

Erik Rynell

UNDERSTANDING THE ACTS OF ANOTHER: EDITH STEIN AND KONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKI

1. Introduction

In recent years there has been a growing interest in empathy in many disciplines, including philosophy, cognitive science, developmental psychology, social neuroscience, anthropology, nursing, and primatology (Zahavi, Rochat 2015, p. 543). These disciplines have presented different approaches to our capacity for intersubjective understanding in general, but so far they have not yielded a commonly agreed-upon definition of what empathy is. Perspective taking, putting oneself into someone's situation, has traditionally been conceived of as a mechanism of empathy (Stueber 2008, 2013).

To put oneself into someone else's situation is something one can do in a purely imaginary way. One can also take a step further and engage one's entire body in this pursuit. Examples of this are children's symbolic plays. There is also the preoccupation of acting roles in plays, and similar media. In a recent article Gallagher and Gallagher (2019) have pointed out how experience from acting and acting methodology, in the first hand as regards perspective taking and environment interaction, have bearing on theories about empathy and intersubjectivity within phenomenology and cognitive science.

Empathy can also be viewed as a matter of perception, how we experience other individuals. This is an understanding that was forwarded by Edith Stein, in her thesis *On the problem of empathy*, (*Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Stein 1917), which has remained an oft-cited reference among the literature on the subject.

In this article, I will point to similarities and differences between Stein's and Stanislavski's views. An overall theme will be: is information we get from other persons' physical expressions of their feelings the royal road to our understanding of these, and to what extent is such information possible to separate from information we get from environmental factors?

Stanislavski's widely influential findings within the area of actor training also imply a conception of how foreign minds become accessible to us. Edith Stein has made a significant contribution to this issue within phenomenological philosophy and is still

today a frequently cited writer on the subject. My aim with comparing their basic views in this article is to contribute to bringing their findings, and also their respective fields, in closer contact with each other.

Some writers, Stein and Lipps among them, use the word “empathy” to designate our capacity to understand others. Other writers I will refer to talk about this capacity without using this term. It is this capacity that stands at the center in this article, whether or not one uses the word “empathy” for it. Thus also, it is not necessary for my purpose here to mediate between different ways to define this term, or to provide my own definition of it.

With this article, I join a debate going on within phenomenology and cognitive science about the nature of social understanding. As I will show, the opposition between Stein and Stanislavski corresponds to an opposition among phenomenological philosophers who see our understanding of others as a matter of direct experience based on the other’s bodily presence, and, on the other hand, on the basis of the other’s interaction with his/her environment. In paragraph 6, I will refer to a similar opposition between Stein and Aron Gurwitsch whose idea about our understanding of others, as I will show, has striking similarities with experiences behind Stanislavski’s notion of the role’s “given circumstances”.

There is a tendency within cognitive science today to include performative media in the discussion about the functioning of our understanding of others. One example is Gallese’s way to apply the theory of mirror neurons to studies of performance and film, an approach there will not be enough space to discuss in this article. Another writer among cognitive scientists who takes interest in theatre and acting is Shaun Gallagher. I will here refer to a recent article by him, *Acting oneself as another: An actor’s empathy for the character*, co-written with Julia Gallagher. Like I do here, Gallagher and Gallagher start with an historical overview of the development of the concept of empathy, where they include the opposition between two basic views: the understanding of the other as a “form of perceptual intentionality”, a view advanced by Stein, among others, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the understanding of the other as based on the other’s contextualized situation. It is this opposition I will focus on in this article. Gallagher’s and his co-writer’s description of acting as perspective taking is, as they also point out in their article, consistent with

Stanislavski's notion of "the given circumstances" (Gallagher, Gallagher 2019). For my sake I am more hesitant than they are to use the term "empathy" in an account of the actor's work, given the aforementioned lack of a generally agreed upon definition of the term, and the misunderstandings that can ensue from this.

A difference between Stein and Stanislavski lies in the fields of knowledge they address, philosophy in the one case, acting methodology in the other. But it becomes apparent that Stein's quest for how the other is constituted for us and Stanislavski's for how the life of a role is constituted for the actor give rise to similar questions about the nature of intersubjectivity.

2. Origins of the notion of empathy

The interest in our capacity to understand others got a significant boost through the invention of the word '*Einfühlung*' and the debate it gave rise to. The word '*Einfühlung*' was introduced by the German Art Historian Robert Vischer in his 1872 dissertation *Über das optische Formgefühl*. In 1909 the psychologist Edward Titchener introduced the term 'Empathy' as a translation of the German concept (Stueber 2013). Moritz Geiger describes the origin of the word *Einfühlung* in the following way: the idea of empathy grew up from the metaphysical and aesthetical speculations of Romanticism. Later aesthetics became reorganized from a metaphysical into a psychological discipline. The Munich philosopher and psychologist Theodor Lipps made a major contribution to giving the word 'empathy' a wider application by extrapolating the idea of empathy from the aesthetical questions and underlining its importance for the wide field of the knowledge of external egos and external personalities. According to Lipps, the concept of *Einfühlung* must become a basic term within psychology and must be the basic concept within sociology (Geiger 1910/25, 19, Lipps 1907, 713). The concept of '*Einfühlung*' attracted attention from German psychologists such as Hugo Münsterberg, Stephan Witasek, Johannes Volkert, Benno Erdmann, Alexius Meinong, besides Moritz Geiger himself.

A question that was hovering over this discussion was, as Dermot Moran puts it in terms borrowed from Husserl: «how do I constitute someone else as the alter ego, as another ego (*Ich*), with its own 'centre' and 'pole' (*Ichpol*) of psychic experiences, affections and performances?» (Moran 2004, 271).

This genealogy of the word *Einfühlung*, or empathy has bearing on the discussion addressed in this article, in the first hand because Stein acknowledged the influence she took from Lipps' understanding of the word, and because she inherited the idea about its content as being a matter of 'inner participation' (Stein 1917, 11), or as 'experience of foreign consciousness' (ibid., 14), i.e. of inner proceedings, in the first hand.

3. Signs and context in Lipps' approach to Empathy (*Einfühlung*)

Despite the fact that the word 'empathy' and the discussion about it was given an application also outside the field of aesthetics, examples from the arts were still recruited to explain the nature of this phenomenon. Thus, one of the important sources when it comes to the use of the word 'empathy' is Lipps' article «*Aesthetische Einfühlung*» (Lipps 1900), where the author discusses the expression of anger in a work of art. I will in this section go a little more in detail about Lipps' conception of empathy, partly as it was highly influential on Stein's, partly as it illustrates a problem about the relation between emotion and environment that is going to be central in this article.

An example that occurs in the early debate about *Einfühlung*, and that Lipps also refers to, is a work of Michelangelo, the artist's portrait of Moses, a sculpture displayed as a part of a funerary monument in the church San Pietro in Vincoli in Rome. According to Lipps' description, the prophet is portrayed with an expression of 'holy anger' on his face. For Lipps, this anger is not just his own assumption when contemplating the sculpture, Lipps can really see the presence of it, its undisputable givenness as an object of his thinking (Lipps 1905, 489). And, according to Geiger's understanding of Lipps, when we see this expression on the face of Moses, we live in this anger, it becomes really my experienced anger (Geiger 1910/25, 22). Moses' countenance exemplifies what Lipps calls 'signs', or 'symbols', which are physical expressions from which we can access others' emotions (Nowak 2011, 306, Lipps 1907, 714). According to Lipps, these signs make the other resuscitate in me anger that I have experienced in my own life (Lipps 1900, 418). The way from the *Einfühlung* in daily life to the aesthetic *Einfühlung* is not long. Lipps names the expression that opens itself to the aesthetic understanding 'aesthetic reality' (Lipps 1900, 425).

The empathy with the other is for Lipps a kind of inner imitation. To illustrate this, Lipps describes how, in his view, we experience the movements of an acrobat. By means of my inner imitation of the acrobat's movements, there is no separation between me and him, I experience myself as in him and in his place. There is a complete oneness in the experience. It is only when I reflect on this event that the separation between me and him takes place (Lipps 1903, 121 f.). Lipps insists that we really share the experience of the acrobats by physical signs like we do with the anger in a work of art (Geiger 1910/25, 2015, 21).

Thus Lipps contends that physical expression of emotions is our principal source of information about others' minds.

One question that could be raised against this view is whether we only react to sensuous expressions in others, and not also to their acts in what we assume to be the given context. Arguably, ways to express emotion like anger could also be actions rather than physical expressions, e.g., leaving the room, refusing to join a company, or remaining speechless. It is not that Lipps fails to mention the circumstances where a 'sign' or a 'symbol' occurs. But he does this in passing before laying the primary emphasis on the physical expression and what he views as its content. In connection with the example with the acrobat, Lipps writes that external movements have an inner side, and that this is the essential part of the story (Lipps 1903, 121). Total empathy (*Einfühlung*) takes place when, viewing the acrobat's movements, I let go, immediately and irresistibly, and when by means of empathy in the acrobat's movements, I keep all my intention focused on these movements. In this way, the empathic relation between the spectator and the acrobat is rather a matter of connection between two inner lives via signs (gestures) than of a shared understanding of the perils surrounding the acrobat's activity and the demands these put on the performer. Similar examples can also be found in Stein.

It turns out that an alternative interpretation of the situation where the physical expression occurs compels us to reconsider our interpretation of the latter accordingly. The example of Michelangelo's Moses can in fact serve as an illustration of this. The mere name of Moses, it could be argued, draws our attention to a story about a biblical figure, a prophet. According to one of these stories Moses receives the Tables of the Law from God on Mount Sinai, and on his return views his People worshipping an idol,

something that can justify Lipps' impression of expressions of 'holy anger' on the prophet's face. Moses' anger comes in a situation, and the question could be raised whether we would even experience his facial expression on Michelangelo's monument as precisely anger were we ignorant of its narrative context, were we not presupposing that it was this event the artist intended to render, were we not already beforehand applying this particular explanation to the prophet's countenance on the portrait or were we incapable of taking a person's perspective when faced with a deceit. The importance of the narrative for the interpretation of the image becomes even more poignant, given the fact that we do not know with certainty that Michelangelo's portrait actually renders the prophet in this situation. Macmillan and Swales argue that details in the artwork rather suggest that this depicts another situation described in Exodus, not in 32:19 where Moses' wrath when viewing the worship of the Golden calf is accounted for, but rather in an episode described in 33:20 when, later on in the narrative, Moses with two new, blank Tables meets God to renew the Covenant. On this interpretation, the prophet's countenance, rather than anger, expresses «joy, admiration, exultation, awe, dismay» (Macmillan, Swales 2003, 76). The example illustrates how an implied, complex assumption about the context underlies what Lipps qualifies as the interpretation of physical expressions of foreign emotional life, and how in reality physical expression and interpretation of the situation simultaneously and seamlessly interact to form the understanding. Lipps believes himself to base his understanding of Moses' countenance on the physical expression alone while, in fact, grounding both his observation of this and his interpretation of it on his presumption about the narrative context.

Similarly, as regards the other example, when we see the acrobats in action, do we really lay all our focus on their physical expressions? Do we not experience with equal immediacy the stark element of peril involved in their preoccupation, and do we even need any sensuous 'symbols' to experience the suspense caused by this fact? Does not Lipps take the context for granted to the extent of overlooking it and its importance? – We will come back to questions of this nature.

4. Edith Stein's empathic approach to foreign experiences

In her dissertation from 1917, Stein sets out to investigate how empathy is differentiated as the perception of psychophysical individuals. She acknowledges important coincidences between Lipps' conception of *'Einfühlung'* and her own (Stein 1917, 11). She agrees with him that empathy is a form of 'inner participation' with the other (Stein 1917, 11 f.). She does not agree on the identity between the empathizer and his/her object, which she reads into Lipp's example with the acrobat, neither does she agree with his contention that empathy is a matter of 'inner simulation'. She reiterates Lipp's example with the acrobat, and she writes:

I am one with the acrobat and I go through his motions inwardly. But in this situation I can also step out of empathy and reflect on my 'real I'. Empathy is not a feeling of oneness. I am not one with the acrobat but only 'at' him. The acrobat's movements are not primordial to me. But it is in this non-primordality that foreign primordality becomes apparent. (Stein 1917, 17).

The example with the acrobat used by both Lipps and Stein echoes a similar example in Adam Smith, a writer Stein also refers to. Smith writes about the reactions of the 'mob' when attending a performance of a dancer on the slack rope, how they «writhe and twist and balance their own bodies, as they see him do and as they feel that they themselves must do if in this situation» (Smith, 3). Smith here stands out as a representative of the idea that our feelings for others is grounded in our ability to put ourselves in the other's situation. According to him this happens with the help of imagination, whereupon we project these feelings onto the other (Smith 1790, 2006, 3). For Stein this is not a way in which foreign experience is given. She calls it «a surrogate for empathy». Empathy, she explains, is «the experience of foreign consciousness», a «non-primordial experience that announces a primordial one» (Stein 1917, 14).

She criticizes Lipps for being «bound to» the phenomenon of expression (signs, symbols) without paying attention to the bearer of these phenomena. It is in this context she presents what to her is the basis for the empathic engagement, the acknowledgement of the other as another 'I' (Stein 1917, 41) with an own 'lived body' (*Leib*) and as being himself a 'zero point of orientation' (Stein 1917, 69). In a similar vein, she also criticizes Scheler's idea that we are placed in a world of psychic experience, a 'neutral

stream of experience' that only gradually differentiates into individual experience (Stein 1917, 30). Instead, she stresses the individual as the irreducible bearer of experience: «every experience is by nature an 'I's experience that cannot be separated phenomenally from the 'I' itself» (Stein 1917, 31).

One could add to the differences between Stein and Lipps that she emphatically places phenomenological reduction as the departing point of her account. This approach is also the one that makes it possible for her to characterize *Einfühlung* as an experiencing act '*sui generis*' (Stein 1917, 1, 10).

Similar to Lipps, in the examples, Stein uses to illustrate how empathy works, she shows a tendency to look apart from the situations that are part of her descriptions of emotions that open themselves to empathy. In one passage she writes about empathy with a person who has lost his brother (Stein 1917, 4). Stein lays all her focus on the emotions experienced by this assumed person. But she does not pay further attention to the circumstances she attaches to him despite the fact that these are necessary for the example to make sense. Stein expressly separates empathy from considerations about the context, i.e. perspective taking. Thus she writes (Stein 1917, 14): «On the other hand, if, as in memory, we put ourselves in the place of the foreign 'I' and suppress it while we surround ourselves with its situation [...]». The formulation suggests that, for her, the act of perspective taking entails the suppression of the person whose perspective one takes.

For Stein as for Lipps, empathy is an 'inner participation' in the foreign experience (Stein 1917, 11, 27, 38). In her «strictly defined sense», empathy is «the experience of foreign consciousness» (Stein 1917, 14). For her as for Lipps empathy is something that must take place here and now, it presupposes the physical presence of its object.

Like Lipps, Stein sees the presence of the other's body as the basis of empathy. But she makes this relation an object of a more in-depth analysis based on two fundamental aspects of the human body that are already present in the German language, the one of *Leib*, which means the inner, first person aspects of the body, or the lived body, and *Körper* that designates the outer aspects of this, the body as I see it in others, and partly also in myself as an aspect of my lived body. The other's body is 'seen in':

The living body in contrast with the physical body, is characterized by having fields of sensation, being located at the zero point of orientation

of the spatial world, moving voluntarily and being constructed of moving organs, being the field of expression of the experiences of its 'I' and the instrument of the 'I's 'will' (Stein 1917, 63).

For Stein empathy resides first of all in the fact that I directly perceive the other's body as present to me, as a lived body, a *Leib*, like my own (Stein 1917, 4, 56 ff.).

In this way, Stein stands out as a representative of what Zahavi calls «the empathic approach that is characterized by its attempt to specify the particular intentional character of empathy» (Zahavi 2001, 158).

For Stein, the intentional character of empathy makes it a matter of 'first philosophy', of our basic way to perceive the world (Stein 1917, 22).

In a section of her unfinished autobiography, *From the Life of a Jewish Family* (*Aus dem Leben einer Jüdischen Familie*), where she treats her work on her dissertation, Stein makes the following remark: in this work, as well as in all that followed, her principal concern was always what she called «the constitution of the human person», «*der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*» (Stein 1933, 248). Her emphasis on the central element of the body in its two aspects stands out as crucial in this regard.

Thus also, it is not the concept of empathy as such that makes it interesting to compare Stein with Stanislavski. No equivalent to this concept can be found in his writings. Rather, what unites the two writers is their aim, that of finding out how the other subject is constituted for us.

I will here go on to discuss an experience Stanislavski drew from his practical work as an actor, and that became central to all his subsequent writings on the subject. It was about the relationship between the actor and another person, given in the form of a role.

5. Acting as perspective-taking

Early on in his practical work as an actor Stanislavski's observed basic obscurity as concerns the relation between him as an actor and the role. While discussions about acting generally focus on *how* an actor goes on with the work on the role, Stanislavski's set out to go to the *what*, the root of the relation between actor and role, what it means to act, with what and for what an actor steps on the stage (Stanislavski 1938). Is acting based on a form of de-

ception, or of self-deception an actor involves him/herself in, where he/she passes himself off as someone he/she is not? Is acting a way to produce artificial signs for emotions that are not really felt? Is acting a form of imitation, and if so, imitation of whom? He realized that this obscurity as regards the elements of his preoccupation affected his work onstage in a negative way (Stanislavski 1925, 254-261, Stanislavski 1938, 179). The solution he found was what he came to name the actor's 'magic if': an actor does not claim to be someone else. He does not have to persuade himself that the artefacts onstage are real. It suffices for him to say: «if everything around me were true, this is what I would do, this is how I would relate to this or that event». (Stanislavski 1925, 261). «This is the basic question to be asked when trying to establish the reality of a dramatic situation», Benedetti writes in his *Stanislavski & the Actor* (Benedetti 1998, 154). The given circumstances have to be identified and as givens they function as real constraints on the actor's work.

On this approach, a role is a form of first-person embodied understanding of another person on the basis of this person's actions in successive situations, within a hypothetical context. The role is not a preconceived personality – Stanislavski increasingly prefers the word 'role' to that of 'character' – but is considered as emergent from actions in hypothetical situations.

Implicitly, the basic relationship between the actor's 'I' and the role in the 'if'-mode means viewing the role as in basic regards someone like the actor himself, i.e., as a foreign 'I'. A living person has a lived body, not only an external one. In the 'if'-mode the actor provides the role with a lived body by hypothetically bringing in his own. As a consequence of this, the actor also comes to inhabit the role's 'zero point of orientation', to use Stein's wording. Thus also, there is a basic person-to-person relationship between the actor and the other, the role, but without any form of blurring of identities, 'identification', as the actor's 'if'-relationship with the other expressly entails that they are not actually 'the same'. The actor takes the role's perspective. Being in the role's situation is to be in what Stanislavski calls the role's 'given circumstances', i.e. the circumstances the actor can extract from the dramatic text: the locations where the roles find themselves, their personal relations, their antecedents, their social circumstances, and so forth. Stanislavski calls the 'given circumstances' the 'corollary' of the 'if' (Stanislavski 1938, 53). From a phenomenological point of

view, the 'given circumstances' can look very much like the role's 'world' or 'life world', such as this can be pieced together on the basis of information in the script.

The role, the other, is never there in isolation but always in interplay with a context. And so is the actor in his work onstage, accordingly, and inextricably, to such extent that the interplay between actors in rehearsal could serve as an embodied analysis of the role's interplay with his/her environment, a dynamic 'analysis by means of action', or 'analysis on the floor' (Knebel 1959).

According to his findings, it is exactly this interaction between the figure, the actor/role, and the circumstances in the specified situations that makes it possible for the spectator to grasp the specific character of the role's emotional life. Stanislavski cautions against playing human emotions 'in general', i.e. unrelated to the situations constrained by the 'if' (Stanislavski 2008, 56 ff). According to his experience of his and others' work as actors, when an actor plays only 'in general', his actions are «empty, not experienced, they communicate nothing essential» (Stanislavski 2008, 56). One should note here that the 'given circumstances' are givens, and that, as a consequence, they function as constraints on the actor's imagination and scenic work.

Thus also Stanislavski tries to divert the actor's attention from the role's 'inner life', from 'feelings' and 'psychology' toward the carrying out of physical actions in circumstances, as a natural way into the sphere of feelings (Toporkov 1979, 216). In his view, the 'inner life' of the other/role manifests itself in his/her interaction with the world, which also is the means by which it becomes accessible to others. Stanislavski found out that the actor's interaction with the circumstances of the play was all that was needed for making the role materialize before the eyes of the audience. According to his experience, the audience's attention benefited from this rigor: «direct communication with the object and through it, indirectly, with the audience» (Stanislavski 1938, 242, Stanislavski 1925). The 'given circumstances' are not only a matter of the actor's subjective imagination, but, once they have been identified through joint analysis of the script, they are shared by all involved in the scenic work. Stanislavski treats the given circumstances as hypothetical givens. 'Logic' is a recurrent notion in his description of the relationship between actor and circumstances (See e.g. Stanislavski 1938, 57, 171). The rationality in-

volved in the actor's way to relate to the 'given circumstances' should be auxiliary to a basic emotional understanding (Stanislavski 1957, 107). This 'if'-relationship stands out as something the actor should work on, not only in the scenic performance but in the entire period of preparation, rehearsals and performances.

For Stanislavski the approach based on 'given circumstances' was supportive of his basic endorsement of scenic realism. But Stanislavski has also been hugely influential on acting modes that differ considerably from the one of his own preference. Theatre artists that have been influenced by him include leading figures in modernist and post-modern theatre, such as Vakhtangov, Grotowski, Boal, and, today, Anatolij Vassiliev and Kathie Mitchell. Stanislavski's writings in this field can serve as a major treatise on the subjunctive element in the actor's work, acting as perspective taking (McConachie 2013, 15, 22). One can find observances of this element in acting documented in writings early on in Western theatre history (Di Somi 1565, 268, Sainte Albine, 1747, 232). Acting as bodily subjunctivity, as perspective taking in the 'if'-mode, transcends epochal and stylistic variations, as well as different aesthetical orientations, and thus also the confines of Stanislavski's realism.

In the same period as Stein submitted her dissertation in Freiburg, in which she set out to answer the question how the human person constitutes itself for us, Stanislavski was preoccupied with a similar problem related to the actor's work, and which he formulated as a quest for «the life of the character» (Stanislavski 1957, 145), or «the life of the human spirit» (Stanislavski 1938, 157). Obviously, the life Stanislavski talks about here is a human life, which makes his quest concern the constitution of a human person, not as based on mere presence but as someone involved in a 'world'. If we see Stanislavski's approach to the role from the departing point of the 'if' as a model for understanding another individual, this is in agreement with Stein in the sense that it implies an understanding of the other as another 'I'. It presupposes a view of the other as a 'lived body like my own', which is also in accord with Stein. What on the other hand differs Stanislavski's way to create a 'life' from Stein's 'constitution of the human person' is the fundamental importance he accords to contextual factors as a result of the 'if' approach.

6. Gurwitsch and Schütz on our understanding of others

The difference between Stein and Stanislavski consists in the first hand in the fact that Stein sees our understanding of the other as fundamentally based on becoming perceptually aware of the other's affective states, while Stanislavski implicitly puts great emphasis on situatedness i.e. on how the other interacts with his/her environment. At the beginning of this article, I cited a contribution made to this discussion within phenomenologically informed cognitive science by Shaun Gallagher in Gallagher and Gallagher 2019, with reference to Stanislavski, among others. In an article entitiled *Phenomenology of the we: Stein, Walther, Gurwitsch, Zahavi and Salice* (2016) have also pointed to the contribution Aron Gurwitsch has made to this debate, and which is of interest here because of striking similarities between his ideas and Stanislavski's findings behind his concept of the "given circumstances". On the other hand, Stanislavski's complex conception of how we understand others does not only boil down to a simple opposition of this kind. In order to provide a more nuanced image I bring in another writer referred to by Zahavi and Salice in their article, Alfred Schütz, to help mediate between the positions.

In his *Human encounters in the social world*, one of Stein's critics, Aron Gurwitsch, criticizes the idea that we can access other persons' mind via something physical (Gurwitsch, 1979, 29). Cognition of others based on perception of something physical, he argues, can only yield propositions on something physical. The mental states of others are never immediately given to me (Gurwitsch, 1979, 29). According to Gurwitsch, Lipps shares with philosophers like Scheler and Cassirer a one-sidedness consisting in the claim that only a single realm of phenomena (expressive phenomena, like Lipp's symbols, my remark) is given which is of significance for knowledge about the mental life of someone else. He argues that « Prior to all specific cognition, and independent of it, we are concerned with other people in our 'natural living' of daily life; we encounter them in the world in which our daily life occurs » (Ibid., 35). « The other», he goes on to write, «belongs to the specific situation, determined by it, and, on his side, also determining it, so that our comportment toward the other is codetermined by our entire situational comportment» (Ibid, 36. In this context Gurwitsch also refers to Heidegger's concept of 'natural *Dasein*'.) And he goes on to write:

To be 'naturally' in the world signifies to stand over against objects, to be busied with objects and themes, to have thematic consciousness of objects, to be thematizingly directed toward objects (Ibid., 41. Emphasis in the original).

Gurwitsch gives an image of this situational relationship between persons by referring to two workers cobbling a street: one worker lays the stones while the other knocks them into place. This relation, Gurwitsch argues, makes up the meaning of the fellow workers. In conclusion, the meaning of the intersubjective situation is constituted by the correlated situated acts of the actors. Gurwitsch calls this 'role encounters' and specifies this concept in the following way:

Our relationship to one another is a founded relationship insofar as it has its root in the situation mentioned. In other words: the situation prescribes a role to us which we take over as long as we are in the situation in question. That we exist in such a place in the role assigned us and as such and such a role is indeed everywhere the sense of the situational determinedness of our concrete being (Ibid. 107f).

In this regard, by stressing the importance of the situation, of situatedness, of situated acts, and of roles in these situations, Gurwitsch's view seems to be very much in accord with Stanislavski's experience that the understanding of the other is based on the circumstances in which his/her actions unfold, and with which (s)he interacts. Gurwitsch's description of how roles emerge in life, «a role assigned to us as such and such a role» and as «the sense of the situational determinedness of our concrete being» bears striking resemblances with Stanislavski's description of the mechanisms behind how roles emerge as 'life' onstage.

But unlike Gurwitsch Stanislavski's 'if'-approach entails a commitment to the idea of the other as fundamentally someone like the actor him/herself. While a basic individual-to-individual aspect seems absent in Gurwitsch's account, it remains a constituting element in Stanislavski's 'if'-relationship to the role.

A writer who moderates between the positions is Alfred Schütz. In his *Phenomenology of the Social World* he aligns himself with Gurwitsch's idea about the importance of the social realm for the amount of experience one has of another person (Schütz 1972, 162). On the other hand, Schütz also puts great emphasis on the person-to-person relationship, which he describes as a 'Thou'-relationship. «First of all», he argues,

the Thou-orientation is the pure mode in which I am aware of another human being as a person. I am already Thou-oriented from the moment that I recognize an entity which I directly experience as a fellow man (as a Thou), attributing life and consciousness to him (Ibid.)

In this context, Schütz, like Stein, foregrounds the importance of the face-to-face encounter (Ibid. 163 f.), something an actor cannot obtain with the role, and that Stanislavski in fact did not need for his version of the person-to-person relationship.

Schütz argues that the 'knowledge' we have of others is based on our own experiences, a view that is also in accord with Stein. When stating that «everything I know about your conscious life is based on my own lived experiences» (Schütz, 106), Schütz is talking about a process that is also elicited by the 'if'-approach to acting.

7. Conclusions

In this paper, I have compared ideas about the constitution of the other forwarded by Edith Stein in her *On the Problem of Empathy* with an idea about an understanding of the other implied in Stanislavski's basic idea about the forming of a role. I have presented two approaches to how the other is constituted for us, the one based on physical signs of emotional reactions, the other on the subject's interaction with a specific situation, or rather, on physical expression as inextricably related to specific factors in the environment. I have pointed to difficulties in isolating the understanding of someone's physical expressions of emotions from an understanding of the situation in which they occur.

I have illustrated this with references to Lipps, Stein, Gurwitsch, and Schütz.

To sum up Stanislavski's 'if' approach in relation to Stein, Gurwitsch, and Schütz:

Like Stein Stanislavski's 'if'- approach presupposes a person-to-person relationship to the other. Unlike Stein it also emphasizes the importance of the context.

Like Gurwitsch, Stanislavski with his 'if'-approach emphasizes the importance of the context. Unlike Gurwitsch Stanislavski also, to equal extent, stresses the importance of a person-to-person relationship with the other.

Like Schütz, Stanislavski with his 'if'-approach emphasizes the importance of the person-to-person relationship with the oth-

er, under the presupposition that the role is an 'other'. Unlike Schütz he does not identify this relation with a face-to-face-relationship.

Stein's idea about the other takes the form of a subject's inner made accessible to foreign understanding through embodied expression. In this regard, she holds on to an idea about our access to other minds that was also Lipps'.

Stanislavski's 'if' mode of acting does not presuppose a division between understanding the other as another 'I' and understanding the other as situated in the context of given circumstances. According to him, the two forms of understanding are inseparable. One way to clarify Stanislavski's point would be to go back to Lipps' influential formulation of the problem about how we can understand foreign minds. For Lipps such understanding was, first of all, a matter of how inner life can be experienced by other inner life, while according to Stanislavski's finds it is, first of all, a matter of understanding, in a jointly intellectual and emotional way, human action in context.

Stanislavski's description of the actor's work implicitly suggests that face-to-face contact is not the only way to obtain a physical understanding of an other as an 'other I'. This can also be obtained my means of an embodied subjunctive approach to the other.

Out of the two explanations of how the other is constituted, the one that stresses here-and-now perceptible physical expressions in the first hand, and the one that accords the primal importance to actions in context and world interaction, it is only the latter that can account for how we can reach an advanced understanding of an other whose face is unknown to us, who is not present here and now, and whose existence is even only fictional.

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