Edith Stein and the Advance of Phenomenology

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IN ITS first phase, as a critique of the prevalent nineteenth-century views of the nature of philosophy and its relation with the sciences, phenomenology was almost exclusively the work of Edmund Husserl. From the attacks launched in his *Logische Untersuchungen* (1900-01) against its exaggerated claims to omnicompetence, the fashionable psychologism of that period never fully recovered. Husserl successfully demonstrated that empirical psychology could pretend to be the basic science only on the assumption that objects of knowledge are little more than modifications of the subject's own awareness, aspects of psychical experience which are sometimes endowed by the mind with the character of objectivity. Only on such a reckoning could it be maintained that the examination of empirical mental phenomena could supply the necessary theoretical foundation for the philosophical account of man and the universe. That no exact science could be safely grounded upon such a shifting support was the chief negative contention advanced by Husserl in his polemic, an objection prompted by Bolzano's conviction that a strict science must be independent of spatio-temporal conditions. By instituting careful investigations into the spheres of logic and mathematics, Husserl indicated that such an ideal was realizable here and could be extended to other speculative fields.

To make of philosophy as such an exact science, the phenomenological method as sketched in the *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie* (1913) was forged. By concentrating philosophical inquiry upon the intentional objects of purified consciousness it was held possible to avoid the pitfalls of both subjective idealism and radical empiricism. As against the
former extreme it was pointed out (following Brentano) that knowledge is always “knowledge of” something, that is, that cognition (noesis) essentially and inescapably involves an intentional reference to the object known (noema). Yet the logical process is not concerned with things of actual experience, with existential contingencies or factual data. All such realities must be “bracketed,” put in parentheses by means of a suspended judgment (epoche), thus forcing us to view the object in the pure state to which it has been reduced by the phenomenological method. In this way the essence is allowed to display itself directly in an immediate manifestation: it appears as it is, it is phenomenally evident to our insight (Wesenschau).

To the young thinkers who crowded the philosophical scene of the Germany of the twenties, these affirmations were strong meat and heady wine after the restricted diet provided by fictionalism and methodic naturalism. Once again the road was clear for entering into fruitful commerce with reality in its most intimate structure. “Back to things themselves!” became the standard of an enthusiastic generation which was surfeited with idealist abstractions and sought sustenance in an objective appreciation of nature and human nature. In response to this demand for an adequate philosophy of life, Max Scheler developed the theory of values implicit in Husserl into an ethical and axiological system with important religious implications. In like manner, the ontological aspects of phenomenology were more carefully explored by Hedwig Conrad-Martius and especially by Martin Heidegger, who synthesized these elements with suggestions drawn from Kierkegaard and Nietzsche to initiate an original existential current in philosophy. Along these often divergent lines the phenomenological method was applied with varying success and conflicting interpretation to the philosophical problems of the day.¹

I

Among the first students to receive the doctoral degree in philosophy at the University of Freiburg after Husserl assumed his chair there was Edith Stein, who wrote her dissertation, significantly, on the problem of *Einfühlung.* While Husserl had rejected Lipps' concept at the experimental plane upon which it had been proposed, yet at first he was forced to include *Einfühlung* as part of the original equipment of the monadic self of pure consciousness. Presumably this provided a fit instrument whereby the transcendental ego could be related to other subjectivities, break forth from its solipsistic isolation and take its place in a phenomenologically verified community of selves. That such a task could be accomplished even within the methodological limits set by Husserl was the claim of Edith Stein's first work. Yet in her consequent investigation she was led to admit that only a painstaking analysis of the structure of human personality could validate this experience of other subjects. Thus her dissertation served mainly to raise a set of problems and to suggest the probable principle of solution.

In prosecuting her mature speculative efforts Edith Stein had the unique advantage, afforded by her position as Husserl's secretary and assistant, of free access to his then unpublished manuscripts. This constant association and intimate acquaintance permitted an invaluable insight into the genetic history of Husserl's thought, endowing her own work with peculiar authenticity and importance as an interpretation and development of phenomenology. Although the "transcendental intersubjectivity" of Husserl's later works remains within an epistemological framework which Edith Stein would be forced to supplement, nevertheless this important conceptual development can be more completely

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2 *Zum Problem der Einfühlung,* Halle, 1917.
3 *Philosophie als strenge Wissenschaft,* Logos, 1 (1919), p. 313; *Ideen,* pp. 85, 279.
4 *Einfühlung,* pp. 2, 10, 72-3.
understood in the light of her own contributions to the question of personal communication. In her first two studies appearing in Husserl’s Jahrbuch for 1922, she approached the problem as an aspect of the phenomenological foundation of psychology and the Geisteswissenschaften. In the first moment of this dialectic the individual is considered in himself and his various capacities; later the inquiry is extended to include not only the individual but the social relations within a group of persons.

For the justification of the concept of causality against Hume’s criticism, it is insufficient and unnecessary to shift the discussion with Kant to the basis of a “transcendental deduction” from the necessary and universal character of an exact science. Rather should we refute Hume upon his own chosen grounds by engaging in a more rigorously methodological examination of the very phenomena he adduced in discrediting causality. What determined Hume’s conclusion was not the nature of the data considered but a previously accepted theory of knowledge which prevented him from seeing in the phenomenal process anything but a subjectively determined sequence. Instead of supplying a faithful and profound interpretation of the evidence, Hume was content with a superficial attempt to explain away the very phenomena he was pledged to respect. Nor can this lack of philosophical acumen be supplemented by calling in the Kantian categorical expedient and his entire artificial machinery of knowledge. What calls for study is not so much the admitted fact of a necessary connection as the concrete and plenary nature of this relation as it appears in the original stream of experience. For the noetic grasp of a necessary connection is the conscious correlate of a noematic relation of dependence in the objective order. In the phenomenological analysis of

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cognition and its ground is made manifest the ontic origin and validity of the concept of causality.\(^6\)

That the causal process may be experienced and rendered conscious requires a superior vital power resident in a living principle or soul. While consciousness constitutes the realm of actual experiences, the psychical includes the pure ego itself and its properties, the transcendent reality which is revealed and announced in the known experiences. Within the evanescent stream of life a genuine causal influence is exerted by the permanent powers or capacities of the self which serve as a permanent substratum for the psychic process.\(^7\) To the extent that the changes instituted in the experiential subject indicate a passivity or receptive aspect, the psyche can be considered a regulative mechanism with a determined quantum of energy. Under this partial view, the mechanistic standpoint which demands a necessary causal determination of mental events is verified, but this is not to overlook the fact that such a conception of human nature is incomplete. For the materialist outlook entirely ignores the qualitative continuum which is a real constituent of the psychic field, although one unamenable to exact and quantitatively verifiable causal laws. Not necessity but probability must characterize the results of our causal predictions at this higher level: by the very nature of the process it escapes mechanistic determination.\(^8\)

In emerging from the sphere of primarily passive sensuous life to self-activity of a superior sort, we are forced to recognize a new reign of law peculiar to the immaterial functions it governs. Properly human acts take their origin in the pure self, being related to each other on the basis of meaning and mutual implication. Insight into the grounds of action coupled with the ability to relate an individual pattern to the total scheme of conduct demand a reasoned procession

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\(^6\)Ibid., pp. 2-7; Einfühlung, p. 80, n. 1.
\(^7\)Ibid., p. 21.
\(^8\)Ibid., pp. 31-2, 84-106.
of one act from another rather than the mere overlapping of fortuitously contiguous phases which characterizes the stream of sense experience. Where the ego is directly and properly involved, motivation is of paramount importance, enabling the agent to will one act on the basis of another act or with respect to a general conception at least implicitly understood. By its effective intervention the agent exerts its influence as an originative source of actions, which are no longer links in an impersonal chain but are instinct with voluntary choice. In its Vermittlerrole the self can direct its conscious striving towards an object not considered as a meaningless X, but precisely under its most pregnant and significant ontological aspect as a desirable and hence motivating being. Since both a notion and a reasonable motive are required that the thing may thus present itself as a unified whole to be willed, volition cannot be reduced to associative bonds as sensism maintains. Instead of positing a univocal continuum of acts in the stream of experience, phenomenological research forces us to recognize the unity which arises from a consciously motivated succession of willed acts as a new sort of "complex" and field of activity. This is the region of free acts where the self is master of its own conduct, the center from which its deeds arise under its own rational control.

For motives to become effective and not merely possible, the decisive intervention of a superior causal factor is necessary. While the externally determined sensuous powers demonstrate the close union between soul and body, a psyche which is naturally bound to the corporeal and directed to external nature, this spiritual power of will supposes as its root a portion of the soul which transcends the material. Although both capacities are mutually regulated, so that spiritual vigor ordinarily rises and declines with sensuous, still the will is capable of achieving results apart from external conditioning for which there is no counterpart in the lower order. For

9Ibid., pp. 34-41.
man in his spiritual powers can draw nourishment not only from the objective world of natural values but also from a more potent dual source in personal subjects: God and other men. The peak of one's specifically human activity is achieved in the state of rest in God, where all anguished dread (Heidegger to the contrary) and solicitation for the future are relinquished in a direct act of trustful surrender to God. Not the inaction following on physical exhaustion but the placid yet dynamic security ensuing on an influx of new life and strength not one's own characterizes this spiritual rebirth. Confessing the need for this divine fortification of one's powers, a receptivity "from above" ("obediential potency" in the language of the Scholastics) is acknowledged to be an essential component of the structure of human personality in which it overpasses the psychic mechanism.

Similarly, man turns in loving suppliance to his neighbor. This more familiar yet scarcely less mysterious aspect of personal growth must be submitted to extended phenomenological investigation.

II

In the second section of her contribution to the *Jahrbuch* for 1922, Edith Stein proceeded to consider the relation of individual to community. Written at the outset of a two-decade period wherein the problems of social life and leadership were to become increasingly acute, her observations gain added weight from their philosophical honesty and prescience. Availing herself of Tönnies' well-known distinction between community (*Gemeinschaft*) and society (*Gesellschaft*), she proposed to examine from the phenomenological standpoint the manner in which persons participate in these social forms in general. Whereas Tönnies contented himself with the somewhat exaggerated and verbalistic contrast of a natural, organic grouping of individuals in a community with

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10Ibid., pp. 72-9, 106.
a rational and mechanical society, the philosophical approach must also consider the intention of the members. Where one person opposes himself as subject to another as object, the result of their mutual efforts at understanding and common effort is a society. On the other hand, when one subject recognizes another as a fellow subject, then they live together in a community. In the one instance the association is that of a monadic congregation, while in the other there is a commonly participated solidarity. Such at least is the ideal law, although factual groups usually present a number of mixed forms.

Similarly, it is permitted to delineate the pure types of leadership in society and community. For the Gesellschaftsmensch the group is but an instrument to be employed for his own end, a means to be used objectively and after due calculation of the effect of his governance. Since, however, his manipulations involve genuine subjects, the demagogue will seek to enter into the innermost life of his subjects that he may understand them the better and more effectively achieve his private purpose through this intimate acquaintance. Thus it is impossible to treat other individuals as impersonal tools without first aping in some way the naïve surrender of the veritable Gemeinschaftsmensch to the common experience of a people. Yet the dedication of the latter to the welfare of his group is without guile or selfish interest, nor does he reckon with the "impression" his position as leader will make upon the community. To achieve the common weal he must, indeed, study the people to whom he is pledged, but this observation is rather the mature self-consciousness of his communal experience than an objectification of private ends. Although he may often employ societal organizations to secure the good of the community, he need not always have this recourse. While community without society is possible, society without community cannot function.

But how is it possible for a self-contained ego which is the constitutive source of its conscious life to join in communal
experience with other such egos? Stated thus prejudicially, there is perhaps no answer possible, since the question considers individuals as mutually exclusive monads, having “neither doors nor windows.” Closer consideration of the structure of the concrete self and of the community indicates that the actual situation is not so desperate.

Within every community there may be distinguished three factors: the subject of experience, the common experience itself, and the stream which unifies this experience. Instead of an individual subject, there is a social one which embraces a multiplicity of individual selves. The trust I feel towards our leader is not mine alone but belongs to the whole group: it is our trust which we experience. Yet we cannot speak of a pure social ego in the same sense as an individual self; the experience of the community as well as that of its members springs ultimately from the individual selves which constitute this group. But analogous to the individual personality with its properties as constituted in individual experience is the corporate personality which is based upon social experiences. A valid distinction may be drawn between what befalls the individual as a member of the community and what the community itself suffers as a whole. Nor is it necessary that this common meaning be explicitly present in every participant, for it can be intended by even a single member in the name of them all: eine Intention auf das Gemeinschaftserlebnis. In virtue of a common object to be sought, the unity of communal experience is securely grounded and thoroughly permeated with a unity of meaning. In and through the participated life of its individual members who form a noetic and noematic unity, the community itself possesses its own motivated experience.

Yet we cannot press the analogy to argue for a super-individual consciousness, as totalitarian theoreticians would

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11Ibid., p. 120.
12Ibid., p. 123; cf. Husserl’s notion of a first intention belonging to the realm of immanent transcendence or the primordial world, Méditations cartésiennes, p. 87.
now have it. While the community lives and experiences in and through its constituents, it does not reflect upon itself when they reflect upon their experience. Rather do they themselves alone reflect upon what the community experiences in them. For all consciousness corresponds to individual selves as constitutive of the experience upon which they reflect. Since we cannot affirm in the strict sense a communal ego or soul, so neither can we admit a reflective source of communal consciousness. That there is an experience proper to the whole community is undeniable, but the originative source of this experience lies inalienably in the individual selves participating in this shared life. Still, in the social union individual “experients” are not simply agglomerated in atomistic fashion to achieve a purely additive mass: the communal experience is a constituted reality sui generis and no extrinsic summation. Its members enter into the community, they take up their respective positions in a differentiated and organic whole. While the community is not a free, responsible subject in the plenary sense, it does possess a corporate freedom and correlative responsibility based upon the nature of its personal constituents.\footnote{\cite{stein1937}, p. 175. Here Edith Stein opposes the view of Max Scheler, who maintained that individual freedom exists only referentially to the primary freedom of the community. Scheler’s position (in \textit{Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materielle Wertethik}) reflects the equivocal notion of freedom prevalent in modern philosophy since Hobbes and especially Rousseau.}

As a concrete reality, the community strikes its ontic roots deep in the structure of the individuals which it includes. From their vital forces it draws its power, and in turn they are enriched by this mutual re-enforcement. Yet the self is never totally exhausted in its social function: in the soul of the person there remains an inviolable reserve of spiritual energy which social engagements can never deplete. Within the unity of the human person himself there is a dual aspect and consequently a constant tension between what is proper to him as an individual self or soul and that spiritual
tendency whereby he is orientated to the objective world and fraternal life. Thus the community is not some foreign entity imposed upon the self from without, nor yet an arithmetical summation, but an authentic realization of the individual's social capacities which demand communal fulfillment.

An analysis of the personal structure, then, reveals two moments, one properly and exclusively reserved for the individual, another bearing a specific or general character which can be shared with others. In the public aspect of the stream of experience is provided the foundation for all social union, which is further enforced and rendered actual by the circumstances of a common fatherland, profession and general set of convictions. On the basis of birth, occupation and susceptibility to suggestion can be erected a set of social relations sufficient to constitute a mass, but without containing the inner bond of a reasonable social pattern. A society, on the other hand, involves an effective personal and spiritual union, but one which owes its origin to a deliberate act of will and which is directed to some external end. In both respects it differs from the community, which enjoys a natural, organic growth having as its purpose the immanent development of its members. Yet these representatives of the community must impress a personal stamp upon their actions, since a representative who is nothing but a pure type can never contribute to the advance of his social group. Indeed, in the extreme case there would be no community at all, since the individual core from which the social impulse starts would then be totally absent. That pseudo-community which seeks the suppression of personal freedom and individual sanctity destroys the very source of all communal life and can be preserved only forcibly by acknowledging itself to be a featureless mass or a mechanized society devoted to sub-human ends.

Since, then, in principle it is impossible and undesirable for the individual core from which the social impulse starts would

\[14\] Jahrbuch, B. 5, art. cit., pp. 236-46.
as refuse to demand this of their members are not to be considered incomplete or partial groupings. Rather is this restraint the very condition of their survival and development in a specifically human way. Such limitation is a social admission of creaturely finiteness: every mundane community involves an internal incompleteness and engenders a striving beyond itself.\(^{15}\) We have here no lasting city, and those temporal communities best fulfill their proper function which generate in their members that tension of insufficiency which cannot be resolved here on earth. Yet once more the phenomenologist must curb the impulse to surrender himself unreservedly to the contemplation of the infinite riches of God for the more modest task of seeking the philosophical foundation of the most perfect form of temporal community, the State.

III

Husserl's *Jahrbuch* for 1925 contains an essay by Edith Stein on the nature of the State\(^{16}\), in which she applies the conclusions reached in her previous investigation to the particular case of the civil community, clarifying certain points left obscure in the earlier work. Against the crescent totalitarian philosophies then achieving their initial embodiment in the practical order, this present contribution determines the proper limits of civil power by its patient method of phenomenological inquiry. Yet it no less emphatically exposes the falsification of the ontic structure of the State to which atomistic liberalism has led. By its close adherence to the evidence revealed by an essential analysis of individual and community, phenomenology here joins with the great philosophical tradition in advocating the middle way between excessive individualism and an omnicompetent statism.

Since it is lacking in purposeful motivation, the mass cannot function as a civil community, but the State can be founded

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\(^{15}\)Ibid., p. 258.

on the other two social forms: community and society. The State is a community permeated with more or less rationalized, that is, societal, elements. The error of the contract theory of the origin of the State was to consider it exclusively as a society and hence to trace it in every case to a deliberate and arbitrary act of will. Like other communities, it has a natural origin and development (natural as opposed to artificial rather than to spiritual). Among the various types of community it holds an intermediate position between the smaller domestic and friendly groups and the all-embracing union of rational individuals which is the world community. It includes the one and is in turn included within the wider bond. What differentiates it from the imperfect forms is its relative self-sufficiency and sovereignty. It is its own master, making, interpreting and enforcing its own laws. Although there are Rechtsordnungen which do not depend upon civil enactments, the recognition and encouragement of these spheres by the State is an integral moment in that self-limitation which is demanded of all communities and which involves no undermining of its authority. That it should respect and secure the legitimate freedom of its citizens and their intermediate unions is rather constitutive of its sovereignty than a threat to it. Self-restraint of civil might is no constraint upon the authority of the State.\(^\text{17}\)

In the essential note of sovereignty which attaches to the concept of the State is to be found the principle of its distinction from the folk community. Even under foreign rule a people may retain its communal way of life, but for the State to be deprived of its power of self-determination within proper limits is to abolish it as an actual entity. Since they are separable, it follows that the State need not be erected on the basis of a single folk community but may embrace several such groupings. Indeed, its ontic structure does not require that any Volksgemeinschaft serve as its foundation. Not from

\(^{17}\text{Ibid.}, \text{pp. 7, 42, 75.}\)
the notion of the State itself but from a consideration of the morphology of the human person does it appear reasonable that it should develop upon the basis of some existent community or communities to insure its secure foundation. The social values which are created in these intermediate organizations are usually best protected and fostered under civil law. For its own security the State in turn normally supposes some previous communal life and social solidarity. In the cultural autonomy of a people is to be found the "material" basis for formal sovereignty. The communal awareness already present in a people is brought to a condition of reflective clarity and mature self-possession in the nation. But while a people serves ordinarily as a natural foundation for a State, the latter does not require the heightened awareness of nationality. Neither a "populist" mysticism nor a national exclusivism is in any way a formal constituent in its essential structure.

The more restricted forms of community, including family, friends and people, make more intense demands upon the individual than the State, although in no instance should there be absolute engagement in social life. It may not require its citizens to recognize in it the supreme human good. No less than the saint (but with a different emphasis) should the loyal statesman recognize that the salvation of his soul overshadows the demands of the State when these duties conflict. Yet within its legitimate sphere it must be served not only by the external fulfillment of appointed tasks but more importantly by participating in the communal experience and contributing to its vital growth. Where the civil servant employs his office for private interests, he not only violates external regulations but delivers a fatal thrust at the spiritual

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18Ibid, pp. 11-12.
19Race is a personal type reflecting the character of a particular terrain. When representatives of a race join in a communal life having a distinctive culture, they then constitute a people. A fortiori, then, the State need not be a racist instrument. Ibid., pp. 87-8.
foundation of the community, from which he thereby severs himself in objectifying. Since the State is comprised of free persons, a particular government must receive at least the implicit *placet* of its subjects. This common consent of the governed to the sovereignty of the actual rulers and their representatives is the kernel of truth to be found in the contract theory (not considered, however, as an explanation of civil origins). What form of government is "the best" cannot be determined from the idea of the State itself; each of the just forms has advantages and disadvantages which must be weighed in the light of particular circumstances. What preserves the State itself against the debilitating influence of conflicting political theories is its *ratio*, to which they must be conformed if they are to represent viable arrangements of civic government.

While Husserl expressed his opposition to subjective idealism chiefly on epistemological issues, Edith Stein repudiated the extreme teaching of German idealism concerning the ethical vocation of the State. Although admitting (against an amoral political secularism) the ethical responsibility of civil representatives, she refused to grant the idealist contention that the State is in principle the sole adequate means for achieving the dominance of the moral law. According to Fichte and Hegel the State, as the instrument of morality and freedom, is the bearer of the historical process, which is nothing other than the realization of the ethical Idea. But to conceive history as the spiritual unfolding of civic freedom is contradictory, since nothing which must submit to the ideal necessity of an "unfolding" can issue in genuine freedom. What develops is not freedom itself but its subjects: the individual and corporate persons in whom it is resident. Fichte's notion that the individual attains to his freedom only in the community expresses a partial factual truth rather than an ontic necessity. While the State is not creative of personal

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20Ibid., pp. 22, 119.
freedom, its organization of social relations does serve to protect and stimulate it. But to equate freedom and morality is inadmissible. Although a free decision is morally relevant, it cannot be characterized as of positive or negative value simply in virtue of its free character. For the realization of moral values motivation must specify indifferently free acts according to the purpose of the agent. While the State may be of actual significance in serving the historical ends of freedom, such an effect lies outside the nature of the State as such.\textsuperscript{21} History is directed primarily to the wider community comprising the entire human family. Nor does the temporal process even in regard to this wider community bear its own final end within itself.

Between State and Church there is often a factual collision of claims to the obedience of members of both communities. Although this conflict is felt most acutely by him who acknowledges the duty of complete dedication to God as well as loyal service to the State, a working agreement seems impossible only to those who refuse to recognize the imperative character of religious obligations. Where all authority is ultimately traced to God, the State and its laws are acknowledged to have divine sanction in temporal affairs. From this standpoint, its respect for the transcendent nature of religious values is an aspect of that self-restraint which is the constitutive condition of its sovereignty. While the religious life flourishes in a region within the soul which can neither be created nor destroyed by legal enactment, still the State can hinder or encourage the free development of man's community with God. That the State itself be a bearer of religious values is impossible, since we have seen that it does not have a soul in the strict sense.\textsuperscript{22} In challenging the secularist version of civil authority, the equally dangerous alternative of crediting the State with an absolute religious vocation must also be avoided.

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 113-7.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 117-23.
In pursuance of his policy of bringing Christian philosophy to bear upon contemporary issues, Erich Przywara devoted several studies to the problems raised by phenomenology in its various phases. To him this movement bore the aspect of a restless desire on the part of modern philosophy to break through the narrow limits set by Descartes and Kant to attain the breadth and easy familiarity with reality which marks the perennial philosophy. While Kant sought to repulse Hume's skeptical conclusions by removing the discussion from the plane of the empirical to that of the transcendental subject, Husserl wished to substitute for the primacy of the subject under any form the primacy of the object. But this object is not to be confused with a transsubjective reality, since such reality is bracketed by the very terms of his phenomenological method. Not real but transcendental objects constitute the realm of essence investigated by Husserl, so that his doctrine of intentional objectivism does not effectively emerge from the autonomous realm of pure consciousness and the world it intends within itself. To this extent he must be considered the furthest point of development of the neo-Kantian Marburg School, since his dialectic culminates in a transcendental idealism of the object. The constitutive subject is merely depersonalized and converted into a rein sachlich noema correlative to the noetic consciousness-in-itself. Despite his protest, then, Husserl's transcendental subjectivity does not succeed in escaping the necessity of a philosophical position which could not but lead from Descartes to Kant.

Nor can the simple expedient of shifting from phenomenology as a method to a systematic phenomenology avoid these inconveniences, as the inclusive and sometimes fantastic efforts of E. Landmann and H. Conrad-Martius indicate.

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23 Cf. my previous article: "Przywara’s Analogia Entis," THOUGHT, March, 1942.
24 Gottgeheimnis der Welt, pp. 9-16.
25 Gott, p. 28; Kant Heute, p. 83.
While M. Heidegger rightly sought an ontological solution of the problem, yet his inadequate analysis of becoming and its implications led him to identify essence and existence in the synthetic unity of the divinized self enclosed “in-the-world.” The movement could be extricated from this impasse only by a thinker who was both a genuine phenomenologist and sufficiently intrepid to reconstitute the method itself in function of a metaphysic of being and becoming. In a survey of recent philosophy written in 1925 and, again, in his lectures delivered during the same year at Leipzig, Przywara signaled the work of Edith Stein as embodying the profoundest tendency of phenomenology to consummate its Wendung zum Objekt by making contact with reality itself. Noting the realist tenor of her doctrine on the structure of the human person, the union of body and soul, the nature of the community, and the relation of individual and State, he nevertheless offered a fundamental criticism and challenge. Unless phenomenology admits the final norm of knowledge to be the evidence of the real thing, then the essence which it investigates can only be the immanent object of pure consciousness, the transcendental noema rather than the actual essentia. Until the relation between these realms be determined, the problem of truth cannot be said to have yet been raised. Only when the object has been returned to the concrete existent, the idea returned to the process of real becoming, can modern philosophy overcome idealism in principle as well as in profession.

Her comparative study of the philosophy of St. Thomas and Husserl’s phenomenology (1929) was Edith Stein’s first
public expression of the results of her extensive study of Aquinas and of the Catholic Faith. On several critical issues there is a remarkable agreement between Husserl and Aquinas. For both thinkers philosophy is not a pleasant pastime subject to feeling and fancy, but an exact science, a precise method of thinking and a certain body of systematic truth. Moreover, both thinkers consciously participate in the task of recovering, enriching and transmitting to others the *philosophia perennis*, philosophizing in the authentic spirit of seeking out the *logos*, the *ratio* or inner structural necessity of the universe. Neither doubts the power of reason, although its scope is widened in Aquinas to include supernatural as well as natural cognition. Although he does not deny the validity of such a distinction, Husserl prescinds from it in his attempt to delineate the essential features of reason as such. For him there are no limits in principle to the efforts of human reason, although knowing is always an asymptotic process having the complete truth as its regulative ideal. While Aquinas grants that natural reason and human philosophy are incomplete and fragmentary, he yet recognizes in the Divine knowledge an unlimited cognition in perfect actual possession of the truth.

Through revelation God imparts to us truth which we should believe even though it is not evidently apparent at present. Husserl never contests the validity of the *act* of faith, yet he assigns the *theory* of belief to rational knowledge in general, to an autonomous reason which sets its own boundaries. Thus he does not envisage the problem of faith and reason as it presents itself to Aquinas. That faith is a more certain way to truth, one which preserves reason from many errors and reveals to it even truths which it might have discovered by its natural power, was a teaching foreign to Husserl. Consequently, he does not recognize the duty of reason to faith or the fulfillment of philosophy in the rational investigation of revealed truth which leads to a total (natural and supernatural) metaphysics.
The most serious difference between Husserl's phenomenology and the philosophy of St. Thomas centers about the role of theory of knowledge in philosophy. Unlike "naive" realism, Husserl first engages in a critique of knowledge as the indispensable prolegomenon to philosophical inquiry. Not only has he put the real world within parenthesis: even within the sphere of the transcendentally purified consciousness Husserl has tended to set off a sphere of complete immanence wherein knowledge and its object are absolutely one, excluding all doubt by this methodological device. This final reduction Edith Stein is unable to make, since it supposes as the condition of philosophical certitude a situation which can be properly realized only in the knowledge of God, where alone being and knowing are simply identical. For finite minds there is a necessary distinction between mind and its object and, consequently, a direction of the intellect to a reality beyond itself in humble acknowledgement of its creaturely insufficiency and dependence. Hence a critical examination and certification of the knowing faculty must remain a cura posterior, an integral but subsequent moment in a general ontology rather than the necessary prelude to all valid speculation.

Corresponding to their divergent views of the status of Erkenntnistheorie is a difference of location of the philosophical center of gravity. Although both Husserl and Aquinas subscribe to the conception of truth as objectively constituted apart from dependence on the empirical cognitive process, they do not agree on the nature of the first truth. For

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28Festschrift, p. 323. There is here apparent a radical discrepancy between the interpretation given the phenomenological method by Edith Stein and the route taken by Husserl in his later work. In his Méditations cartésiennes (1931), Husserl seems to have meant a pointed repudiation of Edith Stein’s approach when he declared that the problem of an a priori ontology of the real world is not a philosophical problem at all, since it takes account of empirical contingencies rather than confining itself to the question of transcendental intelligibility. His confessed Platonic ideal realism has been emphasized (perhaps overmuch) in Sofia Vanni Rovighi: La filosofia di Edmund Husserl (Milano, 1939). Edith Stein’s ontology is actual and structural rather than empirical and a priori.
a *theocentric* philosophy God is the primary truth, the principle of our intellectual light, the ultimate object of all philosophical research. In every speculative question the metaphysical problem is primary, since knowing is consequent upon and determined by the mode of being. Ontology thus assumes the position of the normative discipline to which logic, epistemology and ethics are subordinate. In Husserl's hands this ontology is radically modified as a transcendental phenomenology which seeks to answer the question: how is a world which I can immanently investigate constructed for a consciousness. From pure data of consciousness the subject constitutes the intentional world through its own intellectual activity. In this way, transcendental phenomenology treats the subject as the starting point of philosophy and considers epistemology the basic science. But such a method can never attain the goal for which it was devised: from the sphere of immanence to reach that truth and reality which are free from all relativity to a subject. As an *egocentric* philosophy it pledges itself beforehand to a position which necessarily precludes any juncture with the reality from which the mind has been methodically severed.\textsuperscript{29}

In the Wolffian tradition Husserl considered formal and material ontology to be essential sciences making no use of empirical data. Here he comes into sharp conflict with the Thomistic view of metaphysics as the essential science of this actual world, without overstressing the distinction between essence and fact, eidetic and empirical science. Although philosophical activity for Aquinas includes its own justification as fulfilling the function for which intellect is intended and thereby achieving our most intimate likeness to God, yet this same theoretical activity serves as the directive for our practical relation with the world. Not only possible worlds came within the philosophical provenance of Aquinas (in which sense the factual is considered even by Husserl), but

also the actual world of contingent facts which is so intimately involved in the elaboration of a concrete metaphysics of the creaturely.

The contrast between the Scholastic and the phenomenological methods has been unduly heightened with respect to the Husserlian notion of Wesensschau. Certain superficial comparisons oppose a direct and effortless insight into essences to the labored mediate knowledge claimed by the Scholastics; yet the case is not so simply stated. On the one hand, phenomenological intuition supposes a piercing and painstaking analysis of the given material, a careful and exacting intellectual synthesis of various aspects of the object. For its part, Scholasticism agrees with phenomenology on three important issues. First, all knowledge begins with sense perception or intuition. Second, human knowledge is characterized by an intellectual elaboration of sense data which is the work of the intellectus dividens et componens, of reason in the narrower sense. On the basis of the rationes thus acquired, the reasoning process, which takes its rise in an intuition of first principles, serves the end of the intellectus quidditatum in grasping the essence through its qualities. Third, both schools admit both the active and the passive character of intuition and deny that thought is simply a creation of the thinking mind. 30 While Aquinas reserves the immediate certainty of intellectual insight for the first operation of the intellectus principiorum in the theoretical and practical orders, Husserl extends this privileged form of cognition to our knowledge of essences. The scope of essential truths is carefully delimited by phenomenology, which admits the distinction between truths directly given and those arrived at mediatly. Yet it teaches an immediacy in our

acquaintance with essences which Scholasticism cannot admit in human knowledge while still in statu viae.

This final opposition is traceable to a deep-seated disagreement concerning the nature of the essences investigated by philosophy. For St. Thomas the employment of intellectual and sensible species is necessitated by the fact that true human knowledge is knowledge of the real world, involving an ineradicable distinction between the species and the essence of the thing: the species is the species of this thing; the known essence is intentionally an individual existent. Since it endeavors to prescind from the human mode of knowing, phenomenology recognizes no reference of essential truths to reality, no evidential criterion beyond the status of the object in pure consciousness. Thus essence remains "noematic" in this context, without ever attaining to the ontological splendor it receives in Aquinas. In both instances, speculation terminates where it began: in the immanence of transcendental consciousness or in the real world dependent upon God.

V

Viewed in the light of the philosophia perennis, phenomenology is condemned to a sterile and monadic solipsism unless it submit to a profound transformation in terms of a realist metaphysic. Its original philosophical impulse can be fully realized only when granted its natural expansion in the region of being and existentially grounded essences provided in the Thomistic ontology. When reconstituted within the actual (not empirical) universe, the phenomenological method can yield original results of considerable philosophical moment by approaching traditional problems from a new standpoint. Such was the program guiding Edith Stein's later investigations. In this spirit she issued a translation of the Quaestiones disputatae de veritate of St. Thomas, rendering his Latin into a vital and philosophically pertinent German. To each question is appended an analysis of the contemporary bearing of the doctrine therein treated, with
specially reference to the metaphysical and epistemological is­
ues involved. Without succumbing to the temptation of a
strained interpretation of the text, Edith Stein has succeeded
in effecting a fruitful union of modern inquiry and perennial
wisdom.\textsuperscript{31}

Nor were her efforts confined to academic projects. In
company with Przywara and other leaders of German Cath-
olic intellectual life she participated in the many conferences
which were indicative of a deep-rooted and articulate reli-
gious quickening. Her lectures delivered before university
audiences as well as at popular meetings of Catholic associa-
tions sought to impart to others the fruit of her meditation
upon the Mystery of Faith and the mystery of being. In one
such address given at Bendorf-on-Rhein she affirmed her be-
lief that all our educational and cultural endeavor must be
directed to forming ourselves on the model of the Person of
Jesus Christ. To become an \textit{alter Christus} is the norm of our
conduct, the final goal of earthly existence.\textsuperscript{32} That she herself
might fulfill the meaning of her life more certainly and abun-
dantly, Edith Stein entered the convent of the Discalced
Carmelites at Köln-Lindenthal in 1934, where she became
Sister Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, O.C.D.

\textsuperscript{31}Des hl. T homas von A quino Untersuchungen über die Wahrheit (Quaestiones dis-
putatae de veritate), mit einem Geleitwort von Martin Grabmann, 2 B., Verlag
Borgmeyer, Breslau (1931-2). A Latin-German glossary and list of citations appeared
in 1934. As an instance of her vigorous translation, the following passages may be
compared. "Simplex notitia dicitur non ad excludendum respectum scientiae ad
seltum, qui inseparabiliter omnem scientiam comitatur, sed ad excludendum admix-
tionem ejus quod est extra genus notitiae; sient est existentia rerum, quam addit
scientia visionis; vel ordo voluntatis ad res scitas producendas, quem adit scientia
approbationis" (\textit{De ver.}, III: 3, ad 9). "Nimmt man die spekulative Erkenntnis als
ein einfaches Kennen in Anspruch, so ist dadurch die Beziehung des Wissens auf
den Gegenstand des Wissens nicht auszuschliessen, die unabtrennbar alles Wissen
begleitet, sondern es soll nur die Beimischung von etwas, was ausserhalb der Gattung
des Kenens liegt, ausgeschaltet werden; z. B. die Existenz der Dinge, die das
Wahrnehmungswissen hinzufügt; oder die Hinordnung des Willens auf die gewusst-
en Dinge als zu wirkende, welche das 'wertnehmende' Wissen hinzufügt" (Untersuc-
chungen, 1, pp. 103-4). \textit{Scientia visionis} and \textit{scientia approbationis} are felicitously
rendered in Husserl's own terms: \textit{Wahrnehmungswissen} and \textit{vernehmende Wissen}.