

Introduction: Empathy and Collective Intentionality— The Social Philosophy of Edith Stein

Thomas Szanto¹ · Dermot Moran²

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Two issues have been at center stage in recent social philosophy, both in the analytic and the continental tradition: on the one hand, the nature of interpersonal understanding, or empathy; on the other hand, the possibility and nature of collective intentionality, shared emotions, and group agency. Indeed, there are not many who have investigated more thoroughly *both* these issues, and, even if not quite explicitly, their complex interrelation, than the philosopher Edith Stein (1891–1942). This special issue explores Edith Stein’s social philosophy, especially as expounded in her phenomenological writings from the 1910s and 1920s. In particular, it will investigate the systematic links between Stein’s pioneering work on empathy (Stein 1917), and her less known but certainly not less original theory of collective intentionality and community (Stein 1922).

One of the main aims of this special issue is to re-describe, re-contextualize, and critically assess Stein’s intriguing phenomenology of social reality in contemporary terms, and, specifically, in relation to the relevant current trends in the philosophy of (collective) emotions, social ontology, social cognition research, social psychology, and political philosophy.

If we look at the contemporary philosophical landscape, the issue of empathy and collectivity are typically dealt with separately from one another. Moreover, in stark contrast to Stein—and many other early phenomenologists such as Husserl, Gurwitsch, Scheler, or Walther, who all worked in such diverse areas within social philosophy as social cognition, social ontology or social epistemology, and with a few notable contemporary exceptions (Butterfill 2013; Tomasello 2014; Zahavi

✉ Thomas Szanto
mwt585@hum.ku.dk

¹ Center for Subjectivity Research, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark

² School of Philosophy, University College Dublin, Dublin, Ireland

2015a, b; Bianchin 2015; León, forthcoming)—authors writing on these topics usually do not cross their narrow disciplinary boundaries; it would typically be even different authors working on these issues, with relatively little exchange. Thus, on the one hand, there is an ongoing and lively debate on the epistemological and ontological problem of other minds, the development, nature and structure of our perceptual, cognitive, and emotional access to others, empathy's relation to morality, and, quite generally, the nature and structure of interpersonal understanding (e.g., Coplan and Goldie 2011a, b; Stueber 2013; Maibom 2014). In the past few decades, work on empathy and mindreading has been considerably fueled by developmental (Eisenberg and Strayer 1987; Hoffman 2000; Baron-Cohen et al. 2013), social psychological (Cialdini et al. 1997), and neuroscientific work (Decety and Ickes 2009; Singer and Lamm 2009), especially on the infamous neural correlates of cognitive models of imitation, so-called 'mirror-neurons' (Gallese and Goldman 1998; Iacoboni 2009), as well as by theoretical arguments deriving from the so-called 'theory of mind' debate (Davies and Stone 1995a, b; Nichols and Stich 2003; Malle 2004; Hutto and Ratcliffe 2007; Ratcliffe 2007).

Within the continental tradition, and especially within phenomenology, since Husserl has re-introduced the notion, the manner in which one person understands another, or engages with others has been usually treated under the general heading of 'empathy,' or *Einfühlung* (a term that originated in nineteenth-century German philosophical aesthetics and psychology; see Stueber 2006: 5–19; Coplan and Goldie 2011a, b). In recent years, there has been a welcome exchange between ToM and phenomenological treatments of the notion, and some even speak of a 'rediscovering empathy' in the context of the contemporary ToM debate (Stueber 2006).

On the other hand, one can witness not only a turn to the second person—a turn that has also been labeled the "You turn" (Eilan 2014) in psychology and philosophy—one could also speak of a 'We turn' in contemporary social philosophy and in some rapidly expanding segments of philosophy of science, action, psychology and cognition, as well as the cognitive sciences (Gold 2005; Rupert 2010; Chant et al. 2014; Huebner 2014; Tomasello 2014; Epstein 2015; Tollefsen 2015).

The possibility and nature of sharing of intentions, emotions and actions have been the object of increased attention within recent analytic philosophy, especially in a field that is now standardly referred to as 'social ontology'—a label, incidentally, that was first used by Husserl in a manuscript from 1910 (Husserl 1973: 102; see Salice 2013; Szanto, forthcoming a). For example, philosophers of mind and action have investigated in great detail how it is possible for individuals to intend jointly to do something, and eventually to cooperate in doing what they so intend. Discussions in social ontology have typically concentrated on what exactly makes collective intentionality *collective*. Also, much ink has been spilled on the question of whether collective intentions and agency are reducible to an aggregation of individual agents or whether we need to postulate some supra-individual bearer, a group mind, group or corporate person, or some group agent, of collective intentionality (see Rupert 2005, 2011; Huebner 2014; Szanto 2014). More specifically, philosophers of action tend to dwell upon the question of where to

‘tie in,’ as it were, the ‘jointness’ in collective engagements: in the intentional object or content of intentions, the ‘interlocking’ of interdependent intentional plans and shared goals (Bratman 1992, 1993, 2014), the ‘we-mode’ (Searle 1995, 2010; Tuomela 2007, 2013), or the ‘plural subject’ (Gilbert 1989, 2013) of collective intentions, or some other form of ‘rational integration’ individuals (Rovane 1998, 2014; Pettit 2003; List and Pettit 2011). On the basis of these different proposals, it has been aptly suggested to distinguish theories of collective intentionality in terms of *mode*, *content*, and *subject* accounts (Schweikard and Schmid 2013).¹

Now, turning to the phenomenological movement, the issue of intersubjectivity has indeed been discussed primarily within the ‘empathy’ paradigm, and within second-personal frameworks. But, in addition—and this is crucial—phenomenologists of such different alignments as Husserl, Scheler, Gurwitsch, Walther, or Hildebrand have all dealt not only with the second-person but also with the first-person plural perspective, or the so-called ‘we-intentionality’ (see Mulligan 2001; Schmid 2007, 2009; Salice 2013; Caminada 2011; Chelstrom 2013; Szanto and Moran, forthcoming; Szanto, forthcoming a, forthcoming b; León and Zahavi, forthcoming).

In the face of this very large amount of work dedicated to both empathy and we-intentionality and its affective, agential, or group personal variants, it is quite surprising that there has been hardly any attempt to relate systematically, let alone integrate, these diverse strands. This is all the more surprising if we consider that there are two trends in the contemporary discussion that would seem to lend support to the project of linking issues in empathy and social cognition to those in collective intentionality.

The first such trend of relating the second-person singular and the first-person plural perspective, can be seen in the so-called ‘interactive turn’ in social cognition research (De Jaegher and Di Paolo 2007; De Jaegher et al. 2010; Fuchs and De Jaegher 2009; Gallagher 2008a, b; Gallagher and Varga 2013; Schilbach et al. 2013; Satne and Roepstorff 2015; see, critically, Herschbach 2012; Michael et al. 2014; Overgaard and Michael 2015), and the related, rapidly increasing, but still rather narrow body of work exploring links between social cognition, joint attention and joint agency (Pacherie and Dokic 2006; Hobson and Hobson 2007; Butterfill 2013; Gallotti and Frith 2013; Tomasello 2014; Zahavi 2014, 2015a, b; Abramova and Slors 2015; León, forthcoming; see Szanto and Moran, forthcoming; Bianchin 2015). For instance, it has been argued that collaborating agents are better mindreaders, since they can draw on a number of situational cues afforded by the very interaction, which might otherwise be unavailable (Butterfill 2013); or that complex forms of we-intentionality and group agency conceptually require more basic face-to-face interaction and dyadic forms of empathy (Zahavi 2015a, b).

Secondly, in recent social psychology and the social neurosciences, a number of empirical studies have investigated how and to what extent group and, in particular,

¹ Notice that these different approaches are not necessarily incompatible. Rather, the different elements responsible for the collectivity of collective intentions (e.g., shared intentional contents, goals, modes, or subjects) will, partly, build upon another. For instance, a plural subject account à la Gilbert will typically integrate elements from a Bratmanian shared goal account, though not (necessarily) vice versa. We owe this insight to discussions with Hans Bernhard Schmid.

cultural and ethnic membership or one's social identity affect, modulate or even bias not only intergroup, but also interpersonal understanding. These biases not only concern pro-social behaviour; a number of studies have demonstrated that social identity biases also concern emotional expression and its decoding and, generally, empathic understanding, and responses, which are significantly differentiated along members/non-members or in-group/out-group divides (Bruneau et al. 2012; Eres and Molenberghs 2013).

Further, some have suggested that individuals may not only engage in reciprocal or mutual, but also properly interact or collectively perform acts of empathy. And it has also been inquired whether individuals who share an emotions may be collectively, or as a group, targets of empathy (see Salice and Taipale, forthcoming, and Szanto's contribution in this issue).

What is remarkable is that Edith Stein prefigured *both* these 'social turns' in her early phenomenological work. But furthermore, above and beyond both her discussions of empathy and of collective intentionality, Stein developed an account of a third form of social relation above and beyond—or, better intermediate between—empathy and collective intentionality, namely socio-communicative, or social acts (*soziale Akte, soziale Stellungnahmen*), such as promises, orders, requests (Stein 1922, 51 [58ff.], 175ff. [210ff.], 244 [292]; 1925, 41ff. [52ff.]). In her account, Stein followed Husserl, Scheler, and especially Reinach (1913), Stein's mentor and friend in Göttingen. These social acts and, in particular, promises, are, since Hume (1741: esp. 196f.), considered to be the glue of sociality and the foundation of politics. And it is within this context, and with regard to the specific social act of (collective) recognition or acceptance (*Anerkennung*) of the state by its citizens, that Stein has also dealt with political issues and the largest-scale real-life human sociality, the state (Stein 1925: esp. 37–50 [46–65]).²

To be sure, if we consider the political and socio-cultural context of Stein's personal and intellectual development in the 1910s and 1920s, the mass-mobilization and political movements in and around Great War and in the Interwar period, her interest in social philosophy is not surprising. Moreover, her thinking is deeply shaped by her remarkable biography—which can be seen, somewhat paradoxically, both as a paradigm and an exception of an early 20th century intellectual in Central Europe—i.e., growing up as in an assimilated Jewish family, being educated in Prussia, serving as a nurse in the First World War, being an early,

² However, consider that this type of social act (i.e., collective recognition), as some other examples of social acts Stein mentions (forgiving, allowing, etc.; 1922: 51) are not exactly 'social acts' in Reinach's (1913) sense; see Schuhmann's (1993) critical and very useful study of the relation between Stein and Reinach. Instead of there being simply a misunderstanding on Stein's part (see Imhof 1987: 195), however, we rather contend that Stein is closer to Husserl's, broader, use of the notions 'social' or 'socio-communicative' acts (*kommunikative soziale Akte; Akte der sozialen Wechselbeziehung*; e.g., Husserl 1950: 159; Husserl 1952: 194; Husserl 1953: 98ff.), which Husserl also labels "social I-Thou-acts and We-acts" (*soziale Ich-Du-Akte und Wir-Akte*; Hua 8: 137), which, then, are closer to Reinach's 'other-directed acts' (*fremdpersonale Akte*). Consider also related—but different—conceptions of recognition in contemporary phenomenological thought (Ricoeur 2005), and recent Neo-Hegelian or Frankfurt School social and political theory (e.g., Taylor 1992; Honneth 1992); see also James Jardine's contribution in this special issue). For an insightful study of Husserl's theory of the state, see Schumann (1988).

avid, and not quite unimportant, women's rights activist of her time,³ being refused a *Habilitation*, and ever struggling for academic recognition as both a Jew and a woman,⁴ converting to Catholicism (notably within an almost exclusively Protestant environment), and becoming a Carmelite nun, only to be killed in Auschwitz, and eventually becoming a 'martyr' and a Catholic saint.⁵

It is also noteworthy that Stein, together with Gerda Walther—besides Dietrich von Hildebrand (1930), Felix Kaufmann (1930, 1944), Tomoo Otaka (1932), Kurt Stavenhagen (1933), and Stein another most interesting phenomenological social ontologist (Walther 1923; see León and Zahavi, forthcoming)—and Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Stein's colleague and close friend from the Göttingen circle, represented, though not an official, a nonetheless influential circle of *women* philosophers within the early phenomenological movement. Moreover, Stein's pre-conversion social and political thought must clearly be seen as embedded into the broader socio-cultural and historical context of her time: that is, in the broadest brush-strokes, the redrawing of the geographic and cultural borders of her place of origin (of Breslau, on the margins of a former Empire, of Poland, Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire), the eventual unification of Germany, the revolutions of the socio-political thought of the early Twentieth Century in Western and Central Europe (Marxism and socialism, liberalism and anti-liberalism, etc.), or the emergence of phenomenology.⁶ As to the latter, she was immediately surrounded by a number of fellow phenomenologists in Göttingen working on similar issues, above

³ Stein was, for instance, commissioned to write a report for the Ministry of Education on the women's education and educational reform, and even giving radio talks on the topic in the early 1930s (see Stein 2000; Baseheart 1989; Calcagno 2007: 20, and 63–79).

⁴ A vivid illustration of the fact of being refused a *Habilitation*, and ever struggling for academic recognition as both Jew and woman is a hitherto unpublished letter that Husserl wrote, on May 29, 1919, sent from Freiburg to his colleague Georg Misch in Göttingen recommending Stein for a *Habilitation* there. The original document is archived in the Georg Misch Nachlass at the Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Göttingen (shelf mark: Cod. Ms. G. Misch 74); a copy of the letter can be found in the Husserl Archive in Leuven. The editors wish to thank Dan Zahavi for drawing our attention to this document, Thomas Vongehr from the Husserl Archives Leuven for making the transcript available, and the SUB Göttingen for the kind permission to reproduce it here:

Sehr geehrter Herr Kollege!

Fräulein Dr. Stein, welche nach ihrem Doktorat fast 2 Jahre lang als meine wissenschaftliche Assistentin tätig war, wünscht sich Ihnen vorzustellen und in Betreff der Möglichkeiten einer *Habilitation* in Göttingen Ihren Rat zu erbitten. Gestatten Sie mir nur soviel zu sagen, dass es sich dabei um eine wertvolle Persönlichkeit handelt, die ein gütiges Entgegenkommen verdient. Dass ich ihr nicht eine Meldung zur *Habilitation* in Freiburg anraten konnte hat, im Vertrauen gesagt, darin seinen Grund, dass in unserer philos<ophischen> Fakultät (die der Göttinger philologisch-historischen Abtheilung entspricht) bereits 3 Dozenten jüdischer Abstammung sind, und ich nicht erwarten kann, dass die Fakultät die *Habilitation* eines 4ten genehmigen würde. An sich hätte ich mir zur Unterstützung meiner Lehrtätigkeit eine so wertvolle phänomenologische Hilfskraft sehr gewünscht. Frl Stein hat sich auch als Leiterin eigener philosophischer Übungen sehr bewährt.
[...]

Ihr sehr ergebener
EHusserl

⁵ For a good recent study on Stein, religious martyrdom and the Shoah, see Silverman (2013).

⁶ For some very useful accounts of this socio-cultural and intellectual environment, see Imhof (1987), MacIntyre (2006), Calcagno (2007, 2014), Gubser (2014: 100–131), but also in the fascinating autobiography of Stein herself (2002), and the respective passages in the excellent intellectual biography

all by Reinach and Husserl, who was intensively working on the phenomenology of intersubjectivity from around 1911 onwards.

With this rough contextualization in mind, consider now, in a little more detail, the notions of empathy and collective intentionality.

Empathy, for Stein, is a *sui generis* form of intentional experience (see Stein 1917: 20 [11]) directed upon the mental, or better, the experiential life of others. Put differently, empathy is a genuine other-directed experience. So much—or, rather, so little—seems to be clear.⁷ There are, essentially, six issues which are not only contested among Stein scholars but are also the central moot points within the contemporary debate in phenomenology, social cognition research (see De Vignemont and Jacob 2012; Michael 2014), the debate on morality and empathy (Debes 2011; Prinz 2011; Maibom 2014), and also on recognition in recent social and political philosophy (see Jardine in this issue, and Summa's book review in this issue): (i) What type of mental act or experience is empathy (a form of intuition, cognition, perception, simulation, imagination, inference or transposition, etc.), or is it none of these but rather, precisely, a *sui generis* intentional act with its own irreducible essential structure? And what is the precise structure of empathic acts; do empathic processes have, for instance, any levels or layers (basic, re-enactive acts of empathy, etc.)? (ii) What is the relation of an empathizer's experience to others' experiences (a self-other overlap, affective identification, emotional sharing, etc.)? (iii) What type of mental states or experiences can empathy target or access (emotions, thoughts, etc.)? (iv) What is empathy's relation to self-experience and self-knowledge (co-variance, constitutional correlation, etc.)? (v) How should we measure or assess empathic accuracy (Ickes 1997)? (vi) Finally, what role does empathy play for morality, moral judgment, or pro-social behaviour?

In the contributions to this special issue, the focus will mainly be on the first three of these issues, and only touch upon the other three wherever relevant. Regarding the first question, a number of contemporary phenomenologists have recently defended the so-called 'direct perception' (DP) view of empathy (Gallagher 2008a, b, 2012; Zahavi 2010, 2011, 2014; Krueger 2012; Krueger and Overgaard 2012).⁸ According to DP, an empathizer is directly 'reading off,' as it were, another's mental states from her communicative and bodily behaviour, such as posture, gestures, modulations in tonality of speech, (facial) expression, etc. For example, I can directly perceive or experience another's shame, simply by seeing his blushing, and some additional situational cues, or environmental settings. For instance, I see that his skin color is not caused by his workout in the fitness-center. Indeed, most phenomenologists from Scheler (1926a) to Sartre (1943), and including Stein (e.g., 1917: 14f. [6f.], 93 [75]) (see Zahavi 2011; Dullstein 2013) more or less

Footnote 6 continued

of Scheler in Staude (1967); see also the critical contextualization of Stein's theory of collective intentionality and community within this historical and political context in the contribution of Caminada.

⁷ For two highly instructive papers on the lack of, and the need for, a precise definition or a broad-enough agreement on the notion of empathy, see Coplan (2011), and Michael (2014); see also Coplan and Goldie (2011a, b), and Maibom (2014).

⁸ Critically, see Jacob (2011). For cogent but different epistemological issues concerning DP and the problem of other minds, see Green (2010), Stout (2010), McNeill (2010, 2012).

unambiguously endorse DP.⁹ In the contemporary landscape, DP is typically brought up against the so-called ‘theory theory of mind,’ according to which, roughly, one is inferring or interpreting another’s mental life by applying or projecting some folk-psychological theory.¹⁰

Furthermore, in the context of the theory of mind debate, in an influential book, Stueber (2006) has introduced a pair of concepts that proves useful to see contextualize Stein’s account and recognize her originality. Thus, Stueber distinguishes between so-called “basic” and “reenactive empathy”. Basic empathy, is a “knowledge-poor” mechanism that allows a subject to “recognize the other as being same-minded in a direct perceptual manner” (Stueber 2006: 147f.), for instance, by reading off a basic emotions (e.g., anger), as opposed to more complex moral ones (forgiveness, guilt, etc.) from the facial expression of the target. Reenactive empathy, on the other hand, applies to cognitively richer domains of rational thought and action, and targets the prediction and explication of another subject’s thinking and acting. Thus, a subject A empathically re-enacts a given mental process M of another subject B if A ‘runs through’ or enacts M and those relevant states and processes with which M interacts, herself, and applies one’s own norms of theoretical and practical reasoning to those states and processes. As shall be clear from the contributions, Stein’s *multi-dimensional* account of empathy, Stein can not only accommodate both basic and re-enactive forms of empathy but also, in important ways, expands this typology in a number of interesting ways (see Dullstein 2013; Zahavi 2014: 131–141; Shum 2012; Jardine, forthcoming b). Moreover, as shall be clear from the contributions of Taipale and Jardine, Stein’s view that, in directly perceiving other’s mental states in empathy, one not only grasps isolated, “mental slices” (Taipale and Jardine, both in this issue), but rather always and already grasps certain motivational and rational relations holding between their mental and emotional states, cuts across Stueber’s distinction. Thus, for instance, I not only see *that* the child is angry, but, at the same time, that she is angry *because* she doesn’t get what she wanted.¹¹ I do not merely apprehend a proposition or a content but grasp a person’s mental state or emotional and their motivation and rationale in their context.

Regarding questions (ii) and (iii), there is an ongoing debate whether, or in what sense exactly, empathy involves or entails affectivity and, in particular, whether it involves or entails some form of affective sharing, or even some self-other identification, feelings of oneness (what Scheler called *Einsfühlung*) or merging (Cialdini et al. 1997; May 2011; Zahavi 2014; Zahavi and RoCHAT 2015; see Hobson and Hobson 2007). According to a currently dominant view, empathy is characterized as being “caused by sharing the emotions of another person,” or as the “simulation of the feelings of others” (Hein and Singer 2008: 153, 156), and is then distinguished from cognitive perspective taking, or mindreading. In a similar

⁹ Husserl, for one, certainly belongs to the more ambivalent phenomenologists concerning DP; see Zahavi (2014).

¹⁰ Some have argued that DP equally counts against simulation-theorist, see Krueger (2012), Gallagher (2001, 2008a, b).

¹¹ For a related argument, according to which in empathy one not only perceives animated bodies always, but always already certain basic ‘social types,’ see Taipale, forthcoming.

vein, it has been argued that empathy is essentially an affective state and that it requires “interpersonal similarity,” or a certain affective isomorphism between empathizer and the target subject’s psychological and mental states (Jacob 2011; De Vignemont and Jacob 2012). In contrast, building on phenomenological grounds, and especially on Husserl, Scheler, Schütz, Walther, and Stein some have questioned this assumption and argued—rightly, in our view—that, in empathy, one does not necessarily share any emotions, and that empathy is not affective state (Zahavi 2011, 2014), but rather a “basic sensitivity to and understanding of others” (Zahavi and RoCHAT 2015: 1) (though not necessarily a prosocial concern for others, or the German *Sympathie*). Moreover, it has been suggested that empathy might, instead of being identical to, rather be conceptually and psychologically required for emotional sharing (Zahavi 2014, 2015a, b). Others have taken a middle path, arguing that although empathy is not identical to affective sharing, empathy and emotions are, indeed, in various ways, and systematically, related to one another (Vendrell Ferran, forthcoming; Svenaeus 2014). Whichever side one takes in this debate, Stein’s two books on empathy and on community (Stein 1917, 1922), especially if taken together, represent a uniquely rich resource to tackle this issue.

Stein’s contribution to the philosophy of sociality is more often than not considered to be confined to the bounds of inter-personal relations, and, in particular, to her singularly detailed analysis of empathy in her famous dissertation (Stein 1917). However, sociality, for Stein,¹² is not exhausted by dyadic, face-to-face, or interpersonal relations. Rather, social reality encompasses a much more complex range of properties and facts, such as *collectives*, *societies*, various *institutional entities* (ranging from universities to nation states), and more or less cohesive *communities*, typically bound together by shared values, traditions, rituals, shared habits, collective memories, or even collective emotions. Accordingly, empathy is not the only, indeed not sufficient to fathom all aspects and dimension of sociality—at least, not ordinary, interpersonal forms of empathy, if there are any others in the first place (see Szanto in this issue; Salice and Taipale, forthcoming). But Stein not only distinguishes between different forms of socialities or being-together—as indeed most of her contemporaries, above all Scheler (1926a, b), Otaka (1932) and Gurwitsch (1931/1977), as well as previous generations of social psychologists and early sociologists such as Le Bon (1895), Tönnies (1935), Vierkandt (1928), or the unjustly forgotten Theodor Litt (1919) have—notably between “mass” or “crowd” (*Masse*), “society” (*Gesellschaft*), and “community” (*Gemeinschaft*). In her most thorough analysis of the multiple facets of sociality, Stein has also explored a number of further fine-grained distinctions regarding the life of communities, such as their integration, or ‘conjoining’ through “sentient” or “psychic” causality (*psychische Kausalität*), laws of motivation, and collective intentionality and volition, intriguing discussions of their various cognitive and affective dimension, such as their affective and spiritual ‘life-power,’ or their collective practices of imagination or their shared values. Also, we find in Stein a

¹² As, indeed, it is the case for almost all early phenomenologists from Scheler and Husserl through Walther, Stavenhagen, Kaufmann, Hildebrand, Otaka, to Gurwitsch or Schütz; see Szanto and Moran (forthcoming).

uniquely rich—even compared to Scheler’s (1926b)—account of the difference between the communal conjoining of experiences and emotional contagion (Stein 1922: 148–159 [175–191]), as well as the topical discussion of ideological propagation of ideas and “mass contagion” or “mass suggestion” (Stein 1922: 201–212 [241–261]).

Moreover, Stein offers an original account of the notoriously complex relation holding between individuals and community. In doing so, she provides one of the most sustained defenses of the key phenomenological insights about we-intentionality: according to this, highly integrated communities though have a mental, volitional and emotional life of their own that is irreducible to the respective individuals, such a communal, or supra-individual stream of experiences (*gemeinschaftlicher/überindividueller Erlebnisstrom*) is realized and actualized not in some ‘super-entity’ or some free-floating group mind above and beyond individual minds—the *bête noire* of anti-collectivists like Searle (1995, 2010)—but precisely in the rationally, practically, and phenomenally or emotionally integrated first-person plural, or we-perspective of those individuals. Put differently, what distinguishes Stein’s (and most other of her phenomenological contemporaries’) from contemporary social ontologists’ take on these issues is her insistence to take into account the cognitive, the intentional, the normative *as well as* the phenomenological integration of individuals when considering communities. Moreover, Stein considers these different dimensions of social integration all in relation to one-another, rather than in isolation as it is typically done in contemporary investigations, which would more often than not treat, for instance, collective emotions separately from collective intentionality or group personhood (see Szanto, forthcoming c). At the same time—even if only *in nuce*—Stein is well aware of the core distinctions which underlie much of the current debate in analytic social ontology, such as, for example, the above mentioned distinction between subject, mode, or content of collective intentionality, and she has important insights on each of these notion, indeed worth reconsidering (see, esp., the contributions of Burns, Caminada, and Szanto in this issue).

Ultimately, then, Stein’s work is particularly interesting as it affords us with an integrative framework for dealing with the phenomenology of collective intentionality and emotions, as well as that of social cognition, which is, in scope and depth, probably only comparable to that of her teachers and mentors, Husserl and Scheler (see Szanto, forthcoming a, forthcoming b).

Now, given that the last two decades have witnessed a growing philosophical interest in Stein, one might wonder whether we really need another collection of essays on her work. Yet, notwithstanding some important edited volumes, or monographic, general or introductory contributions (Collins 1942; Imhof 1987; Baseheart 1997; Sawicki 1997; Borden 2003; Feist and Sweet 2003; Lebech 2004, 2015; Beckmann-Zöllner and Gerl-Falkowitz 2006; MacIntyre 2006; Calcagno 2007, 2014, 2015), given Stein’s eminent position in the philosophy of the early twentieth century, and especially within the early phenomenological movement (Fetz et al. 1993), there is a rather considerable research lacuna when it comes to a systematic

exploration of her elaborate social philosophy (see, however, Baseheart 1992; Beckmann-Zöllner and Gerl-Falkowitz 2006, and esp. Calcagno 2014¹³).

Specifically, consider also that even the few existing work on Stein's phenomenology of sociality, in philosophy and adjacent disciplines, such as social cognition research or the philosophy of nursing, have, almost exclusively, and all-too narrowly, focused on her work on empathy in (Gallese 2001; Määttä 2006; Stueber 2006; Zahavi 1988, 2008, 2010; Dullstein 2013; Meneses and Larkin 2012; Shum 2012; Svenaeus 2014). However, not only is there no systematic account of Stein's theory of empathy *in relation* to her equally sophisticated and comprehensive phenomenology of sociality and community as conceived in her subsequent *Beiträge* (1922), let alone to her work *On the State* (1925). Furthermore, there has yet been hardly any systematic attempt to evaluate her works against the background of the current debates on collective emotions (von Scheve and Salmela 2014), agency and intentionality in social ontology (see, however, Caminada 2010), or contemporary trends in social and political philosophy (see Calcagno 2014), such as theories of recognition.

This special issue consists of six articles, three of which focus, primarily, on the notion of empathy, or interpersonal relations, while the other three target collective intentions, actions and emotions. Among these two sets of issues, and among the contributions there are, however, a number of thematic and argumentative threads, which are taken up and further developed in the respective articles. Thus, for example, three articles deal with Stein's complex phenomenological account of emotions and their relation not only to empathy, emotional recognition (Jardine), and collective emotions, but also to normativity, values, and genuinely collective emotions (Vendrell Ferran and Szanto).

In the opening essay, "Empathy and the melodic unity of the other," Joonas Taipale explores the phenomenological conception of empathy, and argues—with Stein—against a certain spotlight or "mental slice" view of our empathy. In contrast, Taipale stresses the embeddedness of mental states into a temporally and dynamically extended stream of experiencing, and, in terms of an analogy to musical perception, the melodic unity of our empathic grasp of them.

In her article "Empathy, Emotional Sharing, and Feelings in Stein's Early Work," Ingrid Vendrell Ferran addresses the, as we have seen, rather intricate question of how exactly empathy and feelings are related, and in what sense we might say that empathy, for Stein, targets others as "feeling beings" and/or involves *sharing* their feelings. In doing so, Vendrell Ferran re-assesses Stein's theory of affectivity, and, in particular, her emotional cognitivism, against the background of the Stein's early phenomenological influences and interlocutors, such as Pfänder, Scheler, or Geiger, as well as the current debate around the notion of affective intentionality (Goldie 2000).

Szanto's paper "Collective Emotions, Normativity, and Empathy: A Steinian Account" resumes the debate of affective sharing, and discusses it from a distinctively first-person plural perspective. He argues that Stein's theory affords us with an original alternative, and also yields a more fine-grained account of different

¹³ For a critical review, see Summa's book review of this work.

types of shared and collective emotions than currently available standard accounts. In particular, Szanto suggests a solution to the central epistemological and normative questions of affective sharing by outlining a suitably extended, non-dyadic, or collective form of empathy.

The next two papers further develop Stein's theory of communal experiences, as laid out in her 1922 *Beiträge*, and contextualize it within the contemporary debate on collective intentionality and group agency.

Thus, Tim Burn's article "On Being a 'We': Edith Stein's Contribution to the Intentionalism Debate" explores Stein's stance towards a central claim in contemporary social ontology, advanced most prominently by Gilbert (1989), namely intentionalism. This is the claim that individuals engaged in proper joint agency must be aware of doing so, and of conceiving themselves as part of the respective collectivity. In contrast, Burn argues that Stein's account plausibly allows for collectives that are not identical to the plural subjects of Gilbert's intentionalism. Rather, there may well be communities constituted by individuals who became members without any explicit intention to do something together, or who do not intend something in terms of joint commitments and under conditions of common knowledge members, but are nonetheless communities that can be proper subjects of collective intentionality.

In the following article "The Phenomenological Framework of Stein's Account of Communal Mind and its Limit Problems," Emanuele Caminada investigates, in further detail, the question of a supra-individual subject or 'bearer' of communal experiences, the tensions between the static and genetic analysis of the nature of a communal stream of experiences. He argues, critically, that although Stein's holistic understanding does not sidestep the individual but, rather, stresses the responsibility of the individual for the accomplishment of the life of the community, Stein's insistence on the possibility of experience of the community which 'lives' in the individual is indeed not wholly immune to the exaltations of the mass-movements of the Great War, the so-called *Kriegsideologie* of her time. Caminada thus demonstrated that Stein's social ontology is essentially political and deeply embedded into the context of her opposition to pre-war liberal individualism.

Finally, and still with a view to eminently political issues, the last contribution, James Jardine's paper "Stein and Honneth on Empathy and Emotional Recognition," takes up, once more, the issue of empathy and its relation to emotions. He discusses it within the context of contemporary theories of recognition and, in particular, Honneth's distinction between "elementary" and "emotional recognition". Jardine then argues that we can best make sense of this distinction by appealing, with Stein, to a distinctive class of emotions which are characterized by their targeting others, in their very and unique personhood, and which are grounded in empathy.

A comprehensive review essay rounds up the special issue, in which Michaela Summa critically engages with a recent monograph by a leading Stein scholar, Antonio Calcagno's book on the social and political philosophy of Stein (Calcagno 2014), a book that represents the very focus of this issue.

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