly perceiving the individual that is present before us without subsuming them into our preconceptions or applying our experience to theirs, we can work to overcome errors in empathy.[138] In addition, empathy should also be guided by inner perception.[139] For example, when we receive an interpretation of ourselves from another, we must compare that interpretation with our primordial experience, in order to discover if there are any conflicts. Doing so may expose deceptions and errors in the other's perception of us or in our own self-perception. Finally, increasing the number of appearances of myself as received from another can go some way in overcoming errors based on reiterative empathy. Each person we encounter presents another opportunity for us to see ourselves from another's perspective. Thus, quite simply meeting more people, and different kinds of people, can challenge false images of ourselves. In sum, then, further experiential acts and further empathic acts can unmask error or deception, regardless of whether those errors located in our perceptions of a situation, or in someone's representation of their experience to us, or someone's perception of who we are, or in our perceptions of others. When we compare the variety of information received through outer perception, inner perception, and empathic perception, we can come to a richer sense of who we are, by complexifying, correcting, and confirming our self-perceptions.[140]

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[138] This suggestion is in line with Helen Fielding's claim that we must "cultivate our perception" so as to relearn how to approach the world without imposing systems or frameworks upon what we encounter. While Fielding herself is not concerned with empathy, her description of how artwork can cultivate perception nicely shows how careful attention to what we perceive can teach us to attend to who or what really is before us, rather than our preconceptions: "Because it is our inherent openness to the world, perception takes place in the present even as it is shaped by past experience and anticipation of the future. When we do not attend to who or what we perceive and instead rely on sedimented concepts as frameworks to 'represent the real,' we invoke past structures and pass over 'the potential of our senses' to generate new meaning" (2021, 4-5).

[139] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 88.

[140] Recalling again Fanon's example, I would argue that further acts of empathy on the part of the doctor would not be sufficient for solving the problem. Rather, awareness of social structures as well as sociocultural change would be necessary. While I cannot develop this point here, in chapter four I begin to sketch out how the individualist account found in Stein can be turned towards projects of social and political change.

Acknowledging that empathy has no guarantee of correctness may suggest that self-knowledge grounded in empathy has critical weaknesses. However, I would argue that we should think of the limitations of Steinian empathy as a strength of the account. Because our self-perceptions based on empathy are subject to error and deception, we can never know ourselves fully. However, this is not a *failure* of experience. Rather, incomplete self-knowledge is a *feature* of human experience. Situating our incomplete self-knowledge as a feature of experience thus means that we should not be settled in our view of our selves but should instead see our self-understanding as revisable and our self-knowledge as limited by the contexts and relationships we have experienced. Furthermore, if we can never know ourselves fully, then we are not transparent to ourselves, nor can we master ourselves.

Empathy as the Intersubjective Ground for Self-Formation

Now that I have demonstrated the role empathy plays in self-knowledge, I can demonstrate why Stein argues that self-formation has an intersubjective ground. As I will argue in this subsection, our self-formation, which is our willed development of our selves, acts upon our self-knowledge, which is ultimately grounded in what we learn about ourselves through empathy. Thus, without empathy, we could not form ourselves; we would instead be passively constructed through formation alone.

Empathy is a ground for self-formation insofar as it provides the possibility of critical self-reflection and self-evaluation. Prior to empathy, we have no access to objective knowledge, nor can we get outside of our own consciousness. We are limited to what we encounter within ourselves via inner perception, or outside ourselves via outer perception. We are also absorbed in the flow of experience, and do not make it, nor ourselves, an object *of* consciousness. In short, without empathy we would never learn how to see ourselves as an object. And it is this objective

position-taking vis-à-vis ourselves that is crucial for enabling us to reflect upon, evaluate, and critique ourselves. In this regard, empathy allows us to learn about ourselves, to overcome error and deception in self-understanding, and to challenge error and deception in other's perceptions of us.

The richer sense of our selves that empathy affords can be the impetus for personal transformation via self-formation. As Sarah Borden argues, when we grasp another's view of us, we create an opportunity to realize latent personal possibilities.[141] This is because the richer sense of ourselves that empathy provides us with allows us to identify and develop our predispositions, as well as any deficiencies, excesses, or lacks in our character as it is appears to others. For example, through reiterative empathy, we may discover ourselves to be lacking certain traits, but this discovery itself may motivate us to develop those traits. Consider the example of courage to clarify this point. When I see an individual exhibit courage, the self-understanding that arises from my reiterated empathy of their experience may show me the lack of courage in my current character. However, this situation may also uncover an ability to *become* courageous. Following this, then, I may be able to realize courage as a character trait arising from this encounter.

Importantly, if empathy allows us to know ourselves, then our self-knowledge is socially dependent, and our self-reflection is shaped by our social contexts and our history of intersubjective relations. In turn, my self-formative work is shaped by what I discover of myself, of others, and of the world through empathy. I can never fully know myself, but through empathy—and, as I argue later in this chapter, through the conscience, which is the voice of my soul—I can always continue to learn about and develop myself. Self-formation is thus a limited

[141] Borden, *Edith Stein*, 30.

exercise, not only in terms of what it can effect (a point I shall explore a bit later), but also in terms of the material that it works upon.

The Process of Self-Formation

Thus far I have argued that while self-formation is an individual exercise, it is rooted in our intersubjective life. That is, self-formation relies upon the objective knowledge of ourselves we derive through empathy. This is because, on the one hand, empathy teaches us the distance necessary for critical self-evaluation and self-reflection. On the other, because we are not transparent to ourselves, we require empathy to know ourselves. It is this empathically-derived self-knowledge that becomes the ground for our self-formative activities.

But how does self-formation occur? What activities are involved in the process of becoming ourselves, and what elements of our individual human being are involved in this process? In this section, I argue that self-formation is ultimately the work of an ego that creates a self in its own fashioning. In this regard, self-formation is a principled effort in which one strives to meet the image of who they want to become by suppressing undesirable traits or developing desired traits; in so doing, they shape their life and create themselves. Ultimately, I argue that while self-formation cannot change our facticity, nor our empirical circumstances, we *can* shape our bodies, minds, habits, values, and characters.

To develop this account, in this section I first examine how the ego creates a "self." I argue that the free ego mobilizes the will in order to form the self, which is the sense of who one is as a whole spiritual psycho-physical individual. Second, I exemplify the egoic work that goes into constructing a self vis-à-vis a process I call value-modification. We become ourselves by adopting, affirming, or negating our personal values, which is ultimately an egoic activity that shapes our motivations, perceptions, desires, and actions. Third, I argue that as an egoic activity, self-

formation must proceed according to design; it is an intentional way of engaging in our personal development. Fourth, I explore the role an adequate motivational context plays in self-formation. Fifth, I explore how the egoic activity of self-formation can be guided by the soul, should the ego attend to the voice of conscience, which judges and guides egoic action in accord with the soul's structure. And sixth, having already spelled out how the ego, a principle of self-design, an adequate motivational context, and conscience each contribute to self-formation, I explore the extents and limits of self-formation.

The Making of a Self

To see how the ego creates a self through its willing, we must be clear on the nature of the pure ego, and the function of the will in relation to the ego. We can begin, then, by examining the pure ego.[142]

The pure ego is an "indescribable, qualityless subject of experience."[143] It has no empirical qualities. Rather, it is the radiation point of experiencing: "this is the original source of experience, the starting point from which the experiences radiate towards their goal points, the objects."[144] The ego itself is thus nothing more than the mental processes it lives in: "Aside from its 'modes of

[142] In her model of the human being, Stein maintains a place for the pure ego initially described by Husserl. Following Husserl, Stein discovers the pure ego (*das reine Ich*) after the application of the phenomenological reduction. The reduction as Husserl describes it is ultimately an attitudinal shift. It is a "step-by-step" process that involves putting our natural belief in the existence of what we encounter out of play in order to discover what persists after the reduction. When the phenomenologist brackets the world, what is put out of play by the reduction is everything encountered in the natural attitude, namely, the world, physical things, living beings, and humans; what is gained is pure consciousness and the realm of absolute being. While Stein herself doubts whether the world can be fully bracketed, she maintains a concept of the pure ego in her own thinking. Accordingly, she maintains that the reduction shifts the phenomenologist from the natural attitude into the phenomenological attitude, thereby enabling the phenomenologist to discover what cannot be cancelled out in experience—namely, experiencing itself, the phenomena of experience, and the experiencing subject. The experiencing subject of pure consciousness is the pure ego. Cf. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 4–5; Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy.* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Pub., 1983), 66, 113, 114.

[143] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 38.

[144] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:104.

relation' or 'modes of comportment,' the Ego is completely empty of essence-components, has no explicatable content, is indescribable in and for itself," writes Husserl. In other words, "it is pure Ego and nothing more."[145] Because it is indescribable and qualityless, the ego cannot be itself an object of inquiry, but exists only in modes of relation to the content of one's experience.[146] It is ultimately nothing more than its acts, acts which are the states of the ego itself.[147]

While the ego itself has no content, it does have a mental "gaze."[148] This is the familiar notion of intentionality. The ego points *at* something, and in doing so, what is aimed at becomes the ego's object. The intentional relation describes how objects are given to an ego in experience. As Husserl himself puts it, "[the Ego's] 'regard' is directed 'through' each actional cogito to the objective something."[149] A ray emanates from the ego and terminates in the object, which puts the object into relation with the ego. The ego lives in this relation.

While the ego only lives in its intentional acts, Stein indicates that the ego can and does go beyond mere experiencing by emerging "as boss of its own experiencing."[150] In other words, while the ego often follows motivations that come from the objective world, it does so *voluntarily*; it can choose to follow motivations or to assume its own. That the ego does not merely undergo experience but can be master of its experiences is significant when it comes to Stein's account of self-formation, for, as I show, it is because the ego can exercise some freedom over experience

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[145] Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy.*, 191.
[146] Shlomit Baruch, "Transcendental Subjectivity in Husserl's *Ideas I*," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 35, no. 2 (January 2004): 202, https://doi.org/10.1080/00071773.2004.11007436.
[147] Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. Richard Rojcewicz and Andre Schuwer, vol. 2 (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 224.
[148] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:39.
[149] Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy.*, 132.
[150] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:52.

that it can direct the flow of experience such that it participates in formative processes. But to unpack this more fully requires understanding how the ego can be the boss of its experiencing.

The ego can be the boss of its own experiencing due to its freedom. As Husserl writes, the ego as a general structure is a "free being" characterized by its "free spontaneity and activity," or by the way each act of the ego is a spontaneous act and a 'creative beginning' initiated by the ego as the subject of those acts.[151] To the ego belong "such modes of living pertaining to freely going out of itself or freely withdrawing into itself, spontaneous doing, being somehow affected by the Objects, suffering, etc."[152] That is, the ego initiates its own activity by going out of itself or into itself (i.e., taking internal or external objects as its intentional object) in spontaneous and creative fashion, and by responding to how it is effected by those objects and by its own activity. In short, and as Stein puts it, "free acts for us are synonymous with the 'doing' of the ego…."[153] For example, we experience attitudes in relation to objective correlates of our experience. Our perception of a tree motivates our attitude toward it, perhaps in this case a belief in its existence. We cannot control this attitude; attitudes befall us and take possession of us, because they arise based upon the objective correlate that inspires them.[154] While we cannot control our attitudes, we can freely respond *to* those attitudes by taking a stance toward the attitude.[155] We can accept or reject the attitude, and in so doing, we act regarding it: we either give ourselves over to it or deny it. Indeed, Stein claims that it is this latter possibility—our ability to deny an attitude—that lies beneath Husserl's concept of the *epochē*.[156] It is because we can render our acts inoperative that

[151] Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book: Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, 2:291.
[152] Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy.*, 226.
[153] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:58.
[154] Stein, 7:48.
[155] Stein, 7:48.
[156] Stein, 7:49.

we can suspend our natural attitude and shift into the phenomenological attitude. In any case, by accepting or denying an attitude, we engage in a "free act" of the ego, one that can even affect our *unfree* acts (e.g., the original attitude the object evoked).

The ego exercises its freedom through the will, specifically by directing the body as the organ of the will (*Willensorgan*). As Stein writes, "thus, the subject who is in possession of a body, thanks to his ability to handle it as an organ of his will, is able to exert effects on the things of the external world, to create new ones out of the existing ones."[157] Put otherwise, the ego freely directs the body, by which means the subject can intervene in external events. Stein gives numerous examples of how the body acts as the organ of the will in her dissertation: for example, upon making a decision one "spring[s] up vivaciously" and expresses that decision through action.[158] Similarly, when climbing a mountain, one wills the whole action—climbing the mountain—and the steps to achieve this aim unfold in accordance to what is required by that aim.[159] Finally, when we are studying for an exam, sometimes we must summon the will to finish despite strong resistance or fatigue. In each case, the ego wills an action, and the body accomplishes the willed action.

In sum, then, the ego becomes the boss of its experiencing thanks to its will. According to Stein, the will is master of both the body and the soul.[160] The will can direct the body's movement as well as our psychic activity. The ego thus directs its own activity through its willing.

It is vis-à-vis the operation of its will that the ego participates in self-formation. Indeed, *self-formation is the activity of the ego that wills the creation of its self*. Recall that the ego itself does not have content but exists only in its modes and relations. This means that while the ego

[157] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:121.
[158] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 54.
[159] Stein, 55.
[160] Stein, 55.

directs self-formative activities, it does not *act upon itself* in self-formation. After all, it is nothing more than the intentional relation itself; it does not have substantial content of its own. Thus, in order to self-form, *the ego must have an object that it is intending in self-formation*. The ego's intentional object in self-formation is *the self*. As Stein puts it:

> What does it mean that I should form myself? Are the ego (*das Ich*) and the self (*das Selbst*) the same? Yes and no. In the self there is, after all, the back-relatedness. But the forming and that which is formed are not in complete congruence.[161]

While interconnected (and, ultimately, largely inextricable), the self is not identical to the ego. Stein rather differentiates the self and the ego based on the dynamic between them. Here I follow Calcagno, who indicates that the difference Stein draws between the ego and the self is framed in terms of activity and passivity: the ego *forms*; the self is *formed*. [162] As Stein puts it: "The whole human being receives his imprint through the current ego life and is 'matter' for the shaping by the ego activity. Only here we stand before the self, which can and should be formed by the ego."[163] The ego forms the self by 'imprinting' upon it in an active and ongoing fashion. In so doing, the self, which Stein defines as "the human being with all its bodily-soulful dispositions (*leiblich-seelischen Anlagen*)," is passively formed.[164] The self thus emerges through the ego's activity. It is never a 'finished product,' but is subject to constant revision and transformation by the ego.

From this, we see that according to Stein, the ego takes its self as its intentional object and wills the transformation of the self in light of its desired aims. It then effects that transformation by specific egoic acts. For example, we might choose to develop certain character traits in an effort to become a particular 'version' of our selves, based upon what we have learned about ourselves

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[161] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:80.
[162] Antonio Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), 85.
[163] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:83.
[164] Stein, 14:83; Antonio Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), 85.

vis-à-vis reiterative empathy. In the following subsection, and through an extended example of this kind of situation, I will illustrate how the ego forms the self through the activity of "value-modification." Value-modification is the process according to which the ego shapes its self through confirming, rejecting, modifying, or adopting values on the basis of information received in the course of its experiencing.

How does the Ego shape the Self?

Imagine yourself in an argument with a stubborn relative during a family holiday gathering. You note how their stubbornness inhibits open and reflective discussion and find it disagreeable. Perhaps, in this same encounter, you see *their* frustration with *you*, and realize that you are being just as stubborn. Or perhaps you fail to notice this, but someone else later remarks upon your familial resemblance to the stubborn relative. In any case, your experience of reiterative empathy ultimately reveals to you a stubbornness in your own character, which you dislike and desire to change.

In order to change your stubbornness, your ego must not rest with the insight regarding your character that was gained from critical self-reflection, but must *will* change. Willed work on the character is accomplished through an egoic act I name value-modification. To understand what value-modification is, it is helpful here to recall from chapter one how our values structure our personality. At the root of our personality is the personality core. Rising out of the core are the levels of our personality, which are composed of our personally held values. Our values motivate our character, our affective response to the world, our sense of reality, our meaning-making processes, our desires, and our actions. Thus, changing who we ourselves are—which is, ultimately, the goal of self-formation—requires changing our values; those changed values

become the basis for a different way of relating to and experiencing the world, and, further, they may restructure or change our personality.

For Stein, once we become aware of the role values play in informing our personalities, we can actively participate in value-modification. Because the ego is the boss of its own experience, it can confirm, reject, or adopt a value on the basis of information received in the course of experience.[165] From this, pertinent value feelings arise, as do desires and actions. In this way, discovering our values through our value feelings can motivate us to choose or reject values, and through this activity, we actively participate in choosing our own personal attributes and shaping our personality.

We can actively change our values if we change our attitudes towards those values. Recall that attitudes occur to me based upon how I take up an intentional object.[166] However, when we take a stance towards an attitude, we can accept or deny the attitude. Accordingly, if I want to change how I comport myself in relation to a value, I can deny the attitude that the value motivates, and in this way, I push back against the feelings that the value arouses. To supplant the original attitude, the new attitude requires a motive that is either stronger or more deeply valued than the original value motive; merely eliminating the attitude is impossible. As Mette Lebech writes, "that means I place one value as more important than another, or recognize in one value a higher motivating power than in the other."[167] This deeper value will become the stronger motive, and if repeatedly realized, will take on a formative role in shaping who we become over time, at least in part by eventually invalidating the original motive. In this way, we can revise our values through the stances we take toward our attitudes. In doing so we install new motives, themselves motivated

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[165] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:52.
[166] Stein, 7:48.
[167] Mette Lebech, "Motivation and Value," in *The Philosophy of Edith Stein: From Phenomenology to Metaphysics* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015), 37.

by different values, and we designate these new values as more important than the preceding values.

Value-modification is one way the ego develops its self. Because our values shape how we behave and who we as persons are, to change our behavior and our character, we need to change our values. We can change our values by adopting new values, supplanting old values, and modifying our values. These choices are executed by the ego, which directs its will towards value-modifying processes, including attitudinal intervention.

While value-modification shows the power of the will to effect the ego's aim in shaping the self, the will alone is not sufficient to accomplish personal transformation. *A principle of self-design* and *an adequate motivational context* are also necessary for change to occur. A principle of self-design is required because self-formation, as the willed activity of the ego, *proceeds according to design*. Similarly, an adequate motivational context is required because personal change requires more than the will's willing alone; it requires a realization of what could change, an appreciation of that change, a desire for the change, a resolution of will, and behavioral intervention. Finally, *conscience* can play a role in the ego's shaping of the self, insofar as conscience can *guide* self-formative efforts so that they facilitate the unfolding of the soul. To achieve a fuller picture of what the ego requires to effectuate self-formation, and, thus, shape the self, in what follows, I examine these three elements in turn.

Self-Formation proceeds according to Design

Because self-formation is the willed activity of the ego, it does not proceed haphazardly. Unlike *formation*, which we undergo, self-formation is willed, and, thus, is deliberate. One must know "what he wants to suppress, what he wants to allow, and what he wants to strive for" when forming

themselves.[168] This means that *self-formation proceeds according to design*. These design decisions are made based on a principle of self-design, which can operate on a case-by-case basis or according to a supreme aim.

If you have a principle of self-design, you may have developed this image from examples encountered in daily life. For instance, other people can present a concrete image of "who one should be" before you and thus become a model for your own self-design. You get an impression of their character from their appearance, and this impression motivates a desire, intention, and resolution to use them as a model for your own self work.[169] Alternately you might develop this image from a set of abstract ideas, which then become the guideline for your self-shaping. For example, religious authority can instill an idea of who one should be and how one should live. Finally, you may not have any guiding image or role model in mind at all but may simply discover in yourself a trait you either dislike or like, and, accordingly, may set out to change or develop that one trait. Whether your aim is to develop a different trait, or further develop a trait you already have, you choose to act upon yourself in order to shape yourself according to a principle of self-design. This principle guides your self-formative activities by motivating your self-work in a certain direction, and, in some cases, even 'binding' your will (e.g., the pressure applied by religious indoctrination can motivate one to give up their will and bind it to the will of another).

An Adequate Motivational Context is required for Self-Formation

The next element required for self-formation is an adequate motivational context. To spell out what Stein means by a motivational context, let us continue with the example from above. In this example, our desire to move beyond our own stubbornness is based upon an idea we have that stubbornness inhibits open-mindedness and reasonableness. In addition, perhaps a more temperate

[168] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:91.
[169] Stein, 14:91–92.

relative illustrates how a responsive and accepting attitude promotes the open conversational engagement that had earlier been impossible between yourself and your stubborn relative. We take this individual—or perhaps their temperance—as a model for how we should be if we want things in our life to proceed differently.

According to Stein, self-formation requires an adequate motivational context. An adequate motivational context involves multiple elements: we must realize what we lack, we must be aware of what we desire to have, we must have the desire to change, we must have a decided will, and, finally, we must act upon our desire to change.[170] When these components are all united, together they form the motivational context required for willed personal change. In the case of our example, we have many of the elements needed to accomplish personal change: we have a realization of our stubbornness and of our lack of temperance; we have an appreciation of temperance based on our perception of our temperate relative; and we have the desire to work through our stubbornness. However, what we lack is "… a resolution of will, [and] finally a permanent practical behavior."[171]

To conclude our example, then, when we desire to change our stubbornness through self-formation, we must have each of these components; only when combined can our work on our self be accomplished. At a practical level, this means that if we have acknowledged our stubbornness, appreciate temperance, and desire to change our stubbornness for a greater level of temperance, then, we must resolve ourselves to effectuate this change, and *follow through at the behavioral level*. Thus, when an opportunity for stubbornness arises, we might take a breath and intentionally revise our attitude, which allows for a different comportment and potentially shifts our value-response. Perhaps instead, we may choose to cultivate patience in the face of frustration, or try to see things from other people's perspectives, or decenter our own experiences. In any case, by

[170] Stein, 14:92.
[171] Stein, 14:92.

taking these actionable steps we have acknowledged our lack and what we desire, we have established an appreciation for what we desire and a desire to change, we have set our will upon this change, and we have acted upon this desire to change. These actions altogether manifest our desire for change and, in time, effect the change that we will through self-formative activities.

Self-Formation should be guided by Conscience

While a principle of self-design and an adequate motivational context are *required* elements of self-formation, Stein introduces an additional element that is *not required but remains highly useful*. The final component, *conscience* (*Gewissen*), introduces our responsibility for our self-formation, by helping to ensure that the design we have chosen for our self-formation and the actions we take in self-formation are good fits for us as individuals.[172] This is because conscience is a function of the soul (*seelische Funktion*) that can guide us in our self-formative activities by facilitating a manner of self-development that is in line with the soul's needs.[173] As we all have innate souls, conscience serves to correspond between our unique souls and our ego, thus allowing the ego to be guided in its action *by* the soul. While in the next section I focus on our responsibility for our self-formation, for now it is useful to simply indicate how our soul can collaborate with our ego to guide our self-formation.

For Stein, conscience is the way we experience our responsibility for ourselves. It is a call (*Ruf*) or a voice (*Stimme*) that is "heard directly as an inner appeal (*ein innerer Appell*)," one which directs us to do or not do something.[174] It judges our potential actions against the state of our soul

[172] While Stein mentions a concept of the conscience in passing in her earlier, pre-theological writings, she does not develop her concept of the conscience until *Aufbau* and *Finite and Eternal Being*. Because of its theological inception, Stein's concept of conscience bears the marks of her commitment to her relationship with God. Cf. Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*; Edith Stein, *An Investigation Concerning the State*, trans. Marianne Sawicki, vol. X, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2006).
[173] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:91.
[174] Stein, 14:91.

and urges us to follow through or turn away from doing something based upon how the act will impact our soul. It assesses the way our souls will be or have been shaped by our manner of engaging with the world. Thus, we experience conscience as an appeal that arrives in the form of an "ought." This ought is a motive, but the ego need not follow it.

Importantly, the appeal of conscience is not *willed*. We can choose neither what conscience responds to, nor what it conveys in its appeal. Conscience is unwilled because it is not an egoic act. Instead, the inner voice of conscience arises from the soul and imposes itself on the ego.[175] In this regard, because the ego is 'embedded' in the soul, what occurs in the soul occurs *beyond* the willing of the ego—beyond *consciousness*—yet it effects consciousness. This means that we do not directly experience the call of conscience in consciousness. Rather, it exceeds consciousness. However, because it is a function of the soul, it has a 'side' in consciousness (*Bewußtseinsseite*), by which means it infiltrates consciousness.

Even though the conscience does not necessitate egoic action, it can "bind" (*binden*) or relate the ego to the soul. As Stein writes in *Finite and Eternal Being*,

> Conscience reveals the roots of these deeds in the depth of the soul, and conscience relates (*bindet*) the I—notwithstanding the ego's free mobility—to this depth. This voice from the deep recalls the I again and again to its proper place and condition and demands that the I answer for its actions and gain and understanding of their effects and consequences. For all actions leave a trace in the soul, which is differently disposed before and after the act.[176]

Rather than indicating that the ego is forced by conscience to attend to the soul, *Binden* here indicates an internal accountability structure for the ego. The conscience relates the soul and the ego. It compels the ego to return to the soul "again and again" in order to account for and to learn about the effects of its actions. This repetitious encounter between soul and ego enables the ego to account for its actions in light of the structure of the soul. The soul conveys whether the ego's

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[175] Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein*, 91.
[176] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, 9:442.

actions are compatible or incompatible with its essence, as well as whether its own condition is enriched or diminished by the ego's actions. From this, the ego can learn—via the voice of conscience—whether its chosen actions have been appropriate. We should think, then, of the 'binding' power of conscience as a power to compel, to motivate, and to relate the ego and the soul to one another.

We might ask, how does the conscience know whether our actions are good or bad? How is it capable of judging the ego's deeds and the condition of the soul following those same deeds? Such a line of questioning is exemplified by Sartre's interrogation of the concept of the superego in the "Bad Faith" chapter of *Being and Nothingness*.[177] The superego, which is the voice of conscience or the psychoanalytic "censor," is part of the unconscious according to the psychoanalytic theory of mind. In this chapter, Sartre argues that the resistance on the part of the analysand's superego to the analyst's queries shows that, to achieve the work of repression and resistance, the superego must know what it is repressing. If this is correct, then the censor is aware of itself. However, by definition the censor cannot be self-aware, as the superego is described as part of the unconscious. We may ask of Stein, similarly, how it is that the conscience as she envisions it knows good from bad actions.

Unlike the superego, which is envisioned as a "part" of the human psyche, Stein envisions the conscience as a voice or call that originates in the soul. It is a *function*, not a *part*. It "guides" the ego and "restrains" it, it "reveals" the way the ego's deeds shape the soul, and it "relates" the ego to the soul by "recalling" it to the soul.[178] By contrast, it is the soul that "feels *what* it is and *how* it is," whereas the voice of conscience recognizes the demand that actions make on us.[179] Put

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[177] Cf. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: The Principle Text of Modern Existentialism*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1984), 86–96.
[178] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, 9:442.
[179] Stein, 9:442.

otherwise, it is the soul that feels whether or not actions are beneficial for its unfolding and align with its needs; the conscience conveys that feeling in the form of a "good" or "bad" conscience, which we experience as an inner call or inner voice. The conscience accordingly does not *know* whether an action is right or wrong, but it *expresses* what the soul *feels*; it is the soul's voice.

In short, then, conscience is the voice of the soul that calls to the ego and encourages certain actions over others, as well as judging the outcome based upon how it affects the soul and its unfolding. In this regard, conscience navigates the distance between the soul and the ego. It is the inner voice that tell us about who we are and who we can become or are becoming based upon the course of our empirical lives.

When it comes to self-formation, conscience's role of conveying to each of us how we *ought* to form ourselves makes it a *useful tool* and a *navigator* for the ego. But conscience does not convey how we ought to form ourselves by giving us "an overall picture of what we should be, as a guideline for our entire behavior" (such an overall picture rather emerges from our principle of self-design).[180] Instead, as Calcagno argues, conscience functions like a tool.[181] It is a tool that can be used to assess the worthiness of actions and of ourselves. However, to the extent that conscience serves to help us bring our empirical life in accord with our personal essence, or our soul, it is more than just a tool; as the voice of the soul, it is a *navigator* for the ego as regards the ego's work of self-formation.

While for now it is sufficient to show that conscience guides self-formation by motivating egoic action in a way that aligns with the needs of the soul, in the following section on our responsibility for our self-formation, I explore more fully why conscience is a necessary—and not merely useful—part of self-formation. As I shall there show, conscience must be enlisted in self-

[180] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:91.
[181] Calcagno, 91–92.

formation if we should wish to become our 'true' selves. However, before we turn to this topic, we must attend to the final details of self-formation, namely, the extent to which the ego can actively form the self, and the limits of its reach in self-formative activities.

The Extent and Limits of Self-Formation

In the preceding, I have argued that self-formation is the activity of an ego that acts upon its self in order to create (or recreate) the self. The account given thus far might appear to indicate that there are no limits for the ego's ability to form the self, provided that all the required elements for self-formation are in place. However, Stein's understanding of how we self-form does recognize limitations, especially those imposed by the factical dimensions of our being. In this regard, it is similar to her concept of formation, which also acknowledged how our facticity limits how we can be formed by experience. The question that must now be addressed thus concerns the extent and limits of self-formation. In other words, what is it about myself that I can actively form? And what remains beyond my reach?

The ego's reach vis-à-vis self-formative processes extends over a great deal of our person. As Stein writes,

> I am free to operate my body and thereby give it strength and agility. I am free to exercise my senses and my mind and thereby "sharpen" them. So also in the area of character there is the possibility of "self-education." It is given into my power to suppress evil urges that stir in me, to nip bad inclinations in the bud and to prevent the corresponding permanent qualities (evil "habits," "vices") that want to form from arising. I can, on the other hand, voluntarily direct my gaze to all attainable values, can make myself inwardly ready for their "reception" and thereby participate in the development of my "virtues." All of this within the limits which are drawn for me by my "original disposition."[182]

According to Stein, we can form our bodies, sharpen or dull our senses and mind, shape our character and personality, change our values, contest habits and vices, and encourage virtues. All work on the self in these areas is considered self-formation, or the willed activity of an ego to make

[182] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:130.

a self. When we actively engage in self-formative processes as regards these areas of our self, we aren't passively shaped by our life circumstances but can consent to the influence events have upon us or contest this influence. For example, we can choose what to do, and those choices form our bodies, inclinations, habits, and possibilities. We can choose our surroundings (to a certain extent), which further forms us. Finally, with value-modification we can cultivate our virtues or challenge our vices, as well as change our personality and desires.

However, note that Stein acknowledges that there are *limits* to our self-formation. For example, our original disposition—that is, our personality core, at the root of our soul—sets our personal developmental limits by endowing us with our predispositions. Our physical bodies also present natural limits to our freedom for self-formation. These are two instances of our facticity that we cannot change on the basis of willed egoic action. In addition, the range of possibilities available to us are shaped by the world we are born into, the structures we inherit in those worlds, and the persons we encounter and with whom we can have empathic encounters. (For instance, while it is *technically* possible, it would make no sense in today's world for me to declare myself a gladiator.) Finally, our own personal histories both enable and restrict our options, insofar as they form the meaningful context from which our possibilities arise. In all these regards, we are not entirely self-generated beings. The point, however, that I wish to make is that within these limitations, we have an ability to decide whether we want to be for or against the values, feelings, and actions that compose our lives and shape our personalities.

Because there are parts of us that can be self-formed—our bodies, values, characters, and so forth—Stein argues that we are *responsible* for our self-formation. "What does it mean that man is responsible for himself?," asks Stein in *Aufbau*. "It means that it is up to him what he is, and that he is required to make something specific of himself: He can and ought (*sollen*) to form

himself."[183] Because we can make choices about who we want to become, and take actions that actualize those choices, we are responsible for doing so. The precise content of that responsibility, however—that is, the question of *what* we are responsible *for* when it comes to our self-formation—is the question to be explored in the next section.

Our Responsibility for our Self-Formation

Stein understands each person to be responsible for their own becoming, first and foremost because they are *able* to self-form. We have an ego, and this ego is a free, spiritual being that is "not defenselessly at the mercy of the game of stimuli and reactions."[184] Rather, our ego wills our actions: we can respond to the motivations that beckon us, or we can resist them and follow different motivations instead. Hence, our free ego can decide how to act; because it can so decide, it is responsible for what it does decide.[185] The question, then, is how do we ensure that we fulfil our responsibility in self-formation? Is the mere act of self-forming—our appropriation of our capacity *to* self-form—sufficient, or do we have a deeper responsibility for who we become?

To answer this question, it is necessary to deploy two terms I developed in chapter one: *Entwicklung* and *Entfaltung*. There, I argued that our psyche *develops* (*Entwicklung*) and our soul *unfolds* (*Entfaltung*). These two tracks of development can coincide but need not. If these tracks depart, then our psyche develops without the unfolding of the soul. Such one-sided self-development Stein names "pseudo-formation." In the following section, I look more closely at the phenomenon of pseudo-formation to clarify the question of how we should responsibly self-form. In my view, by examining pseudo-formation, we can clarify what Stein means when she insists that we are responsible for our self-formation. For, as it turns out, if we develop (*Entwicklung*)

[183] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:78.
[184] Stein, 14:79.
[185] Stein, 14:79.

without unfolding our soul, then we do not become ourselves in the true sense; we become alienated from the core of who we are, as assessed and reported by conscience. Accordingly, developing 'properly' will require us to develop in a way that unfolds the soul. Remaining true to ourselves in this way requires us to bring our empirical life in accord with our essence, as guided by conscience, which not only gives me a say in my self-development but is the exercise of a rich and grounded sense of freedom that fulfils my responsibility for my self-formation.

Pseudo-Formation as an Example of 'Improper' Self-Formation

To first see how self-formation can lead to a form of development that takes us away from who we are, let us consider how pseudo-formation occurs. Emotional contagion is an example of an experience we can have that may lead to pseudo-formation. In emotional contagion, we 'catch' another person's attitudes and feelings and adopt them in turn. (For example, consider how when you enter a room full of nervous people, you may suddenly find yourself nervous as well.) Once we have adopted the feelings of another, we are influenced by them. Stein is careful to point out that we really experience the sentiments we have 'caught,' and that they have the same strength and are expressed just the same as feelings that originate from ourselves. Nonetheless, they are "sham sentiments."[186] They are truly present, but they do not arise from our personal ego—they come from without, specifically from the behavior of another person (from whom it arises as a genuine sentiment, unless they also 'caught' and 'transmitted' the sentiment from others).

To understand what Stein means with this descriptions of sham sentiments, we should think back to her discussion of the personality core of the soul. Sham sentiments are intrusions because

[186] Sham sentiments are truly present and formative for us, but when we adopt them, we do so without "rooting [them] in [our] core." For this reason, they retain an element of artificiality as compared to genuine sentiments (2000, 267). They "violate the unity of the personality" and have a "inner hollowness and feebleness" (2000, 267). They don't necessarily hold up to scrutiny or to testing by experience (although they can if our environment does not contest them or our environment and/or development does not allow us to challenge them internally).

they do not arise from the person themselves, specifically not from the personal core. Rather, they come from without and are internalized. When internalized, sham sentiments have a formative character for us. They can shape our personal characteristics, our values, our actions, and desires, just as genuine sentiments do. For example, as Stein writes, "Consider the acquired 'morals' of a human being who has no moral footing of his own—for whom the personal layer corresponding to moral values is entirely missing, as we would say. Or, consider the acquired devoutness of a fundamentally irreligious person."[187] In these cases, through emotional contagion the individual has picked up various morals and ways of comporting ourselves, which may or may not be native to their personal core. Such also occurs when a strong personality suggestively influences another personality: "The strong personality impresses those who live with her with her stamp, and others adapt themselves to her type, so that either a predisposition is made to bloom in living together that was previously latent in them, or they develop 'pseudo-character-traits.'"[188] In this latter case, someone has influenced another person so strongly, that the individual in question develops character traits that correspond to the other's type. In other words, the influenced individual has taken their charismatic friend as a model, and, by becoming *like them*, they became *less like themselves*.

The concern with sham sentiments thus lies in how they can influence development without allowing the original traits of the personal core to unfold.[189] According to Stein, the result is not a kind of development that is proper to oneself, i.e., proper to one's soul. Rather, the result is pseudo-formation, or the development of traits not proper to one's own person. Indeed, sham sentiments

[187] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:267.
[188] Stein, 7:269.
[189] Technically it seems possible that sham sentiments *can* allow our soul to unfold, depending upon what they are and whether they have some correspondence with our predispositions. It seems that the sham sentiments of emotional contagion only become a problem if they limit the unfolding of the soul.

encourage the development of what is proper *to another within oneself* (or, in the case of mass sentiments, what is proper to no one in particular but belongs to the mass as a whole). When this occurs, the genuine unfolding of one's personal core is restricted, and that person does not become "themselves." (Stein argues that in some more extreme instances, when someone has no sense or experience of "themselves" at all, they are no more than a "phantom" of a personality, an "incomplete" person.[190])

At this point, we may be inclined to ask why for Stein it is so important that we live in such a way that our soul can unfold. Recall, however, that according to Stein, it is our soul that manifests our individual style. In other words, our personality core is our true inner self, or our essence. This is why in *Philosophy* Stein describes the soul as a "center of gravity" or as the "center of our being."[191] When we do not live out of our soul, our life "becomes driven by sensory powers and perhaps by volition, or even carried along by the powers of someone else's soul."[192] We don't live out of the center of our being, and everything we do (or think or feel or want) lacks the "originality and authenticity of 'core-valent' living."[193] Our genuine personality does not manifest, and our individual style is not expressed. If, subsequently, all we experience is pseudo-formation, then we never live in a way that allows us to discover, manifest, and express our individuality. This is what it means to not become ourselves: we develop in a way that leads to us living "soullessly," or not from the center of our being, and we fail to become our authentic individual selves.

If pseudo-formation demonstrates what can 'go wrong' in formation and self-formation—i.e., that we can develop psychically without unfolding our soul, and that this process leads us away from who we truly are as persons—then the phenomenon of pseudo-formation serves as a

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[190] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 111.
[191] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:267.
[192] Stein, 7:267.
[193] Stein, 7:267.

useful foil to discern what can 'go right' in formation and self-formation. For if we are to become "self-supporting personalities," as Stein argues we must in *Philosophy*, then we must live from our center of gravity, our soul. The question that follows, then, is how do we live in such a way that we can become self-supporting personalities, or our true selves? I suggest that Stein develops two possibilities to answer this question: the first is a theological approach to soulful living that foregrounds the role of God in our formation, orienting self-formation towards Him; and the second is a robust understanding of the role of conscience as it interfaces between the soul and the ego. What I argue is that while both of these approaches provide a depiction of how we can live *soulfully* as opposed to *soullessly*, the theological approach fails to appreciate the opacity at the heart of the self, by instead turning individuals towards God, and promising a fullness and perfection of one's individual being thanks to God's grace. Due to this limitation, I favor the second account, which underscores the role of conscience in facilitating a soulful life.

Stein's Theological Account of Soulful Living

If living soullessly leads to one-sided psychic development, then living *soulfully* should allow us to develop ourselves in such a way that our soul unfolds, and we become our true selves. While Stein never fully develops in her phenomenological writings what soulful living entails, in her late theological writings she does offer an account of soulful living. In *Aufbau* and *Finite and Eternal Being* in particular, Stein argues that soulful living occurs when the ego lives in its interiority and finds a "home" in the soul. From there, the ego can grasp the *whole* being of the individual and determine its actions based upon its inner life. However, as I argue in the following subsection, it is here that Stein's theological account of soulful living ultimately betrays what I see as the promise of her account of self-formation. Indeed, as we will see now, the theological account of soulful living not only supposes that we can gain full self-possession, but that we can also thoroughly self-

form to the extent that we fully determine ourselves entirely in accord with our essence and achieve *a perfection* of our own being.[194]

In her late writings, Stein has revised her understanding of the soul to incorporate her theological commitments. As before, she depicts the soul as the center of our being. It is a "self-enclosed inner world" that is open to external influences and bound to the body.[195] However, whereas in her phenomenological writings Stein describes the soul as constituted by value-levels and grounded by a personality core that contains the 'blueprint' for our personal individuality, in the later work she subsumes her concept of the personality core into a theological concept of soul proper. The personality core disappears; instead, the human soul in general becomes the site of one's personal essence, which is now construed as a gift given by God. She also adopts St. Teresa Avila's metaphor of the castle to illustrate her reconceptualization of the soul, arguing that "it is a space, a 'castle' with many mansions in which the I is able to move freely, now going outward beyond itself, now withdrawing into its own inwardness."[196] By depicting the soul as a castle, Stein emphasizes a spatiality proper to it: the soul has inner and outer chambers; the I can explore its various rooms, and choose whether to explore the inner chambers or remain in the outer regions.

The notion of the inner spatiality of the soul is helpful for understanding what Stein means when she insists that we should live soulfully in her theological writings. The ego is unlike the soul; it has no spatiality at all. It lives in its acts, which means that it flits from one experience to the next and is only ever found in its constantly varying acts. In this regard, the ego has no place of its own to dwell. By contrast, the soul has its own unique spatiality, and it can afford the ego a home, so long as the ego is "close to" the soul. As Stein puts it, "there is a place in the soul space

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[194] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, 9:440.
[195] Stein, 9:369.
[196] Stein, 9:373.

where [the ego] has its actual place, the place of its rest, which it must seek as long as it has not found it, and to which it must always return when it has gone out from it: this is the deepest point of the soul."[197] Because the ego is free to be where it wills, it can choose whether to descend into the depths of the soul. It is when the ego returns to its home in the soul that it is living from and out of the soul. Thus, for the ego to align its empirical life with the soul's essence, the ego must have contact with the soul.

This discussion of the ego's need to establish a home in the soul to live a soulful life can be clarified with an example. In a short essay entitled "Ways to Interior Silence," Stein responds to a question asked during a lecture she gave on women's souls and vocations. Stein had claimed that women's souls should be "wide, silent, empty of self, warm, clear," and she was asked how women should set out to obtain such qualities.[198] In response, Stein claims that women should not aim to develop these as individual character traits but should instead train themselves into a "condition of the soul" that facilitates the organic development of these traits. However, women would be unable to "will" the development of this condition. Instead, they must prepare themselves to receive it as a gift from God. Thus, their self-formative efforts should be aimed at preparing themselves to receive such a gift, primarily by opening themselves to God and delivering themselves unto Him. As she puts it, "We cannot achieve this condition by our own will; it must be a work of grace. What we can and must do is to open ourselves to grace. That means denying our own will entirely and surrendering only to the divine will, laying our whole soul, receptive and ready for re-shaping, in God's hands."[199] To open oneself for grace in this way, Stein recommends that people submit themselves wholeheartedly to communion with God: "'The first hour of my

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[197] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:86.
[198] Edith Stein, "Ways to Interior Silence," trans. Cecily Hastings, *Life of the Spirit (1946-1964)* 4, no. 46 (1950): 442.
[199] Stein, 442.

morning belongs to God. Whatever work for the day he gives me I will set about, and he will give me the power to accomplish it. So I will go in unto the altar of God…. And when my Lord comes to me then in holy Communion, I can ask him, "What do you want of me, Lord" (St. Teresa). And after this silent converse, whatever I see as my next task, I will set myself to.'"[200]

The crucial point of this example concerns how Stein envisions the egos of women to be able to align their personal empirical life with the needs of their feminine soul. Because women's souls are meant to be 'wide, silent, empty of self, warm, and clear,' in order to cultivate these qualities of the soul, women are encouraged to submit their will—and their presumed attachment to worldly dramas—to the will of God. The very act of denying their own will is an egoic action they undertake, one which allows them to prepare their soul to be "re-shaped" by God. And to prepare themselves for this, they are told to cultivate silence and emptiness via prayer. Only after having achieved silence and emptiness, are women ready to receive grace. Then, the bestowal of grace cultivates in them the desired feminine character traits outlined above. Thus, through prayer, cultivating silence and emptiness, and denying their own will, women bring their empirical life in line with the needs of their feminine soul, and this allows them to become who they are meant to become as women.

Before turning to what I argue is the major problem with this account of soulful living when it comes to its compatibility with her theory of self-formation—namely, that it is predicated upon Stein's revision of the concept of soul, in order to account for how the ego can grasp the soul in its entirety and thoroughly determine itself and its life in order to achieve a perfection of personal being in accord with one's God-bestowed will—I wish to briefly remark upon the deep sexism implicit in Stein's discussion of how women can become what they are meant to be. The

[200] Stein, 442.

characteristics Stein outlines above form what she calls the "ideal image of the gestalt of the feminine soul," which she derives from accounts of both Eve and Mary.[201] Stein's theological commitments lead her to argue that all women *should* develop in this way, and that they all have the "embryo of such development, but it needs particular cultivation if it is not to be suffocated among weeds rankly shooting up around it."[202] This supposed nature of women is determined by her "original vocation of *spouse and mother*," and Stein's view is that if women fully develop their inherent feminine nature, they can fulfil (and be fulfilled by) their obligatory vocation of spouse and mother.[203] Taking women's requisite emptiness of self as an example, then, Stein argues that women must aim to silence their "inherent agitated self" so that they can "enclose [themselves] in [their] castle, whereas, before, [they were] given to the storms which penetrated [them] from without again and again; and previously [they] had also gone into the world in order to seek something abroad which might be able to still [their] hunger."[204] By cultivating emptiness within herself, all women become able to receive God: she becomes "mistress" of her castle of the soul, and "handmaid" both to God and her spouse, who are each the "visible sovereign" of her soul. In this regard, then, women are inferior by nature (she has a "subordinate" soul to man "in obedience and support"[205]). Her supposed nature and vocation both require her subordination to men (her father before marriage, her husband in marriage, and God above all), and her very nature and vocation is derived from men.

We might be tempted to handwave away this sexist portrayal of women's nature and self-formation as one that merely demonstrates Stein's internalization of sexist gender ideals due to her

[201] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:133.
[202] Stein, 2:133.
[203] Stein, 2:132.
[204] Stein, 2:134.
[205] Stein, 2:132.

theological formation. However, the issue here goes beyond one of bias. In this theological account of soulful living and women's self-formation, becoming "herself" no longer means primarily developing her individuality as a person. Rather, becoming "herself" means *perfectly* developing her feminine nature by emptying herself *completely of all that she is* so that she can come to be determined by God, and subordinated by men made in His likeness. Such a view of the supposed aim of self-formation is thus a significant departure from the pre-theological, phenomenological account of developing one's individuality we have given thus far, and, to my mind, fundamentally undermines it. This is because, up until this point, personal becoming was open to possibility, constrained only by our facticity; now, personal becoming becomes more determined, and possibilities are narrowed, such that feminine becoming means embracing subjection and inferiority of nature, of vocation, and of social status.

While I develop this critique of Stein's concept of feminine becoming more fully in the next chapter, what is relevant for us now is instead recuperating a concept of soulful living. For, as we have laid out so far, Stein's theory of self-formation does require us to live in a way that we become ourselves, rather than becoming like others; to achieve this, we need what she calls an account of soulful living. Thankfully, as I shortly argue, Stein has already given us the resources to understand how we can live soulfully, without requiring us to turn to God or ascribe a home to the ego in the soul: the conscience can facilitate soulful living in its function as mediator and guide.

Soulful Living as guided by Conscience: an Argument against Full Self-Possession in Self-Formation

While Stein's theological account does effectively illustrate that the soul must guide the ego's work in self-formation, this account of soulful living ultimately betrays what I see as the promise of her account of self-formation, namely, that it is an ongoing process that is predicated upon our

inability to fully know ourselves. At the outset of this chapter, I argued that self-formation is dependent upon empathy. The importance of this framework is, to my mind, the way it underscores that we are opaque to ourselves: I cannot know myself until I learn about who I am from others, and even then, I still do not know *all* of myself; something about who I am eludes my grasp. At bottom, then, we remain a mystery to ourselves and others. Subjectivity is not transparent unto itself; we do not have full self-possession; we cannot determine ourselves in entirety. In her Editor's Introduction to the *Philosophy*, Marianne Sawicki echoes these sentiments when she affirms that "for Stein, individual persons *as such* remain mysteries to one another. Personality, at its depths, is just as opaque to knowledge as mere physical matter is."[206] If we ultimately remain opaque to ourselves, then our efforts at self-formation are efforts at becoming ourselves with the limited information that we *do* have access to, namely, what we discover in inner perception, outer perception, and through empathy. We thus guide our efforts of self-development in the directions that our personal experience encourages. And we do the best we can to develop ourselves given our essential inability to fully know ourselves.

Even though I disagree with how Stein describes soulful living in the theological account, I still think that it is necessary to recuperate an account of soulful living given her view of self-formation. To my mind, what is at stake in Stein's description of soulful living—and what is exciting about her account of self-formation—is the possibility that we may live two very different kinds of life: the first a soulless life, which is a life of mimicry where we enact the values of others and live lives plotted out in advance by familial, societal, and cultural expectations; and the second, when we life soulfully, which is a life where we become ourselves in a way that is fulfilling and

[206] Marianne Sawicki, "Editor's Introduction," in *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, by Edith Stein, trans. Mary Catharine Baseheart, vol. 7, The Collected Works of Edith Stein (Washington, D.C: ICS Publications, 2000), XVII.

leads to a rich yet incomplete sense of self-knowledge and involves our continual affirmation to ourselves as *individuals*. I first provide descriptions of these two possibilities before explaining the theoretical apparatus that undergirds these processes in Stein's thought, namely, conscience.

The life of mimicry is a life lived soullessly, in which we develop through pseudo-formation, not self-formation. In this life, "the person is not in full control of himself and does not live his full life; he is not able to accept what comes to him from the outside in the way it is due to him..."[207] Otherwise put, this individual cannot properly evaluate what occurs to them, and does not live a well-ordered life. They are subject to the whims of others and the force of external circumstance. They do not develop values proper to themselves but inherit the ready-made values of their culture and society. These individuals never become *themselves*, but instead become what others want them to be, or become like the other people they know. As described previously, they become incomplete persons, or phantoms without personality.

By contrast, someone who lives in such a way that they become their 'authentic' selves has proper perspective on what they experience and are grounded in their own personal individuality. As Stein puts it, "… only those who live collectedly in the depth of their personalities are able to see even the 'little things' in their larger context, and—measured by ultimate criteria—these persons are the only ones capable of evaluating these little things correctly and of ordering and regulating their attitudes and actions correspondingly."[208] This clear perspective allows the ego of someone who lives soulfully to determine its actions based upon its personally-affirmed values. It develops a strong sense of individuality and character. And it ultimately is free in ways that the person who lives soullessly is not; rather than being determined by without, the soulful I is self-determining (albeit not absolutely).

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[207] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:87.
[208] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, 9:440.

Given these strengths of Stein's account of soulful self-formation, I do not think that we must discard Stein's account of self-formation even if we reject her theological account of soulful living. Put otherwise, Stein's account of self-formation still functions even if it is disentangled from this theological account. This is because soulful living as a concept can be successfully recuperated as we just described it: namely, as the determination of our actions in accordance with personally-affirmed values, even though those values and actions are accomplished without full self-transparency. In so doing, we both maintain the earlier, phenomenological insights into the nature of human subjectivity—namely, that it is incomplete, emergent, revisable, and so forth—while also maintaining Stein's argument that living soulfully is what allows self-formation to facilitate the unfolding of the soul. The question now, then, is what mechanism allows us to live soulfully if God is not the one to accomplish this? I argue that Stein's concept of conscience can explain how one lives soulfully.

To recall, conscience is the unwilled voice of the soul that judges and guides egoic action. The conscience does not *know* or simply relate what is already known; it conveys the soul's feelings in the form of a good or bad conscience. In this regard, it serves as the function of the soul that conveys to the ego how it should act, based upon how those actions would facilitate the unfolding of the soul. It thus navigates the distance between the soul and the ego and brings the two into relation without fixing the content of that relation. In other words, it *mediates* between the ego and the soul. And as the only way the soul can articulate its essence without disclosing the soul's essence in its entirety, conscience thus also acts as a *navigator* to the ego. It can guide the ego to live in a way that would facilitate the soul's unfolding without requiring the ego to have full self-possession, which is the central reason why soulful living is crucial for self-formation in the first place.

An example can clarify why conscience is sufficient for explaining how the ego can align its empirical life with the soul's personal essence without requiring the ego to have full self-possession. All our major life decisions are self-formative moments. My choice to pursue a PhD in Philosophy had significant consequences upon my character, my values, my desires, and my self-knowledge. When I was faced with the decision about whether to accept Emory's offer, I could not have anticipated what would unfold in the following years, nor how it would affect me. I also could not have guaranteed my success, nor whether it was the "right" choice. In short, I had no real way of knowing whether accepting the offer would make me the 'best' version of myself, as Stein would understand it, that is, whether it would allow my soul to unfold, or whether I would end up changing in ways that would remove me from the core of who I am. In this regard, my ego did not experience full self-possession, and I certainly operated only on partial information. Nonetheless, I made a decision, and it was one guided by conscience, insofar as I chose the program that felt 'right'—that is, the one that left me in good conscience based upon my personal values and the values I saw exhibited during my prospective visit and in conversation with others.

We can now appreciate how the conscience can help to align the ego's empirical life without implying a need for full self-possession, nor proposing perfection as an end goal for self-formation. Whereas the theological interpretation requires the ego to find a home in the soul in order to align one's empirical life with one's personal essence, the present interpretation merely requires the ego to be *guided* by conscience. The ego no longer requires full self-possession, which is the apparent benefit of having a home in the soul. Rather, the ego receives the guidance of conscience, even though neither the ego nor conscience *knows* what the soul needs, nor can either the ego or conscience grasp the personality core of the soul. Thus, the ego acts upon its best knowledge, and the conscience expresses the soul's reception of those best efforts.

Because conscience is heard by the ego as an 'ought', it asserts that we ought to develop ourselves *in such and such a way*, depending on what is appropriate or inappropriate for the soul. For example, a good conscience affirms that I ought to act in a certain way, whereas a bad conscience protests an action. Conscience thus conveys my moral responsibility for my own individual becoming, specifically, for doing the work of attending to conscience and bringing my life into accord with my essence. To conclude, then, I place this claim regarding our responsibility for our development in conversation with the general outline of this chapter. This is to say, that ultimately our responsibility in self-formation is a moral claim on us to become ourselves, by way of unfolding our soul and developing our body and psyche to the best of our abilities, given what we can know of ourselves and what occurs to us in experience.

Conclusion: Our Moral Responsibility for our Self-Formation

In this chapter, I have argued that we are not passively formed but negotiate our development through processes of self-formation. While self-formation is an activity borne by individuals, it is enabled by our acts of empathy. This is because empathy allows us to see ourselves as an object, and to learn about who we are (as we present ourselves to others). The ability to take distance from ourselves, evaluate ourselves, and come to know ourselves enables us to determine how we may want to effect change in our selves.

Once we have determined how we wish to change, the ego effects change through the exercise of the will. In so doing, the ego creates its own self. The ego employs critical self-reflection and evaluation in these efforts, and it effects personal change through processes of value-modification. However, in order to succeed, the ego also requires an adequate motivational context. We need to realize what we lack or have in excess, and we must value it in a way that would motivate change. Moreover, we must desire change, we must resolve ourselves, and then

we must make behavioral changes. Finally, the ego can enlist the soul in its self-formative efforts by listening to the call of conscience and allowing conscience to guide its choices.

When interpreted superficially, Stein's claim that we are responsible for our self-formation may appear to suggest that we are responsible for the mere fact of self-formation, i.e., we are responsible for doing the work of forming ourselves. However, when viewed more closely, Stein's claim takes on a moral dimension. That is, we are not just responsible for the act of self-forming; we are also responsible for *who we become* when we self-form.

I argue that the moral imperative to self-form, is, thus, best understood as a moral imperative to develop into *ourselves*. If our self-formation is guided by our soul, then we can actualize what Judith Parsons calls our "ontic blueprint" for development.[209] While Parsons emphasizes Stein's later theological turn in her interpretation of the ontic blueprint of the soul—she claims that our ontic blueprint is the individualized plan specific to each person that is known to God but revealed to the individual throughout life—on my phenomenological account I argue that our ontic blueprint is instead rooted in our personality core. That is, our core contains within it the impetus for our development, the nature of its course, and the limitations of our development.[210] This ontic blueprint is a unique assemblage of personal predispositions that compose our core, and that are, ideally, actualized throughout life. In short, responsible self-formation occurs when our innate individuality blooms, and we actualize in the way that is proper to us as individuals.

Only by living soulfully can we best realize the moral demand to shape ourselves. This means that only by becoming acquainted with our soul via the voice of conscience may we properly

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[209] Judith Parsons, "Edith Stein: Toward an Ethic of Relationship and Responsibility" (Dissertation, Duquesne University), 150, accessed November 18, 2020, https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/1019.
[210] Stein, *Einführung in Die Philosophie*, 8:118.

self-form. This is because living from our soul allows our development to facilitate the unfolding of the soul, and our conscience guides our ego to this end. Restated in the language I introduced in chapter one, if our psychic development [*Entwicklung*] is core-valent—i.e., if the choices we make in our self-formation are guided by our soul—then our soul unfolds [*Entfaltung*]. When this occurs, the two processes that compose human development, namely, formation and self-formation, facilitate one another, which allows us to fully actualize our predispositions and fully become ourselves. Moreover, this is when our conscience, as a faculty of the soul that conveys how we 'ought' to act based upon how those actions will shape us, can guide us most effectively in our self-formative efforts. Once conscience is integrated into the self-formation process, we can cultivate our receptivity to better 'hear' the 'ought' of our self-formation, which allows us to better assume our responsibility for ourselves.

Importantly, becoming *ourselves* in this way again does not require full self-possession. While this process is teleological, it does not suppose that we should aim to become a perfect version of ourselves, in the sense of a fully actualized essence. Rather, becoming ourselves by incorporating conscience into the process of self-formation allows the ego to determine its actions and create and recreate its self based upon the information available to it. The soul remains opaque to the ego, self-formation remains an ongoing process, and the self that we make through self-formation is always incomplete. Thus, we are always in becoming, and it is by constantly engaging in the processes of personal becoming in this regard that we can have a say in who we become.

Chapter 3: Feminine Becoming in Stein's Philosophical Anthropology: The Restrictive Role of the Eve and Mary Archetypes in Feminine Education

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I developed Stein's *phenomenological account of personal becoming* through a systematic reconstitution of the dual theories of formation and self-formation. I argued that we are always developing on physical and psychical levels (*formation*). Further, we have a moral obligation to become ourselves by allowing our true self—our soul—to unfold in the myriad of changes that compose who we are. We become ourselves in this way by actively working on ourselves (*self-formation*). To do this work, we must have in mind admirable personal ideals—or what in chapter two I called *principles of self-design*—that can guide our personal becoming, insofar as they provide concrete goals for our ego to aim at while it creates and recreates its self.

On the one hand, this account of self-formation may seem overly positive. In essence, it states that if you are sufficiently ordered, focused, and disciplined, and if you have a clear vision of who you want to be, then you can apply yourself towards becoming that person. However, throughout this dissertation I have emphasized that this process, while orderly, is not capable of being mastered. Stein indicates that the facticity of our situation can present many inhibiting factors to our self-formation: the circumstances of our lives can inhibit our autonomy and thereby block us from being able to unfold or develop (e.g., political constitution, poverty, under-education, etc.); the views of others can present misleading or false representations of ourselves that we internalize; our social settings, cultural ideals, and historical inheritances can promote personal development in directions that are ultimately inhibiting to us as individuals; and the vulnerability of our bodies and psyches can hold sway over what kinds of lives we lead and what becomes meaningful to us throughout our lives. In these regards, then, throughout the dissertation

I have underscored the *contingency* of self-formation. While Stein sees us as having agency in the process of becoming ourselves, she also admits hindrances and limitations to the process of personal becoming. This means then that we can never *master ourselves*: we never fully grasp ourselves, nor can we fully determine ourselves. Instead, we do the best we can to become ourselves based upon what we can know, what we value, and what we continue to discover and experience.

While Stein's phenomenological account of personal becoming is very robust, this account is not her final word on personal becoming. Rather, in the late 1920's and early 1930's, Stein gives a series of lectures on women's nature, essence, vocation, and girls' education. In these lectures, we find sketches of Stein's vision for *feminine becoming*. Stein is a gender essentialist who develops an account of feminine becoming based upon her philosophical anthropology, in which humanity is divided into two species based upon sexual difference. Woman's *essence*—what defines her as a species—is expressed by the functioning of her faculties in relation to each other, specifically the harmonious unity of those faculties. However, no woman is wholly determined by this essence; each women is also a human being and a human individual. Each thus embodies their feminine essence in a different way. These different expressions of femininity give rise to certain ways of classifying or interpreting women, that is, different *types* of women (for instance, the intellectual woman, the rebellious woman, the feminist woman, and so on) and different *typical* ways of expressing femininity. Feminine becoming, then, is the specific way that each woman becomes herself as a *gendered individual*. The work of feminine becoming is accomplished through the activities of formation and self-formation outlined in the previous chapters, but now the focus is not on developing yourself as an individual. Rather, the focus is on developing yourself *as* an individual girl and woman.

There is a great deal to admire about Stein's gendered anthropology. In many ways she anticipates later developments in phenomenology that underscore the formative depth of sociality and cultural structures, including in feminist and critical phenomenologies, which I will explore in the fourth chapter of this dissertation. In addition, while the language of type that she introduces may sound limiting, Stein's conceptualization of woman via types in fact addresses the *diversity* of lived experiences of femininity. That is, and as we shall see, insofar as type refers to the expression of individual characteristics of femininity, it opens onto an almost limitless plurality of feminine expressions. This means that insofar as womanhood is for Stein essentially *a* way of being, and not limited to a biological function, or material arrangement of organs, or the innate existence of a particular kind of soul, Stein's theory of types reflects the very contingency contained in her earlier theory of phenomenological becoming that I found so persuasive.

However, it is my view that the promise of Stein's gendered anthropology is undermined and betrayed by how she concretizes this account in a theory of girls' education that is structured around two specific archetypes of femininity, namely, the Catholic archetypes of Mary and Eve. Stein develops these archetypes through Scriptural interpretation and deploys them in order to typify 'ideal' and 'perverse' forms of femininity. As I will demonstrate at length in this chapter, while Eve is initially an exemplar of perfect womanhood, the Fall exhibits her degeneracy. Mary, on the other hand, is the positive archetype that redeems womanhood—and humanity through her—by depicting a return to "pure" and "perfect" womanhood.

The problem with the use of these archetypes—especially in education, which institutionalizes the production of a narrow set of feminine types—is that they undermine the promise of Stein's account of gendered humanity and feminine becoming. These archetypes posit a narrow set of goals for feminine becoming, all of which are intended, from the outset, to produce

girls and women who decenter themselves in their lives so that they can fulfil their role in 'redeeming humanity.' The result of this account, in my view, is that Stein's use of Mary and Eve idealizes a type of feminine becoming that makes girls complicit with their own oppression and the oppression of other women.

To develop this critique, in this chapter I read Stein against herself by staging a conversation between her early, phenomenological account of personal becoming, and her later account of feminine becoming. To accomplish this, I consider Stein's claims about women's essence, and her proposals regarding girls' education, as case studies against which I can test her accounts of formation and self-formation. I ultimately show that the later vision for feminine becoming conflicts with the earlier, phenomenological account on multiple points. In my view, the problem lies not in the fact that personal becoming is gendered, but rather in the theological ideals Stein sneaks into her view of feminine becoming. Whereas the phenomenological account underlined that our efforts at personal becoming are contingent and shaped by our embeddedness in the world, now personal becoming is framed by 'eternity' and by the demands of *another* world, a promised world beyond the one in which we live. Rather than situating persons as developmental subjects who are always changing and who assume their freedom through exercising their agency in their self-becoming, in the later account women are made free through dedication to children, men, and God. Finally, in place of self-chosen personal goals and values, a small, heavily Catholicized subset of possible personal goals, which are all personified in the archetype of the Virgin Mary, is substituted and recommended for the proper development of all girls and women.

I develop this immanent critique of Stein in this chapter across seven sections. The first section of this chapter situates my intervention in the literature on Stein's concept of woman by illustrating how defenses of Stein from the feminist charge of essentialism must take fuller account

of Stein's use of the archetypes of Mary and Eve in her theory of education. Having laid out this scholarly context, the second section moves to the geopolitical and methodological context for Stein's lectures on woman. To this end, I emphasize the intended liberatory aim of Stein's lectures on women, given that she is responding to what she understands as the failure of German feminism and the growing threat of National Socialism. Having contextualized the lectures, in section three I turn to her concept of woman proper, in order to explicate her essentialist view of woman's nature. Here, I spell out precisely how Stein derives the concepts of woman as species and woman as type from a gendered concept of humanity. Section four establishes how Stein fleshes out her essentialist concept of woman with reference to Scripture, specifically the Book of Genesis. Here, I explicate the archetype of Eve as Stein understands her in order to illustrate the 'negative' typical qualities Stein associates with degenerate, perverse, and fallen femininity. Section five considers the positive image of femininity by elaborating the archetype of Mary, the Virgin Mother of Christ. Section six concretizes the application of these archetypes in education, which Stein understands as a process that forms girls according to an understanding of specifically feminine nature. Both Eve and Mary are built into the structure and curriculum of girls' education, insofar as educators are specifically tasked with the project of ensuring that education produces desirable types of girls (and applies formative pressure to undesirable types of girls). Section seven critiques Stein's use of these archetypes, especially the archetype of Mary, in education, by showing how these archetypes reduce the openness of Stein's theory of typification down to a narrow set of typical traits, all of which restrict feminine becoming to a form that encourages her complicity with her oppression. Finally, section eight develops in full my critique of Stein's account of feminine becoming, with particular attention to how this later account undermines the virtues of her early, phenomenological account of personal becoming. I conclude by indicating how while Stein

undermines and betrays the promise of her own understanding of feminine becoming, this need not be the case, for her framework could otherwise be recuperated for contemporary discourses.

Feminist Critiques of Essentialism and Scholarly Defenses of Stein

There is a long history of feminist thought that cautions against gender essentialism, at least in part because of how essentialist concepts of woman typecast her and restrict her actual becoming.[211] In this regard, my earlier summation of Stein's description of women's essence sounds suspiciously like what Simone de Beauvoir calls the myth of the eternal feminine, which is the pervasive cultural myth that takes many forms but ultimately rigidifies women's individuality by typecasting her into oppressive and unrealizable ideals.[212] The myth of the eternal feminine states there is a basic essence of woman—femininity—which is timeless, unchanging, necessary. As Beauvoir states, "this idea is indisputable because it is beyond the given; it is endowed with absolute truth."[213] The eternal feminine presents a transcendental idea that functions as a law, one that has little contact with the realities of women's experience, and against which women's lives are evaluated. Woman thus becomes measured by the extent to which she lives up to the idea circulated in the latest cultural iteration or popular *type* of the eternal feminine: is she a proper wife, mother, saint, or an improper seductress, whore, leech? Is she even a woman at all?[214]

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[211] It is significant here to note that not all feminists think that essentialism is necessarily detrimental to feminist efforts. According to Elizabeth Grosz, a concept of woman can provide a useful political ground for feminism by justifying claims that women are oppressed as a group and that femininity is socially produced (*Feminist Knowledge: Critique and Construct* 341). In many essentialist feminisms, gender essentialism is not taken as an accurate description about social reality, but instead is deployed as a strategic method for feminists to adopt in order to produce coalitions and/or solidarity between groups of women. In this regard, and as Allison Stone explicates, "in delimited contexts, feminists should continue to act *as if* essentialism were true, so as to encourage a shared identification among women that enables them to engage in collective action" ("Essentialism and Anti-Essentialism in Feminist Philosophy" 142).

[212] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H.M. Parshley (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 14.

[213] Beauvoir, 260.

[214] While Beauvoir clearly understood that there are a variety of cultural myths that inform identity—for example, she distinguishes the myth of the eternal feminine from the myth of the jew, and the American black—she did not anticipate what black American feminists made clear in the 1980's and 1990's, namely, that all identity is intersectional, and that we cannot conceptualize (or experience) gender without

The risk of a concept of woman grounded in a myth of the eternal feminine lies not only in how it can rigidify personal becoming. Rather, essentialist concepts of women have long been used to justify oppressive policies, expectations, and realities for women's lives. As Beauvoir further states,

> Legislators, priests, philosophers, writers, and scientists have striven to show that the subordinate position of woman is willed in heaven and advantageous on earth…. For instance, the Roman law limiting the rights of woman cited 'the imbecility, the instability of the sex' just when the weakening of family ties seemed to threaten the interests of male heirs. And in the effort to keep the married woman under guardianship, appeal was made in the sixteenth century to the authority of St. Augustine, who declared that 'woman is a creature neither decisive nor constant', at a time when the single woman was thought capable of managing her property.[215]

From these examples, we see how essentialist concepts of women have long been employed by those who are interested in restricting women's autonomy by promoting what are coded as 'traditional' values but more accurately reflect the interests of men as a group. By apparently demonstrating that women's nature is *essentially* and *properly* suited for the domestic realm, and

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recognizing gender as raced (and classed, etc.). As Kimberlé Crenshaw, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, and others convincingly demonstrate, "women" do not exist; rather, white women exist, as do black women, and so forth. In a misbegotten attempt to establish community and solidarity, white woman historically claimed the term "woman" to describe a shared commonality of experience between all women, without recognizing that their experiences were divergent along racial and class lines. Indeed, some of the historical articulations of "woman" excluded black women altogether, a point underscored in the Frances Dana Gage version of Sojourner Truth's famous speech, now dubbed "Ain't I a Woman?" When we consider this in relation to Beauvoir's theory, we must modify her concept of the eternal feminine to reflect that the eternal feminine has, historically, not even included black women, or has included them under a different type than white woman (for example, the mammy in contrast to the mother, or the jezebel in contrast to the seductress). Cf. Kimberle Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989, no. 1 (1989); Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43 (2022): 60; bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, 2nd edition. (London: [Pluto], 2000); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 2000); "Compare the Speeches — The Sojourner Truth Project," accessed July 23, 2022, https://www.thesojournertruthproject.com/compare-the-speeches/.

[215] Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, 1956, 21.

particularly for managing the family and for becoming a spouse and mother, persons interested in maintaining the subordination of women are often well served by essentialist concepts of women.

Given the risks that gender essentialism presents to women's personal becoming and her political autonomy, we must ask of Stein a series of questions: first, what types of women emerge as legible under her framework; second, whether these *ideal* types limit the *actual* possibilities for the personal becoming of girls and women; and third, whether her gender essentialism has been, or could be, used to justify the further oppression of women.[216] While Stein herself has emancipatory aims in mind as she develops her concept of woman, aims that I will explain further in the next section of this chapter, does her concept of woman nevertheless lend itself to the reinforcement of the dated set of beliefs and policies that restrict women's choices and her freedoms? Or is her description of women's essence liberatory and redemptive, as she intended it to be?

Thus far Stein scholarship has largely vindicated Stein along the lines of critique that I have outlined. It is almost as if there is a consensus among Stein scholars, that in order to make a case for the relevance of Stein's account of feminine becoming, it must not be judged guilty of trafficking in the "bad" essentialism that feminists fear. This consensus is exemplified by Stein scholars in three main ways. First, Stein's claims about women's vocation as spouse and mother, for example, are *minimized*, and her claims about wholeness, connection, and emotionality are emphasized.[217] Second, Stein's broadening of the concept of maternity from a *reproductive*

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[216] Stein herself is aware of the risk that ideal images of women present. She writes: "But even beyond that, a criticism of the individual experience is necessary. Has even the individual woman been rightly understood? All experiences are prone to the dangers of error and delusion which are perhaps more numerous and more serious here than elsewhere. What guarantee do we have that such hazards have been avoided? Or it may be that an ideal image of woman is being presented to us by which particular women are to be measured as *authentic* women" (*Essays* 179).

[217] See, for example, Linda Lopez McAlister, "Edith Stein: Essential Differences," *Philosophy Today* 37, no. 1 (Spring 1993): 70–77.

function to an *attitude* that women can bear toward all of humanity is seen as a way of getting beyond the domestication of women, thereby liberating her existential possibilities while maintaining her sexual difference.[218] Third, Stein's description of the essence of woman is claimed to operate at a general level, which implies that there is room for the particularity of personal individuality thanks to various 'stopgaps' built into her account: for example, the structure of the soul, which harbors the personality core at its center, is seen by some to emphasize the individual over the general; or the manner in which existence manifests essence without being reduced to essence is seen to avoid rigidifying feminine becoming; or, finally, the theory of typification, which suggests that femininity is manifested in typical rather than personal characteristics or attitudes, is seen to evade the critique that femininity requires adherence to a finite set of characteristics.[219] In each of these instances, Stein is defended from the concern that her gender essentialism is restrictive of personal becoming or easily co-opted in order to create oppressive policies and realities for women.

However, in my view, in order to render a final verdict on whether or not Stein is guilty of the "bad" essentialism feminists fear, we must account more fully for how Stein *concretizes* her understanding of woman. What does she think women should *actually be* like? How does her theory of womanhood *flesh out* in relation to the everyday woman? The concretization of Stein's gender essentialism largely occurs via her theory of girls' education, and so much of the rest of this chapter will be concerned with explicating how Stein envisions girls' education. To get to her

[218] See, for example, Rachel Feldhay Brenner, "Edith Stein: A Reading of Her Feminist Thought," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 23, no. 1 (1994): 43–56.
[219] See, for example, Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein*; Sarah Borden, "Edith Stein's Understanding of Woman," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2006): 171–90, https://doi.org/10.5840/ipq20064623; Mary Catharine Baseheart, "Edith Stein's Philosophy of Woman and of Women's Education," *Hypatia*, vol. 4, 1989.

account of girls' education, however, we must first understand the geopolitical and methodological contexts that motivate and shape Stein's lectures on woman and girls' education.

A Geopolitical and Methodological Contextualization of Stein's Remarks on Women

To properly understand the genesis and content of Stein's ideas about women, girls' education, and women's vocations, it is crucial to clarify the motivating geopolitical forces that shaped the content and methodology of Stein's lectures on women. In the following section, I look first at the situation of women in Germany around the time of Stein's lectures. I briefly trace the changing sentiments regarding the place and status of women, from women's seeming political, economic, and sexual liberation following World War I to the return of 'traditional gender roles' under National Socialism. Then, I consider how Stein is responding to these changing sentiments. I examine her concerns regarding how women are conceptualized at the time of her lectures, before remarking upon how these concerns motivate her methodology for reconceptualizing women in her lectures.

Women's status and role changed a great deal between Wilhemine Germany (1890-1918), Weimar Germany (1919-1933), and the Third Reich (1933-1945). In general, women's role up to and during Wilhemine Germany was highly traditional and concerned the maintenance of family and domestic life. Indeed, women's status and place in German society is often summarized by the German slogan attributed to Kaiser Wilhem II, the last emperor of Germany: *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*, or children, kitchen, church.[220] There was however some prewar feminist activity during the Wilhemine era. The early feminist movement in Imperial Germany was initially split into two parts, based upon class lines: first, a bourgeois feminist wing, which consolidated into the BDF or

[220] The origins of this phrase are a bit murky, but often it is attributed to Kaiser Wilhelm II. Other variations include the "four K's" (*Kirche, Kammer* [chamber]*, Küche, Kinder*) and "five K's" (*Kammer, Kinder, Küche, Keller* [cellar]*, Kleider* [clothes]). This phrase was later adopted by the Nazi's, whose political rhetoric urged for a returned to traditional domestic values and roles for women.

Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine; second, a proletarian feminist wing, under the women's section of the SPD or *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*. While these two associations diverged on specific points concerning class interests and political views, the general focus of feminist organizations during this time was often (albeit not exclusively) equality with men with regards to education and political life. This approach was especially exemplified by the *Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine*.

While women's roles were highly traditional in Wilhemine Germany, there were some notable changes in their duties and in the general social perception of their capacities. For example, despite the common opinion that women did not need, and indeed were incapable of mastering higher education, reforms of girls' education in Prussia did occur between 1908-1909 that exemplified some concession to the need for formal education for girls. For example, girls' curriculum was expanded to include a larger place for mathematics and natural sciences. In addition, while girls were not admitted to boys' schools, specialized academic institutions (*Studienanstalten*) were created to prepare girls for the *Arbitur* examination.[221] Finally, women with the *Arbitur* were granted admission to full matriculation in Prussian universities.[222] Indeed, without these reforms, Stein never would have been able to become the second woman to graduate with a philosophy PhD in Germany.[223] In addition, during the first world war, economic demands put pressure on the domestication of women, particularly due to the rising need for workers given

[221] Willibald Klatt, "Changes and Innovations in the German School System in the Last Decade," *The School Review* 19, no. 8 (October 1911): 532, https://doi.org/10.1086/435802.
[222] James C. Albisetti, "The Reform of Female Education in Prussia, 1899-1908: A Study in Compromise and Containment," *German Studies Review* 8, no. 1 (February 1985): 11, https://doi.org/10.2307/1429602.
[223] However, as James C. Albisetti indicates, these reforms in Prussian girls' education in 1908 were ultimately a technology of containment: while apparently accommodating the desire for some women to pursue higher education, education officials did little to encourage this path, and indeed, attempted to use higher education as another means to reinforce women's 'natural calling' and prohibit her entry into working life. Cf. Albisetti, 41.

that men were enlisted in the war. As a result, new work roles developed for women throughout the course of the first World War. Working-class women thus frequently stood in for men in the industrial labor force, and middle-class women volunteered for relief work on the home front.[224]

Many of the changes in German women's roles and duties were furthered in the Weimar era after the end of the Imperial Period. During this era, a variety of factors influenced the status of women in Germany and led to what is generally (but not universally) perceived as an increase in autonomy for women and a partial liberation from traditional patriarchal values.[225] For example, in 1918, the newly elected National Assembly created a constitution which established that men and women had the same fundamental rights and duties as citizens, and thereby granted women the right to vote in Germany. (This means that Stein was not enfranchised while completing her PhD, although by the time of her lectures in 1930, women had been enfranchised in Germany for over ten years.[226]) In Weimar Germany women were able to vote, work, get an education, and experienced increasing sexual liberation in the form of changing legal attitudes towards contraception and abortion. In addition, post-war casualties meant that more women were unmarried and in the workforce, and less children were being born. There was a general sense of

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[224] Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion A. Kaplan, eds., *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, New Feminist Library (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 3; Frieda Wunderlich, "Women's Work in Germany," *Social Research* 2, no. 3 (August 1935): 311. As Frieda Wunderlich noted, poor women did work before the war due to economic pressures from industrialization, but the war transformed women's working life in three major ways: first, the entrance of women into jobs traditionally available to men alone broke up the division between women's and men's work; (2) more jobs become available as more workers were required; and (3) women were forced into employment outside the home by wartime conditions.

[225] As Julia Roos points out, scholars continue to disagree about the extent to which women were truly liberated in the Weimar Republic (*Weimar through the Lens of Gender: Prostitution Reform, Woman's Emancipation, and German Democracy, 1919-33* 7). Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan, for instance, argue that women's traditional role was largely unchallenged in the Weimar Republic, and that there was a continuity in patriarchal gender relations between Wilhemine Germany, the Weimar Republic, and, later, Nazi Germany (*When Biology Became Destiny* 11).

[226] Stein describes herself as a "radical feminist" whose activities included campaigning for the vote during her university years, but she admits she eventually "lost interest in the whole question" until she was asked to lecture on the topic of woman (*Self Portrait in Letters 1916-1942*, 99).

optimism concerning women's liberation during this era, although as Renate Bridenthal, Anita Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan have demonstrated, such optimism may not have been realized in the lives of the average woman, for women remained legally unequal in family law and property rights, and their wages, job security, and working conditions were less favorable than those of men.[227] On this point, and against later scholarship that would emphasize the social, political, and economic factors that impeded women's liberation, Stein herself claimed that the dissatisfaction and fatigue women experienced in the workforce after 1918 was reflective of the fact that *feminists in general*—she does not name any particular feminist activists, although she does point the blame mainly towards bourgeois feminism—did not integrate serious reflection on women's essential nature into their struggle for women's emancipation; it was thus feminists who failed to fully think through what would be required in order to create the conditions that would prepare women to enter the workforce.

Some of the changing realities of women's lives during the Weimar era were reflected (and distorted) in the idea of "the new woman" that circulated in German media. The new woman was a symbol that represented progress to some, and deviance and degeneracy to others. She was ultimately a media construction that did not accurately represent the historical realities of women's lives, but as a construction she manifested the Weimar Republic's break from the traditional.[228] The new woman wore her hair short, and, in some depictions, wore short flapper dresses; in others, she was dressed androgynously. She voted, worked for wages, was sexually liberated, used contraception, and obtained illegal abortions. She ignored her duty to nurture traumatized soldiers

[227] Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, *When Biology Became Destiny*, 36.
[228] Rüdiger Graf, "Anticipating the Future in the Present: 'New Women' and Other Beings of the Future in Weimar Germany," *Central European History* 42, no. 4 (December 2009): 647–73, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938909991026; Caroline Epstein, *Nazi Germany: Confronting the Myths* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015).

and heal the nation, by instead displacing men in the workforce, subverting the war effort on the home front, failing to have babies, and profiting on Germany's moral decline.[229] The new woman signified a moral crisis to those who sought to blame her for declining birth rates, changing social morals and values, and male unemployment following the war.

Ultimately, the new woman became a target for Nazi propaganda that sought to encourage women to return to traditional roles. The *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party, henceforth the NSDAP) assumed power in 1933, shortly after the last of Stein's lectures on women in 1932. Stein nevertheless confronted the changing social and political sentiments regarding women thanks to rising National Socialism in her lectures, and thus these changing sentiments warrant comment. Under National Socialism, women were expected to return to their traditional roles as wife and mother. However, this role was now restructured along the lines of the racial eugenics policies of the Nazi Party. As Bridenthal et. al write: "Women were expected to play a crucial role in enacting racial policies: by marrying racially and eugenically correctly, bearing healthy children, policing their children's behavior, enforcing neighborhood social segregation, carrying out consumer boycotts, and generally acting as the nation's racial conscience."[230] The ideal woman under National Socialism remained in the domestic sphere; she was discouraged or outright banned from certain work positions (e.g., teaching in universities, political positions in the NSDAP), although this ideal became untenable when the need for labor rose during rearmament and wartime. Girls' education in turn became an institution that aimed to form girls to embrace their stabilizing role in the Third Reich through domestic service.[231] Thus, education attempted to shape girls to become women who would be, in

[229] Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, *When Biology Became Destiny*, 11.
[230] Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, 24.
[231] Jill Stephenson, "Girls' Higher Education in Germany in the 1930s," *Journal of Contemporary History* 10, no. 1 (January 1975): 45–47, https://doi.org/10.1177/002200947501000103.

Adolf Hitler's words, "the most faithful, fanatical fellow fighters in service of the common preservation of life."[232] Given the role of women in bringing about a racially pure national community, Nazis were hostile towards previous feminist achievements regarding women's equality and rights and sought to undermine women's economic and political advances.[233]

While the return to traditional roles for women under National Socialism is sometimes cast as a regression or decay of ideals of freedom, equality, individual development, human rights, and democracy, it is important to note that women themselves voted for this return by voting for conservative policies. Some women's voting choices at the end of the Weimar era were largely motivated by their dissatisfaction with their putative liberation.[234] Moreover, state reframing of domestic life from a responsibility to a calling encouraged many women (primarily working-class, rural women) to desire a return to familiar roles and expectations.[235] Other women—particularly 'properly bred' women who perceived themselves to be or actually were benefitted from the NSDAP's policies—were vocal supporters of National Socialism; for example, by 1938 the women's branch of the NSDAP, the *Nationalsozialistische Frauenschaft* (the National Socialist Women's League) had approximately 2 million members, which was roughly 40% of the total NSDAP party membership.[236]

In some of her lectures on women and women's education, Stein responds directly to these wide-ranging and changing sentiments regarding women in Germany. We can locate such a

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[232] Adolf Hitler, "Die Rede Des Führers Auf Dem Frauenkongreß in Nürnberg Am 8. September 1934," *NS-Frauenwarte Zeitschrift*, September 1934, 210.
[233] Richard J. Evans, "Feminism and Female Emancipation in Germany 1870–1945: Sources, Methods, and Problems of Research," *Central European History* 9, no. 4 (December 1976): 349, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0008938900018288.
[234] Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, *When Biology Became Destiny*, 56.
[235] Bridenthal, Grossmann, and Kaplan, 43.
[236] Stanley G. Payne, *A History of Fascism 1914-1945* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), 184.

discussion in "Problems of Women's Education." This essay was composed and published in 1932 after her appointment as a lecturer at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy. Here, Stein first acknowledges in positive terms the gains achieved by the feminist movement that expanded women's social value and her achievements beyond the domestic realm: "Until a few decades ago, public opinion concurred that *woman belongs in the home* and is of no value for anything else; consequently, it was at the cost of a weary and difficult struggle that women's too narrow sphere of activity be expanded."[237] She continues by indicating her dissatisfaction with the divisive and condescending public opinion of women common during the time she devised these lectures. In particular, she criticizes views of women that she sees as originating in *thoughtlessness* regarding actual women, the *over-romanticization* of women, and *National Socialism*. As she puts it,

> The actual question which concerns us now is what we think about woman in contemporary society. Here as elsewhere we find vacillation or either a duality or much divisiveness. There is still a multitude of thoughtless people satisfied with hackneyed expressions concerning the *weaker sex* or even the *fair sex*. They are incapable of speaking about this weaker sex without a sympathetic or often a cynical smile as well. They do this without ever reflecting more profoundly on the nature of the working woman or trying to become familiar with already existing feminine achievements. Sporadically, there are Romanticists who idealize women, painting them in delicate colors against a gold background, who would like to shield woman as much as they could from the hard facts of life. Curiously, this romantic view is connected to that brutal attitude which considers woman merely from the biological point of view; indeed, this is the attitude which characterizes the political group now in power. Gains won during the last decades are being wiped out because of this romanticist ideology, the use of women to bear babies of Aryan stock, and the present economic situation. The woman is being confined to housework and to family. In doing so, the spiritual nature of woman is as little considered as the principles of her historical development. Violence is being done to the spirit not only by a biological misinterpretation and by today's economic trends, but also by the materialistic and fundamental point of view of opposing groups.[238]

[237] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:156. It is crucial to note that Stein was also dissatisfied with some aspects of the German feminist movement. While she lauded the achievements of the feminist movement in general, she argued that a proper accounting of women's nature had not been taken by feminists.
[238] Stein, 2:157.

Each of these approaches towards women is problematic according to Stein.[239] The thoughtless person who speaks of the weaker sex in a condescending tone does so without reference to the actual, concrete existence of women, nor her achievements. They rely on stereotypes and fantasies regarding women, simply repeating the 'hackneyed expressions' of the time. The romantic approach similarly idealizes women, again without reference to actual women. They seek to protect women, but in so doing they typecast her as delicate, incapable, 'innocent.' The National Socialist also takes a romantic approach to women by looking to return women to their 'proper place,' the domestic sphere, and to limit her to the role of wife and mother due to her capacity for reproduction and her supposed moral capacity for nurturance. However, they reduce her to a biological capacity: she is no more than the bearer of babies of 'Aryan stock.' In each of these undesirable approaches to the nature of women, Stein thinks a violence is done to women's actual "spirit." Recalling our definition of 'spirit' from chapter two, we see that Stein means that violence is done to women's freedom, autonomy, and her belonging to a larger humanity based on her rationality. In response to these undesirable accounts of women, Stein sets out in her lectures to describe a different vision of what a woman is and can be.

Before I articulate her vision of woman in the next section, it is important to understand to whom Stein is speaking, and the way in which her consideration of audience formed the content of the lectures she presented on the topics of women and girls' education. Stein's lectures on women and girls' education were not composed for phenomenologists or even philosophers; they were composed and presented for public audiences, often at conventions for teachers, academics, Catholics, and Christians. Because Stein is not speaking to philosophers in these lectures, her

[239] There are other issues that motivate Stein's work on women, including her dissatisfaction with the current pedagogical model in play in German, the state of girls' education, and her spiritual commitment to creating the kingdom of God on earth. I will examine these other factors throughout the rest of the chapter.

lectures do not provide detailed philosophical attention to questions of method. Thus, as has been thoroughly acknowledged in Stein scholarship, the matter of Stein's method in these lectures is difficult to resolve. However, scholars generally agree that Stein's development of her concept of women is influenced in part by her phenomenological training, in part by her theological commitments, in part by her reading of Scripture, and finally by her practical experience as a teacher.[240] It is particularly difficult to disentangle the phenomenological content from the theological content in these essays, because, as Sarah Borden notes, Stein uses phenomenology and theology as checks of each other.[241]

Despite the difficulty in separating the philosophical from the theological in these lectures, it is useful to see more clearly how Stein understands each of these methods contributing to a theorizing of women. Phenomenology is for Stein the scientific method appropriate to grasp the essence of things, in this case the essence of woman. The philosopher—in this case, she herself—thus uses intuition to grasp the universal structure of the object of its consideration.[242] We might say, then, that phenomenology provides the outlines for a picture of what a woman is. By contrast, theology "seeks to establish woman's unique nature according to divine revelation."[243] In this way, while phenomenology outlines in scientific fashion the essential structures of woman's essence, theology colors inside those lines by filling out the details regarding women's nature that

[240] Stein taught the philosophical kindergarten class for Husserl at Göttingen, and she also taught phenomenology after leaving the university in her home town of Breslau. In 1923 she took a teaching position at St. Magdalena, a Dominican girls' school in Speyer. She held this teaching post until 1931. In 1932 she took a position at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster but later was removed from this position in 1933 due to anti-Jewish laws passed in Germany.
[241] Borden, "Edith Stein's Understanding of Woman," 177. Borden here cites Stein's claim that "should we attain a concept of woman's essence entirely by philosophy, we would have to compare this directly perceived essence to the concept of nature made accessible by theological considerations" (*Essays* 181).
[242] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:178–80.
[243] Stein, 2:184.

phenomenology cannot provide.[244] Stein turns to Catholic doctrine to receive such insight. In particular, she argues that there are two areas of doctrine that are useful: the first is interpretation of doctrine, for instance, the writings of St. Thomas; the second is Scripture.[245] In either case, theology is used not to determine the essence of woman in a general way, but to "reveal facts and give practical instructions" regarding women.[246]

Having clarified the situation and status of women in Germany during the time of Stein's lectures, as well as how common sentiments regarding women at the time motivated Stein's unique approach to the question of women, I am now prepared to examine Stein's conceptualization of woman.

Stein's Concept of Woman as a Generalized Account of Gendered Humanity

Compelled by the situation of women during her time, and in response to disappointing articulations of womanhood, Stein provides her own account of *das Weibliche*, or the feminine. Given that all individuals not only form and self-form as subjects in general, but now also do so as *gendered* subjects, I am ultimately interested in how Stein's account of gender relates to her view of women's formation and self-formation. To this end, this section demonstrates how Stein derives a concept of a gendered subject from a generalized account of humanity, as well as how she envisions gender as expressed through individuals. That is, gender differentiates the male and female *species*, not based on sexed bodies or souls, but rather *due to the existence of a feminine or*

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[244] Angela Ales Bello, "From the 'Neutral' Human Being to Gender Difference: Phenomenological and Dual Anthropology in Edith Stein," in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. and trans. Antonio Calcagno, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life 4 (Cham: Springer International Publishing Switzerland, 2016), 22. Bello notes that here, in contradistinction to St. Thomas, Stein distinguishes between "essence" and "nature." Essence is the general structure, nature the specific manifestation of that essence. Or, as Bello puts it, "Essence is a structural moment; the essence of women is the feminine, but the realization of this essence is the very nature of each woman" (22).

[245] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:180–81.

[246] Stein, 2:184.

masculine principle of spiritual organization proper to each gendered individual. Femininity in particular is an essence that women embody, and which defines them as a species; this essence is a spiritual principle of *harmonious* organization. However, each woman embodies their feminine essence in a unique, albeit, "typical" ways, which means that women cannot be reduced to their feminine essence but should instead be understood based on the 'type' of gendered individual that they are.

Whereas Stein's earlier work described an apparently genderless subject—and this is indeed the picture I presented in the first two chapters of this dissertation—in her later work on women she moves to a tripartite model of subjectivity comprising the categories of humanity, gender, and individuality. Humanity is now understood as a species that contains within itself the double species man and woman.[247] This double species, man and woman, thus belong to humanity, but are differentiated on the basis of sex. Sex differentiation further shapes the structure of their individual being. Thus, for each person, their humanity, gender, and individuality are not actually three distinct parts but are instead the *unity* of one's "human nature," which for women entails "a specifically feminine and individual character."[248] For Stein, then, even though all persons *belong* to a larger humanity as gendered individuals, this general structure is nevertheless *differentiated* in everyone *qua* gendered individuals.

At this point, however, we must note that Stein uses the language of "woman," "womanhood," the "sexes," "feminine," and "sexual difference" throughout her lectures. She does not rely upon the term "gender," nor does she distinguish between sex and gender in her lectures. However, in my discussion of her lectures, I will employ the term gender to describe Stein's views

[247] Stein defines "species" as a "permanent category which does not change." She claims that this term is equivalent to the Thomistic term "form," which implies that the species, like form, determines the structure of a being. Stein, 2:173.
[248] Stein, 2:166.

at times. My use of this term is anachronistic, for the sex/gender distinction, or the distinction between one's physiological characteristics (sex) and one's socially constructed identity (gender), was not in fashion until feminist discourse of the 1970's-1990's (although Beauvoir's 1942 claim that "one is not born but becomes a woman" is often considered an early articulation of the sex/gender distinction). In any case, despite the anachronism posed by this term, I think that the term gender nevertheless better represents what Stein means, insofar as it captures not just the physiological dimension of sex but also our socially constructed identity (which encompasses but goes beyond physiological sex).

To this end, as I demonstrate throughout this section, Stein holds that an essence of woman exists. However, I wish to be clear from the beginning that Stein is *not* a biological essentialist. This means that she does not locate woman's essence in her feminine body. Indeed, she is critical of the reduction of womanhood to biology, insofar as this reduction neither recognizes the significance of the spiritual dimension of the human being, nor, as I shall elaborate further at a later point in this chapter, the 'supernatural' dimension, namely, one's belonging to an eternal order.[249] However, Stein also does not claim that the essence of woman is located in woman's soul. As we shall see in later sections, the soul and the body may be feminine, but neither is the locus of the essence of the feminine.

If gendered essence is not to be defined by the existence of a gendered body or soul, then how does Stein define and locate the essence of women? In my reading, *gender essence* (i.e., femininity, masculinity) *is a principle of spiritual organization in the human individual.* Gender does not reside *in* body or soul, but is rather expressed *by* how body, soul, and the other human faculties are differentially related to each other in each specific gendered individual. As Stein puts

[249] Stein, 2:206.

it, gender conveys "*a difference*, not only in body structure and in particular physiological functions, but also *in the entire corporeal life*. *The relationship of soul and body is different in man and woman*; the relationship of soul to body differs in their psychic life as well as that of the spiritual faculties to each other."[250] Thus, while there may be physiological sex differences between bodies, gender does not consist in the different construction or functions of bodies. Rather, gender consists in how all the dimensions of each gendered human individual—each *person*—are integrated and mobilized in one's unique spiritual disposition toward being. The feminine and masculine species are thus defined by their respective feminine and masculine essences, or the way they embody and live femininity and masculinity. As I will show just below, the feminine principle of organization is *harmonious unity*, and the masculine is what Ales Bello calls "uni-directionality."[251]

Feminine essence, as a principle of organization, is characterized by harmonious unity. This means that for Stein, "the feminine species expresses a unity and wholeness of the total psychosomatic personality and a harmonious development of the faculties."[252] When Stein argues that in women, body, soul, and psyche are all oriented toward unity, she means that women, by nature, draw upon all the dimensions of their human being in all that they do. Their actions express the wholeness of their being. Thus, femininity manifests as a *personal* spiritual disposition toward being, one which facilitates the harmonious development of faculties (insofar as no faculties are emphasized at the expense of others).

While femininity is ultimately a principle of organization that shapes how women are disposed, Stein does point to the biological capacity of motherhood as well as the vocation of

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[250] Stein, 2:187. Italics added.
[251] Bello, "From the 'Neutral' Human Being to Gender Difference: Phenomenological and Dual Anthropology in Edith Stein," 20.
[252] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:187–88.

motherhood as further illustrations of women's orientation towards unity and wholeness. However, it is important to note here that Stein does not reduce motherhood to the actual act of becoming a mother to one's own children, nor does she reduce women's essence to the biological possibility of becoming mothers. Instead, motherhood is a depiction of what feminine essence promotes, namely, an orientation towards the personal, the holistic, unity, and harmonious development.

In contrast to the harmonious unity that characterizes femininity, masculine essence is characterized by *uni-directionality*. The masculine principle of organization is a spiritual disposition towards the specific rather than the whole. There is a drivenness and focus that characterizes masculine uni-directionality, which motivates "the masculine species… to enhance individual abilities in order that they may attain their highest achievements."[253] In other words, men are disposed toward only a few abilities or faculties, and this focused application of themselves encourages excellent achievement. For example, Stein argues that unlike women, men typically objectify their body.[254] Thus, unlike women who experience a natural union with their body, and who are spiritually oriented such that they emphasize harmonious unity, men treat their bodies like instruments in the service of completing their work; this approach is an effect of their uni-directionality.

Describing women as a species implies that all women are women by virtue of an unchanging feminine essence. Stein *does* indeed think there is such an unchanging essence of woman. This unchanging essence consists in women's spiritual tendency towards harmonious unity. However, Stein does *not* argue that all women uniformly express that feminine essence. Rather, all women differently express their femininity. In this regard, all gendered individuals

[253] Stein, 2:187–88.
[254] As she writes, "the body has more pronouncedly the character of an instrument which serves them in their work and which is accompanied by a certain detachment." Stein, 2:95.

"represent the [gendered] species more or less perfectly" insofar as "they illustrate more or less of [sic] one or another of its characteristics."[255] Thus, any given woman may have some feminine characteristics, but she may also have some masculine characteristics. She may, for example, be highly empathetic, which Stein understands as a feminine strength. However, she may also be highly rational, which Stein understands as a masculine strength. She is not less of a woman for her rationality. Rather, she, as a human individual, shares the same basic human qualities and faculties with men, and she is differentiated as a woman and as an individual based upon the specific assemblage of qualities she embodies and the way she embodies those qualities. Thus, even though Stein details an unchanging essence of woman, she *also* insists that *woman's essential nature is differentially expressed*. To explain how an essence can be differentially expressed, Stein elaborates a theory of type.

Stein introduces a concept of "type" to explain how women manifest their shared essence in unique ways.[256] While "species" is a term to denote the fixed category of all women, as defined by the existence of the feminine essence, "type" refers to the *variability* that is experienced and exhibited among and within women. Although we may expect "type" to denote the essential modes in which essence is expressed (and thus to be an ontological category), in my view typification is better defined as a function of perception. It is not essence, but our perceptual history that teaches us to loosely group together general traits or qualities across groups of individuals in our acts of

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[255] Stein, 2:188.

[256] Stein is not the only thinker with an understanding of types who operates within or alongside phenomenology. Simone de Beauvoir's *Ethics of Ambiguity* uses typology to portray the different moral attitudes or positions we can have on our freedom. She outlines a developmental story about how our childhood can inform our moral attitude in adulthood, ranging from the least to most free 'type' of moral person. While Beauvoir, unlike Stein, does not develop a concept of types, her use of typification in the *Ethics* can be seen as an example of Stein's concept of typification, and, in this regard, Beauvoir's typology testifies to how human social perception involves typifying behavioral traits in order to establish general types of characters. Cf. *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (New York: Citadel Press, 1948).

perception, thus constituting 'types' on the basis of similarity of characteristics. This applies in social perception as well; all individual persons, based upon what Linda McAlister calls "broad classifications of dispositional traits," can be loosely grouped into types according to general shared traits and qualities.[257] Types can be rooted in the composition of the individual personality of a given person, or in the context of their situation, or according to certain social and cultural group categories.[258] This means that while each person is unique, each also exhibits traits that are typical to them, typical to their context, and typical to certain social and cultural group categories. For example, when we teach a group of students, we learn—indeed, we have often already learned, thanks to our own histories as students—to perceive them typically. First, we may see them in the role of student, which is a general type that reflects their context. Then, as we come to know them, we learn to perceive the typical behavior of each student—that is, their individual *style*. We can also determine *what type of student* each one is as a further specification of their general type ("student") that reflects social and cultural valuations (e.g., Bradley is the class clown type, but Moira is the serious studier type). Or in a workplace, we group together individuals who represent certain types depending upon their position, attitude, and behaviour (e.g., the workers, the managers, the CEO, the HR reps). When it comes to femininity, then, for Stein the concept of "type" explains how each individual woman manifests what is common in the species woman (i.e., women's harmonious nature and so forth) *as individuals*, which is to say that they express their feminine essence in unique, albeit typical ways.

In this regard, and as Kathleen Haney notes, types function as "intermediary categories between pure essences (never purely embodied) and the individual (never fully described) which

[257] McAlister, "Edith Stein: Essential Differences," 75.
[258] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:256.

allow groupings."[259] I do not here take Haney to be positing types as an ontological category, without which pure essences cannot be expressed by individuals. Rather, I understand Haney to be asserting that while no individual can be fully described or known—their being exceeds articulation—their expressions are intelligible because those expressions can be brought together with other similar expressions under one type. However, those expressions also bear relation to the essence which the individual embodies, although never perfectly, as they always exceed the essence. Types, as 'intermediary categories,' thus explain how each individual women becomes recognizable yet individuated through typical expressions of their feminine essence.

Consider, for example, the list of five types of girls that Stein borrows from German writer Else Croner: the maternal type, whose nurturing nature emerges in play; the erotic type who demonstrates high sexuality and male-directed energy; the romantic type who relishes experience and desires submission to a leader; the level-headed type who is adaptive and reliable; and the intellectual type who is drawn to the abstract, objective work typically coded masculine.[260] While of course this list is not exhaustive, through it Stein exemplifies her position. In each of these types, the girl's or women's feminine essence is expressed, albeit in different ways. For example, Linda McAlister notes that "in the maternal type [a woman's essential desire to nurture] may be expressed through the attentive care she shows for her children; for the intellectual type it may be something like the caring, respectful, almost interactive relationship that a biologist like Barbara McClintock has toward the corn she studies."[261] Or you can imagine a level-headed type of woman

[259] Kathleen Haney, "Edith Stein: Woman and Essence," in *Feminist Phenomenology*, ed. Linda Fisher and Lester Embree, Contributions to Phenomenology 40 (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 228.
[260] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:186.
[261] McAlister, "Edith Stein: Essential Differences," 75.

who expresses her feminine urge toward harmonious development by taking on a career in social services that attempts to provide essential services to homeless individuals.

Stein's claim that we can classify women's behavior into certain typical categories, and thus understand individual women based upon those categories, may evoke a knee-jerk reaction in us, given our caution against assigning empirical value and normative weight to gender stereotypes. Stein shares this concern. She cautions against developing a fixed system of types and applying it to our encounters with other people, and as seeing personal types as naturally given facts of the individual.[262] She is also clear that she cannot account for all the different possible types of women. As such, here, we can establish, how types, because of social construction, are historically rooted and culturally specific.[263] This is to say that as variable, types can and do change over time (and in across different places), and thus, are epistemic heuristics we employ through our learned patterns of perception to make sense of individuals; they are not ontological givens of the individuals themselves.

Finally, Stein claims that no one is fixed in or determined by their type, but can change their type throughout their life, or can present in a mixed-type. This means that what is at stake in typification are precisely the processes of formation and self-formation. We can be formed, or self-form, in ways that allow us to change our types or to contest popular ways of typifiying women. Indeed, education as an institution is built upon this understanding, insofar as education assumes that valuable typical traits can be cultivated or undesirable typical traits can be culled from the student.. In this regard, the educator who explicitly recognizes the function of typification can actively reflect on the social value of social types and can turn those reflections towards developing practical pedagogical strategies for changing or preserving types. Thus, there is practical value to

[262] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:187.
[263] Stein, 2:186–87.

be found in delineating personal types, so long as we do not overinvest in typification, or employ typification as a means to stereotype individuals. We shall explore this consideration at further length later in this chapter when we develop Stein's theory of education as a process of forming girls according to pre-established feminine archetypes.

Stein's theory of typification is seen to allow her to evade common feminist critiques of essentialism. For example, according to Marianne Baseheart, Stein's universalism does not result in an overly abstract account of women thanks to her theory of typification.[264] Baseheart insists that women are not stereotyped by Stein's account, but instead can exhibit a rich variety of personality types and traits. Similarly, McAlister claims that Stein's emphasis on types allows her to evade the common feminist critique that gender essentialism limits change and social reorganization.[265] This is because Stein already acknowledges that types are social, cultural, and historical; if types can change, then change and social reorganization are not denied by Stein's essentialism. In this way, Stein's indication that types are reflective of changing social circumstances *affirms* differences between women, rather than denying difference. In this regard, Stein's combination of universalism and individuation accommodates difference while establishing shared ground via essence.

At this point, I have shown how Stein understands femininity as an essence that women embody and which defines them as a species. This essence is basically a principle of spiritual organization immanent to the individual. Thus, women are women by virtue of the way they are essentially oriented towards the harmonious unity of their faculties. However, no woman is wholly determined by this essence; each woman is also a human being and a human individual. Each thus embodies their feminine essence in a different way. These different expressions of femininity give

[264] Baseheart, "Edith Stein's Philosophy of Woman and of Women's Education," 4:121.
[265] McAlister, "Edith Stein: Essential Differences," 75.

rise to certain ways of classifying or interpreting women, that is, different *types* of women (for instance, the maternal woman or the erotic woman) and different *typical* ways of expressing femininity. Stein understands these types as social constructions that reflect their historical circumstances, which appears to suggest that her account of typification does not limit feminine types and social reorganization. She also acknowledges that each women can change types or present in mixed-types, which underscores how no women is fixed in her development.

There is nothing *prime facie* in Stein's account of typification that should inevitably lead Stein to be exclusionary about feminine types, and this is precisely the potential of her view: *there is room for a proliferation of types and there is an openness regarding the possibility of feminine types changing.* This potential is indeed the moment that the rest of this chapter will be addressing. Stein has an account of womanhood that could and, indeed, based on her claims regarding our moral responsibility for our becoming, ought to be attentive to the particularity, diversity, and vastness of the lived experience of women. And yet, in my view, Stein misapplies her own ethical imperative to be responsible to others in our and their formation, by reducing the variety of womanhood to simply *two archetypes* of ideal expressions of femininity. These two archetypes are Eve, who embodies the "the Temptress" type insofar as she demonstrates the negative traits that Stein disvalues in femininity, thus providing the model for how women *should not* be, and Mary, who embodies a set of idealized types that Stein values and believes women *should follow*, including "the Virgin," "the Mother," and "the Queen." In this regard, Stein herself will unfortunately foreclose the openness of her account of womanhood with the installation of two feminine archetypes as guiding models for *all* feminine becoming. Because Stein makes the choice to posit these two archetypes for feminine becoming, its important to understand what she thinks the two archetypes are, why they are so important, and how they function to condition feminine

becoming. Thus, the following two sections will explore Stein's use of Eve and Mary as two feminine archetypes. I will first examine how Stein derives these two archetypes—Eve as the Temptress and Mary as the Virgin, Mother, and Queen—before turning to an account of education which demonstrates the function of archetypes in girls' formation. Ultimately, I will argue that these two archetypes restrict the openness of Stein's account of feminine becoming.

Eve, the Fallen Temptress

While Stein's description of the essence of women outlined in the previous section is largely phenomenological, her discussion of the two feminine archetypes—Eve and Mary—are deeply theological. Recall that Stein employs the phenomenological and the theological as checks of each other in her lectures on women. The phenomenological serves to identify the essential structures of a being; the theological provides the facts and instructions necessary to understand women's nature. With regards to the theological input in her lectures, Haney points out that Stein's understanding of women unites Catholic interpretation of the biblical views of women across the Old and New Testaments, especially in her readings of the Fall in the book of Genesis and the Redemption established by Christ through his death.[266] In this section, I focus on Stein's interpretation of the creation story in the Book of Genesis to draw out the figure of Eve as one possibility for women's becoming. Eve's story ultimately identifies how the idyllic relationship between man and woman pre-Fall, where man and women form "one flesh," dissolves into degeneracy post-Fall, resulting both in women's subjugation to man, and the supposed specific feminine deficiencies of disobedience, temptation, and weakness.

According to Stein, the first two chapters of the Book of Genesis explain the natural vocation of *humankind* and the ideal dynamic between man and woman. Let us begin in the beginning,

[266] Haney, "Edith Stein: Woman and Essence," 218–20.

with an exegetical account of the words of Genesis 1, where God creates the heavens and earth, light, darkness, the seas, vegetation, sun, moon, stars, and living creatures. All that He has made is pronounced good. On the sixth day, God determines to make humankind in His own image and in His likeness. He intends a vocation for humankind: "And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth" (Gn 1:26 ESV). He creates man and woman in His own image and blesses them with their vocation: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Gn 1:28 ESV).

Genesis 2 elaborates further on the specific creation story of man and woman. God forms Adam from dust on the ground and breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. He installs Adam in the garden of Eden, a paradise created which was replete with trees to please Adam's gaze and to provide for his nourishment. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil was also in the garden. Adam was placed in the garden to work it and keep it, and he was to eat from any tree but the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God, recognizing Adam's need for a helper that was "fit for him," brought him living creatures to name, but none were the proper fit for Adam. God placed Adam into sleep, and during Adam's sleep, he drew out one of Adam's ribs and closed the wound with flesh. God then made Eve from the rib of Adam, and Adam named her Woman, for she was properly fit for him as she was made from him. As Eve was made from Adam's flesh, they are originally *of one flesh*. Hence, marriage is a return to this original union (as it is written, "therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become *one flesh*" (Gn 2:24 ESV)).

Thus, with Stein's insistence on vocation, we can see that in Genesis 1, God makes both man and woman, and gives them a threefold vocation on the basis of their humanity: "they are to be the image of God, bring forth posterity, and be masters over the earth."[267] At this point, Stein notes that there is no difference between the vocation of man and woman, for this vocation is mutually assigned. Next, in Genesis 2, we see some distinction between Adam and Eve. Adam is made first, and placed in the garden to cultivate and preserve it. He names all living beings, but no helpmate is found for him. Stein acknowledges "a certain pre-eminence" to Adam insofar as he was made first. Eve is made from him—from his rib—and for him. However, Adam's pre-eminence does not amount to his sovereignty over Eve. As Stein writes, "she is named as *companion* and *helpmate*, and it is said of man that he will cling to her and that both are to become *one* flesh."[268] Eve's vocation now already bears some distinction on the basis of her sexual difference: she is Adam's companion, helpmate, and she is fit for him. Yet at this point their relationship is a perfect union. They are, at this point, quite literally one flesh; they are made of the same flesh and do not distinguish themselves from one another in their nudity. They are rather "the most intimate community of love," and "their faculties were in perfect harmony as within one single being."[269] In short, Adam and Eve were initially two complementary parts of one whole, a unity.[270]

All this changes after the Fall. In Genesis 3, the serpent entices Eve to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The serpent contradicts the word of God by telling Eve that they will not die if they eat the fruit, but will have their eyes opened, and will be like God, knowing good and evil. Eve eats, and she gives the fruit to Adam, who also eats. Then both have their eyes

[267] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:61.
[268] Stein, 2:61.
[269] Stein, 2:61.
[270] Stein, 2:62.

opened and discover their nakedness. They cloth themselves in fig leaves and hide from God who walks in the garden. Adam confesses their transgression to God when God discovers them hiding, and he blames Eve for giving him the fruit. Eve reveals that the serpent deceived her, and God renders punishment on all involved parties. God's punishment to Eve is as follows: "I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you" (Gn 3:16 ESV). Adam's curse is as follows: "Because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread, till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for you are dust, and to dust you shall return" (Gn 3:17-20 ESV). Adam names Eve, thereby designating her the mother of all living creatures. Then God clothes them and banishes them from the garden of Eden before they can eat of the tree of life, punishing them to work the ground whence they come.

Stein understands the changed state of affairs for humanity after the Fall as a change in vocation. Adam is punished "by the loss of his undisputed sovereignty over the earth and of the ready service of the lower creatures, by the harsh struggle with them over his daily bread, by the difficulty of his labor and its pitiful reward."[271] Eve is punished with labor pains in childbirth and, for the sin of having achieved superiority over Adam by seducing him, she is punished by subjugation to him. As Stein points out, her subjugation will be unpleasant, for Adam's irresponsibility as a master is demonstrated by how he attempts to shift responsibility for their sin from himself onto her.[272]

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[271] Stein, 2:62.
[272] Stein, 2:63.

While the subjugation of women to men after the Fall is just, insofar as it is ordered by God, Stein suggests that the *unjust* power relationship that exists between men and women is a perversion initiated by the Fall. In other words, while man's rule over women is just, in his fallen state, man has become an unjust ruler. Men have a natural primacy over women—Eve was, after all, created as helpmate to Adam and by his own flesh—and so Stein does not believe that "woman is denigrated by having been created 'for man's sake.'"[273] However, that she *is* currently denigrated—that she is made "serve man's own ends and satisfy his lust"[274]—is the result of a further degeneracy that has taken place after the Fall. As Kathleen Haney summarizes: "[With the Fall] Patriarchy began."[275] A proper lordship would rather be one in which women and men would both flourish, not one in which they are degraded. If such a state were to be achieved—if man could exercise his power over women without degrading her—then she would be by his side at his companion, and her submission to him would be given over freely.

In any case, with the Fall the original perfect union ends. Adam and Eve are no longer of one flesh, but divided, for they recognize their own nakedness before one another. Eve is subjected to Adam, her unjust ruler, and Adam is subjected to a harsh and endless struggle for existence. Their union is transformed from perfection to fallenness, and from fallenness to degeneracy. We will see in the following section on the archetype of Mary how it is that Stein envisions that women can respond to their degeneracy. For now, let us conclude this section by indicating how Eve functions as an archetype for feminine personal becoming, one that delimits the *perversions* and *weaknesses* of feminine nature.

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[273] Stein, 2:196.
[274] Stein, 2:196.
[275] Haney, "Edith Stein: Woman and Essence," 219.

As I suggested at the outset of this section, Stein turns to the book of Genesis to understand the 'facts' and 'practical instructions' necessary to understand women's nature. Eve is one of two archetypes that Stein develops in order to flesh out this picture of women's nature, and to confirm her phenomenological investigations into women's essence. Eve, as an archetype, represents the "bit of defiance in each woman which does not want to humble itself under any sovereignty."[276] On the one hand, Eve exhibited weakness of will, insofar as she allowed herself to be tempted and seduced by the serpent; in this regard, she represents the weakness of will in all women. Yet she also was defiant and disobedient, insofar as she acted against the will and word of God; thus, she represents the defiance and disobedience inherent in all women, a defiance that, we recall, was mandated by God, who sets women up oppositionally against their male rulers ("your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you"). She further convinced Adam to eat of the fruit and disobey God; thus, she represents seduction, temptation, and the type named the Temptress. The original sin *they* thereby engender (and yet for which Eve is blamed by Adam) provides the basis for Stein's assessment of the current state of feminine nature. Feminine nature thereby retains from original sin a flaw that "impedes her pure development, and which, if not opposed, leads to typical perversion."[277]

Stein's development of Eve—undoubtedly a one-dimensional vision of feminine nature—represents for her the worst of feminine nature. Eve is named the mother of all living creatures, but as a figure she represents what women should not be like: they should not be temptresses, they should not succumb to their weakness of will, they should not be defiant and disobedient in the face of their masters, even if their own desire runs contrary to their husband's commands. Stein is entirely comfortable with this negative representation of Eve, as well as what this portrayal of Eve

[276] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:119.
[277] Stein, 2:47.

means for feminine nature. For example, she interprets Eve's transgression as defiance, where it might otherwise be read as curiosity. She is also explicitly comfortable with women's subordination, only critiquing the perversion of this subordination that results from the Fall, a perversion for which Eve is at least partly blamed. Eve, in this portrayal, is thus the cause of and complicit with her condition. Stein also doesn't notice that God himself commands humankind in Genesis 1 to subdue nature, which could be read as an imperative for women to overcome their own 'nature.' In short, Stein doesn't redeem Eve, but condemns her, and in condemning her, she condemns a certain typical depiction of feminine nature. At the same time, Stein valorizes Mary—which means she valorizes Mary's form of submission and subordination.

Thus, insofar as Eve represents the fallen woman, the Temptress, she is the condition of possibility for the archetype of Mary, who embodies the possibility of redemption. Because Eve's actions brought about fallenness, Stein argues that all women have inherited fallenness from Eve, and it is their innate task to move away from Eve—as a type—towards Mary. Let us turn now to see how Stein understands Mary and her role in women's redemption (and the redemption of humankind), as well as the specific virtues that Mary embodies and represents in the Virgin, Mother, and Queen archetypes.

Mary, the Virgin, Mother, and Queen

Whereas Stein identifies Eve's disobedience of God's law as the expression of perverted feminine nature, Mary's embodiment of the role of mother and spouse is seen as the ideal expression of feminine nature. By illustrating the figure of Mary and her role in Redemption, we can see how Stein typifies her as a representative of numerous ideals for *feminine becoming*. Feminine becoming is the specific form of personal becoming proper to women, as delineated by their feminine essence. Mary embodies a variety of ideal feminine types, including the Virgin, the

Mother, and the Queen. The traits represented in Mary are correlates of the traits represented by Eve, which sets up Mary as the ideal woman in comparison to Eve as the fallen woman. And yet, despite the redemption of women in Mary, the very ideals that Mary represents are ideals impossible for women to embody. While Mary's impossibility is part of her value for Stein, insofar as she orients women towards God by requiring openness to His grace, I will underscore the harm that this archetype can do to girls and women. The harm is precisely that it narrows the openness of feminine becoming to two archetypes, whereas, as we have already seen, Stein's own theory of feminine type ought to be open to a plurality of feminine ways of being. This argument will be introduced here, and fully fleshed out in the next section on women's education.

Unlike Eve, whose figure appears only in the Book of Genesis, Mary is a more frequent figure in the New Testament. Mary was the betrothed of Joseph and lived in Nazareth. She was chosen by God to bear His son, Jesus, through immaculate conception (Luke 1:26-38 ESV). Her distinction—and the distinction of all women through her—is that by being chosen to bear and raise the son of God, she "was *the* person who was permitted to help establish God's new kingdom."[278] Various references to her across the New Testament depict her in her role as mother to Jesus and faithful servant to God. In these scenes, she is witnessed raising Jesus, and supporting him, and serving God in so doing. As Stein praises her:

> In the center of her life stands her son. She awaits His birth in blissful expectation; she watches over His childhood; near or far, indeed, wherever He wishes, she follows Him on His way; she holds the crucified body in her arms; she carries out the will of the departed. But not as *her* action does she do all this: she is in this the Handmaid of the Lord; she fulfills that to which God has called her. And that is why she does not consider the child as her own property: she has welcomed Him from God's hands; she lays Him back into God's hands by dedicating Him in the Temple and by being with Him at the crucifixion.[279]

[278] Stein, 2:65.
[279] Stein, 2:47.

Mary's significance is thus found in the spiritual attitude she takes towards her vocation as mother and spouse. Jesus is the center of her life, and she awaits him, and follows him. She accompanies him in quiet expectation, and she gives herself over to God through Him. She otherwise maintains herself in an attitude of acceptance, faithfulness, and obedient submissiveness, which fulfils her spiritually and vocationally.

It is Mary's basic spiritual attitude—the attitude she maintains as she fulfils her natural vocation—that distinguishes her from Eve. Recall Eve's transgression, which Stein framed as disobedience. Eve rebels against the word of God and is punished with painful childbirth and undesirable subordination to her husband. Whereas Eve's failure to remain obedient to God initiates woman's post-Fall vocation as spouse and mother, Mary fulfills these vocations in the way she mothers Jesus, is spouse to Joseph, and surrenders to the will of God. In so doing, she opens the possibility of redemption for humankind. She centers her son in her life, by caring for Him and forming Him according to His gifts and according to God's wishes. She is an obedient and trusting participant in Joseph's life, and she fulfils her spousal function by furthering "his objective tasks and personality development."[280] And she surrenders herself to God, offering to Him her full trust, obedience, and faithfulness. In these regards, Mary depicts "*the purely developed character* of spouse and mother as it should be according to her natural vocation."[281] I will spell out this notion of women's natural vocations more fully in the section on education, where it will become clear that education, which imprints the archetype of Mary unto girls, does so in order to prepare girls to assume their natural vocations as spouse and mothers. In this regard, education will be seen as the work necessary to redeem humanity, in the quest for achieving the

[280] Stein, 2:48.
[281] Stein, 2:47. Italics added

pure human nature embodied by Mary.[282] However, for now, we shall explore how the purely developed character of spouse and mother that Stein believes Mary embodies is, in fact, an expression of the types of femininity that Stein finds valuable.

We can discern in Stein's depiction of Mary three feminine types. First, we have Mary, *the Virgin*. Mary—and the feminine type *the Virgin*—represents the 'purity' of feminine nature. Unspoiled femininity is an "incomparable beauty pleasing to God," for it promises a "fruitfulness of virginal purity."[283] Mary's purity makes her the perfect temple for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is defined as the third person of the Holy Trinity (alongside God and Christ) and is the personification of the love and unity between God the Father and God the Son. Mary's purity also allows her to properly receive the gift of grace, insofar as virginity "safeguard[s] from every stain of sin."[284] Mary's purity is confirmed in the event of immaculate conception, and in her perpetual virginity (in this regard, she did *not* become one flesh with Joseph, as had been mandated in Genesis 2). The purity of feminine nature is to be contrasted with the perversity of fallen feminine nature. Indeed, Stein goes so far as to claim that only "the most pure virgin" can embody pure feminine nature; all other women have something of Eve in them that must be overcome.[285] Fallen feminine nature can only be redeemed and restored through purity, which in this case not only means virginity and chastity but also the complete surrender of oneself to God and one's utter openness to grace.[286] If we were to summarize the typical traits associated with the type the Virgin, then, we should assemble the following characteristics: pure, innocent, fruitful, beautiful due to her purity, full of grace, without sin, and above all, innocent.

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[282] Stein, 2:198.
[283] Stein, 2:119.
[284] Stein, 2:119.
[285] Stein, 2:119.
[286] Stein, 2:56.

Next, we have Mary, the *Mother* of God. Mary, Mother of God is the new Eve: just as Eve was mother to all living creatures, now Mary is mother to all of God's children. As a mother, Mary was distinguished in how she nourished Jesus's formation, protecting, and supporting him. Yet in her maternity is refigured. In her, we see maternity without concupiscence, which, Stein claims, underscores the flaw of lust that is inherent in human procreation after the Fall and which all women have inherited from Eve.[287] This is key, for the immaculate conception of Jesus allows the Son of God to be born without original sin. Thus, through her, the new kingdom of God is made possible, and humanity may be redeemed. Maternity is further refigured by Mary's perpetual virginity: Mary is distinguished from all other human women in that she does not need to become one flesh with Joseph through marriage in order to fulfil her natural vocation. While she, and even Jesus, are human, both stand out from the natural order. Mary remains free from the typical spousal relationship "which makes possible the fulfillment of life's meaning only in union with and through another person," for her union with God vis-à-vis the "surrender of her whole being to the Lord's service" supplants the need for becoming one flesh with Joseph.[288] Yet in her uniqueness, Mary exemplifies all the more what it is for a woman to stand by the side of the one she serves in full faith, devotion, and obedience; in marriage she is still yet the handmaid of God. In this regard, maintaining her own purity allowed her to embody the characteristics she wished to nourish in Jesus and in those around her. Typifying the type the Mother, then, from the archetype of Mary, we would pick out the following characteristics: nourisher and protector, not only of the life of the child, but of "true humanity," which is of the divine order; moral guardian, so as to safeguard the purity of the child; awareness of their true purpose *as* a mother, which can guide how they mother;

[287] Stein, 2:65.
[288] Stein, 2:199.

and the knowing of their own place, so as to deliver themselves, their children, and their spouse into God's hands.

Finally, we have Mary, the *Queen*. Mary the Queen is exalted for her love, faithfulness, and purity. She is the most blessed and the greatest among all saints. She is the queen of the Apostles and queen of all women. While Stein has much to say about Mary the Mother and Mary the Virgin, she does not elaborate on Mary the Queen. I, too, shall not linger here, for *it is Stein's elevation of the Virgin-Mother as the archetype of pure femininity and the guiding image of all girls' education which is of concern*.

The traits represented in Mary are correlates of the traits represented by Eve, which sets up Mary as the ideal woman in comparison to Eve as the fallen woman. This, again, is especially so with the typification of Mary the Virgin and Mary the Mother. In both of these depictions, Mary assumes the 'proper' form of womanly submission to her male superiors (Jesus, Joseph, and above all God). This is in direct contrast to Eve, who typifies the improper attitude towards men, by assuming a superiority over Adam through the act of seduction and disobeying the word of God as conveyed by Adam. The purity of the Virgin, with her complete surrender to God, is the opposite of the impurity of the Temptress. The rebellion of the Temptress is also opposed to the steady acceptance and blissful expectation of Mary the Mother, who awaits Jesus, guides him, supports him, and delivers him unto God with utter faith. In all these ways, Mary, by redeeming the human order, and exemplifying perfect womanhood, becomes "the new Eve," as Stein puts it.[289] She becomes the new Mother, and Stein insists that her image should be the guiding image for all formation of girls and women.

[289] Stein, 2:171. And Christ is the "new Adam," insofar as he exemplifies perfect *humanity*.

While the types Mary that represents (the Virgin, the Mother) are certainly caricatures of femininity—all types are, and our question shouldn't be if they are caricatures but *what it is that they, as caricatures, advise*—the *archetype* that *Mary herself*, as the *Virgin-Mother*, represents, is an impossible ideal. Indeed, for Stein, this impossibility signifies her *value* for feminine becoming. Adam and Eve were created perfect; they did not need to develop but were created fully formed. They were intended to transmit their perfection through the endowment of a perfect essence in their descendants, which would mean that their descendants would have the goal of perfection in their development.[290] With the Fall, the perfect state of humanity was destroyed; now humans are born with original sin and with fallen nature and imperfect essence. It is only with the figures of Mary and Christ that pure womanhood and pure humanity arise once more. They are the archetypes for a post-Fall perfect humanity, and thus are considered the guiding models for all educational efforts. Yet Stein notes that "pure nature can be attained only through grace; its perfection only through the perfection of grace in eternal glory."[291] Mary was blessed by the gift of grace; she surrendered herself to God and cooperated with his grace in order to achieve perfection of her being. In this regard, the purity and perfection of womanhood that Stein points to in the figure of Mary is one that cannot be achieved by human means alone.

While it is impossible to *be* Mary, and outside of the realm of the strictly human to be *like* Mary, Stein nonetheless insists that "those women who wish to fulfill their feminine vocations in one of several ways will most surely succeed in their goals if they not only keep the ideal of the *Virgo-Mater* before their eyes and strive to form themselves according to her image but if they also entrust themselves to her guidance and place themselves completely under her care."[292] The

[290] Stein, 2:194.
[291] Stein, 2:194.
[292] Stein, 2:241.

imitation of Mary is taken as the guiding ideal for women's vocations and girls' education, which curtails the otherwise-open-ended possibilities for the development of women and girls. Hand-in-hand with the elevation of the archetype of Mary to the guiding ideal for girls' formation, then, is the devaluation of everything that Eve is typically taken to represent. In the following section on the education of girls, we shall examine how Stein envisions the principle that girls should be formed in the image of Mary (and, thus, against the image of Eve) be mobilized in actual educational settings and through specific pedagogical choices. As we will see, education is an activity that can facilitate the formation of girls to encourage them away from degeneracy; in so doing, it prepares them to assume their womanly vocation as spouse and mother. It does so by applying the archetypes of Mary and Eve unto girls in order to imprint upon them a narrow subset of typical 'desirable' feminine traits. These typical traits reduce the agency of girls by preparing them to decenter themselves in their own lives by embodying the submissiveness and lack of self proper to their 'natural' vocations of mother and spouse. Hence, *education shapes girls by encouraging them to become self-effacing and self-sacrificing, which is the state Stein codes as the fulfilment of feminine nature.*

The Ideals of Education and (Natural) Vocation

Education, understood by Stein as a "process of shaping the natural spiritual predisposition," is a program that directs the *formative power of girls according to their perceived nature*, and, by these means, *informs* the development of students with the larger goal of achieving *pure human nature*.[293] For girls and women, education meets these goals by institutionalizing the production of certain feminine types. To produce women suited to perform their duties as mothers and spouses with the 'proper' spiritual attitude, education imprints upon girls the traits belonging to the

[293] Stein, 2:99.

archetype of Mary that we have outlined in the previous section. While Stein's vision of education foregrounds the role of typification, the proper spiritual attitude Stein prescribes for girls can only be inculcated by producing certain typical qualities of the soul and the body that require young girls to decenter themselves and to position themselves as the fulfilled subordinates of men. Thus, as I argue in the forthcoming final section of this chapter, Stein's vision of education—when read as a case study for testing her application of her theory of gender types—shows that she herself forecloses the openness of her theory of feminine types with the application of the archetypes of Mary and Eve in education.

Stein's thinking of education is motivated in part by a "fatigue" she witnesses in women who had entered the workforce and found themselves at odds within it in post-World War 1 Germany,[294] and in part by her commitment to fight in "the struggle for Christ's kingdom" against the "unchristian and anti-Christian movements and trends" dominating in Germany.[295] Against this backdrop, Stein develops a theological account of education that is intended to move girls away from fallenness—from being *like Eve*—towards purity—towards being *like Mary*. However, boys, too, have a similar path from fallenness to redemption to follow. In this regard, "all human educational work has the duty of cooperating in the restoration of man's integral nature,"[296] in order to achieve "perfected humanity," as established by the "eternal order" found in Scripture.[297] This means that the educator's goal is to develop each student as a unique gendered individual, one who also belongs to humanity as a whole, and who, in their individual being, contributes to the movement of humanity from a state of fallenness to redemption. In this regard, each individual

[294] Stein, 2:152.
[295] Stein, 2:206.
[296] Stein, 2:190.
[297] Stein, 2:192. Pure and perfected human nature cannot be achieved through education alone, but also requires grace; thus, religious education is integral.

must be redeemed; they must move from fallenness to the 'restoration' of their 'original' nature. The demands of formal education, then, must respond not only to demands of the present time, but also, and more importantly, those demands of the time must be "measured by those of eternity, which means the eternal order of beings."[298]

If the goal of education is to achieve perfected human nature, and if humanity is divided into two species based upon sexual difference, then education must be structured according to the essential differences between the genders that follows from the nature of each. Girls' education thus should take a form appropriate to their nature, place, tasks, and possibilities, as Stein understands these from her phenomenological-theological investigation into womanhood. As we have seen—and as I shall spell out even further below—the nature, place, tasks, and possibilities of girls and women under Stein's Catholic metaphysics is curtailed by woman's apparent destiny as spouse and mother. This means that because women's nature is, according to Stein, best determined by her vocation as spouse and mother, her education should encourage her towards fulfillment of this vocation.

We should pause a moment to acknowledge that Stein is not here advocating that women remain within the domestic realm. Despite the domestic connotation evoked by the claim that women's nature destines her to be a spouse and a mother, Stein rather affirms the objectives of German feminists to provide women with freedom of choice in their lives, especially as those choices pertain to women's vocations.[299] Because the Industrial Revolution transformed average domestic life, such that it no longer remains a "realm sufficient to engage all of women's potentialities,"[300] against the weight of tradition Stein sees that women and girls cannot become

[298] Stein, 2:166.
[299] Stein, 2:105.
[300] Stein, 2:105.

themselves as full persons unless they are allowed to exercise their capacities, which often includes working outside the home. Thus, because women are endowed with talents that can be applied towards a variety of activities, Stein advocates for women's ability to excel in professions ranging from those traditionally aligned with feminine nature (e.g., nursing, education, social work) to those typically coded masculine (e.g., factory work, business, legislature, intellectual institutes). Regardless of what profession they choose, women should infuse their professional work life with their femininity. In so doing, women improve both themselves, and, as McAlister points out, their jobs.[301] We can draw out an example offered by Petr Urban to illustrate the claim that a feminine approach to a job improves it: from a Steinian perspective, the difference between the feminine and masculine attitude in health care is the difference between holistic and empathetic approaches towards the whole concrete patient versus abstractions of sickness to a specific organ.[302] In any case, and regardless of what her *profession* is, women's *vocation*—her calling as spouse and mother, as given by the word of God—remains unchanged. To fulfil this vocation in her profession, then, women are called to bring a properly feminine spiritual attitude—that is, a spousal and maternal attitude—with her to all domains of her life and all applications of her energy. In short, women can do whatever they like, as long as they do it *like* women (read: through their *natural* vocation as mothers and spouses).

To return to our line of argumentation, in order for education to form girls according to their feminine nature, Stein advises that all educators of girls should explicitly ground their pedagogy in an understanding of specifically feminine human nature. This approach ensures that their pedagogical strategies align with the goal of redeeming humanity through redeeming women. Ultimately, then, the process of grounding one's pedagogy in the nature of woman means that

[301] McAlister, "Edith Stein: Essential Differences," 76.
[302] Petr Urban, "Edith Stein's Phenomenology of Woman's Personality and Value," 2016, 554.

educators—or at least policy makers—are responsible for attending to the metaphysical essence of woman, as well as its concrete expression via typification. Educators must therefore ask themselves a series of questions in order to align their pedagogical strategies with their vision of the types of girls education should produce: "which types *deserve* to be preserved? Which types need a specific educational model in order to change them? And which types can be set up as models, i.e., types into which we can try and ought to try to change the existing ones?"[303]

As we saw above, because Mary typifies the perfect fulfillment of feminine nature, Mary proves to be the guiding archetype of the education of girls. Mary, as the archetype of "pure womanhood," exemplifies the typical positive traits of femininity; thus, education should be oriented around "the imitation of Mary."[304] Education in short should preserve the values and virtues demonstrated by Mary (faithful obedience, trust in her superiors, self-sacrifice, quietness, steadfastness, virginity, and so forth); by doing so, any type of girl can be molded to towards the ideal image that Mary presents. For example, say one child embodies the romantic type drawn out earlier with reference to Else Croner. She is inclined towards daydreaming, and she lives in a playful world. She might be understood to be unreliable and ungrounded because of her romantic tendency toward play and fantasy; educators would accordingly deem her 'unfit' for the clear perception and judgement of reality. As a result of this assessment, the educator would aim to develop the intellect and will in such a child, so that she becomes more grounded, and can be trusted to manage everyday practical matters—a crucial trait for women who, as spouses and mothers, who are responsible for housemaking, raising families, and being the moral guardian of the family, or who, while working outside the home, are responsible for bringing a spousal and maternal attitude to their labor.

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[303] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:162.
[304] Stein, 2:201.

While Mary becomes the guiding model for all girls' education, Eve implicitly provides the negative image of the traits that girls' education should cull. Stein never explicitly claims that Eve as an archetype plays a role in education. Stein rather clearly states that "the types and individuals to be considered as variants of pure human nature [i.e., Mary and Christ] give us positive standards for our educational work; the degenerate types require measure leading to their transformation."[305] In this regard, by positioning Mary as the new Eve, and by situating Mary as the "goal of girls' education," Eve as an archetype is implied in her theory of education.[306] Eve's disobedience, her lack of proper submissiveness to Adam and to God, and her desire to achieve wisdom by eating the apple, all represent the types of traits Stein disvalues in her girl students. Even though Eve's disobedience could be understood as *curiosity*, her lack of proper submissiveness as *independence of thought and action*, and her desire for wisdom as *a desire to have clarity of understanding*, Stein maligns the traits exemplified in Eve. More importantly, this means that Stein develops a theory of education that attempts to *change all the different types of girls that embody these traits* into one singular type.

Consider, for example, Stein's claim that feminists embody the "rebellious slave" type. Feminists are seen to exhibit a degenerate feminine nature, like Eve, as opposed to the pure feminine nature exhibited by Mary. Stein writes that the "emancipated woman" embodies the "rebellious slave" type, insofar as she denies her servitude to God and to men and sets herself up in opposition to both.[307] We can read this figure as an example of a woman who has developed an intelligence robust enough to recognize her social situation (in other words, she ate the apple), but according to Stein's views, the emancipated woman's intelligence is not appropriately feminine.

[305] Stein, 2:191.
[306] Stein, 2:198.
[307] Stein, 2:190.

The problem here is not her intelligence, but *how she mobilizes and develops that intelligence*. This is because while her intellect allows her to see her subjugation and motivates her to rebel against it, because she rejects the 'natural fact' that she should be submissive toward men, *her feminine virtues have not been incorporated into her intellectual development*. In Stein's eyes, then, the feminist works against her own nature and destiny. The feminist's redemption—and by extension, any girl who, just like Eve, the "original" rebellious slave,[308] does not embrace her servitude to God and to men—can only come about by accepting that she was created by God as "helpmate" for man; her education should effect this recuperation.

At this point, it is clear that Stein's theory of education has a mimetic dimension. Education works by priming girls to develop certain characteristics based upon the models they are encouraged or discouraged to imitate. Mary is the archetype that is imprinted upon girls through educational processes, and girls are guided to imitate Mary to appropriately develop themselves as gendered individuals. Eve, by contrast, is the archetype that exemplifies typical negative traits of femininity. The basic idea that education is mimetic and employs archetypes of 'virtuous' and 'viceful' characters in order to effect personal transformation in students is, in itself, not terribly controversial. Indeed, such a process of imitation lies at the heart of Aristotle's virtue ethics. Consider, for example, Aristotle's statement here regarding the mimesis of justice and temperance as the means by which the just and temperate character is produced:

> Actions, then, are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them *as* just and temperate men do them. It is well said, then, that it is by doing just acts that the just man is produced, and by doing temperate acts the temperate man; without doing these no one would have even a prospect of becoming good (Nicomachean Ethics II.4 1105b5-1105b12).

[308] The use of this metaphor by Stein sheds some light on how her ideas can be taken. The idea of the rebellious slave is the idea of a being that needs to be put back in place to accept servitude. This conservative politics is anti-revolution, not committed to freedom everywhere, for all, at all times.

In this passage, Aristotle insists that the just and temperate man becomes just and temperate by imitating the way just and temperate men act. Aristotle and Stein would thus agree that the imitation of desirable traits is required for an individual to develop the desirable trait in themselves as a part of their character. I have no objection to this claim. The mimetic means by which girl students are formed is not itself an issue. What is an issue, regrettably, is that the archetypes that Stein chooses to exemplify the proper model of feminine becoming are highly restrictive. That is, while Aristotle would claim that the content of 'becoming good' can be said in many ways, for Stein, there is really only at best a few (and at worst, one) way in which we can say what it means for women to become good persons.

Thus, to summarize our argument thus far, for Stein formal education develops feminine nature to achieve—or attempt to achieve—pure feminine nature. As I argued in section 3 of this chapter, Stein regards gender as a principle of organization for the gendered human individual; the essence of women thus resides in the harmonious unity of her faculties. In this regard, girls and women are born with a unique relationship between their soul, body, and spirit. This organization suits her for the destiny Scripture assigns her and which Mary exemplifies, namely, to be wife and mother. This is because the harmonious unity that defines women as a species is naturally oriented towards the living and the personal. Education effectively mobilizes these faculties, and the distinctly feminine relationship between them, in order to support her formation in a Mary-like direction.

What's the Matter with Mary? A Critique of Stein's Concept of Feminine Education

Given that we have now demonstrated how Mary and Eve function in education as models for positive and negative feminine types, and that we have further shown that for Stein, education functions through mimetic processes, we can now develop my critique of Stein's conceptualization

of feminine education in full. That is, in the following section, I will show concretely why the archetype of Mary in education is too restrictive, and effectively forecloses the openness of her concept of feminine types. While education forms body, psyche, and soul, here I focus on *the particular qualities of the soul that Stein finds appropriate for girls and women, as those qualities are derived from her articulation of the archetype of Mary*. According to Stein, women's souls ought to be *expansive, silent, empty of self, warm, clear, self-contained,* and they should be *mistress of themselves and their bodies*. Girls' educational curriculum is thus devised to support girls' formation and self-formation in this direction, in particular by emphasizing emotionally formative subjects, by teaching girls how to renunciate their personal desires through the development of their will, and by orienting their intelligence towards a 'practical' rather than 'abstract' development. I ultimately argue that the qualities that Stein attributes to the ideal feminine soul function to displace women from herself and, further, to *predicate her individual fulfillment upon her blissful acceptance of his displacement*. In thus restricting the development of girls and women, Stein prescribes an account of ideal femininity that should empty women of themselves, which means that women are only themselves when *they exist for others*. It is precisely this emptying that is thought of as redemptive of humanity for Stein, but as restrictive, conservative, and ultimately, harmful by me.

We should begin by clarifying the concrete qualities that Stein argues characterizes the ideal feminine soul. It is these qualities that endow women with the capacity to fulfil their vocations and, through this fulfilment, to redeem humanity. These qualities, which pertain to the "ideal image of the gestalt of the feminine soul," are found in Mary's soul, and characterized Eve's soul before the Fall.[309] But "in all other women since the Fall, there is an embryo of such

[309] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:133.

development, but it needs particular cultivation if it is not to be suffocated among weeks rankly shooting up around it."[310] *Education provides the cultivation women need.* As Stein notes in an essay entitled "Ways to Interior Silence," properly formed women's souls should embody five qualities: *they should be expansive, silent, warm, clear, and empty of self*. In a lecture entitled "The Problems of Women's Education," she appends two more qualities: *a woman's soul should also be self-contained and mistress of itself and its body*.

For the purposes of legibility, I have organized the seven qualities of the ideal feminine soul in the following table:

1. Expansive: The *expansiveness* of woman's soul describes the ideal capacity for women to be open and receptive to other humans.[311]
    a. The expansive feminine soul goes out of itself to attend to others and discover the inner life and inner burdens of others.
    b. Following the encounter with the other, the expansive feminine soul then returns to itself and takes into itself not only what it learned about the other, but the significance of the other themselves.

2. Silent: Woman's soul should also be *silent*, so that it can hear its own inner life and inner voice and can find inner refuge.[312]
    a. Women's souls are typically "in commotion so much and so strongly" that she cannot hear the inner life of the soul.
    b. Yet only a silent soul can hear the call of God. If silence has been cultivated, then the agitated part of the soul is soothed, and a woman becomes ready to give herself completely to another.

3. Warm: Woman's soul should be *warm*, for warmth motivates a feeling of safety in others.[313]
    a. Stein argues that women's souls are naturally warm, but that its warmth is too frequently inconstant. It fails when it is most needed or flares up when a gentle warmth is needed.
    b. To remedy the inconstancy of a woman's warmth, Stein recommends that she allow "the heavenly fire, the divine love" to "consume all impure matters" and in turn become the flame that warms her soul.[314]

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[310] Stein, 2:133.
[311] Stein, 2:133.
[312] Stein, 2:134.
[313] Stein, 2:135.
[314] Stein, 2:135.

4. Clear: Woman's soul should be *clear*, by which Stein means that women should live a life in which they are transparent to themselves.[315]
    a. A life of soulful clarity means that "no vermin will settle in dark corners and recesses" of the soul.[316]
    b. By nature, "the soul of woman appears dull and dark, opaque to herself and to others. Only the divine light renders it clear and bright."[317]
    c. To live in clarity, a woman must embrace God so that he can illuminate her soul, and thus lift her out of an existence in which her soul is otherwise opaque to herself.

5. Empty of self: Woman must be *empty of self* so as to make room for other life within herself.[318]
    a. By giving herself over to her sovereign—either her "visible sovereign," her spouse, or God—a woman becomes "free of herself."
    b. Women's emptiness of self is further linked to the soul's ability to be *self-contained* and *mistress of itself*.

6. Self-contained: A self-contained woman is no longer distracted and absorbed in worldly desires, nor consumed from without by that which is inessential. The "inherent agitated self" is gone from her.[319]

7. Mistress of itself and the body: Here, Stein draws upon St. Teresa's metaphor of the soul as an interior castle to indicate that a woman who is mistress of herself and her body has fortified herself spiritually and is in touch with her inner life—and God within her.[320]

Now that we have demonstrated the seven ideal qualities of the feminine soul, we can consider how education is mobilized to produce these qualities.

Stein's vision of how education produces these soul qualities in women is, ultimately, quite practical. To produce "practical, able, energetic, determined, self-sacrificing women,"[321] girls' education should begin with a general education before culminating in a vocational school that prepares them for a specific job and aids their integration into a community. In their general

[315] Stein, 2:135.
[316] Stein, 2:133.
[317] Stein, 2:135.
[318] Stein, 2:134.
[319] Stein, 2:134.
[320] Stein, 2:134; Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*, 9:373.
[321] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:137.

education, girls should undergo a religious education, training in household skills, budgeting, childcare, and general political issues. These skills are necessary so that they can have a good general understanding of politics and economics—this general understanding prepares them to support their husbands and his interests—and so that they will be capable of managing a household or working in a job outside of the home. In addition, the specific structure of the feminine soul as well as the needs of a humanity desperate for its redemption means that girls benefit from a thorough training in "emotionally formative" subjects such as literature, art, and history, rather than "abstract intellectual activity" (which is the domain of boys and men).[322] This is because rightly formed emotionality in women allows them to have a proper measure of themselves and of others, and to support others in their development. However, some *practical* intellectual training is required, so that her emotion may be properly guided by reason. In these regards, the intellectual education of girls should be oriented towards the concrete rather than the abstract, so that they are prepared to deal with the practical demands life makes. Exercises must also be assigned that train a girls' will via activities that demand choice, judgement, renunciation, and sacrifice.[323] This will help her learn to prefer higher and better things over lower things. Finally, and most crucially, her religious formation must open her path to God, so that she may develop a relationship with Him and, further, can cooperate with His grace in her own development so that she can reach her fullest potential. In Stein's words, "Whoever wishes to guide others towards the pure development of their individuality must guide them towards a trust in God's providence and towards the readiness to regard the signs of this providence and follow them."[324]

[322] Stein, 2:137.
[323] Stein, 2:137.
[324] Stein, 2:202.

The intended effect of such a rigorous training of soul in girls is that they learn the proper spiritual attitude for the life that she was destined to have, according to the Book of Genesis. As Stein writes, "woman's soul is designed to be subordinate to man in obedience and support; it is also fashioned to be a shelter in which other souls may unfold."[325] In obedience and support, her spousal function is affirmed, and in warmth and sheltering others, her maternal function is affirmed. If the curriculum Stein lays out is followed, the soul of the girl can be encouraged to develop the traits which will support her in her vocations. Emotionally formative study prepares her expansiveness of soul, her ability to take others into herself, as much as it aids her warmth and clarity. Practically-oriented intellectual training prepares her to rightly order her desires, and to have a strong sense of rightly directed will, so that she can maintain inner quiet, be self-contained, and empty herself of herself. Finally, religious training prepares her to be mistress of herself, because through her full surrender of herself to God, she discovers herself fully received by Him, and then given back to herself as mistress of herself. By cultivating these qualities in girls, education thus imprints upon the proper spiritual attitude toward their destiny.

While Stein valorizes these seven qualities of the feminine soul, insofar as they are the traits typified by Mary in her proper feminine spiritual attitude, in my view, these idealized qualities paradoxically function to displace women from herself. The paradox here is that women's development coalesces in giving herself up, so that she can be for others, rather than becoming for-herself. (Or, more precisely, that Stein understands women's becoming in-herself *only* as becoming for-others in a narrowly prescribed manner.) In being expansive, women are to take others into themselves. The expanses of their being "*must* widen in order to be able to take in" other beings.[326] In this regard, the boundaries between a woman's self and others are not just

[325] Stein, 2:132.
[326] Stein, 2:133.

permeable, but constantly redrawn, so that she can constantly take others within herself. By being silent, women are to set aside agitating forces, which is shorthand for worldly desires, so that she can hear the voice of God within herself. Coding worldly desires as distractions from God ensures that women are not 'distracted' from her mission of serving God—through serving men, children, and humanity as a whole—and, thus, not distracted by anything that would detract from her submission to others. In being warm, she effects a *miraculous transfiguration from individual to environment*, specifically a supportive environment that nourishes the being of others. In being clear, she is lifted out of the humdrum of the everyday and into the light of divine grace, which confirms to her that she doesn't need those worldly desires after all, and that she is fulfilled by her work for God and others. In being empty of self, women are to give themselves over entirely to another. This penultimate statement summarizes the state of women's self-relationship: woman becomes known to herself, and indeed *most herself*, only after she has given herself up; when she returns to herself after giving herself up, she returns formed for the purposes of serving the other. The result of the development of these qualities is that woman becomes self-contained and mistress of herself. No longer tempted by anything that would have tempted her fallen self, or which would have distracted her from serving God and thus encouraging her degeneracy, she is master of herself and her desires and primed for self-sacrifice. In all of these ways, the ideal "gestalt of the feminine soul" that Stein presents here is one in which girls and women are shaped such that they set themselves aside. They put aside their desires so that they may deliver themselves to others and to God, and by so doing they turn themselves into supportive environments for the cultivations of others, especially those others who can inhabit the world in "uni-directional" fashion.

I am evidently critical of the valorization of these ideal traits, as well as Stein's depiction of these as desirable typical traits of girls through her depiction of Mary. However, a defender of

Stein might, at this point, point out that Stein precisely valorizes these traits because they are the return to the perfection of human nature prior to the Fall. In this regard, recall Stein's claim that the oppressive domination of men over women is a result of the Fall and arises from a perversion of masculine and feminine nature. If woman was originally the complement to man, but only subjugated to him after the Fall, then these traits actually represent the Redemption of humanity vis-à-vis the return to the ideal state of affairs between men and women. This is Stein's position.

However, from my point of view, these qualities serve to cultivate a spiritual attitude in women which motivates her to participate in her own oppression, and in the oppression of other women like her. As Simone de Beauvoir points out, an appeal to God functions by justifying the continued oppression of women. It works by mystifying women and encouraging passivity toward their own oppression. A religious attitude that asks women to accept themselves as 'equal' to men (equal in the sense as his complement; she nonetheless remains defined by him) appears to offer salvation to women, as Stein herself promises; "it cancels out the privilege of the penis," as Beauvoir remarks.[327] In this case, Catholicism mandates the inferiority of women, and the Church reifies this mandate, yet the interpretation Stein offers of Genesis is a salve that allows women to find "a solid recourse against [men] through [God]" by attributing perversion and sin to the male degradation of women.[328] The mystification here occurs in the way that an 'elevation' of the 'dignity' of women as a sex simultaneously dooms her to passivity, and then sanctifies it. As Beauvoir puts it: "Why remodel this world created by God himself? ... Reading her rosary by the fire, she knows she is closer to heaven than her husband, who is out at political meetings. There is no need to *do* anything to save her soul, it is enough to *live* without disobeying."[329] By promising

[327] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Vintage Books, 2011), 659.
[328] Beauvoir, 659.
[329] Beauvoir, 660.

woman that *after* this life she will be rewarded by God for her sufferings, so long as in *this* life she accepts her lot, remains passive, and she dedicates herself to bettering 'herself' by providing for others, Stein's understanding of the redemption of humanity via the redemption of women reifies the patriarchal oppression that it apparently seeks to overcome.

In summary, then, the idealized qualities that represent the ideal feminine soul and which are typified by Mary—qualities we have already acknowledged to be impossible to meet by human means alone—are highly restrictive typifications of feminine being. For example, the qualities Stein attributes to the ideal feminine soul ultimately function to displace women from herself and to *predicate her personal fulfillment upon her blissful acceptance of his displacement*. Woman, by this measure, is valued *not only for* her ability to displace herself and center others in her life, but *the manner in which she does so*. This is why Mary functions as an archetype in education: she idealizes this very specific and restrictive type of feminine becoming wherein a woman is personally and spiritually fulfilled by embodying the qualities that best suit her to be a compliant subordinate to her spouse and a warm support for her children. It doesn't matter that Mary is 'blessed' among women: she represents one type of women whose qualities typify the most conservative and reductive possibilities of what it means to be a woman. The reason that Mary is so highly valued by Stein is that Mary gives herself up to her son, her husband, and to God: Mary is blessed only on the condition that she decenters herself. Far from some image of self-sacrifice, this is instead the penultimate statement of women's subjection to man: woman as servant, as helper, and companion, but not really as a *subject* or *person*. Thus, it is Stein's disappointing decision to encourage the highly restrictive typification of women in the application of the archetypes of Mary and Eve to education that undermines and ultimately betrays the promise of her account of feminine becoming.

On Stein's Betrayal of her Theory of Feminine Becoming

It is my view that Stein's later theory of gendered becoming has many concerning implications for women's personal becoming. I have no objection to her gender essentialism. Indeed, earlier in this chapter I praised her distinction between women as *species* and women as *type*, insofar as this account allows for a shared common ground without negating differences between women. However, my issue with Stein's theory of feminine becoming lies in the restrictive application of two archetypes—Eve and Mary—to girls' education, for this application produces a particular spiritual attitude in women that makes her complicit in the oppression of women in general. While Stein understands her illustration of these two archetypes as providing important models for discerning how it is that humanity can be redeemed from its fallen state, I understand the restrictions placed on feminine becoming through this application as a restriction of the type of women girls can become, simply because of Stein's theological interpretation of their essence as a destiny that culminates in the natural vocations of spouse and mother.

Let us recall for a moment the virtues found in Stein's early phenomenological account of personal becoming, as I outlined them in chapters one and two. When formation and self-formation, Stein's two processes of personal development, are unified into one theory of personal becoming, we discover that each person is incomplete, vulnerable, open, not self-contained, and always in processes of becoming. Our development is never "complete," as we are always vulnerable and open to formative influences shaping us. We are also not self-contained, because who we are is shaped by the myriad of encounters with others, with the world, and with the circumstances of our lives. And our subjectivity is always in a process of becoming, such that who we become throughout our life can change in accordance with other life events. While we can apply ourselves toward becoming particular versions of ourselves, we never fully grasp ourselves,

nor can we fully determine ourselves. Instead, we do the best we can to become ourselves based upon what we can know, what we value, and what we continue to discover and experience.

To my mind, the phenomenological account of personal becoming I have just outlined presents a compelling description of the way we experience becoming ourselves: we are always on the way to becoming ourselves and are thus responsible for who we are and become, but we never reach some final ideal 'complete' state of self. There is a messiness to this process of personal becoming, and there is room for us to be mistaken and deceived about who we are and want to be. We never have mastery over ourselves, the world, or others. Rather, we are always dependent upon what others and the world reveal of ourselves to ourselves.

Unfortunately, this compelling account is heavily revised in Stein's lectures on women. Her initial elaboration of women as species and as types is not at odds with her phenomenological account but can instead be read as a development and concretization of this view, for it extends the idea that we become ourselves over time through experience, by specifying how gender informs this process. However, Stein's application of the two archetypes of Mary and Eve reduces the openness of typification to a narrowly prescribed, highly restrictive way of being feminine. Thus, in the place of Stein's phenomenological account of contingency, incompletion, and life-long development, a new, heavily catholicized account of feminine becoming is prescribed that would have women mimic a small subset of possible personal goals.

When viewed from this light, Stein's restriction of possible feminine types down to two types fundamentally conflicts with her earlier account of formation and self-formation. Whereas the earlier phenomenological account of personal becoming that I outlined in chapters one and two underlined that our efforts at personal becoming are contingent and shaped by our embeddedness in the world, now personal becoming is framed by 'eternity' and by the demands of *another* world,

a promised world beyond the one in which we live. Now, rather than situating persons as developmental subjects who are always changing and who assume their freedom through exercising their agency in their self-becoming, women are made free through dedication to children, men, and God, and they become themselves by excising themselves from themselves. To my mind, the theological archetypes that substantiate Stein's account of feminine becoming require women to give themselves up in order to become themselves as women. The sad result is that women must find self-realization in self-lessness.

Stepping back one step further, even, we can envision, from the dimensions of Stein's anthropology, possible Steinian interventions in queer theory, trans theory, and in contemporary feminist discourses more broadly.[330] In fact, I will take a step in these directions in the final chapter of this dissertation, when I develop an intervention in feminist and critical phenomenology today. But when we read Stein against herself on the issue of feminine becoming, what is revealed is that Stein betrays the potential that her anthropology and her theory of feminine becoming promises, i.e., that what is essential about women is nothing other than a multiplicity of ways of being a woman, all linked by a harmonious spiritual attitude. For while there is nothing in the anthropology that necessitates that woman be defined by her function as man's helper and subordinate, these strictures nonetheless arrive with archetypes of Eve and Mary. Eve and Mary open and close the

[330] The fact that woman's essence is largely content-less, i.e., that there is not a clear 'locus' for gender (in body or soul), but instead is defined as a *way* that the faculties of the human woman work together, is what is so helpful for addressing problems in queer theory, trans theory, and feminist discourses. Consider, for example, how the language of queer theory implicitly assumes typification, often with the aim of reclaiming types. Stein's framework could helpfully elucidate processes of typification. Or consider how in trans theory, Stein's view that gender is a way of being human means that gender is not reduced to a body, nor a soul, but that individual characteristics in their expression is what specifies gender. Stein herself in 1932 already indicates how her view accommodates *both gender and sex transition*: "If we question the concept of species, if *man* and *woman* are to be considered as types as we have defined them, then the transformation of one type to another is possible under certain conditions… At one time this view was considered valid on the basis that although physical differences were unchanging, the psychological differences were capable of infinite variation. But certain facts, such as the existence of hybrid and transitory forms, can be quoted to dispute the immutability of physical differences" (*Essays* 151).

possibilities for feminine becoming by portraying 'pure' womanhood as well as its degeneracy. As the models that guide education, education thus becomes envisioned as a religiously-informed process of engendering that aims to form girls according to their natural vocation as spouse and mother. This formation encourages girls and women to give themselves up by molding themselves according to the small set of feminine virtues exemplified by the Virgin Mary. In this regard, education prepares the minds, souls, and bodies of girls to be companion and caretaker, and to fulfil these roles with the *proper spiritual attitude*, an attitude that embraces subjection and that upholds the subjection of other women. Girls are thus encouraged to become women that are self-sacrificing and selfless, and they are defined by their success at relating to others and putting themselves aside. This calling for women to be other-oriented in Stein's description of women's natural vocations sets the bar so high that Stein herself acknowledges that women cannot achieve it. And so she encourages women to turn to God and give themselves over to him. To my mind, no amount of elevating the vocation of spouse and mother, nor of reinterpreting women's 'natural submission' as a good that makes her the perfect 'complement' to a man, can remedy the dangerous notion that women's highest personal becoming and fulfillment is found in her sacrificing and displacing not only her desires but her very being.

Chapter 4: A Steinian Intervention in Feminist and Critical Phenomenology: On Values, Motivation, and Types

Introduction

Much of Stein's early phenomenological writings bear on social political philosophy. As Thomas Szanto and Dermot Moran argue, in the years from 1917-1925 Stein exhibits a "preoccupation with social reality" that culminates in three works:[331] her dissertation, *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917); her *Habilitationsschrift*, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (1922); and a third work, *An Investigation Concerning the State* (1925). While these works are (more or less) classically phenomenological, the *topics* in these works are often proper to social and political philosophy and provide the scientific ground for further (non-phenomenological) elaborations.[332] Consider, for example, her dissertation on empathy: Stein's dissertation provides the phenomenological clarification of a particular intersubjective mental act (empathy), and in so doing, it grounds the elaboration of knowledge of world, others, the self, and persons. Consider also her *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, which accounts for experiences of sociality well beyond empathy, including experiences of community solidarity, the mass, and society. Or, finally, consider the much-sidelined third treatise, *An Investigation Concerning the State*, which contains Stein's reflections on the essence of the state and its ideal form, reflections which may have been motivated by Stein's political life and her view of the weaknesses of the then-young Weimar Republic.[333] (We would be remiss not to note that Stein's later work is also deeply social

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[331] Thomas Szanto and Dermot Moran, "Edith Stein," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2020, https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/stein/.

[332] Calcagno has argued that *An Investigation Concerning the State* departs from phenomenology proper by introducing Stein's own vision for political reality. Cf. Calcagno, *Lived Experience from the Inside Out*, 162–71.

[333] Calcagno, 164–65.

and political, as we saw in Chapter three's engagement with her feminism, her work on the essence of woman, and her lectures on girls' education and women's vocations.)[334]

In this chapter, I will demonstrate the relevance of Stein's ideas of *personal becoming*—ideas I have been developing across the previous three chapters of this dissertation—for *current* debates in social and political philosophy, specifically in the areas of feminist and critical phenomenology. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate how Stein's work has contemporary import and relevance for critical and feminist phenomenologies today.

As I will spell out in more detail in section one of this chapter, feminist and critical phenomenologies are recent developments in the phenomenological tradition that center social and political concerns. What both feminist and critical phenomenologies have in common concerns their commitment to the phenomenological method as a descriptive methodology that is a form of social and political critique and an impetus for social and political transformation. In this regard, both approaches attend to how the "institutions, structures, and social conditions" of our contexts—what we, following Stein, will call *formative* forces—shape experience and

[334] Scholarship on Stein that explicitly treats the social political dimension of her work frequently focuses on her social ontology, her concept of empathy, her work on gender, and her account of community. In English language scholarship, treatments of her account of state and political formation are infrequent, although attention is now being directed to this area as well. While much of the scholarship is historical in orientation, focusing largely on recuperating and developing Stein's interventions, some scholars have shown the relevance of Stein's ideas for contemporary social and political philosophy. For example, Dan Zahavi has demonstrated how Stein's concept of empathy can clarify the nature of social cognition; Kathleen Haney has applied Stein's concept of empathy to experiences of autism; and Mette Lebech has also shown how Stein's account of the psyche helps to explain the genesis of mental illness. Cf. Dan Zahavi, "Empathy, Embodiment and Interpersonal Understanding: From Lipps to Schutz," *Inquiry* 53, no. 3 (June 2010): 285-306, https://doi.org/10.1080/00201741003784663; Kathleen Haney, "Edith Stein on Autism," in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. Antonio Calcagno, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life 4 (Switzerland: Springer, 2016), 107–15; Mette Lebech, "Stein's Understanding of Mental Health and Mental Illness," in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood*, ed. Elisa Magrì and Dermot Moran, vol. 94, Contributions To Phenomenology (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 107–23, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-71096-9_6.

subjectivities.[335] In so doing, they reveal deficiencies in the methods and accounts found in canonical phenomenologies, and they provide corrections that deepen and expand our understanding and practice of phenomenology.[336]

However, it is my view that these recent phenomenologies sometimes smooth the gap between the *descriptive* and the *prescriptive*. By this, I mean that these phenomenologies move from a description of oppressive experience to a prescription about what must change, without clarifying *how change can be effected at a personal level*. Despite the promise of these phenomenologies to effect change, then, the result is that it remains unclear *how we can change and, in turn, how we can help to change the world*. What, in short, is missing from these accounts is a reckoning with how individuals integrate and mobilize the changing social and political values that are required to affect social and political transformation in line with the vision of feminist and critical phenomenologists. Thus, to my mind, these phenomenologies require an account of personal becoming that can address how individuals motivate their own change in values in correspondence with changing social and political values.

I will argue for this claim in this chapter by positioning Stein's account of personal becoming as a supplement that clarifies how individuals in differing social and political contexts can effect socio-political change.[337] Thus, this chapter will stage a conversation between contemporary feminist and critical phenomenology and Stein's philosophy of personal becoming.

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[335] Martina Ferrari et al., eds., "Editor's Introduction: Reflections on the First Issue," *Puncta: Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 1, no. 1 (2018): 3.

[336] Canonical phenomenologies here meaning the phenomenologies of Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Levinas.

[337] I emphasize that my application of Stein's account here concerns individuals. By this I mean to indicate that personal commitment and action is *a part of* social change, albeit *not sufficient for* it. I do not mean to say that if we change ourselves, the world itself will change. Rather, my claim is much more modest: self-transformation is required to be a part of changing the world, but the work will go ultimately go beyond the individual.

To my mind, and as I will argue in this chapter, the robust interiority that Stein describes in her theory of personal becoming can be fruitfully adopted by critical and feminist phenomenologies to address unresolved questions at the heart of these phenomenological projects, questions concerning personal change by individuals in differing social and political contexts who are motivated by social and political demands. While Stein might not provide the only answers to these questions, her views, when brought into conversation with feminist and critical phenomenology, reveal and potentially ameliorate this shortcoming.

Interestingly, even though Stein was an important contributor to the phenomenological movement in her own right, Stein's work has not yet been taken up by feminist and critical phenomenologists (although she appears in some footnotes as a throwaway reference). There may be several reasons for this. Many feminist and critical phenomenologies have largely rejected the methodological commitments found in Husserlian transcendental idealism—and, by extension, the work of many members of the early phenomenological movement (including Stein) who worked alongside and under Husserl, some of whom also rejected Husserl's transcendental idealism. In addition, because Stein's work and person was sidelined in the tradition due to sexism and racism, until recently many remained unaware of her original work and its significance to the movement as a whole. However, Stein's realist, intersubjective, and socially and politically attuned phenomenology is in many ways a precursor to feminist and critical phenomenologies. For example, Stein, from the beginning of the phenomenological movement, argued that phenomenology must be in touch with a real, material world, that we are gendered individuals, and that we are not solipsistic but immersed in a social world that we experience alongside others in a variety of social formations. This chapter will thus correct the omission of Stein in recent

feminist and critical phenomenology by showing how Stein's work was—and remains—deeply relevant for these politically-oriented phenomenologies.

This chapter has two major sections. To demonstrate the value of a Steinian intervention in feminist and critical phenomenologies, it is important to explain these two phenomenological projects. Thus, in the first subsection, I situate and account for the contemporary feminist and critical phenomenological movements. Here I argue that these two fields share common ground in their mutual desire to transform the world through phenomenological description and strategic critical intervention. However, to avoid the common mistake of conflating these two fields, in the second subsection I situate them historically in relation to one another, by arguing that feminist phenomenology as a field preceded and supports the work of critical phenomenology. Finally, in the third subsection, I explore how their mutual goal of transforming the world is also a shared *weakness* to both fields. Through a careful reading of Alia Al-Saji's foundational essay on racializing perception, I argue that there are three methodological steps in feminist and critical phenomenology. The first, *description* of a phenomenon, focuses on describing elements of lived experience that fell outside the purview of traditional phenomenology (e.g., pregnancy), and frequently uses modified methodological tools for description (e.g., description without the full reduction). The second, *denaturalization* of a phenomenon, involves bringing to light previously invisible or unspoken dimensions of experience, as well as the conditions which make those dimensions of experience possible, in order to demonstrate that these conditions and dimensions of experience are not natural but are instead historically sedimented. Finally, the third, *prescriptions for change*, involves developing strategic responses to what was uncovered through descriptions, responses that are intended to produce different ways of being in the world and thus ameliorate the uncovered problem. In the case of Al-Saji's essay, this involves describing the

affective and perceptual dimensions of prereflective racism, demonstrating the conditions and institutions that produce and enforce prereflective racism, and developing hesitation as a strategic anti-racist response. Taken altogether, the three steps of feminist and critical phenomenology imply that change is desirable and possible. However, these phenomenologies have failed to articulate how change actually occurs for individuals, which inhibits the realization of the transformative promises of these phenomenologies.

The second section of this chapter develops my Steinian intervention into feminist and critical phenomenologies. Here I argue that Stein's illustration of how individuals integrate and mobilize changing social and political values is a crucial supplement that clarifies how the transformation desired by feminist and critical phenomenology can take place. I demonstrate this claim by exemplifying how the three methodological steps of feminist and critical phenomenology (*description*, *denaturalization*, and *prescription*) are each strengthened by Stein's concepts of *values*, *motivation*, and *types*. In this regard, I show that *values* are an invisible and implicit part of phenomenological *description*, and that they can be mobilized in an understanding of *motivation* that allows for *denaturalization* to take place. Personal change, on this account, is thus a *motivated change in values* that is highly individual. This means that if the strategies developed by feminist and critical phenomenologists are to enact change, they cannot do so in an abstract way; that is, strategic intervention is truly only helpful when concretely applied. By articulating *motivated change as a change in our value systems*, through Stein's account of personal becoming we can provide a reflexive and individuated account for how we as persons can both become the *type* of people who will change in relation to changing social and political values, and we can account for the differential ways that general social and political values can be applied to diverse types of people.

Feminist and Critical Phenomenologies

Before I can illustrate my Steinian intervention in feminist and critical phenomenology, it is important to clarify these fields of inquiry. Yet this task is already complicated, for these new fields are both still engaging in processes of self-definition. We can see, for instance, the ongoing process of determining *what critical phenomenology is* and *what it attempts* in comparison to classical phenomenology by the proliferation of articles recently published on the topic, or the summer session of the *Colleguium Phaenomenologicum* dedicated to the matter in 2018.[338] While the specifics of these debates are outside the scope of this chapter, it is nonetheless useful to clarify the general relationship between these fields in order to contextualize why I think Stein's account of personal becoming can be a useful supplement to both. Given this, the following subsections provides an account of the common ground between each field, before defining their relationship to one another, and illustrating their shared promise and weakness—a shared promise and weakness to which, I think, Stein can contribute.

The Common Ground between Feminist and Critical Phenomenology

Thus far I have treated feminist and critical phenomenology in singular gestures, as though these two distinct fields can be reduced to one another. While there are conceptual reasons for my decision to do so (i.e., I will argue in this chapter that these two fields share a common gap which

[338] Lisa Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020), 11–16; Duane H. Davis, "The Phenomenological Method," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020), 3–9; Gayle Salamon, "What's Critical about Critical Phenomenology?," *Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 1, no. 1 (2018): 10, https://doi.org/10.31608/pjcp.v1i1.19; Johanna Oksala, "The Method of Critical Phenomenology: Simone de Beauvoir as a Phenomenologist," *European Journal of Philosophy*, March 27, 2022, ejop.12782, https://doi.org/10.1111/ejop.12782; Johanna Oksala, "What Is Feminist Phenomenology?: Thinking Birth Philosophically," *Radical Philosophy* 126 (August 2004): 16–22; Alia Al-Saji, "Feminist Phenomenology," in *The Routledge Companion to Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Ann Garry, Serene J Khader, and Allison Stone, 1st edition (New York: Taylor and Francis Inc., 2017), 143–54; Gail Weiss, "FeminisT Phenomenology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Feminist Philosophy*, ed. Kim Q. Hall and Ásta (New York: Oxford University Press, 2021), 63–71.

can be resolved by a Steinian contribution), conventions in these fields also encourage the bleeding of these fields into each other. Consider, to start, two quotations: the first quotation identifies the method and focus of feminist phenomenology, and the second that of critical phenomenology. Of feminist phenomenology, Dorothea Olkowski writes,

> If there is an ongoing task attributable to feminist phenomenology, it is this: to transform the culture in the direction of greater openness towards the diversity of life and body, such that the embodied subject is recognized as gendered and historically conditioned, open to all the tensions and contradictions of the culture in which she lives, thus also open to personal and political transformation.[339]

Olkowski summarizes feminist phenomenology as a project that attempts to initiate personal and political transformation in subjects as well as larger cultural change. These micro- and macro-level changes recognize diversity, historicity, gender, and the 'tensions' and 'contradictions' of one's culture. Implied as well is that the project of feminist phenomenology undermines canonical formulations attributed to classical phenomenology, for example that of the 'neutral' (i.e., ungendered) subject and their body. Now compare Olkowski's description of the task of feminist phenomenology with Gail Weiss and Ann Murphy's description of the task of critical phenomenology:

> A critical phenomenology draws attention to the multiple ways in which power moves through our bodies and our lives. It is also an ameliorative phenomenology that seeks not only to describe but also to repair the world, encouraging generosity, respect, and compassion for the diversity of our lived experiences.[340]

From these two quotations, the task of both feminist and critical phenomenology appear essentially indistinguishable. Like feminist phenomenology, critical phenomenology also seeks to employ the phenomenological method to initiate change. 'Repairing the world' involves recognizing how

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[339] Dorothea E Olkowski, "Feminism And Phenomenology," in *The Edinburgh Encyclopedia of Continental Philosophy*, ed. Glen Glendinning (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 330.
[340] Gail Weiss and Ann V Murphy, "Introduction: Transformative Descriptions," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, ed. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2020), xiv.

power structures bodies and lives. This move is resonant with the feminist gesture of recognizing how subjects are historically conditioned. Both approaches seek to describe and transform, and both see that transformation as reparative and as promising a different kind of future, a future more attentive to diversity.

The similarities between these two fields do not end in the description of their respective tasks. There is also an interesting cross-pollination between the two fields that has been quite fruitful, if not mutually productive. Foundational figures often publish in both fields (consider, for example, that Gail Weiss and Johanna Oksala have both published manifestos defining feminist and critical phenomenology respectively[341]). New or retooled core phenomenological concepts, as well as reformulated phenomenological methodologies, travel between the fields as well. For example, both feminist and critical phenomenology frequently reject the notion of a pure description, as well as the methodological tool of the complete reduction. Both also understand the results of their investigation to be provisional, subject to revision, and reflective of one's positionality, rather than an expression of a universal essence.[342]

If these two phenomenological projects share the same task, then why distinguish them at all? Further, by which criterion ought they to be distinguished? In what follows I will consider one published view concerning the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology before advancing a second possibility, my own view. From this discussion, the purview of each field, as well as the relationship between them, will become clear. Having clarity on these two fields will

[341] Weiss and Murphy, "Introduction: Transformative Descriptions"; Weiss, "FeminisT Phenomenology"; Oksala, "The Method of Critical Phenomenology"; Oksala, "What Is Feminist Phenomenology?: Thinking Birth Philosophically."

[342] Ferrari et al., "Editor's Introduction: Reflections on the First Issue," 3; Weiss, "FeminisT Phenomenology," 64.

prepare me to deliberate further on their shared promise, a promise that is also their weakness, and which Stein can helpfully address.

Spot the Differences: Feminist and Critical Phenomenology

To the best of my knowledge, there are only three publications that have explicitly thematized the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology: first, the "Editor's Introduction" to the first *Puncta* issue, which is the leading journal of critical phenomenology; second, Bonnie Mann's article from that same edition entitled "The Difference of Feminist Phenomenology: The Case of Shame"; and third, Weiss' chapter "FeminisT [sic?] Phenomenology" from the *Oxford Handbook of Feminist Philosophy*. The Puncta editors and Weiss propose what I will call a "taxonomical view" of the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology. This view addresses the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology on a *conceptual* level. However, as I will further show, there is another approach that can be taken to distinguish the two fields, namely, a historical approach. This approach I will call the "historical genesis view," and it emphasizes the historical lineage of feminist thinking that helped to make critical phenomenology as a field possible (as well as making room for the other influential critical approaches that shape the field of critical phenomenology). After specifying the interpretation that each of these views offers of the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology, I will argue that organizing the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology *historically* will allow us to provide a richer understanding of the relationship between both fields.

Let us first consider the taxonomical view. In the taxonomical view, critical phenomenology is positioned as the governing field, whereas feminist phenomenology is a subfield within it that contributes to it. This taxonomical distinction is expressed by Weiss, when she writes that "[d]rawing upon key insights from critical race theory, carceral studies, disability

studies, and queer theory, feminist phenomenologists continue to chart new ground *through their contributions to the emerging field of 'critical phenomenology.'*"[343] In this view, feminist phenomenologists are classified as a subgroup among other subgroups who are together contributing to the overall project of critical phenomenology. The field of feminist phenomenology, then, is a narrow segment of the field of critical phenomenology. The similarities across these two fields thus result from the fact that they are part of one general coalitional effort, which means that their common missions are actually one *shared* mission.

Yet on this view it remains unclear how *specifically feminist* contributions are distinguished from other contributions to the critical phenomenological project. Ferrari et al. note in their Editor's Introduction to the first issue of Puncta that the belonging-together of these two fields follows organically from the fact that they are mutually implicated in one another, such that "critical phenomenology understands that feminist phenomenology exists within broader structures of power that shape, condition, and determine experience. And all critical phenomenology is inherently—if not explicitly—feminist insofar as it attends to experiences of difference and differences in experience."[344] We might say, then, that on this view, the specific character of feminist contributions is not even relevant, for *all critical phenomenological contributions are feminist, and all feminist contributions are critical*.[345] The Editors support his view by citing a brief remark made by Bonnie Mann in an article of the same issue: "What Oksala

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[343] Weiss, "FeminisT Phenomenology," 64. Italics added.

[344] Ferrari et al., "Editor's Introduction: Reflections on the First Issue," 2.

[345] Al-Saji, "Feminist Phenomenology," 144. While Alia Al-Saji does not explicitly account for the relationship between feminist phenomenology and critical phenomenology, in a chapter that sets out to define feminist phenomenology she also notes that "bringing to light the critical, ethical and political possibilities of what I will call 'critical phenomenology'" serves to explain how phenomenology "*becomes feminist*" (144). Because Al-Saji does not make an account for the relationship between these two fields, I do not include her in the main body of my argument. However, Al-Saji appears here to imply a view similar to the one Weiss and the Puncta editors hold, namely, that insofar as feminist phenomenology is already critical, it can be called critical phenomenology.

calls post-phenomenology, what might be called critical phenomenology, what I would simply call feminist phenomenology, admits its own active, ethical motivations."[346] Even with this remark by Mann, which attests to the close tie between feminist and critical phenomenology, the taxonomic view struggles to properly acknowledge or cash out critical phenomenology's "indebtedness to feminist phenomenology and feminist phenomenologists."[347] For how precisely can we account for the contributions that feminists provided and continue to provide on this view, if there is no specifically feminist character to take note of? Moreover, I am not convinced that all critical phenomenology is *also simultaneously* feminist phenomenology, for there are critical phenomenological works that evidence little to no feminist character. Perhaps pessimistically, I cannot help but read the claim that all critical phenomenology is inherently feminist as idealistic.

A case in point can be found in the work of George Yancy. Although Yancy did not claim this name for himself, many have labeled Yancy a critical phenomenologist thanks to his groundbreaking work in what is now called critical phenomenology of race. To this end, his work on racial embodiment is frequently aligned politically and philosophically with feminist phenomenological work on racial embodiment. However, Yancy rarely cites women or feminists in his published work. He has also published a startlingly honest op-ed acknowledging his own personal and professional sexism, and the ways it has led him to fail women in general as well as the women in his personal life.[348] Yancy's figure and important work helps to bring out the problem with the taxonomical approach. Indeed, the taxonomical view that insists that *all* critical phenomenological work by nature is inherently feminist would have us call Yancy's important

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[346] Bonnie Mann, "The Difference of Feminist Philosophy: The Case of Shame," *Journal of Critical Phenomenology* 1, no. 1 (June 30, 2018): 57, https://doi.org/10.31608/PJCP.v1i1.4.
[347] Ferrari et al., "Editor's Introduction: Reflections on the First Issue," 1.
[348] George Yancy, "Opinion | #IAmSexist," *The New York Times*, October 24, 2018, sec. Opinion, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/24/opinion/men-sexism-me-too.html.

critical phenomenological work *feminist*, even though Yancy himself acknowledges his sexism and does not engage feminist philosophers in his works. This seems politically unjust, unfair to Yancy, and, quite simply, theoretically incorrect to my mind. While Yancy's work and feminist phenomenology share many values and goals, classifying all critical work as feminist obscures the weakness (sexism) that Yancy himself admits to and is working to resolve. In addition, eliding critical and feminist phenomenologies legitimizes the exclusion of feminist phenomenologists from published critical phenomenological work, even when that work is at least partially indebted to feminist labor, and when feminist phenomenologists continue to support and remain conversant with the critical work itself.

As such, it is my view that in order to understand the relationship between these fields in a way that does not simply collapse feminist contributions into critical contributions without regard for feminist labor, it is important to consider the history of each of these fields *alongside* the taxonomical view. Consider again, for a moment, how the *Puncta* editors interpreted the remark made by Mann in her chapter for their publication. The editors argue that Mann supports their view of the mutually implicating relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology. But Mann herself does not dedicate much space to this issue. Indeed, her remarks on the relationship between these two fields culminate in one sentence, and this sentence is merely a transitional point that conveys the difference between the spirit of phenomenology as a *practice* and the specific ethical and political manner by which feminist phenomenologists *enact* this practice. To recall, Mann writes, "What Oksala calls post-phenomenology, *what might be called critical phenomenology, what I would simply call feminist phenomenology*, admits its own active, ethical motivations."[349] The editors take this comment as evidence that feminist and critical phenomenology implicate one

[349] Mann, "The Difference of Feminist Philosophy," 57. Italics added.

another in the way they outline, namely, that based upon their shared project, feminist phenomenology infuses critical phenomenology. In this regard, I read them as aligning Mann's view with the taxonomic view that feminist phenomenology is an enactment of critical phenomenology. This may very well be Mann's view (the Editors are her students, after all, and may know her intentions or views beyond the publication).

However, upon my reading, a second, inverse interpretation of her sentence suggests itself for consideration: critical phenomenology may well be another word that designates what is (or what Mann thinks is) properly *feminist* phenomenology. Put otherwise, feminist phenomenology might be the name Mann prefers for the enterprise now called critical phenomenology. It is unclear to me which approach Mann would agree with, if either. But as I consider this interpretation of Mann's statement, I recall that feminist phenomenology as a field *preceded* critical phenomenology, and that feminist phenomenologists developed (at least one of) the critical departure(s) that have since consolidated into the set of methodological principles and practices that partially define the field of critical phenomenology. Put otherwise, it is my view that while *all feminist contributions are critical, not all critical phenomenological contributions are feminist*. Hence, while the Puncta editors use Mann's comments as evidence for what I have just named as the taxonomical view of the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology, I argue that Mann's comment instead calls for a *revaluation of feminist and critical phenomenology on historical terms* in line with the conditions and commitments that called forth feminist phenomenology's genesis. In what follows I examine the genesis and major touchstones in each of these fields to sketch out this historical portrait.

Feminist phenomenology is understood to have consolidated into a field during the 1980's and 1990's, thanks to the work of feminists like Iris Marion Young, Judith Butler, and Sandra

Bartky.[350] Their classic works—Young's essay "Throwing like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment" (1980), Butler's "Gendering the Body: Beauvoir's Philosophical Contribution" (1989) and *Gender Trouble* (1990), and Bartky's *Femininity and Domination: Studies in the Phenomenology of Oppression* (1990)—are foundational texts for the field. Each of these works explicitly appropriated and reworked core phenomenological concepts or the phenomenological method in order to reveal, beneath the so-called universal descriptions provided by canonical phenomenologists, how those descriptions functioned to obscure and effectively delegitimize women's experience. In so doing, feminist phenomenologists shifted both the *content* proper to phenomenological inquiry, as well as transforming the *method* and its *aims*. While the field consolidated in the 1980's and 1990's, feminist phenomenologists also harken back to Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) as *the* starting point of feminist phenomenology (although this label is assigned *post-facto*), for *The Second Sex* was the pivotal work that revealed the value of a situated, material, ethical phenomenology that explicitly addresses political injustice through the cultural production of embodied femininities.

Feminist phenomenology as a field continued to grow in prominence into the early 2000's. The field's growth is attested to by varying visible signs of its academic institutionalization.[351] Consider, as Silvia Stoller points out, the increasing number of major conferences dedicated to feminist phenomenology (e.g., a research symposium in 1994, an international workshop in 2000 in Vienna, and an international conference entitled "Future Directions in Feminist Phenomenology" at Western University, Canada, in 2013, among others). Major publications also serve as an important marker for the field's growth (e.g., Fisher and Embree 2000; Young 2005;

[350] Weiss, "FeminisT Phenomenology," 64; Silvia Stoller, "What Is Feminist Phenoenology? Looking Backward and Into the Future," in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Indiana University Press, 2017), 330, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005vm7.
[351] Stoller, "What Is Feminist Phenoenology? Looking Backward and Into the Future," 331.

Ahmed 2006; Alcoff 2006; Salamon 2010; Heinämaa and Rodemeyer 2010; Schües, Olkowski, and Fielding 2011; Olkowski and Fielding 2017, etc.,), as does the incorporation of feminist phenomenological texts into regular Women's Studies and Feminist Philosophy curriculum. Finally, the establishment of academic organizations are indicative of the field's growth (e.g., the Feminist Phenomenology Group, as well as the Society for Interdisciplinary Feminist Phenomenology).[352] While works in feminist phenomenology continue to be published, in more recent years scholars who identified as feminist phenomenologists now publish in critical phenomenology, and tend to call themselves critical phenomenologists. Let us thus examine the development of critical phenomenology as a field, then, to see more clearly the historical relationship between the two fields.

We can use the same markers to identify the emergence and institutionalization of the field of critical phenomenology. The first major publication to inaugurate what we now understand as critical phenomenology was Lisa Guenther's 2013 *Solitary Confinement: Social Death and its Afterlives*.[353] Since this publication, there has been a good deal of academic activity to bolster the new field. For example, *Puncta: Journal of Critical Phenomenology* was founded in 2018, and the 44th annual meeting of the Colleguium Phaenomenologicum was dedicated to critical phenomenology (2018). Important publications now include the anthology *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology* (2020) and a forthcoming introduction to the field entitled *Critical Phenomenology: An Introduction* (2023), as well as monographs and articles from critical

[352] Stoller, 331–32.

[353] Gayle Salamon points out that in 1987 Donn Welton and Hugh Silverman published *Critical and Dialectical Phenomenology*, which described the emergence of a 'dialectical and critical' phenomenology in the 1984 and 1985 annual Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) meetings. This description has little to do with what we now explicitly name critical phenomenology, beyond what Helen Ngo notes are "phenomenological engagements with the 'problem of politics.'" Salamon, "What's Critical about Critical Phenomenology?," 8–9; Helen Ngo, "Critical Phenomenology and the Banality of White Supremacy," *Philosophy Compass* 17, no. 2 (February 2022): 2, https://doi.org/10.1111/phc3.12796.

phenomenologists (e.g., Yancy 2008; Ngo 2017; Pitts 2018, etc.); we should note that these publications are all fairly recent.

The important takeaway here, to my mind, concerns the genesis of each of these fields. Feminist phenomenology *as a field* preceded critical phenomenology, and the labor of feminist phenomenologists helped to make possible the style of inquiry that characterizes critical phenomenology. By this, I am referencing the way feminist phenomenologists opened and legitimized new areas of inquiry for phenomenologists in general, and how they also transformed the method to support the ethical, social, and political projects that classical phenomenology, with its emphasis on universality, appeared to foreclose. Critical phenomenologists frequently explicitly or—more frequently, implicitly—build upon the labor of feminist phenomenologists, perhaps by adopting the spirit of their inquiry, and/or by following their call for situated and embodied description, and/or by adopting the methodological revisions that they developed.

To be sure, feminist phenomenologists are not the only forebearers to critical phenomenology, nor are they the only phenomenologists who are doing critical work. In terms of precursors, philosophers in critical philosophy of race (especially W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, James Baldwin), Black feminism (especially bell hooks, Angela Davis, and Kimberlé Crenshaw), Latinx philosophy and Latina feminism (especially Gloria Anzaldúa and Maria Lugones), and disability studies (especially Havi Carel, Linda Fisher, Rosemarie Garland Thomson, and Drew Leder) all profoundly shape the emerging field of critical phenomenology. For example, just as Beauvoir was reclaimed by feminists and labeled a feminist phenomenologist post-facto, Frantz Fanon has been reclaimed by critical phenomenologists—especially critical phenomenologists of race—as a precursor who practiced so-called critical phenomenology before it was named as such. At present, philosophers in these same fields are some of the most significant voices in critical

phenomenology proper (e.g., Lewis Gordon, George Yancy, Alia Al-Saji, Linda Martín Alcoff, Mariana Ortega, etc.)

My point here isn't to say that feminist phenomenology is the single origin of critical phenomenology (that would simply be untrue), but rather to argue that we need a framework that historically contextualizes the field of critical phenomenology. A conceptual framework that doesn't attend to the historical genesis of the fields of feminist and critical phenomenology is hard-pressed to properly credit the specifically feminist labor that influences the field, not to mention the labor proper to critical phenomenologists of race, phenomenologists of dis-ability, Latinx phenomenologists, and so forth. I am happy to agree that on a *conceptual* level, feminist phenomenology contributes to the critical phenomenological project by virtue of a shared mission. However, I think it is important that our understanding of critical phenomenology does not become so expansive that it consumes and regurgitates the labor of philosophers without regard to their different orientations, histories, ideological positions, values, or goals, beyond those of the critical phenomenological project. In short, then, the fact of these various influences within the field of critical phenomenology further attests to the importance of assuming a historical perspective on the relationship between the fields of feminist and critical phenomenology. A historical perspective allows us to situate the labor of all the forebearers of a field more clearly; doing so is crucial for acknowledging feminist labor *as* feminist labor, *as well as* recognizing the intellectual and political labor that pertains to the other movements that contribute to critical phenomenology.

While I have been critical of the taxonomic view for its tendency to obscure the specifically feminist character of feminist contributions to the critical phenomenological movement, I do not wish to entirely dismiss this approach. Rather, my goal in the preceding has been to demonstrate how this weakness can be ameliorated by also maintaining a historical view of the relationship

between the two fields. Keeping the historical view in sight does not mean that we cannot *also* have a conceptual understanding of the relationship of the two fields. It just specifies that the conceptual view must be historically attuned to the specificities of the relationship between the two fields. Maintaining a historical understanding of the two fields allows the labor of philosophers within each to be properly accounted for, as well as clarifying any differences that might exist between different critical approaches, as much as their common goal. In other words, a historical account helps recognize the specificity of experience that motivates different critical approaches, as well as their shared ground.

I began this section by arguing that a nuanced understanding of the two fields would allow me to clarify what it is that both promise (i.e., the promise of change) by showing that this promise is also a shared weakness between the fields. Thus, having contextualized what is perhaps overlooked in the lumping together of critical with feminist phenomenologies, it is now time to return to the main argument of this chapter. That is, how does the relationship between feminist and critical phenomenology, properly understood by the historical approach outlined above, allow us to better grasp their relative shortcomings vis a vis Stein's philosophy of personal becoming? Or, how does Stein's philosophy of personal becoming form a useful supplement to both approaches given the shared promise and weakness of feminist and critical phenomenology? In the following subsection, I will clarify the shared promise and weakness of feminist and critical phenomenology, to set up my argument for why Stein can address this problem.

The Shared Promise and Weakness of Feminist and Critical Phenomenology[354]

As I mentioned in the Introduction to the chapter and at the outset of this section, feminist and critical phenomenology share a common mission. Neither phenomenological project remains content to merely describe the world and the experience of the phenomenologist. Both, rather, seek to transform worlds and people. However, it is my view that this shared promise is also a shared weakness between the fields. In looking to *describe* and *transform*, these phenomenologies move between the *descriptive* and the *prescriptive*, or a description of oppressive experience to a prescription about what must change. What is not fully spelled out is precisely *how change can be effected at a personal level*. Thus, a gap emerges between the descriptive and the prescriptive, and this gap has become a weakness that hinders the realization of the transformative aim of these projects. To my mind, what is missing from these accounts is a reckoning with how individuals integrate and mobilize the changing social and political values that are required to affect social and political transformation. I develop this argument in the following subsections, following which I will propose a Steinian response to this problem. For, to my mind, Stein can deliver an account of personal becoming that elucidates how individuals motivate their own change in values in correspondence with changing values in our social and political landscapes.

We can start by giving a schematic account of how feminist and critical phenomenologies articulate the process of transformation vis-à-vis their phenomenological projects. Both take, as their starting point, descriptions of the oppressive historical social structures and contexts that have shaped experience and then show how these structures and conditions produce inequitable ways of being in the world.[355] For example, critical phenomenologists have provided rich descriptions

[354] A great deal of the following section has been previously published in an article I wrote for *Puncta*. Cf. Bath, "Edith Stein's Contribution to Critical Phenomenology."
[355] Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," 12.

of marginalized lived experience, particularly racialized experience, dis-abled experience, experiences of illness, gendered experience, and so forth. What is common across these accounts is the assumption that rich descriptions of oppressive experience provide means of enacting political change. These accounts aim to produce change, I argue, via three steps. I will thematize each of these steps in turn, before illustrating how they unfold through a reading of Alia Al-Saji's chapter, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing."[356]

The first step of feminist and critical phenomenologies is the use of the method of phenomenological description to illuminate the existence of oppressive structures and their effects upon us, our possibilities, and our relations. However, the way feminist and critical phenomenological description proceeds is often distinguished from the practice in other phenomenologies. For example, Husserl originally envisioned phenomenology as a 'pure' endeavor, concerned only with the objects of pure consciousness. Description, for him, followed from the *epoché*, or bracketing, which entailed the transcendental-phenomenological and eidetic reductions. Put otherwise, a proper phenomenological description avoids error by bracketing the existence of the world; it details instead a given mental act and its intentional content, without reference to the *existence* of the object of the intentional act. In this way, Husserl sought only to describe the essential features of a phenomenon without reference to either psychological genesis or causal explanation. However, other phenomenologists, or phenomenology-adjacent philosophers, such as Martin Heidegger, have argued that presuppositionless description is impossible, which means that all description is interpretation.[357] For others, including Maurice

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[356] Alia Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," in *Living Alterities: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and Race*, ed. Emily S. Lee (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2014), 133–72.

[357] Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time: A Revised Edition of the Stambaugh Translation.*, ed. Dennis J. Schmidt, trans. Joan Stambaugh, SUNY Series in Contemporary Continental Philosophy (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2010), 35.

Merleau-Ponty, who famously insisted on the impossibility of a complete reduction, the various steps of the *epoché* were foregone or modified.[358] Along these lines, feminist and critical phenomenologists understand description as a situated and interpretive endeavor that modifies or altogether discards the *epoché*.[359] Rather than bracketing the existence of the world, feminist and critical phenomenological description begins fully embedded in the world, starting with our *positionality*, or the way differences in social position and power shape our identities and experiences. It goes on to attend both to topics that were hitherto under- or un-examined in classical phenomenology (including gender, race, disability, sexuality, and so forth) and the larger social and historical contexts that produce experience and subjectivities.

The second step of feminist and critical phenomenologies is the denaturalization of oppressive historical structures that "privilege, naturalize, and normalize certain experiences of the world while marginalizing, pathologizing, and discrediting others."[360] The description itself increases awareness of the conditions that produce marginalized and oppressive experiences and subjectivities. It does so by bringing to light what has otherwise remained invisible or unspoken, in daily life and in other phenomenological accounts. It also shows how the phenomena and the conditions of everyday life that may otherwise appear 'natural' are instead historically habituated configurations. In this regard, feminist and critical phenomenologists are committed to a style of phenomenology that rigorously exposes the actual realities of our lives. In so doing, these phenomenologists undermine the apparent givenness of reality by showcasing instead the social, cultural, political, and historical conditions that produce it. Ultimately, the goal of describing

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[358] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2012), xxvii.
[359] As Johanna Oksala nicely demonstrates, the extent to which feminist and critical phenomenologists reject the *epoché* varies widely. Oksala herself argues for a critical phenomenology that appropriates and reworks the *epoché*, rather than rejecting it altogether. Cf. Oksala, "The Method of Critical Phenomenology," 2–7.
[360] Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," 15.

experience in this way is to show how our subjective experiences "are constituted as meaningful in constantly changing political, historical, and cultural practices."[361]

The third step of feminist and critical phenomenologies concerns the development of corrective strategies in response to what was uncovered through description. In this way, feminist and critical phenomenologists again go beyond Husserl's aims. No longer is mere description sufficient. Instead, descriptions of our larger social and historical contexts are deployed in order to enact political change.[362] The goal here is to produce new possibilities of action and experience. These different possibilities of action and experience culminate in less oppressive ways of being in the world in general. By offering corrective strategies aimed at producing positive social and cultural change, feminist and critical phenomenologists seek to bring about change in persons, institutions, cultural conditions, and in the world in general. The deployment of the phenomenological method for producing change is what I ultimately see as the shared promise and weakness of feminist and critical phenomenologies.

To see why the transformative aim of feminist and critical phenomenologies is the promise and weakness of both methods, it is helpful to illustrate these three steps through a reading of Alia Al-Saji's chapter "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing." Let us begin by seeing how Al-Saji handles the first step of the feminist and critical phenomenological approach, namely, the illumination of oppressive structures through phenomenological description. She begins with a series of powerful anecdotes of racism, each of which are taken to show how racism operates at a bodily level, specifically through perception and affect. In the third anecdote, she shares that when she met her partner, he was a teacher in France

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[361] Oksala, "The Method of Critical Phenomenology," 6.

[362] Helen Fielding, "A Feminist Phenomenology Manifesto," in *Feminist Phenomenology Futures*, ed. Helen A. Fielding and Dorothea E. Olkowski (Indiana University Press, 2017), xvii, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt2005vm7.

at a school with a high proportion of students of North African descent. It is helpful to reproduce the description of their experience in full here:

> When I first met my partner in 1996, he was an elementary school teacher working in a socially disadvantaged school in the south of France (a school with a visible proportion of students of North African descent). The debate around headscarves in schools was already very much alive in France, and at that time and for several years after, I would attempt to convince him, through all the arguments and analyses at my disposal, that the widespread reaction to veiling in France was misconceived. As a good public servant and citizen, he was committed to the principle of *laïcité* (the French version of secularism) in the public school system. What this means, for him and for many other friends and colleagues in France, was that veiling could not have a place in schools. As someone whose immediate family includes both women who wear the hijab and unveiled women, and where veiled women have attained a high level of educational and professional achievement (as engineers and lawyers), I saw the French reaction to veiling as eliding the reality and multiplicity of Muslim women's experiences. My arguments, however, did not seem to work on my partner, so we left it at that. Several years later, having moved to Montreal, the question of veiling arose again in the context of the debate that led up to the 2004 French law. In the meantime, my mother and grandmother (who both wear the hijab) had been very much a part of our everyday lives. At this juncture, it became apparent that my partner was not only critical of the proposed law but had revised his reaction so thoroughly that his previous attitude seemed alien to him. Instead of owing to my persuasive abilities, it was the transformed affective tissue of collective living that seems to have shifted my partner's perceptions. Women wearing the hijab, and the modalities of interaction that such veiling dictated, were now, to him, part of intersubjective life. New habits of seeing had emerged: veiling was no longer perceived as a homogeneous object (hiding subjects from view); rather, differentiations in ways of veiling and interacting were seen as adumbrations of individuated and concrete subjects who commanded singular and contextual responses.[363]

At the time that Al-Saji met her partner, debates about veiling in public schools in France was at its height. Because he supported the French vision of secularism in the public school system, he disagreed with veiling in French schools. However, Al-Saji, based upon her own experience with family members and other women who veil, saw the general French response to veiling as "eliding the reality and multiplicity of Muslim women's experiences."[364] Attempts to convince her partner to reconsider his position via arguments were unsuccessful, but many years later, after Al-Saji's

[363] Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," 135.
[364] Al-Saji, 135.

veiled family members had become central figures in the couple's life, the question of veiling arose again in a new geographical and cultural context. She was surprised to see that her partner had become highly critical of the proposed law banning veiling in Montreal schools. This change of perspective she understood as a change that had originated in their affective life, an affective shift that had transformed his perceptual practices. As a result, he no longer saw veiling in a homogenous way, and these new habits of seeing allowed him to differently perceive veiled Muslim women.

To understand what had changed for her partner, Al-Saji deepens her phenomenological description of racism by drawing on the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Frantz Fanon, Linda Martín Alcoff, and Iris Marion Young. By syncretizing elements of these varying accounts, Al-Saji finds a way of illustrating the prereflective, perceptual, and affective dimension of racism. She determines that racializing affect is a rigidity and numbness that projects a closed temporality onto racialized bodies. In doing so, it "short-circuits the work of responsivity and self-critical engagement that comes with sustained coexistence with others."[365] Racializing perception, in turn, is a learned form of perceiving that becomes habituated, and which represents and objectifies racialized bodies by reducing them down to socially-coded visible markers. In this regard, racializing perception closes the organic *receptivity* and *openness* of vision.[366] The result of these prereflective operations is that racism becomes invisible and deeply recalcitrant. It cannot be changed by cognitive intervention alone because it operates beneath the level of cognition. Rather, because racism is perceptual and affective, "it is within perception and affectivity that I believe critical antiracist practice must find its tool," writes Al-Saji.[367]

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[365] Al-Saji, 142.
[366] Al-Saji, 139–40.
[367] Al-Saji, 142.

We can see from this example that Al-Saji's description of racism illustrates how racism operates prereflectively, through perception and affect. Thus, Al-Saji's description illustrates the existence and operation of prereflective racism, which means that it fulfils the first step of feminist and critical phenomenological intervention. How does this analysis illustrate the second step, which is to denaturalize oppressive historical structures?

For Al-Saji, the second step of denaturalization is accomplished by the very act of illustrating how racism operates perceptually and affectively. By illustrating the prereflective, perceptual, and affective dimension of racism, Al-Saji herself increases awareness about how we come to see race (or 'not see' race, in the case of the color blind). Her essay helps draw our attention to our own instances of perceptual and affective racism, or to instances where others express perceptual and affective racism. (Consider Yancy's famous examples of hearing white people secure themselves from black persons through the "click" of a car lock, or witnessing white people's nervous gestures and their eyes "that want to look but are hesitant to do so."[368]) Finally, by citing numerous works in critical philosophy and phenomenology of race, Al-Saji herself helps to denaturalize how racism is part of the structure of perception, and thus needs to be attended to phenomenologically as well as conceptually.

Al-Saji also fulfils the third step of feminist and critical phenomenological intervention, which is the step that actively tries to create change. Al-Saji prescribes *hesitation* as an embodied response to address the prereflective nature of perceptual and affective racism. Because the tacit perceptual practices that sustain racialized affect and perception become habitual, the process of racializing others proceeds very rapidly. Racializing perception, for example, occurs faster than

[368] George Yancy, *Black Bodies, White Gazes*, 2nd ed. (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), xxxiii–xxxiv. To be clear, the kind of hesitation Yancy describes in reference to the fearful white racist is not the critical, anti-racist kind of hesitation that Al-Saji recommends. Rather, this is the hesitation that is motivated from racializing perception and affect.

thought, which means that critical anti-racist intervention needs to occur at the level of perception itself. Hesitating becomes a way to slow down our perception in order to make it responsive to what it encounters and to open up a space for critically assessing its features.[369] Interrupting racializing perception and affect thus forestalls the repetitious, habitual, normalized overdetermination that defines prereflective racism. It allows us to denaturalize racializing affect by revealing the conditions that make it possible (our "social-historical horizon, positionalities, and attachments") and reduce the intensity of our immediate, habitual tendencies. In these regards, Al-Saji's concept of hesitation thus fulfils the third step of feminist and critical phenomenological projects, insofar as it is a strategic response that produces new possibilities for action and experience, and thus aims at creating a transformed person (if not a transformed world in line with the vision that motivates anti-racist practice).

Through this engagement with Al-Saji's chapter, we have seen how feminist and critical phenomenologists seek to realize the transformative promise of their phenomenological project. In response to her description of racializing perception and affect, a description which brought to light how racism operates prereflectively and thereby denaturalized the condition of invisibility which otherwise enabled racializing perception and affect to continue unchecked, Al-Saji proposed hesitation as a strategic response and as a form of critical anti-racist practice. She recognizes that hesitation is not sufficient for overcoming racializing habit, but she sees it as a necessary anti-racist strategy that may be deployed alongside other strategies.[370]

I am confident that many a thoughtful and sympathetic reader would be moved by Al-Saji's chapter. Indeed, it is not difficult to imagine that this *type of person* could, simply from the reading

[369] Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," 147.
[370] Al-Saji, 149.

of the work, feel motivated to test out her suggestion of hesitation to see how it well it serves as a concrete strategy for achieving the goal that Lisa Guenther attributes to critical phenomenological work, namely, "dismantling oppressive structures and creating or amplifying different, less oppressive, and more liberatory ways of Being-in-the-world."[371]

But what of the *non-sympathetic reader*? How do you get them on board? Or what of the person experiencing akrasia, who is disposed to act in ways contrary to what they consider best, who knows they should act differently but they don't? How do you convince these people to begin hesitating? Is it even a matter of *convincing* them to hesitate, if, as Al-Saji already pointed out, these kinds of value and orientation changes are facilitated by changes in the affective fabric of our lives, rather than our cognitive life? Furthermore, how do you motivate these individuals to attend to what their acts of hesitation reveal about themselves, their actions, their values, their motivations, their social-political horizons, and their worlds, if those revelations might involve an upheaval in their settled sense of themselves and their worlds?

Thus, these odd bedfellows, namely, the sympathetic, non-sympathetic, and akratic types of people, together raise, to my mind, a problem common to both feminist and critical phenomenology. In short, *what motivates someone to change in the ways prescribed by feminist and critical phenomenological works, if simply reading these works is not (always) sufficient?* Indeed, if feminist and critical phenomenology both assume that we can make changes to our established practices, even at the level of the structure of experience and the form of subjectivity itself, then what makes it possible for us to decide that we might want to live differently in the first place? What changes must take place within us to motivate us to try and live differently, and what must we do to follow through with our desire for change?

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[371] Guenther, "Critical Phenomenology," 16.

It is here that I think a Steinian intervention is helpful. Stein's account of personal becoming showcases how each of us, fundamentally, manifests our "developmental character" throughout our lives by the ways we become ourselves. Stein explains how we become ourselves through a rich understanding of motivation, which describes not only how each person is shaped by the values they hold, but also how their values shape how they experience their reality. From Stein, we discover that we are the values we hold, insofar as our values motivate our feelings, actions, and desires, and thus compose our personal characteristics. The question, then, of how we can be motivated to change, if not simply by reading feminist and critical works, becomes under a Steinian framework a question regarding *how we can instill the values that promote openness towards others, and, indeed, openness towards the values embodied in feminist and critical phenomenologies, and thus motivate individuals to develop themselves according to those values*. And part of the answer for these questions involves discerning *what type of person* embodies these values, so that we can self-form—or form others—to embody those typical values.

In the following section, I will spell out at length how a Steinian account of personal becoming can provide an answer to the question of how we can decide to live differently, such that we can realize the transformative potential promised by feminist and critical phenomenologists. In my view, Stein helps us to formulate an initial response to the problem of how we as persons can be motivated to change.

A Steinian Intervention in Feminist and Critical Phenomenology

As I have already explicated Stein's account of personal becoming throughout the first three chapters of this dissertation, in this section I will not reiterate her positions. Rather, this section *exemplifies* how a Steinian intervention can contribute to feminist and critical phenomenological projects. Here I argue that each of the three steps of feminist and critical phenomenology (i.e.,

description, denaturalization, and prescription) bears a weakness that Stein's philosophy reveals and can resolve. As regards the first step, an explicit account of *values* has been lacking from feminist and critical phenomenological descriptions thus far. This is a problem because, as Stein reveals, our values motivate how we as individuals experience reality. Thus, it is important that we clarify *why change can be valuable*. As regards the second step, to properly account for how we can denaturalize our habits, we need a robust understanding of how we can be *motivated* to change based upon our values. Without this robust understanding of motivation and values, we can't fully actualize the promise of transformation embodied in the third step, that is, our prescriptions for change. Indeed, if the strategies developed by feminist and critical phenomenologists are to enact change, they cannot do so in an abstract way. Strategic intervention is truly only helpful when concretely applied. Thankfully, Stein also gives us a way to resolve this weakness: by articulating *motivated change as a change in our value systems*, through Stein's account of personal becoming we can provide a reflexive and individuated account for how we as persons can both become the *type* of people who will change in relation to changing social and political values, and how we as feminist and critical phenomenologists can differentially apply social and political values to diverse types of people.

I will advance this argument in three subsections. In the first subsection, I return to Al-Saji's anecdotal description of her partner's changed position regarding the subject of veiling in public schools. Here I show how values are implied but largely invisible elements in Al-Saji's description. To exemplify this claim, I consider both the implied affective values Al-Saji's partner holds, as well as some of the cultural values that may have informed his personal values, and, thus, influenced his change in position regarding veiling. In the second subsection, I show that an account of motivation is required to explain how Al-Saji's partner's changing values could be

mobilized to change his perceptions. What I show is that *motivational change* underwrites the possibility of denaturalizing our perceptual and affective habits. In the third and final subsection, I crystallize motivations into types, to show how the strategies outlined by feminist and critical phenomenologists only work when concretely applied to types of people. What Stein ultimately provides, then, that feminist and critical phenomenology both need, is a robust account of personal becoming vis-à-vis the processes of formation and self-formation, an account that can attend in nuanced ways to how we are *shaped* by our world and how we *shape ourselves* in response to that world.

Rendering Values Visible: A Return to Al-Saji's Description

To show that values are an invisible yet implied element in feminist and critical phenomenological description, it is useful to return to Al-Saji's description of her partner's affective and perceptual changes regarding veiling. Having rehearsed Al-Saji's account of racializing perception and affect in the last section, we may now further unpack the transformation her partner underwent with regard to veiling with that argument in mind. The goal of this analysis is, ultimately, to elucidate the multiple layers of valuing that *motivated* either his initial perception or his changed perception. There are multiple levels of valuing at play in Al-Saji's description. The values that are operating in this description can be articulated across two different scenes: first, a detailed *evaluation* of the initial position that he held, and the value system which motivated that position; second, an account of the *revaluation* which led to the explicit change in his values, and the changing contexts that motivated these new values. In the first scene, there is the initial context of French secularism (*laïcité*) as an ethical value seemingly concomitant with French national identity, which motivated Al-Saji's partner's view that veils have no place in public schools. In the second, his later support for the wearing of veils in schools is tied to his changing affective values. But before we can

elucidate the various layers of valuation in this description, it is useful to briefly recall Stein's concept of values.

Stein understands values as objective qualities that we truly experience through feeling, but which do not exist independently of the I. Values are objective insofar as they are real qualities that *correspond to* real objects, but they also are subjective insofar as they reflect not an objective *property* of the object in question, but rather, *the meaning we make of it*. Values thus reveal what an object means to us personally through the feelings we have about that object. This means that the value responses we experience in relation to the world via acts of feeling are *just reflections of the values we bring to our experiences*. Thus, Al-Saji's partner's initial position involved his homogenous perception of veiling as an expression of patriarchal oppression proper to Islam that had no place in the French public. But according to Al-Saji, underwriting this position was a commitment to the French value of *laïcité* that formatively shaped his perception of veiling. As she indicates, this commitment produced in him the form of racializing perception endemic to France. As she writes, "the racializing map, which subtends secular French space, means that veiling is overdetermined as a conspicuous sign incompatible with that space, not only because it is religious (crosses, after all, are allowed), but because it is seen as invariantly oppressive to women."[372] While Al-Saji presents the French commitment to the value of *laïcité* monolithically, in reality the meaning of this value is contested within France. To understand the power of the French value of *laïcité* for her partner, it is important to clarify first the cultural and ethical value of *laïcité*, and second, its role in current debates concerning Muslim immigration to France and their assimilation into French society.

[372] Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," 160.

Laïcité is a French cultural and ethical value that can be translated in English as secularism. This value was developed through the French Republican struggle against the Catholic Church. It was codified in law in 1905, when the separation of Church and State was legislated. *Laïcité* in this legal context has two meanings. First, religion has no place in the public sphere, including in governance and education. Second, that religious life and expression is a private issue. Thus, while *laïcité* is distinctly "*not* about the protection of religions from state interference," by maintaining state secularism, *laïcité* is protective of private religious practice.[373]

Whereas *laïcité* originated in a context to segment the tenets of France's dominant religious institutions from the fabric of public life, today, by contrast, *laïcité* is most commonly invoked in debates concerning Muslim immigration to France and their assimilation into French society. For example, two laws have been developed that supposedly seek to preserve the French value of *laïcité* in response to the presence of veiled women in the French public: in 2004 conspicuous religious symbols were banned from state schools, and in 2010 full face-coverings were banned from public places. (These are the laws Al-Saji has in mind when she says that crosses were not banned as religious symbols. Strictly speaking, this is incorrect, as large crosses were banned, along with other visible religious markers, including Islamic hijabs, Jewish kippahs, Sikh turbans, etc.) Al-Saji's partner, like 78% of teachers in France in 2004, supported the legal prohibition on veiling in French schools.[374]

However, it is unclear whether these laws, mobilized as they are in response to the appearance of new *minoritized religious groups*, successfully uphold *laïcité* as a cultural and

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[373] Raphael Cohen-Almagor, "Indivisibilité, Sécurité, Laïcité: The French Ban on the Burqa and the Niqab," *French Politics* 20, no. 1 (March 2022): 8, https://doi.org/10.1057/s41253-021-00164-8.

[374] "Laic.Info: Le Site d'information Sur La Laicite," August 16, 2004, https://web.archive.org/web/20040816102546/http://www.laic.info/Members/webmestre/Revue_de_presse.2004-02-04.2241/view.

ethical value. In this regard, there are two main positions which capture the tension in the interpretation of the value of French *laïcité* with regard to the topic of veiling. For some, laws prohibiting conspicuous religious symbols betray *laïcité* by weaponizing its restrictive function. This is to say that these laws are seen to fail to protect one's right to religious expression as private citizens and residents of France. For others, the ban on religious symbols in public simply affirms *laïcité* by re-affirming French national identity (i.e., by affirming that religion has no place in the French public sphere). From the description provided, Al-Saji's partner, a "good public servant and citizen … committed to the principle of *laïcité*… in the public school system," held the second understanding of *laïcité* in relation to veiling. That is, he saw veiling as bad in schools when it concerns students because it was oppressive to women, and because this form of religious oppression had no place in the French public sphere or as an expression of French national identity. No amount of argumentation could change this perception because the underlying values that affirmed it were not displaced (i.e., argumentation did not change his commitment to *laïcité*, thus he continued to believe that religion had no place in the public sphere). And yet, as Al-Saji recounts, his position did change. The question, then, is how this change came about.

Al-Saji attributes his change in perspective to affective changes in context. To be more specific, she notes that the close and regular relationship between the two of them and her veiled mother and grandmother had provided opportunities for him to discover the different adumbrations of veiled subjectivity beyond the stereotypical trope of the oppressed Muslim woman. I think Stein would agree that affectivity is key here. However, Al-Saji's assessment doesn't explain *how* relationships with her family changed his perspective on veiling. For he surely encountered students and possibly colleagues or neighbors who veiled, and the way they negotiated veiling did

not previously change his perception. What made the difference at this later point in time?[375] Here, again, Stein is helpful, because Stein goes further than Al-Saji in explaining the origin of affective changes. For Stein, changes in one's affective life are truly *changes in one's values*, for values provide the *content* of our affectivity, and, in turn, shape the *structures* of our experience, including our perception.

My claim is that insofar as affective changes are actually changes in values, examining values gets to the root of why his relationships with her family made a difference. Regular, open, caring relationships (rather than institutionalized, civil-servant directed ones) afforded the opportunity to revalue his own values. While the details of how this worked out for him are unknown to us, perhaps the closeness of these relationships allowed a positive valuation of family to be more deeply rooted in his person than the value of *laïcité*. (Remember that Stein claims that our values are rooted within us, and that the deeper a value is rooted, the more central it is to us, and the more formative it is for us.) If family was more deeply rooted than *laïcité*, then the personal relationships he had with them would have resonated more deeply, and thus, been more formative for his value system. This interpretation is actually in line with Al-Saji's remarks that close, genuine being-together is necessary for change, especially for the kind of affective and perceptual change that anti-racist praxis demands; however, what it adds to this is precisely the power of *values* to motivate change.

Indeed, we can confirm that his change in perspective was a change in values because of how he responded to the surfacing of debates surrounding veiling in public schools in a new context. After the couple moved to Quebec, Canada, they encountered the Quebecois iteration of

[375] Al-Saji would further emphasize here the role of time in shifting one's affective commitments, which I also agree with, and think Stein would concede. However, the point of my inquiry is to isolate how our feelings are already expressions of our values, and so this affective change over time is a change in *values*.

the otherwise familiar debate regarding veiling in public spaces and public schools.[376] When this occurred, he found that his views had so changed that "his previous attitude seemed alien to him." What I take this to convey is not simply that his mind had changed, but that something deeper in him had changed. Al-Saji would indicate that this 'something deeper' is denoted as perceptual and affective structures, but Stein would say that those kind of changes are ultimately value changes. And values reflect *who we are as persons*; the values we hold *constitute our personalities*, as well as our actions, our desires, our choices, and so forth. In other words, to say his previous attitude seemed alien to him is to say that *he didn't see himself in his previous opinion*, because the values that *now* define him as a person, at this later date, *are values that are alien to the person he once had been but was no longer.*

Rereading Al-Saji's description from a Steinian perspective thus allows us to see how values were always implicit in the description. They operated at an invisible level to shape her partner's experience of his changing position about veiling in schools. Recognizing that values are implicit and invisible elements of phenomenological descriptions such as these invites us to consider further how the influence the rest of the feminist and critical phenomenological project. For example, how can we understand the process of denaturalizing habits and oppressive structures once we explicitly recognize the role of values in this process? In the following section, I will answer this question by showing how Stein's account of motivation situates how values shape us, our perceptions, our desires, and our actions. Accounting for how motivation mobilizes values shows that committing to the work of denaturalization requires us to be properly *motivated*.

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[376] It is important to note that France and Quebec are very different, and that these debates, while superficially similar, turn on very different values, ideals, and norms. For instance, while in France the veil is perceived to challenge secularism or *laïcité*, in Quebec, the existence of the veil is taken by some to challenge the Quebecois vision of *interculturalism*, which is the specific vision of immigration integration developed in Quebec during the 1980's in response to the Canadian federal government's model of multiculturalism.

Motivating Change: Denaturalizing Oppressive Historical Structures

Denaturalization is the second step that I identified in feminist and critical phenomenological projects. Denaturalization involves a shift from simply accepting the inherited hegemonic configuration of the world to viewing that configuration as historically habituated. As Al-Saji's description of her partner's experience details, she attempted to denaturalize his habituated racialized response to veiling through sustained discussion on the topic of veiling. However, these attempts failed. What, by contrast, did eventually make a difference were affective changes in his life. We now recognize these affective changes as *value changes*. These value changes were so significant that not only did his perception of veiling change, but now his previous view seemed alien to him. This transformation suggests that the original values were thoroughly denaturalized.

While Al-Saji depicts the denaturalization process very well, her account does not explain how her partner's denaturalization came about. However, drawing from Stein, we can show that because his values changed, the way he was *motivated* by his values changed. Values underwrite denaturalization because they function as *motives.* Motivation, as we saw in chapter one, denotes the temporal connection between our acts of consciousness. It is "the connection that acts get into with one another: not a mere blending… or the associative tying together of experience… but an emerging of the one out of the other, a self fulfilling or being fulfilled of the one on the basis of the other for the sake of the other."[377] The flow of our experience is established by motivation. This means that *motives*, as "direction-giving factors that determine how psychic occurrence runs," shape the flow by establishing the structure of motivation specific to each individual.[378] Values are motives in this way: they are *felt* motives that *motivate affective attitudes, desires, wills, and*

[377] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:40–41.
[378] Stein, 7:116.

action. This means that the way we see the world is quite literally shaped by the values we hold, for our values, as motives that shape our sense-making processes, lead us to interpret the world *as we are motivated*. We see the world according to our values, and the world reflects those values back to us in the sense we discover in what we see.

So, if I am a teacher walking into a classroom in the south of France at the height of the debates about veiling, *the way I perceive the veil itself is motivated by the values I hold*. And if those values include the value of *laïcité*, which is interpreted as French secularism, and expressed through the comportment apparently proper to French national identity, then I am *motivated* to see veiled students in *stereotypical* ways, i.e., as the "oppressed Muslim woman" type. The world proceeds to confirm this expectation in various ways (perhaps my colleagues also perceive the veil and veiled students along these lines, which confirms my perceptions and feelings, and, beneath that, my values). Because *motivation as a system is mobilized by my values* to make sense of objects of consciousness, to change how I perceive those objects, including dehabituating those perceptions and rendering them unnatural, I need to be differently motivated, which requires different values. In other words, to get beyond the stereotypical perception of veiled Muslim women, I need a different set of values, which will motivate me to see veiled Muslim women in different ways.

Recognizing values as motives helps us to better understand how we can denaturalize oppressive structures and habits. *The process of denaturalization requires us to make the invisible values that motivate racializing perception visible* so that we can work on them. Having brought our problematic values to light, we then have to make them unnatural. This involves drawing out their historically arbitrary nature and demonstrating their thoroughly social and cultural character.

Doing so effectively reveals how they motivate us to perceive in certain, disvalued ways, perhaps by showing how they belong to a particular value context that we do not want to find valuable.

This brings us, finally, to Al-Saji's now famous solution to the problem of prereflective, perceptual, affective racism: hesitation. The work of hesitation aims to critically expose and denaturalize our racializing perceptions, but as currently outlined, this work tries to accomplish this goal without recognizing the role values play in the work itself. Accordingly, it is important to now consider the role both values and motivation play in making hesitation work as a strategy. In the next subsection, I will show how we can mobilize feminist and critical phenomenological prescriptions for change (of which hesitation is an example) by concretizing values and motivations through an account of types. Typification, perhaps ironically, will allow us to concretize our prescriptions for change from generalizing strategies into prescriptions that address individuals on the level of their specific yet typical values and motivations.

Typifying Hesitation: Motivating Changes in Social and Political Values

The third step of feminist and critical phenomenological projects is prescription, which involves developing strategic responses to what the phenomenological description has uncovered. Prescriptions attempt to remedy a world of its issues and does so by providing an ideal and occasionally utopian image of this process. It thus encourages the development of new possibilities of action and new ways of being in the world, with the understanding that these new ways of being will bring about the transformed world. However, the suggestions offered by feminist and critical phenomenology frequently lack the specificity that helps readers tailor the suggestion to their specific situation and as regards their specific positionality. In this regard, prescriptions are often general and generalizing. For example, one may read Al-Saji's suggestion of hesitation as a mere recommendation to "just hesitate!" This reading unfortunately overlooks the nuance required to

see how persons of different positionalities would *need to hesitate differently*, and that *not all hesitation is politically emancipatory*. In this regard, prescriptions often do not go far enough, and are not specific enough. For this reason, to my mind, fully realizing the transformative potential of these phenomenological projects requires more than simply outlining new strategies. To demonstrate this claim, I will now illustrate how the strategy of hesitation both can and ought to be more concretely specified if it is to be widely applicable. I will consider how the three *types* of readers mentioned above (the sympathetic, the unsympathetic, and the akratic reader) might respond to Al-Saji's suggestion. Ultimately, I show that implementing hesitation successfully as a strategy involves convincing people that the values this practice implies are *valuable*. This is better accomplished if our strategies account not only for how people can become *the type of person who will change* in relation to changing social and political values, but also *how social and political values can be differentially applied to diverse types of people*.

Before turning to hesitation proper, it is important to clarify why I think Stein's account of typification is a helpful tool for specifying and concretizing feminist and critical phenomenological prescriptions. The claim that we can get more specificity through a concept of *types* will seem counter-intuitive and perhaps ironic. For of course the concept of typification, which involves processes of grouping together general traits or qualities on the basis of similarity, seems to be a *generalizing* move, not a *specifying* one. Why, then, can typification help to resolve generalizing tendencies in feminist and critical phenomenological prescription?

Stein sees typification as a function of our perception that organically occurs based upon how we process diverse information. Our acts of perception recall previous similar acts, and we synthesize across our history of perception in order to constitute types on the basis of similarity of characteristics. Types can be rooted in the composition of the individual personality of a given

person, or in the context of their situation, or according to certain social and cultural group categories.[379] This means that while each person is unique, each also exhibits traits that are typical to them, typical to their context, and typical to certain social and cultural group categories. The *way* we typify is surely also a reflection of our motivational systems, and thus, our values. Indeed, there is always the possibility that typification can lead to generalizing *stereotypes* rather than specifying types. In this regard the *stereotype* of the oppressed veiled Muslim woman is a reflection of our values and motivations, more so than her own being. And so, *stereotyping* is the result of a particular kind of typification, where one, having incorrectly developed a fixed system of personal and cultural types, then inflexibly applies this fixed system to their interpersonal encounters. The result of stereotyping is the reduction of unique persons to typical characteristics, and the assumption that those typical characteristics are naturally given facts of their person.

But typification itself need not go in this direction. Indeed, Stein herself already warns about this danger, writing that "in order to be fair to [people] as individuals, [one] must guard [oneself] against classifying them schematically in a fixed system of types."[380] By contrast, a richer view of the function of typification helps to *specify* what is typical *to* individuals. We can move from general to highly specific categories via typification: for example, what is typical to a person due to their membership in the human species, what is typical to a person due to their nationality, due to their culture, due to the work identity, due to their positionality, due to their personal identity, and due to them as a unique individual, i.e., their style. In fact, I think a good deal of feminist and critical philosophy already employs a concept of type, as we see in the type of "the white feminist." The point here, then, is that our relatively general strategies can be typified based

[379] Stein, 7:256.
[380] Stein, *Essays on Woman*, 2:187.

upon the *type of person we want to produce through the strategic response*, and, *the type of person that the reader already is*.

Now that we have justified the use of type as a way to specify the application of feminist and critical prescriptions, we can elucidate how hesitation as a strategy can afford further specification through the process of typification. To begin, hesitation is already associated with a set of values that may or may not be reflected in the reader of Al-Saji's essay. For example, to carry out the kind of hesitation Al-Saji prescribes, one would ideally already valorize openness to difference, responsiveness to others, care for others, a willingness to change for others, or, simply put, the value of *others* as worthy of our consideration. But what of types of people for whom others are not a concrete value? (Consider, for example, the kind of North American person who sponsors a child in a third world country while simultaneously claiming that the Indigenous people who live a few streets away and who are protesting to protect their land from pipelines "need education and need to come together to move this country forward." For this person, perhaps others are an abstract and not concrete value.) We can consider how different readers might respond to the suggestion of hesitation by illustrating three different potential value-positions people might take in response to Al-Saji's argument, embodied by three types of reader: the sympathetic reader, the unsympathetic reader, and the akratic reader. To clearly articulate the experiences these three types of readers might have in relation to Al-Saji's text it is helpful to bring them together in a list:

1) The sympathetic reader: Perhaps the sympathetic reader recognizes themselves in Al-Saji's descriptions of her partner's initial one-dimensional perceptions of veiling. They are convinced by Al-Saji's description and prescription. They tell themselves they will begin to hesitate when they encounter difference (perhaps specifically the difference embodied in the veil, which now begins to signify a range of possible meanings, beyond the typical 'oppressed woman' trope). In an ideal case, based upon Al-Saji's account, the sympathetic reader who begins practicing hesitation learns to catch themselves in the act of drawing habitual racist conclusions, or applying common, racist stereotypes to Muslim women who veil. If this happens, they are now able to interrogate themselves

and their own perceptual practices, and, further, begin to make changes in their own lives that support more compassionate forms of co-existing with different others.

2) The unsympathetic reader: Perhaps the unsympathetic reader is not convinced by the account of racializing perception and affect offered by Al-Saji. Or perhaps they find the suggestion of hesitation to be insufficient. Maybe they test out hesitation as a solution and find it wanting, or maybe they dismiss it altogether. Whatever variation they assume on this theme, the result is that they are not satisfied with Al-Saji's account and do not agree with either the description or the prescription she offers of racialization.

3) The akratic reader: The strongest position would be to assume that the akratic reader is a sympathetic reader who buys into Al-Saji's argument and her proposal for hesitation. They agree with the description and support the prescription. They acknowledge hesitation to be a solution that can help bring about the best state of affairs for themselves and others, yet they just can't bring themselves to actually start hesitating in any significant, sustained way. And unfortunately for them, as Al-Saji notes, "*time makes a difference,*" which is to say that hesitation must be practiced in a sustained way in order for one's perceptual and affective maps to be redrawn.[381] Thus, this reader is deadlocked: wanting a different future, seeing that future as their best option, they are unable to make the change that would bring that future about.

While critical and feminist phenomenologies may take suspicion to or rejection of their prescriptions as a failure in individuals to grasp what is at stake (i.e., no argument can convince them of the necessity), or a simple unwillingness to change oppressive habits (i.e., resistance to denaturalization and/or prescription), the descriptions here of these three positions vis a vis Al-Saji's work suggests that underlying these different types of responses are different *values*, and, thus, different *motivational* systems. Therefore, if we look more closely at these three types of readers, their differences in values evidently becomes concretized in different types of responses to the suggestion of hesitation. To draw out the ways in which typification allows us to specify hesitation for particular types of people, let us now examine the values and motivating systems of the sympathetic reader, the unsympathetic reader, and the akratic reader which underwrite their responses to hesitation.

[381] Al-Saji, "A Phenomenology of Hesitation: Interrupting Racializing Habits of Seeing," 160–61.

The sympathetic reader has values in line with the suggestion of hesitation, and likely in line with the Al-Saji's values as they are embedded in the text of her chapter. Because of the correspondence in their personal values with the values of the chapter and the values embedded in the suggestion of hesitation, they likely need little convincing to try hesitation as an anti-racist strategy. However, even within this type, not all sympathetic readers are the same. Consider, for instance, two kinds of sympathetic reader who we may find today on social media that are well documented in critical literature, namely, the performative internet activist and the deliberate internet activist.[382] Both the performative internet activist and the deliberate internet activist may adopt hesitation as a strategy into their internet activism. For example, both might post on their social media feeds about how they are hesitating, or they may post comments on other pages about the virtues of hesitating. But the motivating values of each varies. The performative internet activist might associate the value of hesitating with a positive valuation of image maintenance, which they see as fulfilled by building credibility with their followers. Thus, even though they are a sympathetic reader who values hesitation as a strategy, their online posts about hesitating are examples of "performative allyship used strategically," which threatens to undermine long-term social justice movements by 'memeifying' social justice activism.[383] By contrast, the deliberate internet activist perhaps has a different set of values. Johanna Hedva convincingly demonstrates

[382] We can see these two types of internet activists exemplified in the works of Mariah L. Wellman and Johanna Hedva. As Wellman points out, performative internet activism involves activist activity that is intended to increase one's brand rather than contribute to the longevity of a movement. By contrast, Hedva indicates how internet activism can be taken up in deliberate ways by those for whom public forms of protesting are not available. Johanna Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory" (johannahedva.com, 2020), https://johannahedva.com/SickWomanTheory_Hedva_2020.pdf; Mariah L. Wellman, "Black Squares for Black Lives? Performative Allyship as Credibility Maintenance for Social Media Influencers on Instagram," *Social Media + Society* 8, no. 1 (January 2022): 205630512210804, https://doi.org/10.1177/20563051221080473.

[383] Mariah L. Wellman develops a condemning account of this kind of activism with regards to Instagram activists during the BLM movement following the murder of George Floyd. Wellman, "Black Squares for Black Lives?," 1.

that not all persons have the privilege to protest in modes recognizable to the public, including the chronically ill, persons who are imprisoned (by literal incarceration or by their job), persons subject to the threat of violence and police brutality, and so forth.[384] These individuals might express political solidarity through non-traditional means, like those provided by the internet, without engaging in performative allyship. The difference between these two types of sympathetic readers is not only a difference of situation, but also a difference in *values,* and what they show is *that hesitation as a solution is not a one size fits all, even for those who accept it and its values.* But what of those who do not share the values underwriting hesitation? In this regard, we can consider the unsympathetic reader.

The unsympathetic reader has contrary values, which means they are motivated to perceive in a way not captured by Al-Saji's chapter; thus, they reject hesitation. I can imagine many subtypes under this type, each of whom would have a different set of values and different motivational system. For example, the white supremacist would surely reject hesitation as an anti-racist practice (in fact, anti-veiling laws aren't racist enough for them), but so might the old-school liberal who values equality (veiling laws are correct because they mean that everything is the *same* for everyone in public life). Or I can imagine another person staunchly committed to anti-racist practice (like supporters of afro-pessimism), who would consider hesitating a profoundly insufficient response for stopping antiblack racism and the murder of black men in America by the police.[385] It is a gross oversimplification to classify these three positions together, but what they

[384] Hedva, "Sick Woman Theory," 1.

[385] Calvin Warren argues this line of thought in *Ontological Terror*: "I told the audience there was no solution to the problem of antiblackness; it will continue without end, as long as the world exists. Furthermore, all the solutions presented rely on antiblack instruments to address anti-blackness, a vicious and torturous cycle that will only produce more pain and disappointment. I also said that humanist *affect* (the good feeling we get from hopeful solutions) will not translate into freedom, justice, recognition, or resolution. It merely provides temporary reprieve from the fact that blacks are not safe in an antiblack world, a fact that can become overwhelming." Calvin Warren, "Introduction: The Free Black Is Nothing,"

share (the same position vis-à-vis hesitating) helps to draw out the profound differences in values between these individuals. We might be tempted to prescribe reading Al-Saji's essay as a way to 'get everyone on the same page,' but as Al-Saji herself shows, conceptual argumentation doesn't change minds. Rather, it is *changes in values that change minds, as values are motivations, and different types of people are motivated differently.*

Thus, what the multifarious type of the unsympathetic reader reveals for feminist and critical phenomenologists is that *their task is ultimately a two-fold value project.* First, it is important that their descriptions properly account for the diversity of values in individuals, so that their accounts are less general and their prescriptions less generalizing. Second, *if* feminist and critical phenomenologists hold that *shared values* is a necessary part of their political praxis, then their task becomes a task of changing personal values so that they are in line with the social and political values endorsed by the feminist and critical phenomenological project. While I am not convinced that *uniformly* shared values are necessary, it is important that feminist and critical phenomenologists clarify for themselves their stance on this issue. In any case, the point here is not to say that everyone who is not hesitating is failing to do their job to bring about a better world. Rather, my point is precisely the opposite: there are fundamental differences between the white supremacist, the old-school liberal, and the afro-pessimist, and these differences must be attended to in order to realize the transformative potential of feminist and critical phenomenological methods. The goal, here, is thus to mobilize the diverse individual desires of unique persons, so that they are themselves compelled to change their values. However, what of those that already have the values Al-Saji prescribes, but for whom change feels impossible?

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in *Ontological Terror: Blackness, Nihilism, and Emancipation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018), 3.

Finally, then, is the akratic reader. The akratic reader has values in line with the project, but a failure occurs in their motivational system that prohibits the realization of their values. Both the person who has given up hope and the person who is overburdened would be inclined toward embodying the akratic type of response to the suggestion of hesitation, but there are likely other subtypes as well. Often akrasia is chalked up to an issue of contravening or inadequate reasons for acting (if it is recognized as a legitimate existential possibility at all),[386] but Stein would say that the problem here is with the overall motivational context of the individual. Motivated change has five elements: a realization of lack, a desired outcome, a desire to change, a decided will, and action that actualizes our desire for change. A weakness in any of these areas negatively impacts our action. Resolving the akrasia for this type of reader becomes about resolving issues in their specific motivational contexts and system. This may again involve value change (insofar as value impact our will, our desire, our resolution, our models for change, and so forth). However, it might also involve resolving non-value related issues or issues that only mediately concern values (e.g., they may have all the 'right' values, but perhaps something in someone's situation or environment contravenes the mobilization of those values, like they do not have the life power required to enact difficult personal change).

Ultimately, what this close assessment of the values and motivations of these three types of reader reveals is that an understanding of typification helps to concretize Stein's theory of motivated value change. Hesitation, like other solutions, is not a one size fits all suggestion. The formative power of hesitation is dependent upon the values and motivations of the type of person hesitation is meant to address. By articulated motivated change as a change in our value systems,

[386] Sarah Stroud and Larisa Svirsky, "Weakness of Will," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford University: Metaphysics Research Lab, 2021), https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2021/entries/weakness-will/.

a change that is simultaneously specific to individuals but reflective of them as *types* of people, Stein provides feminist and critical phenomenology with a way to concretize their prescriptions. In other words, Stein shows how values are diversely reflected in people, and can be shifted in order to be mobilized towards actualizing the transformative promise of feminist and critical phenomenologies.

Chapter Conclusion: Future Directions

From a Steinian perspective, both feminist and critical phenomenology are value projects. Even though the role of values, motivation, and types have not been previously thematized explicitly by feminist and critical phenomenologists, these phenomenological projects have always trafficked in values. Feminist and critical phenomenologists have always either implicitly or explicitly identified invisible values, evaluated them, and proposed alternate values in turn. The transformative promise of these phenomenologies has also always hinged on the consensus that we as persons can change, even though the details of how we can change have remained ambiguous. Through Stein, we resolve this ambiguity: we discover that personal change means change in our motivational systems, via changes in values. Stein teaches us that changes in our value systems allow us to, first, value ways of living that are different from those we have either *consciously and habitually developed* or socially *received and inherited*; and second, how we can develop ways of living that are different to the way we live now.

Bringing Stein explicitly into conversation with feminist and critical phenomenology helps to reframe and concretize the transformative promise of these fields. Now, we see how these phenomenologies are ultimately projects that aim to be formative and to encourage certain kinds of self-formation. With this intervention explicitly in mind, feminist and critical phenomenologists can now ask: What sorts of values circulate today and how do they motivate habitual styles of

living? What sorts of values would be better for us to hold? And what sorts of values do we want to see circulated and mobilized in the world? By answering these questions, we can develop prescriptions that are less sweeping and more specific, and, thus, more readily instrumentalized.

As my goal in this chapter has been to develop an initial Steinian intervention into feminist and critical phenomenology, there is a great deal of Stein's philosophy that I set aside. However, there is room to further mine Stein's theory of personal becoming in order to develop richer and more nuanced accounts of the formative and self-formative potential of feminist and critical phenomenologies. For example, we can mine Stein's theory of personal becoming for *concrete self-formation strategies*. One step in this direction might involve developing Stein's understanding of the role of attitudinal intervention. For as I have argued elsewhere, to truly modify our values, we must intervene at the level of our *attitudes*; by denying the attitude that a value arouses, we render the attitude inoperative, and this allows us to install new motives that cancel out our original beliefs.[387] Feminist and critical phenomenologists could further develop this account into a concrete strategy that can be adopted by those who wish to transform their own perceptions and values.

Another direction for future work in feminist and critical phenomenology might involve developing Stein's understanding of how self-formation proceeds according to design. As I argued in Chapter two, self-formation occurs based on a principle of self-design. We develop the image of "what [we want] to suppress, what [we want] to allow, and what [we want] to strive for" in ourselves through the images or models we have compiled of desirable or undesirable traits and/or

[387] Bath, "Edith Stein's Contribution to Critical Phenomenology." As Stein points out, this is precisely how the *epoché* operates. The *epoché* is an attitude that denies the existence of the world. This does not mean that the attitude which initially affirmed the world's existence is eliminated. It just means that we can deliberately comport as though the initial attitude, and its motivating values, were not present. In the case of personal change, making attitudes and their motivating values inoperative is the first step towards changing our values.

persons.[388] Feminist and critical phenomenologists can build off of this account in order to develop a vision for the *types of qualities* that are desirable in persons in anti-sexist, anti-racist (etc.) worlds. They could go even further by developing models of different *types of persons* in order to aid in formative and self-formative endeavors. These types of persons would act as models that provide an overall image of how one should be, and thus can be adopted as principles of self-design.

As I argued in Chapter three, Stein herself presents two *archetypes* as models for how women and girls should be formed and should self-form. However, in this chapter, I also interrogated and critiqued Stein's use of Mary and Eve as feminine archetypes. As I argued, Stein's use of these two Catholic models contradicted her otherwise expansive understanding of types of women. Indeed, insofar as the concept of archetypes presents 'originary' models for how to live, they appear to present models that are static, fixed, apparently 'natural,' and God-given. Perhaps *archetypes* are best avoided by feminist and critical phenomenologists, who, from the outset, strive to denaturalize phenomena by showing how they are thoroughly social, cultural, political, and historical. While we could perhaps install other archetypes, it might instead be best to instead consider developing many various types as models without fixing those types as archetypes, or as 'originary' and static models. Instead of fixed archetypes, the development of types should be historical, context-dependent, more existential, and more pragmatic in their conception. These types can change and can be discarded when outgrown, but nonetheless could provide guiding models for how to self-form in line with the values identified as valuable by feminist and critical phenomenologists.

[388] Stein, *Der Aufbau Der Menschlichen Person: Vorlesung Zu Philosophischen Anthropologie*, 14:58.

Conclusion: Who is the Steinian Subject?

I want to conclude my dissertation by providing some personal and philosophical reflections on who the subject is for Stein, as a way to syncretize the key moments of what I have learned about Stein's philosophy of personal becoming. These reflections, I hope, will defend what I see as its greatest possibilities against certain mis-readings that the contemporary reader may be prone to.

My initial encounter with Stein was in the first semester of my Master's program, when her dissertation on empathy was assigned in Professor Antonio Calcagno's class on "Political Interiority." At the time of my enrollment in this class, my mother was undergoing aggressive chemotherapy appointments to slow her advanced pancreatic cancer, which she already knew that she would not overcome. I recall reading *On the Problem of Empathy* while sitting with her one afternoon in the waiting area at London Health Sciences Center, the local hospital where she was receiving treatments. She remarked upon the relevance of the topic for our current situation, a comment I somewhat brushed off because I was irritated at Stein in the moment. I was irritated with her in part for writing such an obscure and difficult treatment on empathy, which was a topic I felt should be treated with openness and frankness given its immediate value and meaning for people, and in part because I had approached the assignment with the hopes that Stein would offer me a lifebuoy for how to deal with my mother's illness and my caretaking responsibilities. Of course, instead of immediately practical discussion about how one could develop or exercise their empathy without experiencing burnout or assuming that their interpretations of the other's experiences were accurate or just, I found dense phenomenological descriptions about the nature of empathy as an act of consciousness and the relationship that mental act bears to one's recognition of personhood in others and in oneself.

There were, of course, interesting moments that would stick with me on that first reading, especially Stein's descriptions of how reiterative empathy provides the basis for self-knowledge. However, because I was searching for what was not there, at that time I could not grasp the depth of the work. I failed to see the power, and indeed, the immediate relevance of Stein's claim that empathy or *Einfühlung* is the mental act *by which we encounter others as others*, and that *ways we respond to others after empathically perceiving them* are possibilities opened but not determined by the empathic act itself. What I missed then, and what I would only discover many years later while writing a dissertation on Stein (still cursing her dense and obscure writing at this later point), was that empathy teaches us about who we are by revealing us to ourselves *through* the alterity of others. If I could have seen that lesson then, I might have saved myself many years of interpreting my mother's final months from my own perspective, by instead allowing myself the opportunity to consider it from her perspective—and considering myself, in turn, not from my internal perspective, which focused on my apparent failures, but instead from how she saw me. In this regard, it is precisely in the gulf between the other and myself in which the question of the Steinian subject emerges.

The same gift that Stein's concept of empathy might have offered me—i.e., the potential to reframe my perception of myself from the perspective of a loving other—is the source of great pain to others. When I taught some of Stein's dissertation in my final course offering at Emory, one perceptive student pointed out to me that if others teach us who we are, both in terms of their living perceptions of us, and in terms of teaching us *how* to view ourselves 'objectively,' then we might encounter others who view us unfairly or falsely, and we might believe them. Upon a Steinian account, our internalization of false images of ourselves from others would encourage a deprived self-knowledge that inhibits our judgement and action, rather than bolstering it. Wasn't

this precisely what happens in the case of sexism and racism? She asked. Don't misogynistic, racist, and other forms of prejudicial perceptions, operate at least partially through mis-framings and mis-characterizations of others, to the extent that the alterity of the other is destroyed, and personhood denied? To this, I responded that Stein believed that in order to objectify and destroy the humanity of the other, *empathy as an act* must always already been completed, but the product of that act—that affirmation of the other's alterity and personhood—had been denied. In other words, empathy as an act guarantees nothing—it does not guarantee that we will treat each other well, or that we will be correct in our perceptions of others or ourselves. Indeed, we can use empathy destructively, producing various sorts of intersubjective and social harms.

Stein herself understood that empathy was not infallible yet nevertheless believed that empathy had the power to correct errors, deceptions, and harm, when combined with further acts of empathy, as well as genuine inner and outer perception. Her incomplete autobiography was motivated by this hope. In the face of Nazi antisemitism, Stein argued that testimonies about Jewish people and the Jewish life would present a different picture than the racist caricature circulating in Germany, one that could help ameliorate antisemitic hatred. As she wrote at the outset of the project in 1933,

> Recent months have catapulted the German Jews out of the peaceful existence they had come to take for granted… In one of those conversations by which one seeks to arrive at an understanding of a sudden catastrophe that has befallen one, a Jewish friend of mine expressed her anguish: "If only I knew how Hitler came by his terrible hatred of the Jews."
>
> She had her answer in the programmed writings and speeches of the new dictators. From these sources, *as though from a concave mirror, a horrendous caricature looked out at us*….
>
> But many [people] lack this kind of [positive experience of Jewish people to contradict the horrendous caricature].The opportunity to attain it has been denied primarily to the young who, these days, are being reared in racial hatred from earliest childhood. *To all who have been thus deprived, we who grew up in Judaism have an obligation to give our testimony.*
>
> What I shall write down on these pages is not meant to be an apologia for Judaism…. I would like to give, simply, a straightforward account of my own experience

> of Jewish life as one testimony to be placed alongside others, already available in print or soon to be published.[389]

We now know that empathy, testimony, and genuine intersubjective encounters were not enough to overcome the Nazi project, nor are they enough today to overcome other expressions of prejudice.[390] But in the Introduction to this dissertation, when I described some of Stein's various instances of social and political activism, I showed that Stein herself understood that there was more to being with people—and more to expressing human freedom in general—than just forms of empathy. Stein always chose action when she could have chosen passivity or resignation, and she appreciated that her actions, values, and choices made her who she was. For Stein, it was crucial to become own's fullest self, to become what she called a "self-supporting personality" or a person who has their own "center of gravity."[391] As she understood it, only by being solidly and affirmatively oneself could one develop their own capacities and talents in a way that would allow them to best serve others. And while her understanding of what it meant to become one's fullest self changed over her life, in accordance with her sensitivity to the role of gender, her appreciation of the deep formative power of education, and her intense religious commitments, what she consistently appreciated was that human freedom and human responsibility were concomitant, and that both were fulfilled by how you become the person you become.

Stein's understanding of personal becoming on the one hand resembles a hopeful, heroic tale. Indeed, her choice to bring Husserl's *Ideas I* (a phenomenological epic if there ever was one) and Homer's *Illiad* to war when she worked as a nurse in many ways is an allegory for the

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[389] Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: 1891-1916*, One:23–24. Italics added.
[390] While we recognize that testimony and empathy are insufficient for remedying systemic social issues or profound injustice, we do also seem to collectively consent to the power of testimony and empathy for being witness to the cruelty of the human condition.
[391] Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, 7:275.

straightforward reading of her account of personal becoming.[392] Self-formation is the egoic, ordered, and orderly process of a unified individual. Self-knowledge is possible and considered an adequate ground upon which we build our entire lives. We can actively form ourselves through a robust exercise of our will (assuming the conditions of our willing and our motivations for the change are all properly aligned). Personal development is thus a tale that describes the adventures and misadventures of an originally enclosed soul that becomes an unfolded soul over time. It is, therefore, about progress.

The contemporary reader might well balk at this depiction of personal becoming. Deeply influenced by the German ideal of *Bildung* and Enlightenment notions of progress, Stein's views appear here to resonate with what many now consider philosophical myths about unity,[393] self-transparency,[394] and mastery.[395] In this way, her views might raise the hackles of those concerned with the androcentrism and eurocentrism of the phenomenological movement.[396] Her views may also raise questions from some feminist corners, especially feminists critical of atomistic liberal individualism, for whom Stein's remarks about the freedom of the individual might seem to call

[392] Berkman, "Edith Stein," 16.
[393] Many philosophical schools question the notion of a unified self, including but not limited to Latina feminism and psychoanalysis.
[394] Some philosophical literature on the nature of self-knowledge, and especially the prevalence of self-deception, suggests that the philosophical desire for self-transparency is likely a reflection of the philosopher's prejudice, rather than a reflection of the human condition.
[395] Here I allude to the caricature of the phenomenological position that in constituting the world, we render others, and even the world itself, dependent upon the constituting I. The concern here is that there is a singular ego to which all is due, and which determines what it encounters.
[396] I suggest that the elements of Stein's philosophy most likely to arouse contemporary suspicion—namely, claims for unity, and the apparent self-transparent and masterful nature of the Steinian subject—are linked to critiques of androcentrism and eurocentrism in the phenomenological tradition. While it is impossible for me to spell this out in full here, it may be sufficient to state that the notion of a unified, self-transparent, masterful subject is a common enemy in feminist and decolonial criticisms of the tradition, insofar as the phenomenologist—usually Husserl, but sometimes also Merleau-Ponty—is seen to be encoding their privileged standpoint as European men as the universal perspective.

forth a vision of a fundamentally unconnected and self-sufficient individual who acts out of a competitive self-interest.

Yet I would not move so hastily to condemn Stein. Certainly, Stein's philosophy of personal becoming resembles the myths of unity, self-transparency, and mastery. Yet her resonances with various moments from these myths are only partial. Stein indeed understands the subject as unified—and in this, she differs from other phenomenologists, including early phenomenologists who make space for non-unity.[397] However, while the subject in Stein is unified, it is not self-enclosed, nor is it only secondarily oriented to the other. The unity of the subject in Stein is constituted *through* the alterity of what it is not, and especially through the alterity of the other that it empathizes. And though empathy does offer relatively rich insight upon the self—richer, than, say, the knowledge that inner and outer perception alone could provide—empathy does not provide a path to sure knowledge or to total knowledge. What we learn through empathy is hard-won and always open to error and deception on all sides. Yet without it, we cannot know ourselves at all, nor can we get outside our subjective perception of the world. In other words, empathy does not guarantee self-transparency, although it does provide a contextual and revisable form of self-knowledge that grounds our self-formative endeavors. Finally, despite the highly disciplined nature of Stein's understanding of self-formation—a level of discipline and willing I find hard to achieve or prescribe, and which is exemplified by Stein's later years, when she spent hours in daily silent prayer and contemplation—I do not think she either desires or implicitly advances mastery as an ideal or a goal for personal becoming. Indeed, I have striven in this dissertation to demonstrate that with the exception of her late theological revisions, Stein never

[397] Gerda Walther, for example, argues that the role of the unconscious, experiences of telepathy, instances of mental illness, and mystical experiences all demonstrate that the apparent unity of the phenomenological subject can be broken open. Cf. Walther, *Phänomenologie Der Mystik*.

posits perfection or completion as goal for personal becoming. One is instead always open to revision, and one can never predict in advance what they experience, what others reveal or teach them, or what they learn and make of themselves. One can also never guarantee in advance the outcome of the choices made and thus must constantly respond to the facticity of their experience as it accrues and potentially forms them. While personal becoming is certainly about progress, it is just as much about the always changing trajectory of that advance, the always real possibility of not advancing at all, and the unbearable weight of becoming oneself, and failing to become oneself, *for and with others*.

Similarly, while Stein's account of personal becoming may appear to resemble an atomistic view of the individual, according to which it is primarily separate from others and self-determining, I think this would be a misreading of Stein on multiple levels. Not only does empathy show our interdependency and connectedness with others, but for Stein, there is no pre-social *self*, and certainly no self without connection to others. To be 'self-supporting' or to build one's sense of self around a "center of gravity" that is one's own, means for Stein that we adjudicate the formative influences we experience, rather than submitting ourselves wholesale to them. Moreover, the center of gravity around which one's sense of self is established arises from one's *soul*, which is, perhaps, pre-social (insofar as it is innate), although even the soul remains open to influence from without, as it unfolds only by taking in what is formative for it. We are far from being unencumbered by others for Stein; our self-interest is and should be other-oriented, and to be free is to be responsible for them by being responsible for ourselves.

Thus, while the heroic interpretation of Stein's philosophy of personal becoming is not entirely false, I think it fails to capture the nuance and complexity of Stein's views. In this regard, my goal in this dissertation was to also show the underside of her philosophy of personal becoming.

Behind the actively willed choices and actions, the multifarious, imbricated processes that produce change, and the deployment of self-knowledge as the ground for judgement and action, we discover in Stein a deep appreciation for the interdependency and vulnerability of the self, the weight of personal facticity, the non-transparency at the heart of the self, the contingency of all that occurs and all that we become, and the fallibility of self-knowledge as the ground for personal becoming. These elements, to my mind, *loosen the stranglehold of unity and ideals of progress*, while still maintaining the disciplined and resolute character particular to Stein's understanding of human responsibility in freedom.

The takeaway I encourage from Stein's philosophy of personal becoming, then, is not simply the heroic tale of a soul that unfolds itself through the exercise and triumph of its ego. Rather, in the place of hopeful heroism, I would emphasize a resolute willing that faces contingency and challenge head-on, and that makes choices and acts in ways that affirm the one's chosen values. Alongside the image of Stein bringing *Ideas* and the *Illiad* to war, then, we should place the image of Stein's final days: when she, with clear-sighted awareness of her future, cared for other people while refusing aid for herself; when she wrote notes of her final words for many loved ones, and passed those notes out during train stops and stops at detention centers; and when she exchanged prayers with those she travelled with and with officials along the way to Auschwitz.

Stein's philosophy of becoming ultimately provides, to my mind, a rich yet deeply critical vision of the human person that embeds individual freedom and responsibility in an historical, cultural, and social world. Personal becoming is thus the development of a self and the unfolding of a soul through the intertwining of the individual with others and with their specific historical and cultural world. This subject is not the masterful subject that constitutes the world in such a way that the objects and others of that world are dependent upon it. Nor is it a subject reduced to

its social identities who is unable to get beyond how the world interprets it. Rather, the Steinian phenomenological subject experiences freedom and responsibility, and as much as it is formed from the outside, it self-forms from within in correspondence to what it experiences.

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