Abstract In her doctoral dissertation, Zum Problem der Einfühlung (1916), Stein attempted to complement Husserl’s work on the phenomenology of intersubjectivity by providing a description of empathy and its key role in the mutual constitution of whole persons. Because he thought that her work anticipated certain ideas from the second part of his Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologische Philosophie, Husserl demurred at publishing it in his Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung. He did, however, engage Stein as his private assistant, and as such she helped him edit, between 1916 and 1918, his Ideas II. In the process, Stein’s interventions may have introduced views different from and possibly foreign to Husserl’s, and the new Husserliana edition of Ideas IV/V (2021) aims to sort things out. This paper seeks to contextualize the debate about the philosophical relationship between Stein and Husserl between 1916 and 1925 by drawing on two other sets of texts: (1) Stein’s several contributions to understanding Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology from 1924 to 1937, for example, “Die weltanschauliche Bedeutung der Phänomenologie” (1930/31); and (2) Husserl’s “Fichte Lectures” (1917/18), his “Kaizo Articles” (1922–24), and his “Reflections on Ethics from the Freiburg Years” (1916–37). The results of the paper suggest that, as Husserl did not adequately appreciate Stein’s pioneering work on the phenomenology of the person, she also did not fully recognize the philosophical potential of his transcendental-idealistic Weltanschauung for clarifying social phenomena. Thus their itineraries were intertwined but not inextricably so.

Preface: Reconstituting the phenomenology of the constitution of the social

Formally, Husserl’s Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy, Second Book: Phenomenological Investigations of Constitution and Theory of Science is intended to continue the work of his Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology (Hua III/1, 7). Materially, it is supposed to so by focusing on the relationships between the pure I and the real I, psychic reality and material reality, the soul and the live body, material things and the live body, and solipsistic and intersubjective experience—in short, spirit, nature, and person. Methodologically, these phenomena are investigated under the aspect of their constitution in and by consciousness.

According to the editor of the new Husserliana edition of Ideen II, Dirk Fonfara, one should distinguish five stages in the Entstehungs- und Entwicklungsgeschichte of the work (Hua IV/V, xxxiii–xxix). First, Husserl produced three partial drafts of the second book of Ideen in 1912, 1913, and 1915. Second, he also generated, between 1908 and 1924, texts that are thematically related to Ideen II, and Stein, as his private assistant, used parts of some of these texts, research manuscripts selected by him, to compose a unified handscript between 1916 and 1918. Third, Ludwig Landgrebe, as his private...
assistant, produced for Husserl, in 1924/25, a typescript of the handwritten manuscript of Stein, and Husserl, between 1924/25 and 1928, entered numerous corrections, notations, and supplementations into this version. Fourth, Marly Biemel produced, for volumes IV and V of Husserliana in 1952, an edition of Ideen II that incorporated Husserl’s emendations into Landgrebe’s typescript of Stein’s manuscript. Fifth, Fonfara has produced an edition of Ideen II for the Husserliana that reconstructs, as far as it is retrievable, the form and content that Husserl would have given his texts.

Before the new Husserliana edition of Ideen II it was already known that Stein was not fulfilled by working with Husserl (ESGA 2, 23; 4, 50–1, 72–4). But the new edition presents evidence that Husserl was also dissatisfied with Stein’s attempts by her interventions to become a kind of co-author of Ideen II (Hua IV/V, xxvii, ns. 2–3). He also reacted critically to the typescript produced by Landgrebe based on the handwritten manuscript by Stein (Hua IV/V, xxvii, n. 3; xxviii, n. 1–xxix, n. 1). In many places Husserl demanded a return to his original manuscripts. In any case, Husserl eventually broke off his attempts to work with Stein’s and Landgrebe’s versions of his manuscripts for Ideen II, so that there is no reason to regard the version that emerged by 1928 as bearing his imprimatur. This version served, however, as the supposedly authorized text of Ideen II that was published in the Husserliana in 1952.

Thanks to the painstaking editorial efforts at the Husserl Archives, one can now say that what has long been a theoretical necessity has emerged as a practical possibility, namely, the task of clarifying Stein’s and Husserl’s respective contributions to Ideas II and of situating them within the field of the phenomenology of the social, to which both thinkers made several substantial contributions between 1917 and 1925. Husserl did so with his “Fichte Lectures” (1917/18) on the ideal of humanity, his “Kaizo Articles” on cultural renewal (1922–24), and his “Reflections on Ethics from the Freiburg Years” (1916–37), and Stein did as well with her treatises Psychic Causality (1922), Individual and Community (1922), and An Investigation concerning the State (1925), which appeared in the Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung.

Within this horizon, the task of the conference is to discuss the contributions of Husserl and Stein to Ideas II in the light of their contributions to social phenomenology from 1917 to 1925 and beyond. This is important work because it remains desirable not only to arrive at a judicious assessment of the work of these philosophers, but also to advance the field of social phenomenology, which has significant interdisciplinary relevance for other disciplines, especially the social sciences and political science.

The present paper stretches the conference horizon by casting a wide temporal and thematic net to pose the question concerning the extent to which Stein and Husserl understood one another’s general philosophical-phenomenological approaches—in a word, their respective Weltanschauungen (worldviews). In “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” (1911) Husserl defines phenomenology as rigorous science in opposition to philosophy as Weltanschauungsphilosophie (Hua XXV, 3–62). In “The Significance of Phenomenology for a Worldview” (1930/31), however, Stein insists not only on the relevance of phenomenology for the formation of a worldview but also on the significance of a Weltbild (world picture) for the phenomenologist (ESGA 9, 143–158). In his research manuscripts, Husserl makes the distinction between a Weltanschauung and a Weltanschauung (world apprehension) (e.g., Hua XLII, 204–11, 332, 404). This philosophical difference, which lies at the foundation of the phenomenology of the constitution of the social world, yields the clue to the present approach. It would be hard to imagine a more promising occasion on which to revisit the philosophical relationship between Stein and Husserl than the publication of the new Husserliana edition of Ideen II.
Talking points

1. Introduction: A relationship fraught from the start?
   1.1. The development of Husserl’s phenomenology between 1900/01 and 1913/15
      1.1.1. *Logical Investigations* (1900/01) call for realism: “to the things themselves” (*Hua* XIX/1, 10)
      1.1.2. *Idea of Phenomenology* (1907) introduces phenomenological method of transcendental reduction (*Hua* II)
      1.1.3. *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology I* (1913) announces idealism: “consciousness constitutes being” (*Hua* III/1)
   1.2. Like other students (Reinach etc.), Stein has a critical reaction to Husserl’s methodological reorientation (1913–15)
      1.2.1. She comes to Göttingen to study with the author of *Investigations* (ESGA 1, 199–200)
      1.2.2. She encounters the author of *Ideas* (ESGA 1, 200): ‘no consciousness, no world’ (ESGA 9, 89)
      1.2.3. They engage in lively discussions & passionate debates about transcendental idealism (ESGA 1, 200–01)
   1.3. Stein submits her dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy* in Freiburg, where Husserl had moved (1916)
      1.3.1. Stein passes her *examen* (1916) with the grade of *summa cum laude* (ESGA 1, 341–3)
      1.3.2. But Husserl does not publish her dissertation in his *Jahrbuch* (ESGA 1, 340)
         1.3.2.1. According to her, he does not want to publish it next to *Ideas II* there …
         1.3.2.2. … because he thinks that it “anticipates some things” from that forthcoming work
      1.3.3. Stein publishes her dissertation as a book (1917) but without the historical part, which is now lost
   1.4. Before her *Promotion*, Stein offers to serve Husserl as his private assistant, and he accepts (ESGA 1, 339–40)
      1.4.1. One of her tasks is helping edit his *Ideas II*, but it is hard for her to please him (*Hua* IV/V, xxvii, ns. 2–3)
      1.4.2. He regards her as an editorial assistant, whereas she sees herself as a philosophical associate
         1.4.2.1. Their relationship does not yield “a real cooperation” (ESGA 2, 23 [12.I.1917])
         1.4.2.2. Stein works on manuscripts that Husserl does not look at (ESGA 4, 50–51 [20.III.1917])
         1.4.2.3. She can “serve” a “cause”, but not a “human being”: “obey, that I cannot” (ESGA 4, 72–3 [19.II.1918])
         1.4.2.4. Stein pours herself out to Ingarden and quits Husserl’s service (ESGA 4, 74 [28.II.1918])
   1.5. A question of empathy: Did Stein and Husserl ever genuinely understand one another philosophically?
      1.5.1. The question concerns their respective understandings of the general relationship between mind and world
      1.5.2. It also concerns their respective understandings of particular relationships in the phenomenology of the social
         1.5.2.1. The constitution of the self as a whole person consisting of body, soul, and spirit (ESGA 5)
         1.5.2.2. The constitution of others as whole persons (cf. ESGA 5, 107, e.g., self-deception & other-correction)
         1.5.2.3. The constitution of God & the relationship between God & human beings (ESGA 5, 20, 67)
         1.5.2.4. These phenomena involve questions of evidence or givenness: *Gegebenheit* (ESGA 5, 126–7 etc. …)
   1.6. The new edition of *Ideas II* makes an indispensable contribution to the resolution of these & related issues

2. Elaboration: Stein’s distance from and critique of Husserl’s transcendental-idealist worldview
   2.1. Stein’s academic career & spiritual journey leave her little chance to philosophize with Husserl after 1918
      2.1.1. She receives Roman Catholic baptism in Bergzabern (1.II.1922) and confirmation in Speyer (2.II.1922)
      2.1.2. She teaches at the Lyceum & Seminary of the Dominican Sisters in St. Magdalena, Speyer (1922–32)
      2.1.3. She lectures at the German Institute for Scientific Pedagogy in Münster until “Arierparagraph” (1932–33)
      2.1.4. She enters the Cologne Carmel in successive stages of her profession of vows (1933/34/38)
      2.1.5. The exceptions prove the rule
         2.1.5.1. Correspondence: 10.IX.1929; 17.VII.1931 (BW III, 547 & ESGA 2, 101–02; ESGA 2, 185–7)
         2.1.5.3. Confirmation: “[Stein] has not spoken to [Husserl] in several years” (ESGA 9, 89 [1924])
   2.2. Stein undergoes not only a religious conversion but also a philosophical conversion in the 1920/30s
      2.2.1. She continues to struggle with Husserl’s transcendental idealism
      2.2.2. She translates Aquinas’ *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (started in 1925 and published in 1931/32)
      2.2.3. Gradually Stein comes to prefer Thomistic realism over Husserlian idealism as a way of looking at the world
      2.2.4. Her shift is documented in her correspondence with Ingarden (ESGA 4; Heffernan 2021a, 141–2)
   2.3. Stein’s reorientation away from Husserl and toward Aquinas is reflected in her writings on phenomenology
      2.3.1. “What is Phenomenology?” (1924) (ESGA 9, 85–90)
2.3.1.1. Stein emphasizes history, method, knowledge, intuition, & idealism of Husserl’s philosophy
2.3.1.2. She downplays his idealism & recommends the works of his realistically inclined students
2.3.1.3. Stein makes no mention of Husserl’s investigations in the phenomenology of the social

2.3.2. “Husserl’s Phenomenology and the Philosophy of St. Thomas of Aquinas” (1929) (ESGA 9, 119–42)
2.3.2.1. Stein composes a juxtaposition of Husserlian idealism and Thomistic realism
2.3.2.2. She argues that Husserl’s turn toward TI has led phenomenology away from medieval philosophy

2.3.3. “The Significance of Phenomenology for a Worldview” (1930/31) (ESGA 9, 143–58)
2.3.3.1. At the beginning, Stein distinguishes between the “religious worldview” and the “scientific worldview”
2.3.3.2. Stein does not mention Dilthey’s work (1911) or Jaspers’s Psychologie der Weltanschauungen (1919)
2.3.3.3. She does mention H’s “Philosophy as Rigorous Science” (1911) (Hua XXV, 3–62)
2.3.3.4. She mentions Scheler & Heidegger but emphasizes Husserl for his influence & transcendental idealism
2.3.3.5. She argues that phenomenology influences worldview & that worldview influences phenomenology
2.3.3.5.1. She states that Husserl has a Weltbild: “a closed picture of the world”
2.3.3.5.2. She also suggests that Husserl has a Weltanschauung: “a certain manner of looking at the world”
2.3.3.6. At the end, Stein juxtaposes the “Catholic worldview” and the “modern worldview”
2.3.3.7. She also argues that Husserl’s Weltbild cannot accommodate God, religion, metaphysics, ethics, etc.
2.3.3.8. She grants that the Weltbild of Scheler is religious & that of Heidegger dynamic—but not Husserl’s

2.3.4. “Husserl’s Transcendental Phenomenology” (1931) (ESGA 9, 159–61)
2.3.4.1. Stein argues that the Cartesian-Husserlian starting point in philosophy is incompatible with Thomism
2.3.4.2. She asks whether it is not possible to solve the problem of constitution without accepting idealism …
2.3.4.3. And still to be doing phenomenology …

2.3.5. “Excursus on Transcendental Idealism” (1931) (ESGA 10, 235–48)
2.3.5.1. Stein admits that her “thinking was formed by Husserl” but that she “found a home in Aquinas”
2.3.5.2. S argues that with H’s TI “all psychic life” and thus “all being” get “dissolved” in “a senseless game”

2.3.6. “Contributions to … the Journal of the Thomist Society” (1932) (ESGA 9, 162–7)
2.3.6.1. Stein describes Husserl’s increasing preoccupation with transcendental idealism
2.3.6.2. She observes that it was originally not the center or the basis of his philosophy …
2.3.6.3. But that it became such because of the resistance of his students and his insistence on it

2.4. The Leitfaden of Stein’s critique of Husserl’s phenomenology: her rejection of his transcendental idealism
2.4.1. For Husserl, consciousness constitutes being: das Bewusstsein konstituiert das Sein
2.4.2. For Thomas, the knowing intellect does not measure but is measured by the things known
2.4.3. For Stein, the Thomistic standpoint is superior to the Husserlian because it is religious & not merely scientific
2.4.4. Finally, for Stein, Husserl’s “idealism is” … (ESGA 9, 89)
2.4.4.1. … “a personal, metaphysical basic conviction” … (ibid.)
2.4.4.2. … “not an unobjectionable result of phenomenological research” … (ibid.)
2.4.4.3. … and thus it is “not decidable by way of philosophy” (ESGA 4, 185 [Stein–Ingarden, 2.X,1927])
2.4.4.4. H tells S that she cannot overcome the ‘great obstacle’: TI (ESGA 2, 186 [Husserl–Stein, 17.VII,1931])
2.4.4.5. S realizes H’s point: ‘To understand TI is to accept it’ (ESGA 4, 229 [Stein–Ingarden, 29.IV,1932])
2.4.4.6. Stein finds Husserl’s way of arguing for transcendental idealism profoundly unsatisfactory

2.5. Question: But does Stein miss anything significant in Husserl’s phenomenology—through no fault of her own?


3.1. H defines phenomenology as rigorous science against Weltanschauungsphilosophie (Hua XXV, 3–62)
3.2. Husserl’s world-apprehension first emerges in Limit Problems of Phenomenology (Hua XLII)
3.2.1. Metaphysics: there is no binary opposition between it and phenomenology (e.g., Hua III/1, 7–8)
3.2.2. Monadology: the designation is better than its reputation (Hua XLII, 137–59)
3.2.3. Intersubjectivity: objectivity is founded on intersubjectivity (not mere subjectivity: Hua I, 121–177)
3.2.4. Metaethics: ‘Do your best to live a meaningful life!’ (Hua XLII, 390)
3.2.5. Teleology: phenomenology requires & reveals it in life and in the world (Hua IX, 301)
3.2.6. Philosophical theology: rational faith in God is a moral requirement (Hua XLII, 169–77)
3.2.7. Mindfulness: a matter of Besinnung (sense-investigation) & besinnliche Evidenz (Hua XLII, 497)
3.2.8. Question: ‘What must one believe in order that life might make sense?’ (Hua XLII, 238)
3.3. H develops a “transcendently-phenomenologically founded metaphysics” (Hua XLII, 160; XXVIII, 226, 229–30)
3.3.1. How phenomenology supports metaphysics: Husserl–Wilhelm Dilthey, 5/6.VII. 1911 (BW VI, 50)
3.3.3. Metaphysics must be founded on phenomenology: Husserl–Karl Joël, 11.III.1914 (BW VI, 205–06)
4. Resolution: The incompleteness of Stein’s understanding of Husserl’s phenomenology of the social

4.1. The strong focus on transcendental idealism has its disadvantages for both sides

4.1.1. Husserl never renounces his idealism—to the contrary, he increasingly emphasizes it


4.1.3. Husserl insists on his TI in Ideen II: “Nachwort zu meinen Ideen” (1930) (old Hua V, 138–62, esp. 149–55)

4.1.4. Stein ignores Husserl’s warning not to separate TP and TI: Cartesian Meditations (1931) (Hua I, 119)

4.1.5. The “Holy Grail”: Husserl searches for a “proof” (Beweis) or “demonstration” (Erweiss) of TI (Hua XXXVI)

4.2. There are “other”, more “social”, works of Husserl that Stein could have taken into consideration

4.2.1. “Fichte Lectures” (1917/18): a call to Besinnung in the crisis at the end of the war (Hua XXV, 267–93)

4.2.2. “Kaizo Articles” (1922–24): a call for human Erneuerung after the German defeat (Hua XXV, 3–94)

4.3. But there are also many works of Husserl that Stein could not have taken into consideration, for example …

4.3.1. “Reflections on Ethics” (1916–37): calls for Besinnungen on the meaning of life (Hua XLII, 156–527)

4.3.2. Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity (1905–1935) (Hua XIII–XIV– XV): a phenomenology of the social

4.4. Or Husserl’s “London Lectures” (1922): another missed opportunity, this time by him (Hua XXXV, 311–40)

4.4.1. His guests expected the “realist” Husserl of the Logical Investigations

4.4.2. They received the “idealist” Husserl of the Ideas I

4.4.3. This was a seminal event in the history of the split between “Continental” and “Analytic” philosophy

4.5. Stein knew that the results of Husserl’s research between 1914 and 1924 were not yet published (ESGA 9, 87)

4.6. The question remains: Is it possible to provide a phenomenology of the social presupposing transcendental idealism?

5. Conclusion: the broader horizon and the need for an empathic reading of two already vulnerable authors

5.1. Philosophical considerations

5.1.1. Is this a simple clash of personal worldviews or a more complicated case of philosophical positions?

5.1.2. Stein and Husserl went their separate ways on transcendental idealism
5.1.3. Husserl gives primacy and ultimacy to constituting consciousness over constituted being
5.1.4. Stein prefers divine creation of the world to human constitution of being
5.1.5. She seeks a solution to the problem of phenomenological constitution without lapsing into TI (ESGA 9, 161)
5.1.6. But she neglects Husserl’s concept of evidence: “the intentional achievement of self-giving” (Hua XVII, 166)
5.1.7. This is remarkable given what is at issue: the givenness of selves and others to one another (ESGA 5, 126–7)
5.2. Hermeneutical considerations
5.2.1. There is the question here concerning whether Stein did justice to the sources available to her at the time
5.2.2. But fairness requires that one must not hold her accountable for what she could not have taken into account
5.2.3. Husserl himself was already being overwhelmed by “Husserliana” before it became Husserliana
5.2.4. There was the intractable problem of the Meister and his Manuskripte
5.2.4.2. Husserl–Flora Darkow, 28.II.1923 (BW IX, 168): “Die Erndte meines Lebens ist aber noch nicht abgeschlossen, meine größten Arbeiten noch unveröffentlicht. Eine große Sorge!”
5.2.4.3. Husserl–Adolf Grimme, 5.III.1931 (BW III, 90): “In der That, der größte u. wie ich sogar glaubte wichtigste Theil meiner Lebensarbeit steckt noch in meinen, durch ihren Umfang kaum noch zu bewältigenden Manuskripten.”
5.2.5. Husserl and his correspondence: How important is his Briefwechsel to his philosophy? (BW X, 1–9)
5.2.6. Historical-philosophical Besinnungen & philological Auslegungen are needed (Hua VI, 15–17, 58–60, 71–4)
5.2.7. The hermeneutical principle: one can understand past thinkers better than they did themselves (Hua VI, 74)
5.2.8. Husserliana IV/V: this is a case study in the successful retrieval of sedimented origins (Hua VI, 365–86)
5.3. Phenomenology of Stein’s and Husserl’s respective social-political situations
5.3.1. Human facticity, infinite tasks (Hua VI, 73–74), & attempt at an ascent to the meaning of being (ESGA 11/12)
5.3.2. Husserl and Stein were both persecuted persons
5.3.3. The philosophical loss for posterity has been inestimable
5.4. Regardless of Stein’s picture of Husserl’s picture of the world, the latter was not closed but open
5.4.1. There are other Husserls
5.4.1.1. There is the “social Husserl” (Hua XIII, XIV, XV)
5.4.1.2. There is the “ethical Husserl” (Hua XXVIII, XXXVII, XLII, XLIII/2 & 3)
5.4.1.3. There is the “theological and teleological Husserl” (Hua XLII, 137–263)
5.4.1.4. There is the “existential and metaphysical Husserl” (Hua XLII, 265–527)
5.4.1.5. But there is no Husserl comparable to the spiritual Stein in the precise sense (ESGA 17–20)
5.4.2. In short, there is the Husserl who takes phenomenology to its limits—and beyond?
5.5. The question remains: Did Stein and Husserl ever genuinely understand one another? This is a question of empathy
5.5.1. “Secretum meum mihi” (Stein to Hedwig Conrad-Martius, 1921)
5.5.2. “Nein, ich kann es Dir nicht sagen. Nein!” (Husserl’s last words, 1938 [Schuhmann 1977, 489])

Bibliography


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