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DEFENDING THE TRANSCENDENTAL ATTITUDE: HUSSERL'S CONCEPT OF THE PERSON AND THE CHALLENGES OF NATURALISM

abstract

The person is a concept that emerged in Western philosophy after the ancient Greeks. It has a multiple origination in Alexandrine grammar (first, second, third person), Roman Law (free person versus slave) and Latin Christian Trinitarian theology, epitomized by Boethius' definition – a person is an individual substance of a rational nature. In this paper I trace some aspects of the history of the concept of person and evaluate contemporary analytic approaches in the light of the Husserlian phenomenological account of the person.

DEFENDING THE TRANSCENDENTAL ATTITUDE

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The concepts of "person" and "personhood" have re-emerged as a central concern of contemporary philosophy of mind and action (Baker 2000, 2013). Persons *matter.* Their lives have significance for themselves and for others. There is broad agreement that personhood and agency are crucial for human social, moral and cultural life (Sturma 1997). Persons are intrinsically valuable and deserving of dignity and respect (Korsgaard 2009). The concept of the *person* is at the heart of morality and human rights; it is wrong to violate persons (e.g. by inhuman and degrading treatment). The person is fundamental to morality, law (human rights), the health and human sciences, and indeed to everyday life, yet it lacks theoretical definiteness. Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self* calls the person "part of our moral ontology" (Taylor 1989). Daniel Dennett (1981) similarly recognizes the person as "an ineliminable part of our conceptual scheme", albeit he interprets persons as "roles" or functions and denies that they exist as real ontological entities.

Many questions arise about persons: what kinds of entity are they? Who or what are persons? What are the boundaries of personhood in human beings, e.g. embryo stage, implantation, capacity for awareness, sensitivity to pain (Becker 2000; Jones 2004)? Can personhood be diminished or lost, e.g. in patients in a coma or in advanced dementia? Peter Singer (2002), for instance, proposes removing personhood from certain human beings in persistent vegetative states, advanced Alzheimer's, or other forms of dementia (Kitwood 1997). Are there non-human persons (see White 2007; Francione 2008)? Dolphins? Great apes? Intelligent machines or genetically altered human beings? Robots? There are even personhood deniers. Others from a different standpoint reject humanism and propound a "posthuman" or "transhuman" condition that transgresses traditional boundaries of the human due to new bio-technologies (Bostrom 2003). The health sciences (person-centered medicine, nursing, personalistic psychiatry, geriatrics, end-of-life care) recognize the importance of persons (Thomasma, Weisstub & Hervé 2001; Kitwood 1997), but with little theoretical underpinning. Psychology examines "personality" rather than persons. Religion, theology, and humanistic psychology (Rogers 1961) advocate the value and integrity of persons but such traditional defenses are regularly challenged by those who do not share the underlying value system or its justification (Singer 2002). The first point to note is that "person" is a specifically Western concept,

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although there are analogous conceptions of the unique worth of the human being in other cultures (e.g. the concept of *jen* or *ren* in Chinese Confucianism). As the anthropologist Clifford Geertz writes:

> the Western conception of the person as a bounded, unique, more or less integrated motivational universe, a dynamic centre of awareness, emotion, judgment, and action organised into a distinctive whole and set contrastively against other such wholes and against its social and natural background, is [...] a rather peculiar idea within the context of the world's cultures (Geertz 1974, p. 126).

Confucianism employs the key concept of   , *Jen* or *Ren* ("benevolence" or "humaneness"). The Chinese character combines "human being" (   ) and the number "two" (   ) and carries in folk etymology the thought of humans involved with one another or caring for one another (see Chan 1955; Shen 2003) in mutually supporting roles (mother-daughter, father-son, husband-wife). Buddhism, on the other hand, with its doctrine of no-self, has often been seen to be hostile to the concept of personhood although it too can be seen as promoting a humanism which is informed by compassion (Tu & Ikeda 2011). But the debate with the East can begin only after the Western notion of the person has been clarified.

The concept of the person has a long history in the West – from ancient Alexandrine grammar, to Christian Trinitarian theology, to Enlightenment discussions. Unusually the concept of the person is one of the few still current philosophical concepts that did not find its first expression in ancient Greek philosophy (deVogel 1963; Sorabji 2006). The term "person" in Greek (πρόσωπον), in Latin (*persona*), means originally "face", "visage", and refers to masks worn by theatre actors expressing character. Clement of Alexandria complained of women who turn their "faces" (*prosopa*) into "masks" (*prosopeia*).

In fact, the first Western discussions of persons emerge in Alexandrine grammar (e.g. first, second, third "person") and in Roman Law which distinguishes *persons* "in their own right" as freemen (*liberus*) from *slave* (*servus*, "under the right of another"), see Long (1912). Roman law had a gradated series of conceptions of the person. The person with the fullest autonomy and authority over others, held the right to own and dispose of property, was the "head" (*capus*) of a household. All others had degrees of legal dependency. Latin Christian theology in the fourth century CE and subsequently made a profound advance by attaching personhood to God and individuating three "persons" in the Trinity (see Kobusch 1997). The Roman philosopher Boethius' definition of a person as 'an individual substance of a rational

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nature' (*naturæ rationalis individua substantia*) in his *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium* emerges in this Christian theological context discussing the nature of the Trinity (Koterski 2004) and had enormous influence on Aquinas (Wallace 1995) and subsequent Christian thought (Braine 1992). Persons, on this account, are ontologically distinct rational individuals. Boethius' concept of the person depends on concepts such as *substantiality*, *rationality* and *individuality*. Aquinas discusses Boethius' definition in detail approvingly but with considerable transformation of meaning in his *Summa Theologiae* Part I Q. 29 Art. 1, where the person is understood as a *bearer* of rationality (see Braine 1992). Thomas defends the attribution of personhood to disembodied entities, e.g. God, angels. Indeed, medieval theology developed extremely subtle and sophisticated ways of talking about persons. Persons have generally been understood in the Western tradition, then, as individual substances, as free agents, as rational animals, as worthy of infinite dignity and respect, and so on. Ancient accounts of personhood as found for instance in Panaitios of Rhodes (as reported in Cicero's *De Officiis* I §§30-32) tend to emphasize the rational character of the human person, free will, the unique individuality of persons and also their historical contingency. The problem is that the different sources of the concept of "person" suggest different underlying metaphysical conceptions and presuppositions. In modernity, Descartes refines the concept to reflective *self-consciousness* (*cogito*). Enlightenment thinkers, including Locke and Kant, emphasized rationality, freewill and autonomy as the key characteristics of persons. Locke (1689), revived by Parfit (1984), proposed self-consciousness, memory and repeated ability to self-identify as necessary to the identity of the person. For Kant, all *rational* beings, not just embodied ones, are persons. Locke and Kant laid the groundwork for considering personhood as both a normative and a descriptive concept: to be a person is to be worthy of respect, but personhood also picks out individual, embodied beings in nature. Locke's definition is instructive because it encapsulates many of the concepts and indeed contradictions found in the current profile of the concept of person. Locke defined a person as a "thinking intelligent being [...] capable of a law, and happiness, and misery, [...] that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking being in different times and places" (Locke, 1689, 2.27.9 and 2.27.26). Following Locke, Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, explains persons as: ": "nothing else than [...] freedom and independence from the mechanism of the whole of nature, regarded nevertheless as also a capacity of a being subject to special laws – namely pure practical laws given by his own reason, so that a person as belonging to the sensible world is subject to his own personality insofar as he

also belongs to the intelligible world" (Kant 1787, p. 210). Note that both Locke and Kant identify this capacity to act not just in accordance with law but in recognition of the force of law on them. This conception re-emerges in recent discussions of normativity in Korsgaard, McDowell and others. For Kant, persons must be treated as ends in themselves because we must respect them as free and rational and not constrained by their embodiment in the world of nature. Thus Kant writes in his *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*: "The fact that the human being can have the 'I' in his representation raises him infinitely above all other living beings on earth. Because of this he is a *person,* and by virtue of the unity of consciousness through all changes that happen to him, one and the same person – i.e., through rank and dignity an entirely different being from *things*" (Kant 1798, p. 239).

Kant recognizes the bi-furcated nature of persons – as natural beings in the world and also as transcendental entities acting under their conception of the law. This bifurcation will continue in Edmund Husserl's conception of persons as being both in the world and for the world.

Current analytic philosophy includes diverse metaphysical accounts of persons as unique integral wholes, organisms, assemblages of objective temporal parts (Hudson 2001), even aggregates that are as loosely connected as heaps or swarms (Peter Van Inwagen's "mereological non-essentialism", Inwagen 1990), alternatively, metaphysical simples. Peter Van Inwagen writes:

> I suppose that such objects – Descartes, you, I – are material objects, in the sense that they are ultimately composed entirely of quarks and electrons. They are, moreover, a very special sort of material object. They are not brains or cerebral hemispheres. They are living animals; being human animals, they are things shaped roughly like statues of human beings. (When Descartes used the words '*moi*' and '*ego*' he was referring malgré lui to a living animal, a biological organism. When Hume looked within himself and failed to find himself, he was looking in the wrong place: like everyone else, he could see himself with his eyes open). It follows from this, and from well-known facts about animals, that it is possible for a material object to be composed of different elementary particles at different times. "Mereological essentialism" is therefore false (Inwagen 1990, p. 6).

One of the most influential recent movements is so called 'animalism' (Snowdon 2014; Olson 2007), that sees personhood as incidental to our essential animality or organic nature and identity to be constituted by bodily continuity. The *constitution* view (Baker 2000; 2013) defines persons in relation to the first-person point of view. According to the constitution view,

human persons are constituted by human bodies without being identical to the bodies that constitute them.

Another contemporary approach that reformulates the traditional criterion of rationality presents human persons as possessing the power for second-order representations or *metarepresentation*, i.e. the capacity to *represent* their representations, e.g. to consider certain states as *having been* theirs ("I was in pain yesterday"). This latter example involves adopting a complex temporal stance towards one's cognitive states, something perhaps unavailable to creatures lacking language abilities. This view, often understood more generally as the capacity for *metarepresentation* (Sperber 2000), has been the subject of much critical discussion. The American philosopher Harry Frankfurt (1971) claims that human persons are capable not just of wants and desires but also of higher-order or *second-order* desires about their desires (I can desire to curb my desire for cigarettes). Frankfurt claims that the capacity to form higher-order desires is adequate to distinguish persons from non-persons. In some respects all the approaches listed are unsatisfactory because they do not take into account the complex ways in which persons live and engage with their lives and with other persons. The metarepresentation approach has real limitations in that it may also exclude certain infants and impaired reasoners who ought to be considered persons on other grounds. One can imagine a person being able to identify a reason as their own without being able to determine when they formed it or grasp it as something *having been held* by them for some time. Higher-order stances towards one's mental states is a powerful human (and arguably some mammals) ability but it needs to be considered in terms of the living of an intentional and affective life.

The *narrative* approach (Taylor 1989; Dennett 1990, Hutto 2007) sees the person as emerging in a story it weaves about itself. Charles Taylor writes in his *Sources of the Self*: "to ask what a person is, in abstraction from his or her self-interpretations, is to ask a fundamentally misguided question, one to which there couldn't in principle be an answer" (Taylor 1989, p. 34).

Elsewhere he defines a person as "a being who can be addressed and who can reply [...] a respondent" (Taylor 1985, p. 97).

The "no self" or "illusory self" view claims that selfhood (and personhood) are inventions or constructs of the brain (Metzinger 2009). There are competing ontological, instrumental and eliminative conceptions of persons, ranging from full realism about persons to a complete denial of their existence (Farah & Heberlein 2007). Many of these approaches seek to conform to naturalism. It is not until recently that other key features of human beings such as *feelings*, *emotions* (Goldie 2000; Prinz 2003) and the *bodily* sense of agency have been

advanced as contributing to personhood, again often in a piecemeal manner and without a coherent map of how these capacities integrate in the full, concrete living person.

Lynne Rudder Baker's (Baker 2000, 2007, 2013) approach is much more promising because it recognizes persons as genuine ontological entities in their own right; the person is, in Aristotelian terminology, a "primary kind". Baker sees persons as uniquely defined by possessing essentially a first-person point of view. She writes: "what's unique about us are the features that make us persons, not just animals – features that depend on the first-person perspective (like wondering how one is going to die or evaluating one's own desires)" (Baker 2000). And again: "What distinguishes person from other primary kinds (like planet or human organism) is that persons have first-person perspectives necessarily" (Baker 2007, p. 68).

Baker further clarifies what a first-person perspective is: "A first-person perspective is a very peculiar ability that all and only persons have. It is the ability to conceive of oneself as oneself, from the inside, as it were" (Baker 2007, p. 69). She goes on to say in her 2007 book *Metaphysics of Everyday Life*:

> A being may be conscious without having a first-person perspective. Nonhuman primates and other higher animals are conscious, and they have psychological states like believing, fearing, and desiring. They have points of view (e.g., "danger in that direction"), but they cannot conceive of themselves as the subjects of such thoughts. They cannot conceive of themselves from the first-person (Baker 2007, p. 70).

For Baker, the nonidentity of person and organism is based on the fact that organisms have different persistence conditions from persons. Human organisms have, Baker claims, third-personal persistence conditions: whether an animal continues to exist depends on continued biological functioning. Persons, on the other hand, have first-personal persistence conditions: whether a person continues to exist depends on its having a first-person perspective. Most recently, Baker has modified her view to distinguish between a "rudimentary" and a "robust" first-personal perspective. The rudimentary perspective is a metaphysical property possessed by human pre-linguistic babies and some animals. This rudimentary perspective includes the ability to perceive and act on environment from a particular spatiotemporal location, which, for Baker, necessarily requires consciousness and intentionality. The robust perspective, on the other hand, is a "remote" capacity that is acquired at birth but needs to be activated later. It seems to require the possession of language and the ability

to refer to oneself as "I".

Baker's view is very rich and suggestive. I think she is essentially correct to recognize the ontological status of persons and their unique possession of a first-person perspective. She is also correct to acknowledge gradations or levels in the development of persons from the rudimentary to the robust stage. In my view her account is still too "third-personal" and perhaps too closely seeking to accommodate itself to naturalism. In the rest of this paper I am now going to sketch an alternative view – drawing on the rich resources of the phenomenological tradition and showing some comparisons with Lynne Rudder Baker's approach.

In contemporary European philosophy the phenomenological tradition (especially Husserl, Stein and Scheler) has much to say about persons, but this rich tradition has been relatively neglected until recently. The phenomenological tradition recognizes persons as embodied, intentional meaning-making historical beings, embedded in social contexts and acting on the basis of motivation rather than causation. The Husserlian phenomenologist Robert Sokolowski in his *Phenomenology of the Human Person* characterizes persons primarily as "agents of truth" and of disclosure (Sokolowski 2008). I shall base my phenomenological account of personhood primarily on the writings of Edmund Husserl, but also, including insights drawn from some of the more neglected figures of the phenomenological movement, especially Max Scheler (1913-1916; 1973), and Edith Stein (1989; 2000).

Martin Heidegger, in *Being and Time* (1927), deliberately rejects the Husserlian conceptions of consciousness and of the transcendental ego, as well as Scheler's "personalism", and instead introduces the notion of Dasein. There has been much controversy of the meaning of Dasein. Dasein picks out the transcendental conditions for the possibility of living in the disclosure of being. Is Dasein a person? Does it mean the way of existence of individual, embodied, historical human beings? Is it a kind of categorial picture of what human being essentially is? These are difficult questions. The later Heidegger becomes even more anti-humanist especially in his 1947 *Letter on Humanism* and the result includes Foucault's proclamation of the end of man – indeed of the birth of the conception of "man" in the classical age. Heidegger, on the other hand, claims the ancient tradition did not value human beings highly enough.

In fact, a very rich and still relatively unexplored phenomenological concept of personhood is developed by Husserl, especially in his *Ideas* II (Husserl 1952; 1989), unpublished during his life and which was assembled by his then assistant Edith Stein. This concept of the person is also taken up in Edith Stein's doctoral thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917/1989) and in her subsequent important and neglected study *Contributions to the Philosophical*

Foundation of Psychology and the Human Sciences published in Husserl's own *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung*, in 1922 and recently translated as 'Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities' (Stein, 2000). The phenomenology of personhood is closely wrapped up with the discussion of self-hood and this is something that one finds across throughout philosophical tradition. For Husserl, a person encounters itself in reflection as a self: "In reflection I therefore always find myself as a personal Ego. But originally this Ego is constituted in the genesis pervading the flux of lived experiences" (*Ideas* II § 58, Husserl 1989, p. 263; Husserl 1952, Hua IV 251). Finally, despite the importance of Scheler who does invoke the concept of the person as a being oriented to value, neither Sartre nor Merleau-Ponty make much use of the concept of personhood, and it tended to fade out of phenomenological discussion, until relatively recently.

Phenomenology begins from the concept of functioning intentional life, of an embodied subject who is making sense of its world through intentional activity. Husserl writes in his *Crisis of European Sciences* (Husserl 1954/1970):

> Conscious life is through and through an intentionally accomplishing life [*intentional leistendes Leben*] through which the life world, with all its changing representational contents, in part attains anew and in part has already attained its meaning and validity. All real mundane objectivity is constituted accomplishment in this sense, including that of men and animals and thus also that of 'souls' (Husserl 1970, *Crisis* §58, p. 204; Hua VI 208).

Human beings, for Husserl, are essentially intentional meaning-makers. Moreover, despite his embrace of Cartesianism, Husserl was never solipsistic in his approach to human beings. They live in an intersubjective socially-constituted cultural life world. He writes: "The development of a person is determined by the influence of others" (Husserl, *Ideas* II § 58C, Husserl 1989, p. 281; Husserl 1952, Hua IV 268). Furthermore, persons simply do not appear in and therefore cannot be grasped by what Husserl calls the "naturalistic attitude" which sees things primarily as entities within nature as broadly understood within the natural, physical and biological sciences. Persons are recognized in what Husserl calls "the personalistic attitude" which, for Husserl, is prior to the natural attitude (and also to "the naturalistic attitude" which is even more derivative since it incorporates the outlook of modern science). It takes persons to recognize persons. Husserl writes: "[The personalistic attitude is] the attitude we are always in when we live with one another, talk to one another, shake hands with another in greeting, or are related to another in love and aversion, in disposition and action, in

discourse and discussion" (Husserl 1989, *Ideas* II § 49, p. 192; Husserl 1952, Husserliana IV 183).

Moreover, persons are in the world in a peculiar way in that they are also world-constituting and are being constituted in turn by their social and worldly relations (*Ineinandersein*). As the mature Husserl puts it, persons are "in the world" but also "for the world". According to Husserl's account of foundation, whereby there is a onesided dependence of one thing on another, persons are founded entities in that, in agreement with Baker, persons depend on corporeal living bodies but are not identical with their bodies (hence animalism is false). For Husserl, indeed, the conscious living self is *necessarily* embodied. This is an a priori, eidetic truth. Similarly, for him, consciousness is necessarily *egoic* (*ichlich*), that is ego-centered; all conscious acts and passions radiate from or stream into the ego or "I". An egoless consciousness is, for Husserl, also an a priori or eidetic impossibility. The pure I – the I of transcendental apperception – is, for Husserl, not a "dead pole of identity" (Hua IX 208), but rather is a living self, a stream that is constantly "appearing for itself" (*als Für-sich-selbst-erscheinens*, Hua VIII 189). It is sometimes described, in Hegelian language, as simply "for itself" (*für sich*). Husserl's terminology is wide-ranging. He speaks of "human-I" (*Ich-mensch*), "ego-body" (*Ichleib*), "I-pole" (*Ichpol*), "I-life" (*Ichleben*), "animate body" (*Leib*), "living body" (*Leibkörper, Körperleib,* depending on the emphasis), "pure ego", "phenomenological ego", "transcendental ego", "soul" (*Seele*), "psychic life" (*Seelenleben*), my "psychic" or "soulful" being (*mein seelishes Sein*, I 129), the "egoic" (*das Ichliche*), the "sphere of ownness" (*Eigenheitssphäre*), my "self-ownness" (*Selbsteigenheit*, I 125), the "primal I" (*Ur-Ich* VI 188) of the *epoché*, and so on. But frequently he employs traditional terms such as person, personal subject, life, subjectivity and so on, often endowing these terms with a new meaning. Husserl draws on all these locutions to try to articulate his sense of the meaning of subjective life in its first person, individual consciousness with its many layerings (including those that might properly be described as 'pre-ego' (*Vor-Ich*) and 'pre-personal'), as well as in its connection with other selves and in its moral, social and rational nature, amounting to its communalized 'life of spirit' (*Geistesleben*). In fact, subjectivity understood as "primordial, concrete subjectivity", "includes the forms of consciousness, in which is valid nature, spirit in every sense, human and animal spirit, objective spirit as culture, spiritual being understood as family, union, state, people, humanity" (XV 559, my translation).

For the mature Husserl, furthermore, the ego is an ego of habits. It also develops a personal style. The person emerges slowly and develops attributes

which accrue to it as permanent characteristics that form its 'character'. Husserl writes:

> That which is given to us, as human subject, one with the human body [*Menschenleibe*], in immediate experiential apprehension, is the human person [*die menschliche Person*], who has his [or her] spiritual individuality, his [or her] intellectual and practical abilities and skills [*Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten*], his [or her] character, his [or her] sensibility. This Ego is certainly apprehended as dependent on its Body and thereby on the rest of physical nature, and likewise it is apprehended as dependent on its past (*Ideas* II § 34, Husserl 1989, p. 147; Husserl 1952, Hua IV 139-40).

Husserl's starting point is that, as persons, we can take positions and occupy standpoints and this is very close to Baker's view of the subjective first-person point of view. Husserl writes:

> As a point of departure we take the essential capacity of human beings for self-consciousness in the precise sense of personal self-reflection (*inspectio sui*) and the capacity grounded therein of reflectively taking positions vis-à-vis oneself and one's life, that is, the capacity for personal acts: of self-knowledge, self-evaluation, and of practical self-determination (self-willing and self-formation) (Husserl, Hua XXVII 23).

The mature Husserl was undoubtedly influenced by the Kantian and Neo-Kantian conceptions (he was a close reader of Natorp and Rickert) of the self as person understood as an autonomous ("giving the law to itself"), rational agent, but Husserl never suggests that the person is *purely* a rational subject. At the centre of the person, for Husserl, is a *drive* for reason, but it is a drive sitting upon many other affective and embodied elements, including drives, "strivings", passively being drawn to things, and so on. In its full "concretion" (Hua XIV 26), a *self* has convictions, values, an outlook, a history, a style, and so on. As Husserl writes in *Cartesian Meditations*: "The ego constitutes itself *for itself* in, so to speak, the unity of a history" (Husserl 1999, p. 75; Hua I 109). It is present in all conscious experience and cannot be struck out (*undurchsteichbar*). As the Husserl scholar Henning Peucker has written:

> The ego as a person is characterized by the variety of its lived experiences and the dynamic processes among them. According to Husserl, personal life includes many affective tendencies and instincts on its lowest level, but also, on a higher level, strivings, wishes, volitions, and body-consciousness.

> All of this stands in a dynamic process of arising and changing; lived-experiences with their meaningful correlates rise from the background of consciousness into the center of attention and sink back, yet they do not totally disappear, since they are kept as habitual acquisitions (*habituelle Erwerbe*). Thus, the person has an individual history in which previous accomplishments always influence the upcoming lived-experiences (Peucker, 2008, p. 319).

Given that Husserl sees persons as constituted in specifically personal acts and in inter-communication with other persons in mutual recognition, his approach to the person is resolutely anti-naturalist. Husserl rejects the naturalization of consciousness as one of the great counter-senses or contradictions of the age. He writes: "A univocal determination of spirit through merely natural dependencies is unthinkable, i.e. as reduction to something like physical nature [...]. Subjects cannot be dissolved into nature, for in that case what gives nature its sense would be missing" (Husserl 1989, *Ideas* II § 64, p. 311; Husserl 1952, Hua IV 297).

Generally speaking, Husserl regards naturalism as the reification of an outlook which is better understood as the natural attitude. He writes: "Naturalism is seduced by the spirit of unquestioning ('naïve') acceptance of the world that permeates the natural attitude, leading to the 'reification' (*Verdinglichung*) of the world, and its 'philosophical absolutizing' (*Verabsolutierung*)" (*Ideas* I, § 55, p. 129; Hua III/1, Husserl 1950, p. 107). Naturalism begins from the presumption of a given "ready-made world". Transcendentalism, on the other hand, says: the ontic meaning (*der Seinssinn*) of the pregiven life-world is a subjective structure (*subjektives Gebilde*), it is the achievement (*Leistung*) of experiencing, prescientific life (Husserl 1970, *Crisis* § 14, p. 69; Husserl 1954, Hua VI , p. 70).

From *Ideas* I (1913) onwards, Husserl characterizes the ego as an 'I-pole' (*Ichpol*) or "I-centre" (*Ich-Zentrum*), "the centre of all affections and actions" (Hua IV 105). The I is a "centre" from which "radiations" (*Ausstrahlungen*) or "rays of regard" stream out or *towards* which rays of attention are directed. It is the centre of a "field of interests" (*Interessenfeld*), the "substrate of habitualities" (*Cartesian Meditations*, Hua I 103), "the substrate of the totality of capacities" (*Substrat der Allheit der Vermögen*, Hua XXXIV 200). This I "governs"; it is an "I holding sway" (*das waltende Ich*, Hua XIV 457) in conscious life (Hua IV 108), yet it is also "passively affected". In his *Kaizo* articles from the early 1920s, Husserl expands on the notion of personhood to speak of the character of social groups and peoples which he sees as 'personalities of a higher order' (*Personalitäten höherer Ordnung*, Hua XXVII 22) – made up of individual persons who are united

into a culture and a communal consciousness. Communal achievements are not merely the aggregates of the achievements of individuals, Husserl points out. A people (*Menschheit*) can be understood as "an individual human writ large" (*Mensch im grossen*, Hua XXVII 22). There can be a common will or group properties that are not possessed by individuals.

Husserl gives an a priori account of personhood. The essential capacity for self-consciousness and what Husserl calls *inspectio sui* is important (Hua XXVII 23). But equally important is the idea of being able to "take positions" (*Stellungnehmen*) regarding their lives. This involves the capacity for uniquely personal acts, what Husserl often calls "I-Thou acts" (*Ich-Du-Akte*, Hua XXVII 22). Persons evaluate their actions, motives, goals, and values. The person is not just a rational agent but also built up on capacities, dispositions, skills, and what Husserl often refers to as *praxis.* Husserl also speaks of a *habitus* (Hua XXVII 23). Husserl speaks of human person's ability to act freely from the "I-centre" outwards: thinking, evaluating, acting. Persons can curb their inclinations and what passively affects them. The subject is an "acting subject". A lot of this Husserl puts under the category of position-taking (*Stellungnehmen*). We can alter, take up or modify or negate position takings. We can affirm or reject previous decisions made freely. Husserl emphasizes that not only can we curb or alter position but we can reflectively renounce a position. It is important to emphasize that we can and do occupy positions pre-reflectively. We simply inhabit stances towards the world. This goes along with our personal habitus. But it also marks our individual "style".

In *Ideas* II, written roughly around the same time as *Ideas* I, Husserl begins from the experience of myself as embodied ego or *Ich-Leib*, as a special kind of physical entity in a physical world, or, to use Husserl's language of the 1920s, as a "world-child" (*Weltkind*, IX 216). The experienced body belongs to our "natural conception of the world". Husserl simply describes in phenomenological terms the manner of the givenness of the living body (*Leib*), which is first constituted in the stream of experiences (Hua XIII 5). The body is sensitive, reactive, responsive, but it also has freely willed movement, spontaneity, the basis for the autonomy that enables it to operate as a rational subject.

There is a special kind of corporeality, embodiment or 'lived-bodiliness' (*Leiblichkeit*) belonging to the ego. It has its own kind of objectivity, its own peculiar mode of givenness. I am both a living organism (*Leib*) and a physical corporeal thing (*Körper*), an "external body" (*Aussenkörper*), a natural body, a spatio-temporal, material object (XIV 456). The body is unified with a psychic stratum (IV 25); it is a "psychophysical unity". The psychic or conscious stratum supervenes on the living body and is "interwoven" with

it such that they penetrate (IV 94). The psychic, as Husserl understands it, is not an independent domain but one dependent on or "founded on" the physical (IV 310). This interpenetration of psychic with physical is personally experienced – I decide to raise my arm, my indigestion affects my mood, and so on. Husserl starts from my experience of myself and here there is a sense of "I" pervading the whole body, I *animate* my body from within, and physical body is only arrived at by abstracting from this animation (Hua IX 131). Moreover, peculiarly, I can experience myself both from the point of view of the purely physical (my body is subject to gravity, I fall down the stairs, or it can twitch under an electric shock, impulses that are other than self, *ichfremd*, XIV 89), or the psychic – I can move myself, I can leap out the window. The "body" in the sense of a Cartesian physical object is an abstraction that focuses on certain properties and ignores "practical predicates" (IV 25), rather I experience my own "innerness" (*Innerlichkeit*), my "inner flesh" (*Innenleib*), my alertness, relaxedness and so on. Only when we abstract from the essential "two-sidedness" of the animate body, do we experience the purely physical body (Hua IX 131). Husserl always stresses the bodily sensations and experiences that are "I-related", that are connected in some way with my will or in some way awake my interest.

Through my body I am an object in the world and also an actor in the world or as Husserl prefers to say "for" the world. My living body is the "organ of worldly life" (*Organ für das Weltleben*, XIV 456), and the world is the theatre where I display myself through my *Leib.* My body is primarily experienced as an instrument of my will, a "field of free will" (IV 310), it is the centre of a series of "I can"s, of my "being able to" (*Können*), of "powers" or "capacities" (*Vermögen*). I can move my eyes, head, limbs, alter my gaze, position, direction of attention. But not every bodily movement involves an explicit act or *fiat* of the will (XIV 447ff.). I may move my hand "involuntarily" because its position was uncomfortable (IV 260), I involuntarily reach for a cigar (IV 258). When I play the piano as an expert, I do not *wilfully* move my fingers but they do move voluntarily (XIV 89). They are doing what I want them to do, but I can still perhaps adjust my posture or press with greater pressure on the keys. There is much more to be said about the complexity and variety of Husserl's thinking on the ego, the ego-body, the self and the person. But to clarify the manner in which Husserlian thinking developed I want now to turn briefly to two further phenomenologists – Max Scheler and Edith Stein. A person, for Scheler according to his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, is a "self-sufficient totality" (Scheler 1973, p. 390) and, moreover there is an individual world corresponding to each person (Scheler 1973, p. 393). For Scheler, a person is not part of the world but a *correlate of the world*. This

essentially makes the concept of person a transcendental concept.

Edith Stein wrote her doctoral thesis under Edmund Husserl but was deeply influenced by Scheler's account of empathy, as well as by Hedwig Conrad Martius, Geiger, Pfänder and others. Stein completed her doctoral thesis with Husserl on the concept of empathy (Stein 1917/1989). Stein gives a very interesting characterization of "spiritual persons" in that work. Chapter Four of *On the Problem of Empathy* deals with what she calls "the spiritual subject" by which she means the human subject in so far as he or she is an agent attuned to values (a concept she found in Scheler). This attunement to values is, of course, a clear acknowledgement that the self and the person move in the space of reasons, meanings and values. The self and the person belong within the domain of normativity – but there is more in what Stein, following Husserl and Scheler, calls "spirit".

As Stein puts it, "an "I" in whose acts an object world is constituted and which itself creates objects by reason of its will" (Stein 1989, p. 96). Spiritual acts are not simply separate rays streaming out from an ego but overlap, interpenetrate and build on one another. They are linked under the lawfulness of motivation. As she puts it, directly echoing Husserl in *Ideas* II: "motivation is the lawfulness of spiritual life" (Stein 1989, p. 96). Moreover, spiritual subjects operate within a general context of "intelligibility and meaningfulness". A feeling, for example, may motivate a particular expression and define the range of expressions that can properly issue from it.

Stein is interested phenomenologically in the constitution of personhood. She emphasizes especially the role of feeling in the constitution of personality. Stein in general spends a lot more time on the feeling and emotive aspects of self-hood. There are different layers and dimensions to the self and different ways in which the ego is involved or at a distance from these feelings. The self is entirely permeated by emotions but even these can be at different *depth*. As Stein writes: "Anger over the loss of a piece of jewelry comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person would be even deeper" (Stein 1989, p. 101). According to Stein, every feeling has a certain mood component "that causes the feeling to spread throughout the I from the feeling's place of origin and fill it up" (Stein 1989, p. 104). A slight resentment can grow and consume me completely. There is not only "depth" and expanse ("width"), and "reach" in relation to emotions and feelings, but there is also duration. Emotions and feelings develop, evolve, change over time. Personhood can be "incomplete" – someone who has never experienced love, or who cannot appreciate art (Stein 1989, p. 111). Perhaps personality does not unfold and one becomes a

"stulted" person. In this sense, there are aspects of the person that grow or can decline. There is a great richness of descriptive detail and psychological insight in the writings of Edith Stein on the nature of the person and it is very likely she influenced Husserl's thinking on persons as much as she was influenced by him. Unfortunately, we cannot explore it further here.

In this paper, I have tried to show the depth and richness of the phenomenological approach to persons. According to the phenomenological approach – developing insights from Husserl, Scheler, and Stein – to be a person is minimally to be an *embodied intentional sense-maker,* involved in an intersubjective horizon of other persons, belonging to and acting and suffering in a world [*In-der-Welt-sein*], possessing a specific sense of a personal past and a future of possibilities that belong and in principle can be realized to it, living a *life* that is meaningful *for* that being, *for whom things matter* (but this "mattering" – i.e. the normative values need not be necessarily represented consciously). To be a person is always to be involved with other persons in a world. Furthermore, personhood is gradually acquired, grows and can be diminished. While Husserlian phenomenology acknowledges the paradigm case of the mature rational person who acts autonomously out of purely or mainly rational motives, phenomenology can also accommodate a much weaker notion of persons as beings who have a subjective point of view and live lives that have significance for themselves and for others. Personhood can decline although it is not easy to say if it can be completely lost. Phenomenology also recognises a "core" or "minimal self" (Strawson 2009), a consciousness of oneself as an immediate subject of experience, at the very heart of embodied human existence. This minimal self involves little more than a pre-reflective self-awareness that may be regarded as constitutive of consciousness as such. Part of phenomenology's richness is that it can understand persons in a much wider context than that of autonomous rationality – there is the whole range of embodied selfhood, feeling, emotion and the apprehension and appreciation of value. Edith Stein offers a valuable insight also when she says that in the end persons always remain mysterious to one another.

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