The perceived object in media-based empathy: applying Edith Stein's concept of Wortleib

Minna-Kerttu Kekki[1]

Abstract

The question of how other consciousnesses appear via media has forced us to re-think the classical phenomenological accounts of sociality. However, as the phenomenological account of empathy is very much centred around the perception of the other's living body, it has faced challenges in discussing the empathic experience in media-based contexts, where we cannot perceive the other's body, but something else, such as a screen or a text. In this article, I provide the concept for describing the perceived object in media-based empathy: a living textual body, based on Edith Stein's concept of *Wortleib* (a living word body) referring to words as "living," as bearers of meaning in her early work *On the Problem of Empathy* [*Zum Problem der Einfühlung*]. I divide the term *Wortleib* in two different cases—the empathic and non-empathic object—and thereby argue that, while the object of media-based empathic experience cannot be the other's body, it is an empathic *Wortleib*, a communicative empathic object. While Stein herself discussed media-based empathy merely in paper media, I demonstrate the unique usefulness of these concepts in analysing any media-based communication and thus the timeliness of her work in this respect.

Keywords Empathy · Media · Edith Stein · Expression · The other

1 Introduction

The question of how other consciousnesses appear via media has forced us to re-think the classical phenomenological accounts of empathy. Empathy [*Einfühlung*] as the perception of others and grasping their perspectives as *theirs* is a much discussed

✉ Minna-Kerttu Kekki
   minna-kerttu.kekki@helsinki.fi

1   Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

topic in phenomenology.[1] As Stein has put it already over one 100 years ago, empathy in this sense includes the "basic type of acts in which the lived experiences of the other are grasped."[2] However, as the phenomenological account of empathy is very much centred around the perception of the other's living body [*Leib*], it has faced challenges in discussing the empathic experience in media-based context, where we cannot perceive the other's body, but something else, such as a screen or text (Schmetkamp and Ferran 2020). The core of this problematic is the unclarity of *what* is the perceived object in the empathic experience by media.

In this article, I will provide the concept for describing the perceived object in media-based empathy: a living textual body, based on Edith Stein's concept of *Wortleib* (a living word body) referring to words as "living" as bearers of meaning in her early work *On the Problem of Empathy* [*Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, 1917]. I will do this by dividing the Steinian term *Wortleib* in two different cases— the empathic and non-empathic verbal object—and thereby describe and analyse the appearance of others' perspectives in media-based communication. I will argue that, while the object of media-based empathic experience cannot be the other's body, it is an empathic *Wortleib*, a communicative empathic object. While Stein herself discussed media-based empathy merely in paper media, such as letters, books, or newspaper, due to her writing more than 100 years ago, I will demonstrate the unique usefulness of these concepts in analysing any media-based communication and thus the timeliness of her work in this respect. At the same time, I will take the analysis and argumentation further than Stein did and probably would have done, while utilising the analytical tools provided in her work.

"Media," in the context of media-based empathy, refers to a means of communication other than our physical bodies, such as letters, internet-based social media, books, video, or audio material. Defined like this, media as a phenomenon is essentially related to our physicality and spatiality; the core feature of media is that it mediates something from somewhere else where we are not physically present. As Bernard Waldenfels has put it, the defining feature of media-based communication is that others appear physically absent while communicating to or with us. The idea of "telepresence" is, according to him, rather tele*absence*, as the other or others do not appear as being here with me, but physically absent, while their communicative acts appear to me (I will further discuss Waldenfels's theory in the conclusions).[3]

The question of media-based empathy is important for understanding our capabilities of experiencing others and the world through media. Here, my aim is to *describe* this experience, not to justify its possibility. As I will suggest, based on previous arguments in this field, we have good grounds to assume that media-based empathy is a sensible topic for phenomenology and that it differs from the physical-presence empathy in crucial aspects.[4] Even though empathy often is conceived as a low-level

---

[1] E.g., Calcagno (2014); Depraz (1995); Heinämaa (2010); Husserl (1973); Jardine (2014); Osler (2021); Stein (1917/2008); Szanto (2020); Zahavi (2014).

[2] Stein (1917/2008, p. 13–14) In German original: "Grundart von Akten in denen fremdes Erleben erfasst wir."

[3] Waldenfels (2009, 55).

[4] Kekki (2022); Krueger and Osler (2022); Osler (2020); (2021); Svenaeus (2021).

starting point for experiencing larger social and political objectivities,[5] it is relevant to ask, what kind of empathic experiences media-based communication allows. Further, understanding the media-based empathic experience provides us deeper insights into social experiences in more general and the patterns of media-based communications in the 21st century.

In the following, I will first present the state of the contemporary discussion of media-based empathy. That will function as the background and the starting point of my argument. Then, I will explain the concept of *Wortleib* in Stein's work. Lastly, I will analyse media-based empathy as being constituted by something appearing as an empathic *Wortleib*, an indicator of another consciousness. In the conclusions, I will justify my use of Stein's work and compare the object of media-based empathy with the empathic experience, where the subject perceives the other's body in a shared physical space.

2 Contemporary phenomenological investigation of empathy in media-based context: pessimistic and optimistic accounts

In phenomenology, empathy in general means to experience another consciousnesses. The original German term, *Einfühlung*, means something like "intropathy" or "feeling into,"[6] literally immediately and intuitively feeling or knowing the other as another consciousness, who has their own perspective on the world and maybe on "me." Empathic experience in this sense means to grasp other consciousnesses as other, "not-me," whose perspective "I" cannot grasp as they have it. In Husserl's terms, if I were to have the other's experience as they have it, we would not be two different consciousnesses but one.[7] Still, I can have an understanding about their aims, actions, or what they perceive. As Stein has formulated it, empathy is a type of "original" [*originär*] acts, as they are performed by the empathizing subject, but at the same time empathy is a type of act whose content is not originally given [*nichtoriginär*]:[8] it is the lived experience of the other that I grasp in empathy, and not mine.[9]

In the wider field of the contemporary theory of empathy, the phenomenological account is also called the *direct perception account*, contrasted to the two well-known contemporary readings of social cognition, that is, *theory–theory* (TT)[10] and *simulation-theory* (ST).[11] The proponents of the direct perception model criticise TT and ST for their common assumption, the so-called "unobservability principle:"[12] the idea that the intentions, beliefs, desires and emotions of others cannot be *experi-*

---

[5] Calcagno (2014); Szanto and Moran (2015).

[6] Calcagno (2014); Depraz (1995).

[7] Husserl (1952).

[8] Stein (1917/2008, p. 15–16, 20).

[9] Stein (1917/2008, p. 20); see de Vecchi and Forlè (2020).

[10] Baron-Cohen (1995); Gopnick and Wellman (1994); Leslie (1987).

[11] Goldman (2006); Gordon (2005); Gallese (2001).

[12] Krueger (2012; p. 149).

enced by us in a direct way; the experiences of others are perceptually inaccessible to anyone but their owner; the fact that we cannot live such experiences in the same way in which the subjects of those experiences can makes our access indirect and somehow mediated by other kinds of processes.[13] In contrast, contemporary defenders of the direct perception approach refer to classic phenomenology[14] in arguing that, quite often, we do have direct perceptual access to the mentality of others. For this phenomenological account, others and their minds are not inevitably hidden from the observer but can be grasped directly, without necessarily relying upon extra-perceptual cognitive mechanisms, such as inferences and simulations.

Many of the phenomenological arguments concerning empathy in media-based context are based on the classical phenomenological analyses according to which our relations to the world and others are enabled by our bodies.[15] In classical and contemporary phenomenology, it is often argued that the perception of another person is based on the perception of their living body; the other consciousness appears to the subject in their spontaneous (i.e., not-mechanic) bodily actions and expressions.[16] In media, however, we, by definition, do not perceive others' physical bodies here and now, but only traces of them, such as pictures, messages, or videos. This has motivated several kinds of different arguments about whether the communicative experience in media-based contexts can be empathic or not. Next, I will present the main lines of these arguments.

One major line of argumentation in this field is what I call the *pessimistic* account on media-based empathy. Proponents of this line of argumentation are phenomenologists such as Thomas Fuchs, Hubert Dreyfus, and Max van Manen. Outside phenomenology, for instance, psychologist Sherry Turkle has argued accordingly.[17]

Shortly put, van Manen argues that even video calls simply do not provide the experience of an in-person encounter, as they do not really enable those engaging with them to look into the eyes of the other in the sense of real eye contact.[18] It is possible to look directly into the camera on the computer so that the other "sees you looking directly at them (or so it seems)—but there (in the camera lens-eye) you will not meet the pupil of the other."[19] The encounter via media can never be quite the same as when sharing the same physical space.

Further, Fuchs argues that, in media-based communication, the empathic experience of the other person is imaginative, because we do not perceive the other person's physical body: "Disembodied [i.e., media-based] communication…shifts the modes

---

[13] de Vecchi and Forlè ([2020](), p. 764). As de Vecchi and Forlè ([2020]()) argue, both TT and ST can be interpreted as (explicitly or implicitly) adopting this principle: "The mental lives of others must be inferred via the adoption of a theoretical apparatus (e.g., folk psychology theory), or simulated by the observer using his/her own mind as a model of the other's. In neither theory, others and their experiences are present and directly given to the observer" (de Vecchi and Forlè [2020](), p. 762).

[14] e.g., Husserl ([1973]()); Scheler ([1913/1923]()); Stein ([1917/2008]()).

[15] e.g., Husserl ([1976b]()); Merleau-Ponty ([1945/2012]()).

[16] e.g., Fuchs ([2016]()); Heinämaa ([2010]()); Husserl ([1952]()); ([1973]()).

[17] Turkle ([2017](); p. 20).

[18] Van Manen ([2018](); p. 673); see Hyde and Rouse ([2022]()).

[19] van Manen ([2018](); p. 674–675).

of empathy towards the fictional pole at the risk of merely projecting one's own feelings onto the other."[20] For Fuchs, empathy and interaffectivity are related to our physical bodily interaction.[21] Therefore, I cannot be affected by and empathise with the actual other by media but rather, I am affected by my own projections of the other and have a pseudo-empathic experience. Fuchs divides empathy in two levels: the *primary empathy* as perceiving the other's bodily expressive behaviour, which is mainly based on intercorporeality and interaffectivity, and a level of *cognitively extended empathy* informed by perspective-taking and other cognitive means.[22] While Fuchs does allow empathic experience in media-based communication, he does this only in terms of a higher-level empathy, in the form of imaginary self-transposal to "in the other's shoes," so to say.[23]

Dreyfus's argument is, like Fuchs's, based on the classical-phenomenological argument that for empathy, we need to perceive the other's physical body. In his book *On the Internet*, Dreyfus claims that in the digital media, we leave behind our embodied selves and thereby lose some of our crucial capacity to engage with others genuinely and to learn from them anything else than solely mechanic action.[24] In response, Dave Ward has presented the quite obvious counter-argument that, based on the same phenomenological sources, we simply cannot leave our bodies behind, because we are essentially embodied beings and therefore all our experiences are bodily conditioned.[25] However, the solution to the problematics Dreyfus poses is not this simple. As Tanja Staehler argues, in media, we can appear only as modified representations of ourselves. Our corporeality creates definite constraints on communication that the media seems to overcome.[26] Still, the other is not there in the media, but somewhere else.[27] As Staehler concludes, when encountering others in the media, the "depth of encounters with others in flesh"—our original and true way of being—is absent.[28]

An opposite line of phenomenological argumentation is what I call the *optimistic* account on media-based empathy. Proponents of this line of argumentation are, for instance, Lucy Osler, Joel Krueger, Fredrik Svenaeus, and Ward. This line of argumentation, too, is often based on the phenomenology of our bodily existence.

Svenaeus utilises Stein's analysis of empathy in arguing that genuine social and empathic experiences by media are possible at least in video calls, as in these situations, we perceive the other's body as moving and expressing itself spontaneously, which for Stein—as well as for Husserl, her close collaborator—is a central feature of something appearing as another conscious being.[29] However, by utilizing Peter

---

[20] Fuchs (2014; p. 152).

[21] Fuchs (2016; p. 196).

[22] Fuchs (2019; p. 240).

[23] see Decety (2005); Fuchs (2014); (2017).

[24] Dreyfus (2008; p. 34).

[25] Ward (2018; p. 10).

[26] Staehler (2014; p. 235).

[27] see Waldenfels (2009).

[28] Staehler (2014; p. 237).

[29] Svenaeus (2021; p. 90).

Goldie's analyses, he also argues that empathy may be possible, in the form of imaginative empathy, when encountering others' personal stories, in which we may grasp the other's perspective not through the perception of their body but through imagining being in the position their text describes. The idea that empathy in media-based communication other than video calls is imaginative comes close to Fuchs's view of media-based empathy as imaginative, but without assuming that such empathy would be close to fictional.

Osler's argument is the most optimistic in this context. She clearly argues that we can empathetically perceive others and their experiences in certain online situations, as the lived body can enter online space and is empathetically available to others there.[30] Drawing upon the phenomenological distinction between the physical, objective body and the expressive, lived body, she highlights that empathy involves perceiving the other's expressive, lived body, and thereby shows that the lived body is not tied to the physical body and that empathy can take place outside of face-to-face interactions.[31] Elsewhere, using Gerda Walther's phenomenological framework of communality, she suggests that habitual communal experiences and actual we-experiences online allow us to circumvent questions about embodiment online and that a fully-embodied interaction is not always required for we-experiences.[32] That is, her argument suggests that empathic experiences and even communality would not require being in shared physical space.

In my previous work, I, too, have contended that the genuineness of the empathic experience is not necessarily restricted to the physical presence of another person, and that perceiving the other's physical body is not necessary for an empathic experience.[33] In some contexts, it suffices to perceive a message of some kind from others, either in the public or the private sphere. By contrast, it is not given that we can always have an empathic experience even when others are physically present.[34] I do not deny the constitutive role of our bodies in our being in the world or being together, but I do state that our bodily nature of being does not hinder empathic experiences in media-based communication. Even though both Stein and Husserl argue that our experience of other persons are based on their corporeal manifestations, and they assign to embodiment a crucial role in the constitution of our experiences of others, their analyses do not explicitly limit our social relations to body-to-body interactions or to physical presence. Instead, as James Jardine points out, for Husserl, the comprehension of the other's subjectivity, in its own concrete and intentional directedness, can be allowed a certain priority over the sensory experience of the other's body. For Husserl, our experience of others includes, as an essential component, a comprehension of what cannot be sensuously provided—namely the other's subjective life, manifested in their expressions.[35]

---

[30] Osler (2021; p. 5).

[31] see Kekki (2020); (2022).

[32] Osler (2020; p. 570).

[33] Kekki (2020).

[34] see Fanon (2008); Fuchs (2019); Heinämaa (2010); Jardine (2014).

[35] Jardine (2014; p. 280).

In addition to the clear accounts of empathy in media-based communication, there is something called fictional empathy. That is, empathic experience, where the intended object is a fictional character. Basing their work on Stein's analysis on empathy, de Vecchi and Forlè argue that we can have empathic experiences even towards fictional characters and that the differences between empathy with real people and empathy with fictional characters are not structural but just qualitative. For them, empathy varies according to the variation of its parts. Thus, there are different acts of empathy within the empathy-type, corresponding to different *fulfillment degrees* of empathy. They conclude that in both fictional and real-people empathy is a direct act of perceiving others and their lived experience.[36] While they do not take a stand on whether empathic experiences in media are genuine or not, their Steinian account of fictional empathy suggests that the Steinian and, more widely, the phenomenological account of empathy allows for an analysis of empathic experience in media as genuine.

Bringing together the optimistic account of media-based empathy and de Vecchi and Forlè's idea of empathy as a variety of different acts, we have good grounds for assuming—at least as a hypothesis—that the idea of an empathic experience in media is reasonable within the phenomenological account. In spite of not sharing the physical space with others, we do not necessarily have to claim the empathic experience to be imagined or ingenuine. Instead, we can take it to be a variation of the empathy-type, a real empathic act but in the context of media-based communication. We can also call it "imaginative" or "virtual" empathy following Fuchs,[37] but, like Svenaeus, without assuming that media-based empathy would be fictional.

3 *Wortleib* in Stein's work

If we accept the idea of empathic experiences in media-based communication, then the question arises, what is the empathic object of perception in such an experience. Surely, to be (non-fictional) empathy, the perceived object must be the other person or what appears as another person, but in a different manner than in perceiving the other's actual body—while not perceiving the other in front of me, I perceive the other's expression in the form of (written or oral) speech, language, or pictorial "gestures" like photos, memes or emojis. For characterizing this object as an empathic expressive textual body, I will first present Stein's concept of *Wortleib* as a possible means for the analysis of the perceived object in media-based empathy. For this, I will apply the analysis that Stein offered in her early work *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*. This work bears many similarities with Husserl's investigations of empathy he had accomplished prior to 1917, but it also involves many original points, among which is the concept of *Wortleib*, which Stein contrasts with other related concepts such as *Signalkörper* and *Wortkörper*.[38] After accomplishing this, in the next Sec-

---

[36] de Vecchi and Forlè (2020, p. 764).

[37] Fuchs (2021), pp. 83–97.

[38] As Calcagno argues, Stein's notion of empathy is merely one aspect of her philosophy of sociality, see Calcagno (2014; p. 109). In this article, though, I concentrate on empathy.

tion, I will present my application of this terminology in characterizing the object in empathic media-based experience.

In her work on empathy, Stein investigated the constituents of complex empathic experiences, such as the perception of another's expressive acts.[39] While she starts by drawing from Husserl's analysis of the relationship between word and meaning in *Logical Investigations* and Lipps's distinction between signs, expressions, and symbols, through critiquing their analyses (especially Lipps's concept of "symbol") she develops her own view. According to her, we may perceive expressive acts, such as blushing of shame, in which we, so to say, see a feeling "through" the expression ["*dort erblicke ich das eine durch das andere*"]. The psychic is thus perceived in or *through* the bodily expression. Yet, these two aspects of the expression are, for Stein, experienced as an intelligible one.[40]

Like the symbolic expressive acts such as blushing of shame, words are, according to Stein, intermediate points to their meaning.[41] For Stein, we can express our psychic states by words, but they are a different kind of expression than bodily expressions: "Should someone say to me that he is sad, I understand the meaning of the words. The sadness I now know of is not an 'alive one' before me as a perceptual givenness…In one case I am in the apophantic sphere, the realm of propositions and meanings, in the other case in immediate intuitive contact with the objective sphere."[42] Both cases are, still, cases of empathic experience. In the case of communicative words, the empathic object is constituted together with the meaning of the words, such as "being sad."

For Stein, the factor that could be empathised in a word or in a text is the expression of the sense the word or the text bears. Stein conceives of language as such as expressive.[43] For her, language is not only symbolic; words and sounds do not only point to or represent another reality, for example, a sign ordering us to halt before an intersection. Following Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, Stein maintains that language can communicate senses [*Sinn*] of things and reality without any necessary mental picture or representative image.[44] We can grasp this sense immediately in the expressive force of the word.

For this analysis, Stein distinguishes the mere physical body of the sign [*Signalkörper*] and the expressive body of the word [*Wortleib*] which can be translated as "the living word body" (also translated as "verbal living body" by W. Stein in the English translation). For Stein, there is no such thing as a mere physical word body, *Wortkörper*, because a verbal expression could not exist without also being a bearer of meaning.[45] These concepts entail the distinction between *Körper* and *Leib* (the physical body and the lived body) that Husserl used to distinguish the mere

---

[39] Stein (1917/2008, p. 85).

[40] Ibid., p. 88.

[41] Ibid., p. 89.

[42] Ibid., p. 92.

[43] Stein (1917/2008, p. 92).

[44] Calcagno (2014; p. 76).

[45] Stein (1917/2008, p. 91).

physical thing from the living, experiencing, and self-experiencing bodily subject.[46] Thus, *Wortleib* regards the word as if living—referring to the Husserlian concept of *Leib* as the *lived* body—in the sense that the word is not mere physical matter, but metaphorically put, *does* something, in the sense of pointing towards an object other than itself.[47] The living word body—*Wortleib*—is not to be confused with the actual lived body, though. Stein characterises the latter, somewhat similarly to Husserl, as "having fields of sensation, being located at the zero point of orientation of the spatial world, moving voluntarily and being constructed of moving organisms, being the field of expression of the experiences of its 'I' and the instrument of the 'I''s will."[48]

When Stein distinguishes between *Signalkörper*, *Wortkörper*, and *Wortleib*, she emphasizes the fact that each word puts forth, in one way or another, both a physical side and a meaning, unlike in the case of signals, e.g., the beeping noise, which may have multiple functions but, in a particular context, has a fixed meaning.[49] Stein utilised the concept of the living word body to explain the general nature of words as bearers of meanings, not as physical things. For her, due to the nature of the word, no word operates as a physical body or a mere material thing, because a word, as a word, always means something. Therefore, each word is a living word body—that is, a body as a bearer of meaning, as expressive.[50] In our everyday experiences, when words appear to us, they always involve both the lived word body as the expressive feature of the word as well as the physical word body as the material feature of the word.

In other words, Stein utilizes these terms to argue that there cannot be a mere *Wortkörper* in lived experiences of words. For her, there is no such actually experienced thing as a mere physical word body because every word is a bearer of meaning, and thus the moment a material body (ink on paper, noise, etc.) is perceived as a word, it appears as a living word body. (One might counterargue this by bringing up the case of meaningless words, but in the Steinian sense, there is no such thing as an actual meaningless word, but a 'meaningless word" is a mere signal). Next, I will apply these terms in characterizing the object in empathic media-based experience as an empathic *Wortleib*.

4 WLe and WLne: empathic and non-empathic *Wortleib*

While Stein only utilizes the term *Wortleib* briefly to make the described point about words as being always bearers of meaning—practically, always *Wortleib* and never a mere *Wortkörper*—these terms are more fruitful than she seemed to realise as a

---

[46] e.g., Husserl (1976b).

[47] Stein (1917/2008, p. 55).

[48] Stein (1917/2008, p. 56–57).

[49] Ibid., p. 91.

[50] It is notable that Stein's analysis comes somewhat close to Austin's philosophy of language, Saussure's structuralist distinction of linguistic factors, or Peirce's pragmatism. However, Stein emphasised the experiential level of language in phenomenological terms and especially in the context of experiencing other consciousnesses, which makes her analysis different from these other philosophers of language.

means for analysing the appearance of another consciousness via media. This holds especially to the concept of *Wortleib* referring to words appearing as expressive. By extracting these concepts from their original context as mere analytical tools for Stein's argument about the appearance of words, we can utilise these terms to designate objects of the lived experience of others in media versus mere information.[51]

Notably, Stein does argue that, in addition to direct perception, we can contact others through their communicative work, such as letters and photos.[52] However, she did not apply the term *Wortleib* in this argument in the manner I suggest, even though that would have had—as I am hopefully able to demonstrate—a clarifying effect.

In the following, I will present the potential of the term *Wortleib* in describing the perceived objects in media-based empathic experience by dividing it in two; the empathic *Wortleib*, abbreviated as WLe, and the non-empathic *Wortleib*, abbreviated as WLne. WLe refers to the object appearing empathically as someone's expression and WLne appears as a mere verbal object. I will argue that, while the object of media-based empathic experience cannot be the other's body, it is, as WLe, an expressive empathic object other than the person's body. Such a description of the object of media-based empathic experience is compatible with both the fictional and non-fictional empathy introduced above.

4.1 Distinguishing WLe and WLne

Based on Stein's analysis of language as expressive, we can assume that words are always bearers of meaning. However, by diving the concept of *Wortleib* further in two different objects of experience, we can see how these terms can be used in investigating the appearance of communication versus mere non-personal content or information. That is, the media-based empathic experience versus non-empathic experience of media. Here, the term *Wortleib* can be extended to all non-bodily communicative content such as pictures, video, or audio. Thus, we take:

a. non-empathic *Wortleib* (WLne) to designate the verbal body that is experienced as non-personal content or information, not as *someone's expression*, as lexical, and
b. empathic *Wortleib* (WLe) to designate the verbal body experienced as an expression *by someone*, expressing the other's perspective.

---

[51] Here, I do not discuss the communicative media produced by a collective or a corporation. I suggest these cases could be discussed in the Steinian manner as personalities of higher-order, but as there is no consciousness in a higher-order personality (see Stein 1922), we also cannot have empathic experiences towards such objects, if empathy is defined as an experience of other consciousnesses. In the Steinian context, it is remarkable that, for Stein, empathy is absent on higher levels of intersubjectivity, that is, on the levels of community and society. This becomes relevant, when thinking of the wider audience and discussions in media in the political context. I would suggest that, based on Stein's argument of empathy being part of only our experiences of another individual—not a community or other type of group—in the political discussion in media, both empathy and other forms of intersubjectivity may be constitutive of the experience; an opinion letter or a political statement appears to me as put forth by another person, while, as a context or as a background, also the public sphere and the society appear to me.

[52] Stein (1917/2008, p. 131).

While in both cases (a) and (b), words are bearers of meaning, in this way, they refer to two different objects of experience: (a) a verbal content that is *not someones* expression, and (b) *someones* verbal expression. For example, the words "type" and "search" on my computer screen are WLne in this sense because they appear to me as mere words, not as anyone's expression (as they are words and thus bearers of meaning, they still count as *Wortleib* in the Steinian framework and not as *Signalkörper*). When I hear the same words expressed by my friend in our discussion, either in her physical presence or by media, they are, in my experience, WLe, because they are part of (what appears to me as) her expression as another experiencing subject.

By this strategic distinction, these two terms come to refer to two different kinds of perceiving words (or other non-bodily communicative contents):

a. perceiving words non-empathically as mere words not expressing anyone's experience.

and

b. empathically perceiving words as someone's expression of themselves and their experiences.

Roughly, the term "expression" refers to the acts by which another person tells or shows us something, whether on purpose or by accident. Husserl clarifies the concept of "expression" as follows: "I 'say' something to him, I 'express myself,' I accomplish an expressive movement or a verbal externalisation or I accomplish an outwardly visible, noticeable deed, that is appropriate to awaken, in the other, the consciousness that I have the intention to make something known to him."[53] In other words, by experiencing another's expression, we can grasp some aspects of what the other is going through. For example, we can perceive the other's expression of their feelings through their smile, their voice, or their words.

In this way, WLne refers to case (a) and WLe refers to case (b). That is, WLe as an empathic lived word body is the object perceived as a mediated verbal (in the wide sense) expression by someone pointing at their experience with which I, the subject, can empathise, such as a text message, opinion letter, an emoji, or a voice mail sent by another person. It is not the actual living body of the other, but the other can still be seen as if "in" or "behind" the expression, having put forth that particular expression and providing something of themselves in that expression. In perceiving a verbal object as someone's expression, it appears as someone's particular expression and no one else's, even if we do not know the name, the looks, or other attributes of that person. For example, anonymous confessions are always someone's confessions, not confessions in general as examples or abstractions, even if we did not know who exactly the person doing the anonymous confession is. By contrast, the mere term "confession" as such is a WLne, not expressing someone's experience. In other words, the expressiveness in WLe comes to be, not the mere expressiveness of the

---

[53] Husserl (1973; p. 167).

word as such, but the expressiveness of the *person* putting forth and using the words (or other media tools) to express their perspective on the world.

The difference does not lie in the kinds of contents (words, emojis, pictures, etc.) that are used, but in how the contents *appear to the subject*; whether they appear as someone's expression in which the contents are so-to-say "living" to the subject, or they appear as non-personal information in which the contents are so-to-say mere information. Thus, without involving empathy, the object would appear as mere non-personal informational content. Sure, this implies that the same content may, in different experiences of that content, appear as non-personal content, and, in other cases, as someone's communication to me or to a wider audience. For instance, seeing a meme online may appear as a mere funny picture with a text not indicating another consciousness, but, when seeing the same meme in social media put forth by a particular user, it may appear to me as her expression of her current feelings, comparable with her simply telling me how she feels. To be precise, in the latter case, I do not empathise with the meme as such (unlike in the case of fictional empathy with characters), but with the user putting forth the meme, expressing herself by the means of that meme.

The distinction of WLe and WLne as empathic and non-empathic verbal objects (or other meaningful contents) in experience does not even necessarily relate to the original production process of the object. Stein further clarifies the nature of verbal objects by arguing that the verbal expression can be released from its original subject, which makes it a non-personal text appearing as non-empathic: "The expression released from the connection with what is expressed is no longer the same object."[54] That is, when a verbal expression is separated from the expressing subject, it is no longer part of that person's expression, but something else, such as an abstraction or an example—that is, mere non-personal information, in our newly contextualised Steinian terms, a WLne. For example, announcements about the next station on a bus can be recorded by an actual person but utilised by separating the recording from the original person. In this case, the words do not appear to the hearing subject as expressions of that person but instead as mere information about the next station.

Accordingly, perceiving a word does not necessarily involve empathic experience. As Stein clarifies this: "Only if I want to have the intuition on which the speaker bases his statement and his full experience of expression, do I need empathy."[55] That is, another person *may* appear to be externalizing or communicating something verbally, and possibly communicating that to me. In this case, the contents point out something, the foreign consciousness, the other person's experience. They do not appear as something objective, "but at the same time are the externalization or the announcement of the person's meaningful act as well as of the person behind, such as perception."[56] When I suddenly hear the bus driver saying that the bus is on an exceptional route today, from the same speakers that gave the pre-recorded announcements just a moment before, the words appear to me as a message from the bus driver—as WLe—and not as mere words without a foreign consciousness, as WLne.

---

[54] Stein (1917/2008, p. 92).

[55] Ibid. p. 82.

[56] Ibid., p. 82–83.

4.2 WLe as an object of perception

To clarify, when it comes to the written or recorded communication, someone like Fuchs might argue that we are talking about fictional empathy, an "as if" consciousness of the other that results from an imaginative act.[57] However, based on de Vecchi and Forlè's description of fictional empathy as intending a fictional character empathically, there is an essential difference between perceiving something *as a fictional* character and perceiving something *as real communication* by a *real* other person.[58] While in both experiences there must be some kind of an imaginative act included, they are not the same experience. To empathically intend a fictional character, I must be able to imagine their perspective and feelings, and to perceive something as a communication of another person via media, I must be able to have the mental image of the other doing the communication. Moreover, both may include the projection of one's own feelings onto the other. However, perceiving something as fiction does not involve a constitutive aspect of being related to someone in the world, to another actual consciousness. By contrast, when perceiving something as another real person communicating to me via the third matter—the medium—I experience the shared world together with them. Moreover, perceiving them as real involves assuming them to share the very same fundamental aspects of existence and experiencing with us; they are somewhere, even if I do not know, where exactly; they must have a body; they must perceive the world from their perspective; they may perceive me or my expressions; in our communication they "resist" me and my plans in various ways,[59] etc. An intersubjective situation is constituted by our communication. In fictional empathy as described by de Vecchi and Forlè, I do not perceive the other as living in and sharing the same real world with me and having their own perspective on the same world. Otherwise, I would not perceive the object as fictional but as another person via media. That is, while de Vecchi and Forlè argue that empathy with real persons is *in principio* more vivid and intense than empathy with fictional characters, I argue that the object in fictional empathy and the object in media-based empathy with real persons are two *different kinds* of objects of empathic experience.[60]

In our experience of media-based communication, the WLe becomes a kind of substitute for the other's real physical lived body in that we perceive the other's expression somewhere else than in their physical bodies. According to Husserl, as we experience others as other consciousnesses, we are directed to their lives as presented to us through their expressions.[61] For example, when listening to, reading, or watching someone's experiences and ideas, we are not directed at the means of com-

---

[57] see Fuchs (2014).

[58] Vecchi and Forlé (2020, p. 565).

[59] Cf. Fuchs (2021; p. 93).

[60] De Vecchi and Forlè also argue that, when we are watching a movie or reading a novel, we can still have direct perception of the fictional characters as others. This makes sense, as in such cases the perceived object is there before us, in the movie or in the novel. In media-based empathy with real persons, in turn, we are not perceiving the other in the same physical space with us, but essentially as physically absent, as "somewhere there."

[61] Husserl (1952; p. 347).

munication—the other's body or the medium—but rather at the other's experience as revealed to us by their expression. That is, we encounter others through grasping their intentional directedness at the world as we perceive their expressions in some way. The body of the other becomes, in our eyes, "lived" as it expresses the life of the other. The same holds for alternative means of communication; the contents become "lived" for us as we perceive another person behind them and as we perceive them as expressions of their producer.[62]

It is only when we perceive others' expressions—in general, not just in media—that we can encounter them as "living" rather than as mere physical things; this idea holds in relation to our perceiving others whether in physical presence or in media. Their expressions illustrate their will and refer to their world experience. For example, when we listen to another person's story, either in their physical presence or in an audio clip posted on social media, the decisive element in our encountering and understanding that person is their expression, through which we come to perceive them as a living, personal being. As we experience a voice as "lived"—in other words, as belonging to someone and expressing their thoughts and experiences—we view them as another person and are able to grasp their ideas as theirs; physically seeing that person's physical body is not necessary for this process.

In this sense, a letter, a vlog post or a posted emoji all appear as empathic lived word bodies—WLe—in that we do not experience them as mere non-personal texts, videos or pictures but as the other's expression. In detail, the different media involve different elements, but these details are not relevant to my argument—unlike Svenaeus introduced above, I do not argue for an essential difference between video calls and other media in regard to the possibility of empathic experience. Rather, I rely on the assumption that the comprehension of another's subjectivity is so fundamental that the sensuously given is immediately encountered as that which expresses a subjective life, whether it is the other's physical body or something else through which we encounter them. That is, any form of media can function as WLe.

Moreover, media-based empathy as a more complex form of empathy and distinguished from fictional empathy is not a form of what Husserl calls picture consciousness, experiencing something as a picture, not as the real actual thing.[63] For instance, perceiving an object as a *picture* of Husserl and not as Husserl *himself*. However, here, again, we need to separate different types of perceptions when looking at pictures of others. A picture, too—or any other form of media—can function as WLe, when the picture is perceived as expressive, as used to communicate something. For instance, a selfie can be seen as communicating to others that the person has met someone or has been in a certain place. Instead of telling these things in words, this

---

[62] In media-based empathy we do not perceive the other in the same physical space or not necessarily even communicating to us at the same moment when their communication reaches us. We might therefore extend the media-based empathic experiences to the empathy of the dead, where the author is no longer living. For instance, I can empathise with Stein through her writings about her life, but, as I believe her to be dead, my experience of her experiences is different from empathizing with someone communicating *to me* or at least *to someone contemporary*. Empathizing with the dead might be similar to the fictional empathy, even though the dead person is perceived as having been a real person living in the same world where I am now living, having an effect on this world.

[63] Husserl (1980; p. 115).

person tells these things by the picture. Thus, I do not empathise with the picture but with the person posting the picture of themselves. The line is not clear cut, though, as I can, for instance, see from the picture that the person has a new haircut or has achieved something, and thus, that particular empathic experience involves both the perception of the picture as such and the physically absent other having posted the picture.

In our communications with others, we often do not perceive the *product of their work*, such as pictures, text, etc. *as the other*, but rather, the product indicates the other's aims or goals to us and thus indicates the other consciousness. We thus empathise with the other *through* their expressive act of putting forth and using these products to communicate something. Like in the example of a meme, the act of putting forth the meme, expressing themselves by the means of the meme, is what appears in empathy, not the content of the meme as such. When seeing a meme in my social media feed, I do not empathise with the character in the meme, but with the person putting forth this meme to communicate their feelings or thoughts. This means that I can agree with Svenaeus, when he argues that, for Stein as well as for Husserl, encountering pictures or stories about others does not involve empathy,[64] when these products are not perceived as communicative acts of others but as mere pictures, texts, stories, etc. In other words, arguing that we can have media-based empathic experiences is not the same as arguing that the so-called picture consciousness—perceiving an object as a picture, presenting something else by the means of a material object—is empathy.

A question remains, though, what brings something from WLne to WLe. I suggest that the perceived object is *either* WLne *or* WLe, and first perceiving something as one and then as the other form of WL is an experience of a mistake; I thought I was communicating with someone, but it turns out that I was not, or that I thought something was a mere non-personal text, noise or picture, but it turned out to be someone's communication. In the example case of the automatic pre-recorded announcements in a bus and the bus driver speaking through the loudspeakers the two perceived objects—the automatic announcement and the bus driver speaking—are different kinds of objects and do not overlap despite both being heard on a bus from the loudspeakers. A constitutive difference here is my belief that the content is (or is not) created by another person intended to communicate something to someone.

Still, as non-bodily mediated objects can, at least in some cases, be perceived both empathically and non-empathically, we might sometimes be confused about whether or not an object is someone's expression of their experiences, or whether our perception of the object might change from non-empathic to emphatic and vice versa as we find out more about the object. Presumably someone who has never got on a bus before may experience the two objects as two tokens of the same kind; they might not perceive the two objects as two different kinds of objects but might mistake them to be simply two pre-recorded announcements or two different persons speaking to the passengers. We might also assume that, in practice, media-based empathy requires certain cognitive capacities. For example, infants may not be able to encounter another person by media, while media-based communication and media-based

---

[64] Svenaeus (2021; p, 86); see Husserl (1980).

empathy are every-day activities for many human adults.[65] Discussing this belief formation thoroughly, however, would require a further discussion of the constitution of social experiences and possibly even a discussion of mental abilities and development psychology and thus goes beyond the limits of this paper.

5 Conclusion

I have described the perceived object in media-based empathic experiences as a verbal (in the wide sense) object as empathic *Wortleib* (WLe), a so-to-say empathic lived word body. I have argued that, while the object of media-based empathic experience cannot be the other's body, it is WLe, an empathic object other than the person's body. I have assumed the possibility of media-based empathy, as we do communicate with others by media and thus must have some kind of an experience of those others and their perspectives on the world. In this final section, I will improve the description of media-based empathy by comparing it to physical-present empathy and justify my use of Stein's work in investigating media-based empathy.

Most importantly, even if we assume that there can be empathic experiences in media-based communication, empathy in the other's physical presence and in their absence—by media—are different regarding *where* the other consciousness appears and whether this physical place appears as the other themselves. As Waldenfels has argued, the givenness of others in media is constituted by the experience of the presence of their expression and their simultaneous physical absence, which Waldenfels calls "tele*absence*."[66] By contrast, in the other's physical presence, the other appears in and as themselves and their expression appears in their body or provided by their body.

Stein further argues that, through empathy, we can come to grasp feelings and values that are foreign to us, and we can also learn about ourselves as empathic experiences also reveal our own values to us and show us what we are not.[67] If we assume empathic experience in media-based communication, the expansion of the range of people with whom we communicate has potential for teaching much of others, ourselves, and the world around us (note that the popular "echo chamber" theory is overstated).[68] Of course, not all of this is nice and convenient.

Here, I admit that others' embodiment is constitutive of our experience of them at a rather "primitive" level. The constitutionally simplest and most basic way to experience another person is to see them in physical presence as a living body [*Leib*]. Accordingly, this primitive level cannot be constituted by media, except maybe video calls, where I can see the other's body moving and gesturing.[69] Instead, media-based communication provides additional and more complex ways to experience others. The body is an expres-

---

[65] see Anderson and Subrahmanyam (2017).

[66] See Waldenfels (2009).

[67] Stein (1917/2008, pp. 128–130).

[68] Dubois and Blank (2018).

[69] see Svenaeus (2021).

sive organ, but that expression can be extended to other means,[70] that is, media in all its variations.

It is important to note that, for Stein as well as for Husserl, the perception of the other's body is important for an empathic experience of another person. Therefore, it might seem that we cannot utilise Stein's work in analysing media-based empathy. For instance, Svenaeus argues that Stein's analyses do not allow media-based empathy other than video calls, because, for Stein, seeing the other's living body is central for the constitution of empathic experience.[71] However, while Stein does not extensively discuss media-based empathy in her 1917 work, she brings up the possibility of media-based empathy in *Die Einführung in die Philosophie* (1924): "Concerning the effect of one person on another… further tools involve her 'work.' For example, when I look at the work of art, I perceive marks of creative action and I can visualise this action empathically…The appearance of the artwork manifests a certain way of seeing, and its content reveals what the soul of the artist lives up to, how he stands in the world."[72] Here Stein refers explicitly to media-based empathy in the form of an artwork appearing as someone's expression and not a mere impersonal picture. For Stein—and for Husserl—perceiving another's body is an essential requirement only for the very basic level of experiencing another living being, the very basic immediate perception of an object as another conscious being based on the perception of their living and moving body.[73] There are also other, more complex forms of empathy in which the perception of the other's body is not (always) necessary. We may know another consciousness through their expression elsewhere than in their physical body.

Stein distinguishes the verbal and bodily expression in that words as the other person's expression are given in a different manner than bodily expression: "At most one could say that in speaking the externalization of self steps into view with the same animation as an affect does in expressive movement, but not the experiences in themselves to which the speech testifies."[74] But words can still be given as mediating the other's experience in their own way: "The transition to the speaking person and his acts can also begin in the meaning of the words. A question, a request, a command, a greeting is always directed at someone and thus refers back to the relationship between the speaker to the hearer. Here the speaker's intentions substantially assist in making the words intelligible. From the viewpoint of [the speaker] we comprehend, not what the words mean in general, but what they mean here and now." And further: "We see that we experience this proceeding of what is outwardly perceived on the level of empathic projection from what was 'coperceived' on the first level. This was missing in the cases considered earlier."[75] The "cases considered earlier" refer to the cases in which a verbal body was taken not as someone's expression but as an abstraction or example.

Based on Stein's analysis of the nature of words, some kind of a physical body is still needed in all real-life empathic experiences (i.e., not in mere rhetorical hypotheses), be it

---

[70] Merleau-Ponty (1945/2012, p. 110).

[71] see Svenaeus (2021).

[72] Stein (1924/2004, pp. 130–131).

[73] see Fuchs 2014), 2016); Husserl (1976b).

[74] Stein (1917/2008, p. 83).

[75] Ibid., p. 83.

media-based empathy or physical-presence empathy.[76] We always experience others by sensing something material about them, even when it is not directly through the other's body. To be able to perceive their expression, we need some kind of a material medium, be it written text, voice or something else. Media, too, are physical bodies in communicative function, which I must grasp through my senses as a corporeal being. This is captured in Stein's work as follows:

> Is it essentially necessary that spirit can only enter into exchange with spirit through the medium of corporeality? I, as psycho-physical individual, actually obtain information about the spiritual life of other individuals in no other way. Of course, I know of many individuals, living and dead, whom I have never seen. But I know this from others whom I see or *through the medium of their works which I sensually perceive and which they have produced by virtue of their psycho-physical organization*. We meet the spirit of the past in various forms but always bound to a physical body. This is the written or printed word or the word hewed into stone—the spatial form becomes stone or metal.[77]

What is similar between these two types of empathy is that, in both cases, we only have a partial access to the other consciousness. There are always aspects of the other that do not appear to us, because their experience as they have it is never accessible to me as such. Moreover, for Stein, there are profound limits to our knowledge of ourselves, too. Not all we are is obtained through the senses.[78]

The fact that most of the analysis Stein provides of empathy concerns the other's physical presence is, as such, not a problem for my argument. However, as also Svenaeus's account suggests, by close reading Stein's work, we may also end up in an argument that there cannot be empathic experiences without seeing the other's actual lived body. This is not because Stein would deny the possibility of media-based empathy, but because she mostly discusses mere empathy in the other's physical presence, thus providing an analysis of empathy as if taking place only in the other's physical presence. However, as I have demonstrated, we may also come to an opposite conclusion by reading and analysing Stein's work.

---

[76] See Stein (1924/2004, p. 116).

[77] Stein (1917/2008, p. 117, emphasis added).

[78] Calcagno (2014; p. 110).

References

Anderson, D. R., and K. Subrahmanyam, K. 2017. Digital screen media and cognitive development. *Pediatrics* 140 (Supplement2): S57–S61. https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-1758C.

Baron-Cohen, S. 1995. *An essay on autism and theory of mind*, ed. Mindblindness. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Calcagno, A. 2014. *Lived Experience from the Inside Out: Social and Political Philosophy in Edith Stein*. Duquesne University Press, 2014.

de Vecchi, F., and F. Forle. 2020. Phenomenological distinctions between Empathy De Vivo and Empathy in Fiction: from Contemporary Direct Perception Theory back to Edith Stein's eidetics of Empathy. *Topoi* 39: 761–770. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-019-09637-6.

Decety, J. 2005. Perspective taking as the royal avenue to empathy. In *Other minds: how humans bridge the divide between self and others*, eds. B. F. Malle, and S. D. Hodges. 143–157. New York: Guilford.

Depraz, N. 1995. *Transcendance et incarnation: le statut de l'intersubjectivité comme altérité à soi [Transcendence and incarnation: The status of intersubjectivity as alterity in oneself]*. Vrin.

Dreyfus, H. L. 2008. *On the internet*. London: Routledge.

Dubois, E., and G. Blank. 2018. The Echo Chamber is overstated: the moderating effect of political interest and diverse media. *Information Communication & Society* 21(5): 729–745.

Fanon, F. 2008/1952. Black Skin, White Masks. R. Philcox (trans). Grove Books (orig. *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Seuil).

Fuchs, T. 2014. The virtual other: Empathy in the age of virtuality. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 21(5–6): 152–173.

Fuchs, T. 2016. Intercorporeality and interaffectivity. *Phenomenology and Mind* 11: 194–209. https://doi.org/10.13128/Phe_Mi-20119.

Fuchs, T. 2017. Levels of empathy – primary, extended, and reiterated empathy. In *Empathy*, eds. V. Lux, and S. Weigel. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Fuchs, T. 2019. Empathy, Group Identity, and the mechanisms of Exclusion: An Investigation into the limits of Empathy. *Topoi* 38: 239–250. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-017-9499-z.

Fuchs, T. 2021. *In defense of the Human Being: foundational questions of an embodied anthropolgy*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Gallese, V. 2001. The 'shared manifold' hypothesis: from mirror neurons to empathy. *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8: 33–50.

Goldman, A. 2006. *Simulating minds: the philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience of mindreading*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gordon, R. M. 2005. Intentional agents like myself. In *Perspectives on imitation I*, eds. S. Hurley, and N. Chater. 95–106. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Heinämaa, S. 2010. Embodiment and expressivity in Husserl's phenomenology: From logical investigations to Cartesian meditations. *SATS: Northern European Journal of Philosophy*, 11(1): 1–15.

Husserl, E. 1952. *Husserliana: Vol. 4: Ideen zu Einer Reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen philosophie: Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen Zur Konstitution [Ideas pertaining to a pure phenomenology and to a phenomenological philosophy: 2nd book]*, ed. M. Biemel. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. 1973. *Husserliana, Bd. 14. Zur phänomenologie Der intersubjektivität, zweiter teil*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. 1976. *Husserliana: Vol. 6: Die Krisis der europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendentale Phänomenologie [Crisis of the European sciences and transcendental phenomenology]*, ed. W. Biemel. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Husserl, E. 1980. *Husserliana: Vol. 23: Phantasie, Bildbewusstsein, Erinnerung. Zur Phänomenologie Der Anschaulichen Vergegenwärtigungen. Texte aus dem nachlass (1898–1925) [Phantasy, picture consciousness, memory: on phenomenology of appearances. Manuscripts]*, ed. E. Marbach. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Hyde, B., and E. Rouse. 2022. What is it like to experience the other in an online interview? Using phenomenology to explore the online encounter of the other. *Qualitative Inquiry* 00: –1. https://doi.org/10.1177/10778004221144071.

Jardine, J. 2014. Husserl and Stein on the phenomenology of empathy: perception and explication. *Synthesis Philosophica* 58(2): 273–288.

Kekki, M. 2020. Authentic encountering of others and learning through media-based public discussion: a phenomenological analysis. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 54(3): 507–520. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12405.

Kekki, M. 2022. *Educational possibilities of media-based public discussion: A phenomenological-philosophical analysis of the givenness of others*. Doctoral dissertation, supervisors: Katariina Holma and Joris Vlieghe, UNIOGS, University of Oulu.

Krueger, J. 2012. Seeing mind in action. *Phenomenology and Cognitive Science* 11(2): 149–173.

Leslie, A. M. 1987. Children's understanding of the mental world. In *The Oxford companion to the mind*, ed. R. L. Gregory. 139–142. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Merleau-Ponty, M. 2012/1945. *Phenomenology of Perception*, ed. D. A. Landes. Abingdon: Routledge.

Osler, L. 2020. Feeling togetherness online: a phenomenological sketch of online communal experiences. *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* 19(3): 569–588. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-019-09627-4.

Osler, L. 2021. Taking Empathy Online. *Inquiry*. Published online 15 March 2021. https://doi.org/10.1080/0020174X.2021.1899045.

Osler, L., and J. Krueger. 2022. Taking Watsuji online: betweenness and expression in online spaces. *Continental Philosophy Review* 55: 77–99. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-021-09548-7.

Scheler, M. 1913/1923. *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*. Bern: Francke Verlag. English Translation: *The Nature of Sympathy*. Trans. P. Heath, London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1973.

Schmetkamp, S., and Í. Ferran. 2020. Introduction: Empathy, Fiction, and imagination. *Topoi* 39: 743–749. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-019-09664-3.

Staehler, T. 2014. Social networks as inauthentic sociality. *Metodo: International Studies in Phenomenology and Philosophy* 2(2): 227–248.

Stein, E. 1922. Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften [Philosophy of psychology and the humanities]. *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* 5: 1–116. (Reprinted in Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe [ESGA] 2010).

Stein, E. 1917/2008. *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*. Gesamtausgabe, Vol. 5. Verlag Herder. (Original work published 1917).

Stein, E. 1924/2004. *Einführung in die Philosophie*. vol. 8 Gesamtausgabe. (Original work published 1924).

Svenaeus, F. 2021. Empathy and Togetherness Online compared to IRL: a phenomenological account. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 52: 78–95. https://doi.org/10.1163/15691624-12341384.

Szanto, T. 2020. Imaginative resistance and empathic resistance. *Topoi* 39: 791–802. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11245-019-09642-9.

Szanto, T., and D. Moran. 2015. Introduction: Empathy and collective intentionality – the social philosophy of Edith Stein. *Human Studies* 38: 445–461.

Turkle, S. 2017. *Alone together: why we expect more from technology and less from each other*. Basic Books.

van Manen, M. 2018. Serendipitous insights and Kairos playfulness. *Qualitative Inquiry* 24(9): 672–680.

Waldenfels, B. 2009. *Ortsverscheibungen, Zeitverscheibungen: Modi Leibhafter Erfahrung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

Ward, D. 2018. What's lacking in online learning? Dreyfus, Merleau-Ponty and bodily affective understanding. *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 52(3): 428–450. https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12305.

Zahavi, D. 2014. *Self and other: exploring subjectivity, empathy, and shame*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.