

## STEIN'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL VALUE THEORY

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Stein's phenomenological value theory stands among various contributions to a phenomenology of value and valuation.<sup>1</sup> It stands in many ways between Scheler's theory, stressing the *a priori* of the values and of the hierarchy they form<sup>2</sup> and Husserl's, which is interested in describing the act of valuation and sees values as founded on things.<sup>3</sup> It also stands between Sartre's later subjectivist existentialism and Levinas' insistence on the Other as the ground of obligation.<sup>4</sup> Stein, because of her ability to synthesise the best from Scheler and Husserl, and because she started with the notion of empathy, which allowed her to include the hermeneutical tradition from Dilthey, elaborates a phenomenological theory of motivation in

<sup>1</sup> So also John Drummond in his Introduction to *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy. A Handbook*, Kluwer, 2002, p. 8. Stein's value theory is to be found in her early work; in *On the Problem of Empathy* (henceforth PE), *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (henceforth PPH), and in *An Investigation Concerning the State*, all from the *Collected Works of Edith Stein* (CWES) ICS Publications, Washington DC as volumes 3, 7 and 10 respectively. The German originals have been critically edited in the *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe* (ESGA) from Herder, Würzburg, vol. 5, 6 and 7 respectively. There is little doubt that Stein learned much from Adolph Reinach, whose phenomenological stringency and attention to matters of practical philosophy, made him develop a theory of values, which serves as template for Stein's. See for example Adolph Reinach: 'Die Überlegung: ihre etische und rechtliche Bedeutung', *Gesammelte Schriften*, pp. 121-16 and *Sämtliche Werke* pp. 279-311. See also Beate Beckmann: *Phänomenologie des religiösen Erlebnis. Religionsphilosophische Überlegungen im Anschluss an Adolph Reinach und Edith Stein*, Königshausen und Neumann, 2003, pp. 90-92; 196-208. This paper was originally given as a lecture at Wheaton College, Illinois, repeated at the Baltimore Carmel, November 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Max Scheler: *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, transl. by Frings and Funk, Northwestern University Press, Evanston, 1973; *Ressentiment*, translated by William W. Holdheim. Schocken, New York, 1972.

<sup>3</sup> See *Ideas II*, tr. by Rojcevicz and Schuwer, Kluwer, 1989, Section III and *Vorlesungen über Ethik und Wertlehre*, Husserliana Bd. XXVIII.

<sup>4</sup> John Drummond op. cit. gives up situating Stein as either a realist axiologist (understanding values to exist independently of the evaluator) or an idealist subjectivist (which existentialists or value constructivists could be said to be) and for good reason. She, like the early and middle Husserl, understands the constitution of values to rely on the subject as much as on the object constituted (which as constituted, and intersubjectively constituted, must have essence). This intentional structure of all experience is the key to the inseparability of subjective perspective and objective analysability in early transcendental phenomenology: Stein would understand the label 'transcendental' to refer to exactly this necessity, which could be likened to a Möbius band whose inner and outer side is so connected that it is neither and both. See her discussion of realism and idealism in *Einführung in die Philosophie*, ESGA 8, pp. 69-72 ('Die metaphysische Bedeutung des Wahrnehmungsproblems: die Idealismusfrage'), and Hans Rainer Sepp's discussion of it: 'Edith Steins Position in die idealismus-realismus Debatte' in Beckmann and Gerl-Falkovitz (eds.): *Edith Stein. Themen Bezüge Dokumente*, Königshausen und Neumann, 2003.

which value plays the role of motivation's object or formal explanation (analogous to how the perceived is the specific object of perception and its formal explanation). Motivation is like perception in that it is experienced as identified by its object. It is unlike perception in that it is felt specifically and in that it can be followed or infelt (empathised) in others, in texts, and in other things marked by spirit.<sup>5</sup> Motivatedness reveals to us the entire inner world of persons and is in fact, according to Stein, what we understand by spirit.<sup>6</sup>

It is the simplicity of this understanding — spirit is motivatedness — that allows Stein to develop her comprehensive theory of what in German is called the 'sciences of the spirit', and which we in English call 'the humanities' (*Geisteswissenschaften*). As values are what allow us to conceptualise what type of motivatedness we have in front of us, they also explain why something is done. When this is their function, we call them motives. Motives, like values, can be shared, in the same way as what is perceived can be seen by others. But unlike perception, shared motivation involves an inner dimension that allows for motivation to be shared at different levels in accordance with the structure of the persons motivated, so that intersubjective constitution is layered in contrast with the simple constitution of the I. Motivation is power or life, like the spirit is, and focussing on the values in which this power is conceptualised as originating or as objective, must be accompanied by a focus on valuation, which is the act in which I allow this power to flow into my life stream and direct it or not, the act in which I constitute the values as mine.

Let us first look at how values are experienced according to Stein (1). Then we will have to ask what that tells us about what they are, and what reasons we have to affirm that they are what we think they are (2). And finally we will have to ask what that allows us to know about ourselves (3).

## I THE EXPERIENCE OF VALUES

Experience, to Stein, is what is left when the phenomenological and transcendental reductions have been performed. She assumes Husserl's consent in this, although one might well think that the performance of the reductions for him leaves us with the transcendental ego. Stein takes this to be correct in so far as the transcendental ego includes experience as it is experienced. If it does not, there is nothing to investigate and the whole enterprise of phenomenology falls down for lack of material with which to engage. As this is absurd, Stein regards experience to be a more accurate description of what is left by the reductions, as indeed I experience not only one I, but several, and could not even conceptualise the I as *an* I (or even as an ego) were it not for the others, nor conceptualise the world were it not for

<sup>5</sup> Perception as well can be empathised, but not really without empathising its motivation. What we see when seeing someone watch, is that they watch something, aeroplanes, for example. We might wonder why they do that, but then we are already preoccupied with motivations, just as we are, when we wonder what they are watching. Motivations, generally speaking, interests us far more than the sheer perception of things, as this perception only makes sense in relation to its motivation.

<sup>6</sup> A full-scale comparison of the three authors on the subject of values is beyond the scope of this paper. To the author's knowledge it does not yet exist, but would make a wonderful topic for a doctoral dissertation, and fill a gap in current scholarship.

their perspectives on it that allow me to distinguish it in intersubjectively constituted entities. Experience, for Stein, is thus rock bottom, it is shared, and therefore available for everyone to test, understand, contest and explore. This is how phenomenology can be a collaborative enterprise, as envisaged, but perhaps not practised, by Husserl, who seems to have expected conformity to his thoughts rather than collaboration of his closest and dearest.<sup>7</sup>

Experience, as we experience it in common, is experienced as motivated, otherwise communication about it would not be possible.<sup>8</sup> This is so commonplace that we hardly think about the possibility of isolating motivation from experience. Stein defines it thus:

Motivation, in our general sense, is the connection that acts get into with one another: [...] 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 (p. 41).

Stein thus explicitly denies motivation being an act, and in this sense it is unlike perception. It is more on a par with constitution, although motivation must presuppose constitution, as there could be no emerging of one act experienced out of another were it not for entities or acts experienced.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand Stein cannot envisage constitution to be completely inexplicable, and when we explain it, we invariably see it as motivated precisely by its object, and thus the hermeneutical circle is introduced into the heart of intentionality: we interpret reality or objectivity, and our motivation in doing so is reflected in what we see. We see as we are motivated to see, and this we see first and foremost in others, where it comes to us as the reason for their perspective being different from ours. Having seen it in others, we also see, however, that they see it in us by what Stein calls ‘reiterated empathy’,<sup>10</sup> and we then conclude that this is how it is: I see the world in a manner that can be explained by (my) motivation.<sup>11</sup>

Turning towards the source of motivation to look at it is a road fraught with difficulties. Partly because it requires the trained ability to empathise, as it is only by means of empathy that values can be seen as objective, i.e. as something that also exists for others as motivators.<sup>12</sup> If empathy is not sufficiently trained, it is with difficulty that I distinguish motivation from myself: I see its source as if it were identical to myself. Then, of course, I cannot explain how it comes about that others are motivated, nor understand what they are motivated by, so it remains that the inability to empathise is a deficiency in my ability to explain, which, however, may well be experienced by the one suffering from it as a means of being powerful,

<sup>7</sup> See for example Marianne Sawicki; *Body Text and Science. The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein*, Kluwer, 1997, Chapter 4.

<sup>8</sup> ‘Germany surrendered because the Allies forced them to.’ This statement relies on us knowing what ‘because’ means; it expresses that the action of ‘Germany’ was motivated by ‘the force of the Allies’. We explain the actions of others as well as of ourselves to others by such ‘because’, which in fact signifies the motivation.

<sup>9</sup> Marianne Sawicki discusses the relative importance of empathy, constitution and motivation as regards the phenomenological project. op. cit. Chapter 2 and 3. See also my *On the Problem of Human Dignity. A Hermeneutical and Phenomenological Investigation*, Königshausen und Neumann, 2009, Chapter 9.

<sup>10</sup> *PE*, Chapter 2, 3 (f).

<sup>11</sup> *PE*, Chapter 3, 5 (g).

<sup>12</sup> *PE*, Chapter 3, 5 (m-p)

of originating the world, of being in charge, and therefore not so easily given up.<sup>13</sup> Thus, inability or unwillingness to empathise is the first systemic or endemic obstacle to bringing oneself to face the source of motivation. The next is that one might not want to see what one then sees. One might not like to see one's gesture as issuing from jealousy, as this says something about oneself, in which one might not want to recognise oneself. My potential dislike of my jealous self (which again is experienced motivation) shows us something more about values: we experience them as actually informing who we are, as if our acceptance of the motivation issuing from them makes up our substance and forges our very being as individual persons. Stein will see them as explaining our personality: our value response as mediated by the psyche's retention of traces of earlier value responses facilitating others of the same type.<sup>14</sup> So turning our attention towards the source of motivation presupposes two things: it presupposes our ability and willingness to empathise, which allows us to see values as objective and not as merely originated in, ourselves, and it presupposes our ability and willingness to see ourselves in the light of these values as objective, i.e. as seen by others, any other, and, most excruciatingly, by myself.

What do we see then when we turn to face the values? Light? Life? Energy? The difficulty of seeing what we see quite likely is that we *see* precisely nothing in a literal sense. We see something by insight: we gather information from a myriad of sources to form an intuition of what we see. And then we see 'in images', 'light', 'life', 'energy'. The most important sources from which we gather this information are feelings, and paired with them our understanding of the state of our psyche that allows us to interpret the information about motivation that the feelings carry.<sup>15</sup>

Let us start at the end, with the psyche, proceeding later to feelings and the meaning they carry. The psyche, for Stein, is constituted from all experiences in which life power is experienced as an element.<sup>16</sup> I do not experience the stream of experience flowing always in the same manner. Excitement is accompanied by a characteristic artificial quickening of experience, and tiredness by the stream 'drying up', so that pain results when one attempts to bring the experiences into a coherent order or understand. Vitality shows up as openness to experiences and a certain ease in bringing them into order. These phenomena are distinct from the experience of motivation because they appear as its limit. Although motivation can feed life power to an extraordinary extent, it cannot produce it. When 'the batteries are flat' as indeed we say, what normally enlivens us becomes a pain, and indeed we may not be able to experience it at all (the mathematical proof, the elegant argument). All we want when entirely exhausted is to sleep and switch off the stream of experience, at least to the extent where we have to intervene in it by being conscious. The phenomena of life power hence seems to testify to something that is not

<sup>13</sup> It might, as in this imagined case, be seen from the outside, however.

<sup>14</sup> *PE*, Chapter 4.

<sup>15</sup> *PE*, Chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* and *PPH*, Treatise 1: *Psychic Causality*. Stein seems to be the only one among the phenomenologists to have elaborated a distinction between psyche and spirit. As a consequence understanding of the emotions allows her to see them as analysable as psychic phenomena with a physical as well as a spiritual side. See Christof Betchart: 'Was ist Lebenskraft? Edith Steins erkenntnistheoretischen Prämissen in „Psychische Kausalität“ (Teil 1)' in *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 2009, pp. 154-84; and 'Was ist Lebenskraft? Edith Steins anthropologischer Beitrag in „Psychische Kausalität“ (Teil 2)' in *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 2010, pp. 33-64.

motivation, to the type of causality which Stein calls ‘psychic causality’, which cannot be infelt or understood but can nevertheless be observed as part of ‘nature’.<sup>17</sup>

The experience of life power allows us to constitute the psyche as a characteristic of ‘me’, as something that colours ‘my’ experiences, and which I experience as colouring the experiences of others as well. The psyche however, does not form part of the spiritual world of values that I experience as motivating my own person and that of others; it is experienced as transcendent, as pertaining to me because I am also embedded in a causal network which is different from that of the spirit. The law of this network of nature is causality, just like the law of the network that is spirit is motivation.<sup>18</sup>

Having seen what the psyche is, we can start looking at the feelings. They are experienced as pertaining to both networks, that of nature and that of the spirit: they cause something in me (the blood to rush, the hands to sweat, the knees to weaken) and they are motivated by something that comes to me as a message sounding something like ‘this is valuable’, ‘dangerous’, ‘horrid’, ‘beautiful’.<sup>19</sup> The message carried is the motivating power of what is intended. What I feel is where it can carry me; who I shall be if I let it into the substance of my soul, what can happen as a result of this power not only to me but to others as well. My psyche lights up at the message, depending on how it is prepared to receive it, and the spiritual energy reverberates through it like sound through a musical instrument. The psyche is the sounding board, which transforms spiritual energy into causal phenomena and make me feel physically what otherwise is invisible and does not belong to the world of nature at all. The psyche is the antenna that captures the signal, the network that stores the message; the feeling is the act in which I detect this (slight, perhaps, but nevertheless significant) physical reaction, this fluctuation in life power, caused by the spiritual energy passing through. Just as it is possible for me to disengage from my field of vision (if I am concentrating on what someone is

<sup>17</sup> PPH, Treatise 1, I: Causality in the Realm of Pure Experiences. ‘If I feel myself to be weary, then the current of life seems to stagnate, as it were. It creeps along sluggishly, and everything that’s occurring in the different sensory fields is involved in it. The colours are sort of colourless, the tones are hollow, and every “impression” – each datum that is registered with the life stream against its will, so to speak – is painful, unpleasant. Every colour, every tone, every touch “hurts”. If the weariness subsides, then a shift enters the other spheres as well. And the moment when the weariness changes into vigour, the current starts to pump briskly, it surges forward unrestrainedly. Everything that is emerging in it carries the whiff of vigour and joyfulness.’ (pp. 14-15)

<sup>18</sup> PPH, 1, V: ‘The Intermeshing of Causality and Motivation’. Husserl’s *Ideas II* is based on the same idea, and it is worth remarking, that Stein wrote PPH immediately after having taken her leave as Husserl’s assistant, during which period, she among other things edited *Ideas II* and *III*.

<sup>19</sup> PE, 4, 1: ‘All outer perception is carried out in spiritual acts. Similarly, in every literal act of empathy, i.e. in every comprehension of an act of feeling, we have already penetrated into the realm of the spirit. For, as physical nature is constituted in perceptual acts, so a new object realm is constituted in feeling. This is the world of values. In joy the subject has something joyous facing him, in fright something frightening, in fear something threatening. Even moods have their objective correlate. For him who is cheerful, the world is bathed in a rosy glow; for him who is depressed, bathed in black. And all this is co-given with acts of feeling as belonging to them. It is primarily appearances of expression that grant us access to these experiences. As we consider expressions to be proceeding from experiences, we have the spirit here simultaneously reaching into the physical world, the spirit “becoming visible” in the living body. This is made possible by the psychic reality of acts as experiences of a psycho-physical individual, and it involves an effect on spiritual nature.’ (p. 92).

saying, for example, or am listening to music), I can disengage from the field of emotions, thus paying no attention to the information carried in them, if I want to concentrate on another source of information, say what can be seen or heard or known about an object apart from its value. Some people think that objective science is made this way, and only in this way, that science per definition is value free. For Stein, such an idea simply begs the question, as the whole question of the motivation for such science is left unexplored. It would by its own inner necessity lead to a discussion of the driving interest, of social paradigms setting an agenda underpinning the scientists, and ultimately to a discussion of the entire social setting that makes the science meaningful as activity for the scientists, investors and society at large. Science is 'objective', that is appropriately addressing its object, only when it takes all factors relating to this object into account, and that includes its value, as any object is only ever completely constituted when it is constituted also in its value.<sup>20</sup>

Feelings are, therefore, far from irrelevant in science, in particular in the humanities, where the information they carry is at the centre of the investigation. So, what are they?

As already said they are a kind of physical measure of the effect of spiritual energy on the psyche.<sup>21</sup> As the mercury that rises in the thermometer indicates heat in the surroundings because mercury expands, thus anger is felt in the blood rushing to the back of the brow and the tension of the body preparing for aggression. Love is felt in the inclination of the heart, the loosening of the limbs, the easy acceptance of the presence of the other in close proximity. With them they carry the message: this makes me angry, I love that man: the object they present to us has the formal quality (as Aquinas would say) of being 'uneasily avoidable evil', or 'good', and hence reveal to us a valuation we have ~~always~~ already performed when we feel. The first thing—with which attention to feelings thus confronts us is this implicit valuation, over which in fact I experience myself as having much more control than over the feelings, which are sheer reactions, affects, effects of spiritual energy on the psyche. The valuation is the allowance I make for the effect to take place: I do think this attitude, act, situation is bad, and I therefore allow myself to be angry; I do think this man is lovely, therefore I allow myself to love him. If I don't think that this attitude actually is all that bad, that this situation in fact merits scorn, then I revise my attitude. I then don't allow the anger to flow freely, it is cut at its source, so to speak: there is nothing to be angry about. Likewise with the love: if the man turns out not to be lovely at all, the love dries up at the source. The situation is different if I feel the anger, and feel it is justified, but know that it is socially inexpedient or perhaps even dangerous to express it, and take this as my motive for not expressing the anger. Then the anger is still simmering, still motivating me (and probably still detectable in my comportment to others who

<sup>20</sup> Hence PPH is indeed a contribution towards the founding of the sciences of psychology and the humanities, both of which, without the distinction between nature, psyche and spirit would continue to be imprecise about what exactly they study and therefore be unable to progress in an orderly fashion as sciences.

<sup>21</sup> This is why psychology can also conduct investigations of emotions in their physical properties. Entirely disregarding their cognitive side, however, would reduce psychology to a natural science, and consequently fail to do justice to the proper object of psychology, the psyche, which is neither nature nor spirit, but the interface between the two.

know me well), just like the love still is, when it cannot find an acceptable expression.<sup>22</sup>

Thus the feelings make me realise the motivation as it reaches the level of detectability in the psyche. I retain the possibility of taking an attitude in relation to them, i.e. stand over them and let the motivation they carry determine my actions or in contrast, not allow their energy to determine the direction of my motivation as an acting person.<sup>23</sup> Practical wisdom consists in being able to judge the true good of the whole person, the community and the other, and in knowing how to ‘sail up against the wind’, or harness the powers expressed in the feelings in a manner that allows for a complete expression that does not damage what is deepest in our souls.<sup>24</sup>

## II

### WHAT ARE THE VALUES AND WHAT REASONS DO WE HAVE TO AFFIRM THAT THEY ARE WHAT WE THINK THEY ARE?

Having looked at the feelings as the fundamental source of information about the values for beings, who like human beings are endowed with a psyche, we must proceed to look at the second source of information which is insight or reason. The experience of not wanting the feeling felt to determine one’s actions implies in fact that we have another way of experiencing motivation, which is less dependent on feeling, but which nevertheless finds expression in one’s experience. If I deny myself the ‘right’ to be angry facing an object I cannot really want to condemn or regard as bad, it is because I ‘see’ that it is not so bad after all, that compared to other activities, say, it comes out rather well, that its effects have proven acceptable, that others have benefited from it, etc. By reasoning I compute the effects resulting from the motivation to evaluate it ‘objectively’, i.e. according to what it is in itself,

<sup>22</sup> See my ‘Study-guide to Edith Stein’s *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*’ in the *Yearbook of the Irish Philosophical Society* 2004, also available online.

<sup>23</sup> PPH, Treatise 1, III, § 3-4: ‘I can “take a stance” towards the attitude, in a new sense. I can accept it, plant my feet on it, and declare my allegiance to it. Suppose I accept it – that means that if it emerges in me I give myself over to it, joyously, without reluctance. Suppose I deny it – that doesn’t mean I eliminate it. That’s not under my control. “Cancelling out” a belief would require new motives, through which the motives of the original belief are invalidated and from which the cancellation is established instead “all by itself”. But I need not acknowledge this belief. I can comport myself just as though it were not present; I can make it inoperative. (It is this, the comporting, that Husserl designated as *epoché*. The acts rendered inoperative are “neutralized”).’ (p. 49)

<sup>24</sup> It cannot be said that Stein developed an ethics or a moral philosophy, although there is the basis for doing so in her writings on anthropology on the one hand and her value theory on the other. The difficulties of thinking together these elements are broached by John Drummond in his ‘Aristotelianism and Phenomenology’ published in the work edited by him cited above, pp. 15-45. Judith Parsons thesis: *Edith Stein: Toward an Ethic of Relationship and Responsibility*, Duquesne University 2005 could be a starting point for such an investigation, as indeed the many investigations of Stein’s philosophical, educational anthropology. It could be argued that education theory, because education is a moral act par excellence, implicitly contain an ethics or moral philosophy. See also: Bernhard Augustin: ‘Ethische Elemente in der Anthropologie Edith Steins’ in Beckmann-Zöller and Gerl-Falkovitz (eds.): *Die unbekannte Edith Stein: Phänomenologie und Sozialphilosophie*, Peter Lang, 2006, pp. 193-200. The article is based on a doctoral dissertation of the same name.

according to the motivating power it actually possesses as such. When all is counted I judge that it is after all not worth being angry about: it is good for what it is, say. This ability to compute motivation from various sources and refer it back to its own source, the value, to evaluate the value as such, is a capacity animals do not seem to have. They do not seem to be able to bring into focus a value as such, and hence they cannot reason, as this is precisely what we do when reasoning. When I add  $2 + 2$  I focus the value of 2, i.e. its motivating power, and I add it to 2 to get the motivating power of 4. Logic, as Husserl also thought, has the same fundamental structure as axiology; to Stein this is the case because both rely on the ability to evaluate motivating power.

This computing does not happen at the same pace in everyone.<sup>25</sup> Just as some have specific talents for mathematics, others have specific ‘emotional intelligence’, depth of interpretation, or wisdom, and hence we teach each other and learn from each other. Education is a systematic effort to bring values to the attention of the child growing up and to the adult in quest of deeper knowledge. ‘Moral education’ is of course specifically addressed at forming the character of the individual, and is therefore of particularly existential importance for the individual (and also of interest to society at large). The sciences of the humanities systematically explore motivational relationships and thus help us develop our ability to interpret the world, ourselves, and our social relationships. That, as governments should regularly be told, is of no small benefit to society: it is the basis for our collaboration and life together.

As a beginner (which we always remain in relation to values since they originate our power), where do I start to find out about what values to place higher than others? How do I start to learn to think about how to lead (in a very literal sense) my life?

This question is always already raised by the fact that I can take an attitude in relation to my feelings and sometimes feel I must do that. Why do I feel I must? I feel that the value motivating my attitude is higher than the one revealing itself in my emotions, and thus I form a value hierarchy: I place one as more important than another, or to put it in another way: I recognise in one value a higher motivating power than in another, and thus attempt to stem the motivation felt as expressing itself in my feeling by ‘standing on it’ with my attitude, taking command of myself. It is in this process that I look to others to see what they do in similar situations and attempt to learn from their experiences about the ‘real’ motivating power of the values, i.e. what happens when one opens one’s life to them and let them determine its direction.

In this process, however, insight into the motivating power is not the only factor at work. This is because I can access this power in two other ways, apart from direct motivation. 1. I can access this power by means of the psyche being ‘contaminated’ with it as it is transferred from one psychic network to another and in fact can make of those networks one operational unity. This happens when individuals form a mass, as at a football match, a rock concert or a mass political

<sup>25</sup> I know this by the means of empathy as explained above, and in general my ability to empathise gives much more scope to my experience of values, partly because it allows me to access values I did not know about otherwise and partly because it allows me to constitute the values as objective, i.e. as there for others as well.



meeting.<sup>26</sup> Dancers, lovers, sportsmen and physical workers learn to exploit this psychic unification, and perhaps mothers with their children. We can also form psychical unities with animals, as the rider does with his horse, or the dog or falcon do with the hunter. 2. I can also access motivational power by deciding to belong to a group founded on allegiance to certain values and being accepted into the group because of certain objective criteria. This happens when I am admitted to an association, granted access into the United States, purchasing a health insurance policy, or when I join the Society for Phenomenology in the Human Sciences.<sup>27</sup> In the first case of *sentient contagion* I am powered by values that may remain entirely foreign to me, which I might not know about at all, but at the price of not being conscious about what I want and do.<sup>28</sup> In the second case of *society forming* my decision links me to the association, but I need not myself be motivated by the values the association stands for. I can very well be a member of the communist party and not at all be motivated in my personal life by communist values, except that the organisation usually retains the ‘right’ to disengage itself from me if it esteems that my actions do not sufficiently express the values it stands for. The association retains a power over me, thus, over the expression of motivatedness in my life, in so far as I want to be a member and am a member precisely because I want to be. This power is parallel to (but very different from) that of the crowd, which, when I am immersed in it and part of it precisely because I am immersed, retains a power over my behaviour by switching off my own motivatedness and with it my own access to the depths of my soul. As we grow up these relationships are not transparent to us, and we do not always know where our motivation stems from, whether it is the expectations of my family, tribe or peers that determine me, or the form of the state in which I am raised. As teenagers we rebel against all social constraints to find out who we really are, i.e. what we really want to be motivated by, ourselves. That process in many ways lasts for the rest of one’s life, and thus there does not seem to be a closed or definitive account of what the deepest or the highest values are, although there does seem to be something we strive towards, a higher clarity. Of course, many accounts exist of what the highest values are, and we learn about them as we grow up – we might also commit ourselves to some of them. Such commitment, however, like the belonging to an association, cannot according to Stein be the final word about our valuation, as commitment, however heroic, relies on acts of will and not on the motivation itself. Only the motivation itself allows for community proper and hence for understanding the world without preconceived opinions about how it should be.<sup>29</sup>

As we experiment in social construction, i.e. as we attempt to find out what the world is to us, we come to identify three corresponding ways of being ‘us’: as mass, as association and as community. I can be part of ‘us’, because I am contaminated with the opinions and views that ‘we’ have: I am then referring to my peer group by means of remaining as they are and that usually means accepting

<sup>26</sup> PPH, 2. Treatise, II, §4 (b)

<sup>27</sup> PPH, 2. Treatise, II, §4 (c)

<sup>28</sup> Scheler mentions emotional infection (*The Nature of Sympathy*, Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1954 (repr. 1970 and 1979, pp. 14-7), and no doubt Stein is inspired by him in her account. Because he does not systematically distinguish psyche and spirit he does not see the networks these form as the reasons for our ability to sociate in these ways, however.

<sup>29</sup> Both association and mass predetermine our point of view, by expecting of us that we view the world as the majority does (as our group does) or as we agree to do.

social pressure without realising it; just thinking, doing and feeling whatever I am expected to.<sup>30</sup> I can also be part of ‘us’ because I have decided to, and because my decision has been accepted: in that case I feel obliged to think, do and feel as I am expected to, because I have in a certain sense decided to or promised to do so by entering the organisation and having obtained acceptance. And finally I can be part of us because of my own personal value response, which allows me to form one motivational movement with others motivated in the same way, not by emotional manipulation, coercion or agreement, but because it is thus. This latter form is the heart of all ‘we’s, meaning that a ‘we’ cannot persist without some element of this type of commonality present in it: the crowd has no shape and no limit, whereas the association has no life. Only the community has both structure and life.<sup>31</sup>

Having and sharing a worldview is also reliant on which subject of intersubjective constitution I take to be the decisive one, as this determines the structure of intersubjective constitution for me in this regard. ‘The world’ is constituted by (1) people constituting it in this way ‘because everyone else does’, (2) people constituting it in this way because they think they ought to have decided or ‘promised’ to constitute it as the chosen group prescribes it and (3) people constituting it willy-nilly as they are motivated to, according to their lights and naively, simply. I have to take account of this structure of intersubjectivity when I move in the world: in fact I know well how to distinguish a socialist by conformism from one who is a socialist by commitment, and both from the one who just is a socialist, without even perhaps being a member of the party.

Thus we can say about the values that they *are their motivating power* of which we always have expandable experience. Our reasons for evaluating certain values as highest can amount to social conformism, choice and the experience of the values themselves. At none of these levels are we able to communicate about them, were it not because we expressed ourselves by means of judgements, and thus expressed our conviction that values *are* such and such. Hedwig Conrad-Martius’ argument for the indispensability of the verb ‘is’ in the structure of judgement always convinced Stein that although we can methodologically reduce experience to view it as such, we cannot act without already having accomplished a judgement of existence, as we have to act on a motivation we take to *be* the one that determines us.<sup>32</sup> Maurice Blondel, in fact, had a similar argument from action for the practical necessity of

<sup>30</sup> A neighbouring German tradition, stemming from Gerda Walther, another of Husserl’s and perhaps Stein’s students, investigates ‘Kollektive Intentionalität’ (Collective Intentionality), to understand the ‘we’. See for example the volume by the same name, edited by Hans Bernhard Schmid and David P. Schweikard, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 2009

<sup>31</sup> The articles in the volume mentioned above suffer, when at all accepting the idea of a structure of intersubjectivity, from not sufficiently distinguishing motivation from the life of the psyche (Phillip Pettit, for ex., already in the introduction to his contribution slides from spiritual to mental to psychological seemingly making no distinction at all). The distinction of different types of commonality which relies on this distinction, is therefore not made. John Searle (p. 504 ff), to take another example, will take collective intentionality to rely on a biological fact (hence short-circuiting the phenomenological method), and identify collective intentionality as the psychological presupposition of social reality in its entirety (p. 511). His understanding of what he calls a ‘function’ relies on an implicit understanding of valuation, which he reserves the right to leave unexplained. Neither of these relies on Gerda Walther’s heritage. Schmid does, and hence the introduction to the volume, co-written by him, opens up the debate in an insightful manner.

<sup>32</sup> Hedwig-Conrad Martius: *Das Sein*, Kösel Verlag, München, 1957. Stein knew the argument in an earlier version.

ontology: that we have to act in the world shows us both that we are finite and that we cannot dispense ourselves from pretending we know what is the case.<sup>33</sup> In Stein this knowledge motivates a search: if we have to pretend, we might as well try to get our pretension as right as we can, or at least as we want it, since it is irreducibly our responsibility.

### III WHAT DOES THIS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT VALUES ALLOW US TO KNOW ABOUT OURSELVES?

First and foremost this knowledge about values, this phenomenological value theory, allows us to know that we are persons, as persons are subjects that are essentially value-related.<sup>34</sup> As we, and in so far as we, are motivated we are thus persons. This is not all that we are, as we are not exclusively spiritual: we are also of the type of psycho-physical individual which is called a human being.<sup>35</sup> This is manifest in the fact that we feel and that our direct access to the motivating powers, outside the psycho-physical person that we are, is very limited. Thus we are human persons, not angels, not gods, not animals, not things. We have something in common with all of these: the fact that we are persons with angels and God, the fact that we have a psyche with animals, and the fact that we also have a body that manifests us in the world is something we have in common with things.

Such value theory also allows us to know that there is something very decisive in our value response as it forms us interiorly, where it is experienced. I experience my own value as an I, as a person: I also experience the level of depth at which my personal value response allows me to express myself in my actions, corresponding to the height of the motivating power of the values accessed.<sup>36</sup> This brings me up against the fact that I cannot flee from who I have become in my own eyes, from myself, from what I have made of myself as a psycho-physical individual person in the light of the values I am (in fact) motivated by. From here stems the power of and need for forgiveness, which as life draws to a close becomes the only way for us to reconcile ourselves with what we have become by our own doing.

Such value theory allows us furthermore to know that there is nothing that is not important in one way or another, nothing that has no value and cannot be explored to find out about the essential relationships pertaining to being a person in the world. Thus, for example, it pertains to the person as such to be spiritual and capable of community because it is essentially motivated, it pertains to the human person as such to be embedded in other forms of commonality because of its structure as a psycho-physical individual person, it pertains to values to motivate spiritual subjects, to spiritual subjects to be motivated, to motivation to be felt in psychophysical individuals. All this pertains to human experience, to experience as we know it: attempting to describe experience as if it were not motivated will remain a stunted effort, manifesting our own disavowed motivation and

<sup>33</sup> Maurice Blondel: *L'Action* (1893), Paris, PUF, 1973

<sup>34</sup> PE, Chapter 4, 2

<sup>35</sup> PE conducts constitutional analyses of the psychophysical individual and the spiritual person (Chapter 3 and 4 respectively). This analysis is continued in *The Structure of the Human Person* (*Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, ESGA 14), in the process of being translated by Antonio Calcagno.

<sup>36</sup> PE, Chapter 4, 3

unwillingness to be all that we must be to do justice to our experience and analyse it as we experience it.

Stein's phenomenological value theory is based on experience shared by means of empathy. It develops an intuition that was already present in Husserl, but did not unfold because of the underdevelopment of his theory of empathy and his consequent understanding of transcendently reduced experience. Stein's phenomenology of motivation and the psyche allows for the phenomenological founding of the sciences of the humanities and of psychology as she investigates their proper objects. Moreover, Stein sees constitution itself as motivated and hence introduces hermeneutics into phenomenological analysis in a manner that allows us to see all experience, and all constitution as motivated and therefore interpretable, including the experience of nature and consequent differing world views. As such her phenomenology could be of significance to sociology, politics, history, anthropology, and literary criticism, to mention but a few fields.