

# Stein and Honneth on Empathy and Emotional Recognition

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**Abstract** My aim in this paper is to make use of Edith Stein’s phenomenological analyses of empathy, emotion, and personhood to clarify and critically assess the recent suggestion by Axel Honneth that a basic form of recognition is affective in nature. I will begin by considering Honneth’s own presentation of this claim in his discussion of the role of affect in recognitive gestures, as well as in his notion of ‘elementary recognition,’ arguing that while his account contains much of value it also generates problems. On the basis of this analysis, I will try to show that Stein’s account of empathy demarcates an elementary form of recognition in a less problematic fashion than does Honneth’s own treatment of this issue. I will then spell out the consequences of this move for the emotional recognition thesis, arguing that Stein’s treatment lends it further credence, before ending with some remarks on the connection between recognition and emotional personality.

**Keywords** Edith Stein · Axel Honneth · Empathy · Recognition · Emotion · Personhood

In recent years, a renewed interest in the relationship between phenomenology and critical social theory has begun to emerge. On the one hand, there have been important steps made in challenging a dominant assessment of phenomenology as hopelessly solipsistic and formalistic, and thus as uninterested in social matters and inherently unable to address them. Not only do social theorists and phenomenologists share a concern with the issue of intersubjectivity (broadly construed), but the importance of a multi-dimensional understanding of this issue is so fundamental to both disciplines that mutual enlightenment between them is not only possible but

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fruitful and important.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, recent works in critical social philosophy have actively made use of phenomenological analysis, treating it as a crucial tool in clarifying and engaging critically with the lived reality and normative structure of concrete social phenomena.<sup>2</sup> In this paper, I attempt to contribute to these efforts by making use of Edith Stein’s phenomenological analyses of empathy, emotion, and personhood to clarify and critically assess the recent suggestion by Axel Honneth that a basic form of recognition is affective in nature.<sup>3</sup> I will begin by critically considering Honneth’s own presentation of this claim (“[Honneth on Social Visibility and Recognition](#)”), before turning to Stein’s account of empathy, arguing that it demarcates an elementary form of recognition in a less problematic fashion than does Honneth’s own treatment of this issue (“[Stein’s Analysis of Empathy](#)”). I will then spell out the consequences of this move for the emotional recognition thesis, arguing that Stein’s treatment lends it further credence (“[Empathy and Emotional Recognition](#)”), before concluding with some remarks on the connection between recognition and emotional personality.

## Honneth on Social Visibility and Recognition

In an important publication, *Invisibility*, Axel Honneth seeks to clarify what he calls the ‘moral epistemology of recognition’ by means of an analysis of ‘social visibility’ (2003: 10).<sup>4</sup> The initial question guiding his discussion is the following: “what must be added to the perception of a person—to taking cognizance of him—in order to make it into an act of recognition” (2001: 111)? Honneth raises this issue because he starts from the assumption that for a person to be either socially visible or invisible, her literal visibility must already be established (2001: 114)—although, as we will see, his discussion ultimately shows that this apparently obvious premise requires nuancing. But what does this alleged distinction between literal and social visibility amount to? Honneth stipulates that someone is literally visible to someone

<sup>1</sup> For seminal examples of this, see the efforts made by Steinbock (1995) and Zahavi (2001) to demonstrate the contemporary importance of Husserl’s analyses of, e.g., transcendental intersubjectivity, generativity, normality, typicality, and the lifeworld(s). See also the classical works by, e.g., Schutz (1967), Gurwitsch (1979), and Paci (1972). From the side of critical social theory, Honneth (2008: 29–35; 1995b: 150–169; 2007: 118–121) has engaged, in an occasionally critical but generally open-minded and appreciative way, with the work of Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Levinas.

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the recent studies by Jaeggi (2014) and Guenther (2013).

<sup>3</sup> I am unfortunately unable to explicitly address here the extent to which the rather different frameworks underlying Honneth and Stein’s work (i.e. the former’s strong intersubjectivism and normativism, versus the latter’s phenomenological approach) can be easily and productively reconciled; an important and interesting issue that would (at least) require a separate paper. Indeed, my approach will be generally closer to the phenomenological methodology adopted by Stein. On the other hand, given that Honneth himself gives phenomenological considerations a fundamental role, and that I will be addressing issues that he takes to be of fundamental importance to his own project, this omission will not, I hope, render my argument wholly superfluous. I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for urging me to make this limitation of the paper more explicit.

<sup>4</sup> In regard to Honneth’s broader project of reconstructing a critical social theory based on recognition, see the detailed study found in Petherbridge (2013), as well as Honneth’s own presentation in his inaugural lecture (2007: 63–79).

else when that person is correctly identified, by another person who perceptually encounters him or her, as a currently present individual of determinate features. In short, someone's being literally visible is a matter of her being perceptually present to another person, who in their turn apprehends one in a veridical, and predicative-judgemental, act of cognition or *Erkennen* (2001: 113). When it comes to social visibility, on the other hand, matters are not so simple. Indeed, we must consider characterisations deriving from two perspectives: that of the socially visible person, and that of the person for whom she is socially visible. To begin with the former, Honneth writes that to be socially visible is a matter of living in a social space of "interactive relationships" in which one is aware of having been accorded a "social validity" (or "affirmed") with respect to the "role of a specific social type" (whether acquaintance, cleaning lady, or fellow traveller) by one's interactive partners in that social space (2001: 119).<sup>5</sup> This can be helpfully contrasted with the experience of one's own social invisibility, which Honneth describes as "non-existence in a social sense" (2001: 111). Despite (indeed, precisely *as*) being visible to others in the literal sense, the socially invisible person experiences the "humiliation" of encountering others who fail to offer her any visible acknowledgement that she is a person within a social space (2001: 114). Honneth's prime example of such invisibility is the first-person narrator of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*: a black person who feels himself rendered 'invisible' by the near-constant and ritualized manner in which the (white) people he encounters in his social world 'look through' and actively and publicly fail to 'see' him as a person.

A more detailed characterization of social visibility (and its negative counterpart) is offered by Honneth in his description of the recognitive activity that renders another person 'socially visible'. Since literal visibility is necessary for both social visibility and social invisibility and sufficient for neither, and since social invisibility is suffered by subjects who are routinely denied visible acknowledgement, Honneth stipulates that the activity of rendering somebody socially visible must consist, at least in part, in some form of expressive and publicly performed bodily activity directed towards that person in her visible presence (2001: 114f.). This bodily expression, which comprises the properly public aspect of an act of "recognizing" a perceptually present person, conveys to this person that the one who performs it is aware of her, and is aware of her not merely "cognitively" but in the manner of an "affirmation" (2001: 115). To illustrate this, Honneth offers the following examples:

Even adult persons usually make clear reciprocally in their communications, through a multitude of finely nuanced, expressive responses, that the other is welcome or deserves special attention: a friend at a party is worthy of a sparkling smile or a strongly articulated welcoming gesture, the cleaning lady in one's apartment is offered a gesture hinting at gratitude that extends beyond the speech act of greeting, and the black person is greeted like all other

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<sup>5</sup> Notably, phenomenologists have also emphasized the role of social types and typification in empathy and interpersonal understanding. For recent treatments of this issue, see Zahavi (2010: 300–301) and Taipale (2015b).

persons in the train compartment with changing facial expressions or a quick nod of the head (2001: 119).

In Honneth's discussion of such recognitive gestures, several intriguing claims emerge. On the one hand, Honneth notes that while such bodily movements are in one sense voluntary actions in and of themselves, in another sense they are better described as a kind of "meta-action," in as much as they make it clear to the other person that their agent is willing to act in a particular type of way in the future, hence allowing the other to form an expectation of the kind of treatment she will be in for as the encounter unfolds. Thus, "a welcoming gesture among adults expresses the fact that one can subsequently reckon upon benevolent actions," while "the absence of gestures of recognition" suggests, in the space of the encounter, that the other "must be prepared for hostile actions" (2001: 120).

Importantly however, such meta-practical recognition of the other is not merely a matter of a habitual compliance with social codes, as if recognizing another person were simply a matter of being willing to act towards another individual in a merely customary fashion; rather, Honneth claims that all "direct" forms of recognition—i.e. those by means of which a perceived other is rendered socially visible in one way or another—possess a "moral core" (2001: 122). This moral dimension of direct recognition appears to stem from the fact that the meta-practical commitments it institutes are rooted in an acknowledgment that the other is a *person*, an acknowledgement that is partially constituted by a certain kind of *evaluation*, in which the other's personhood is taken to be something of moral significance. In performatively recognizing the other, the recognizing subject makes it clear that she takes the other to be a person and that she is willing to treat the other in a way that persons, and only persons, *ought* to be treated. As Honneth puts it, the diverse forms of direct recognition each involve an appraisal of the personality of the other as having a certain "worth," and this appraisal is implicit in the reciprocally understood meaning of the public gesture, since such gestures reveal to the recognized person that their agent is "motivated to treat him in the future according to his worth" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Honneth notes that the spectrum of different forms of direct recognition is far from homogenous, and that it includes "fine distinctions" insofar as different recognitive gestures betray different types of evaluative appraisal, as well as being directed towards and appraising different aspects of the other's personal life in its social dimensions. Although acknowledging that these three "possibilities" are far from exhaustive, Honneth offers as examples of direct recognition those gestures which betray love, respect, and solidarity (122f.).

Thus, Honneth's claim here is that recognition involves a certain kind of personal appraisal of the other, one which is simultaneously publically intelligible as something that will serve as guiding for the recognizing subject's practical activity. But what more exactly is the nature of this appraisal? While his account to some extent vacillates on this point, Honneth seems to suggest that the evaluative character of direct recognition arises in part from its being expressive of a specific type of *emotional stance*, one which is held by the recognizing subject and directed

towards the other person.<sup>6</sup> Thus, what the recognitive gesture most directly expresses is an affectively grounded evaluation of the other (of one or another form), and this emotional stance is furthermore immediately intelligible to the person recognized as having motivational consequences, namely as eliciting in the recognizing subject a desire to treat the recognized person in a morally appropriate fashion (in one or another sense). As Honneth writes: “Whether someone smiles lovingly or merely greets one respectfully, whether someone extends his hand emphatically or merely nods his head in a benevolent way, in each case a different type of *emotional readiness* to engage morally with the addressee is signalled with the expressive gesture” (2001: 122, my emphasis). This is not to say, of course, that all forms of recognition merely involve a person being affectively moved, or even involve affect at all. Certainly, the examples offered by Honneth in *Invisibility* seem to involve the act of recognition being rooted in a certain type of affective stance, in that they each involve a certain type of emotionally expressive gesture or movement (2001: 119). On the other hand, the recognition of a person’s legal rights, for example, might not require any specific emotional response, personal evaluation, or even bodily gesture, since here an implicit or explicit commitment to act in accordance with certain practical norms is often sufficient.<sup>7</sup>

Ultimately, Honneth notes that an important consequence of his analysis is that the notion of cognition with which he began is in need of revision. When the manner in which we immediately respond to those who we take as socially visible is considered, it becomes clear that (in such cases at least) our most basic comportment towards others is fused with recognitive elements. Honneth thus suggests that, for non-pathological mature adults, the perception of others is rarely the value-neutral cognition of an identifiable object, but is rather an “evaluative perception in which the worth of other persons is directly given” (2001: 125). Indeed, when it comes to our social experience, value-neutral and purely judicative identification is a rather rare case, one that occurs only when “an original recognizing is neutralized” (2001: 126). In short, recognition is grounded in a form of evaluative intentionality already present in our perceptual awareness of others. Honneth thus wonders whether his initial construal of literal visibility might be in need of revision, given that it now seems questionable to postulate a form of cognition uncontaminated by recognitive elements as a basic and self-sufficient layer in our relations to others.

In a later text, *Reification*, Honneth revisits and deepens his suggestion that affect plays a central role in recognition. Here he is at pains to describe a distinctive and basic form of recognition, one that, he claims, is already presupposed by forms of recognition in which other persons’ cognitive and moral attitudes and social statuses are taken as “a corrective authority” to one’s own (2008: 42). Drawing on developmental psychology as well as conceptual analysis, Honneth argues that the ability to take over another person’s perspective through communication is “attached to the hardly accessible prerequisite of emotional receptivity or

<sup>6</sup> See the interesting, although apparently slightly different, account offered by Honneth his discussion of the Kantian notion of respect (2001: 222).

<sup>7</sup> Honneth discusses the different forms of recognition pertaining to love, rights, and solidarity, in his seminal work, *The Struggle for Recognition* (1995a, 92–139).

identification” (2008: 46). He moreover describes such a recognitive stance as a form of ‘sympathy’ (*Anteilnahme*),<sup>8</sup> by which he means an emotional mode of comportment in which the rhythm of the other’s emotional life affects the sympathetic subject, presenting itself as having a certain value and thus as an “invitation to act” (2008: 45, 49f., 57f.). Thus, and following a distinction already present in his discussion of invisibility, Honneth seeks here to distinguish this “emotional recognition,” in which the other is recognized in a sympathetic or benevolent manner (2008: 46), from “that particular form of mutual recognition” in which the “other person’s specific characteristics are affirmed” (2008: 51).

Honneth also seeks to delineate a certain type of *general stance* towards other persons, one which is presupposed and articulated by specific acts of recognition and recognitive relationships, and which he thus describes as an “elementary” or even “existential” mode of recognition (2008: 51, 90). Crucially, this general stance is also taken to be a presupposition for any active *denial* of substantial recognitive acts. Like the different modes of positive recognition, the forms of social activity rooted in the denial of recognition constitute a broad spectrum, from the basic act of responding to others in an emotionally negative way (2008: 51), to the more extreme cases of ‘reification,’ in which the other person is treated in a purely instrumental fashion and denied any moral significance whatsoever (2008: 58f.). And yet all of these stances, like all specific acts of positive recognition, are rooted in this elementary recognitive stance, which Honneth characterizes as a “practical, non-epistemic attitude that must be taken up if one is to attain knowledge of the world or other persons” (2008: 54).

In a further step, one which is on the face of things tempting to follow, Honneth connects the two claims, maintaining that this elementary mode of recognition itself “contains an element of affective sympathy” (2005: 59 [2008: 50]), or more strongly, that it just *is* a stance of sympathetic-affective recognition.<sup>9</sup> One consequence of this move is that Honneth must then offer an account of how sympathy and affective valuation can indeed comprise a fundamental and universal layer in our other-relations, since this is exactly the role which elementary recognition is supposed to play. After all, it is far from obvious that all of our relations to others, and in particular those involving mere indifference or the active denial of positive recognition, are rooted in sympathy. Honneth is certainly aware of this problem, and he claims that an appropriate account can be given for both of the characteristic cases of recognitive denial already mentioned—namely, negative emotional responses, and reification. In enacting a negative emotional response to another person, Honneth writes, “we still always have a residual sense of not having done full justice to their personalities. In such a situation, the element in our recognitional stance which we customarily call ‘conscience’ would be at issue” (2008: 51).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> In the English version of this text, the (not readily translatable) German term *Anteilnahme* is mostly rendered as “empathic engagement,” but in light of my later discussion of a slightly different notion of empathy, I use here the translation “sympathy”.

<sup>9</sup> Thus, to cite one example of many, Honneth writes of “einer vorgängigen Einstellung der Anerkennung oder Anteilnahme” as being prior to all cognitive attitudes with regard to the world of social relations (2005: 63, my emphasis).

<sup>10</sup> For reasons of space I am unable to discuss here Honneth’s attempt to render cases of reification compatible with his claims regarding elementary recognition (2008: 52–63).

Now, I take it that Honneth here identifies a relatively prevalent and philosophically interesting facet of our social and, more broadly, emotional being—namely, the sense in which our emotional responses can be appropriate or inappropriate to the matters which they target, and can moreover be immediately lived as such, through their accompaniment by an element of second-order and self-directed affect (such as pride, embarrassment, shame, or guilt).<sup>11</sup> However, as a defence of the claim that our other-relations necessarily and universally contain an element of sympathetic recognition, Honneth's allusion to this phenomenon seems unpersuasive. Perhaps we can concede that, in those instances where we are aware of unsympathetic responses as being normatively inappropriate, a primitive form of sympathetic recognition thereby shows itself to be operative in our experience. But whatever the merits of this line of thought, it appears to have no bearing upon the diversity of situations in which an individual responds to another person in an unsympathetic fashion, and does so without any sense of her response being inappropriate. Indeed we frequently feel, whether correctly or incorrectly, our negative response to another person to be fully justified. Honneth's claim that sympathetic recognition plays a ubiquitous and fundamental role in our relations to others thus appears questionable, or at least in need of further argumentation. After all, one would surely have to be an unusually compassionate and self-critical individual to experience *all* of one's non-sympathetic feelings for and engagement with others as being inappropriate in nature. And as this observation suggests, not only is it the case that many of our responses to others contain no identifiable trace of sympathy, but the extent to which we do respond to others sympathetically is just as much rooted in our specific emotional personalities, and in the specific nature of the perceived actions and suspected personalities of those that we respond to, as it is in our bare recognition of those others as persons.

It follows from this that if we are to hold onto the notion of an elementary recognition underlying even our non-benevolent and merely indifferent responses to others, the terrain in which such recognition is to be located must lie below the level of any specific form of emotional or practical comportment. That is, any attempt to identify elementary recognition with emotional recognition is ultimately unsustainable. On the other hand, and as Honneth has persuasively illustrated, elementary recognition must be such that it can be made intelligible how emotional recognition can function *immediately* in our relations to others. We should retain our grip on the insight that our basic recognition of others as persons is typically infused with and accompanied by forms of other-directed affect, and while these primitive affective responses to others may not be as unconditionally affirmative as Honneth seems to suggest, his insistence that an element of sympathetic emotional recognition *can* be operative already at a very basic level of our other-relations—at least in certain cases and under certain conditions—is both intuitively persuasive and in need of further clarification. In the remainder of this paper, and taking my basis in the phenomenological analyses of empathy and emotion found in the early work of Edith Stein, I will delineate one way in which these two desiderata can be fulfilled.

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<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the manner in which emotions of self-approbation or -disapprobation (such as pride, embarrassment, shame, or guilt) can be directed towards a first-order emotional response, bringing about a lived and pre-reflective sense of that response being normatively appropriate or inappropriate, see Drummond (2004: 123f.).

My basic claim will be that if elementary recognition is identified with what Stein calls empathy (*Einfühlung*), then it becomes intelligible how it can provide an immanent basis for emotional recognition, while simultaneously allowing that the details of specific cases of emotional recognition (or its denial) have a certain dependency upon the interpersonal context in which they are enacted (or denied).<sup>12</sup>

To summarize briefly, Honneth's suggestive analyses of the relations between social visibility, recognition, and emotion raise the following points. On the one hand, our lived visibility to one another in a social (as opposed to 'literal') sense, is not exhausted by our perceived spatial proximity, but is also shaped by the bodily gestures we direct towards one another, inasmuch as these gestures serve to express recognitive stances. In many cases, such recognitive stances point towards the affirmation or of the other persons' social status and indicate nothing more than an intention to treat the person accordingly. Other recognitive gestures, however, are more accurately understood as primarily expressive of an emotional stance held by the recognizing person and directed towards the person recognized. Such expressive stances of emotional recognition also confirm certain moral expectations on behalf of the recognized subject, inasmuch as they convey a certain kind of affective valuation of the other as a person, and a willingness to do justice to the other's personal value in the ongoing course of the encounter. On the other hand, they are not ordinarily the product of a process of deliberation, nor are they motivated by instrumental or egoistic purposes. Rather, such emotional recognition is a matter of an immediate and affective responsiveness to the personhood of the other, a responsiveness which appears just as basic as the literal 'seeing' of the recognized person. Finally I have suggested that, in order to account for the variety of possibilities for emotional recognition, as well as its possible denial, we need to turn to a level of recognition *below* any emotional stance proper—and this we can find in Stein's analysis of empathy.

### Stein's Analysis of Empathy

Stein's discussion of empathy is driven by the conviction that there is a distinctive and irreducible type of intentional experience in which other experiencing subjects are given and apprehended as such, and she names this experience empathy, defining it as "the experience of foreign consciousness in general," or as "the experience of foreign subjects and their lived experience" (2008: 20, 5 [11, 1, translation modified]).<sup>13</sup> For Stein, those philosophical or psychological theories

<sup>12</sup> The convergence between elementary recognition and empathy has been briefly noted, but not discussed in any detail, by Zahavi (2010: 305). See also the phenomenologically minded discussions of elementary recognition from Varga (2010), and Varga and Gallagher (2012), although the role of empathy is not considered.

<sup>13</sup> When referring to Stein, I have used the critical *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe* editions of *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* and *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften* (2008, 2010). Where possible, I have indicated in square brackets the relevant pagination in the English edition (1989, 2000), although I have occasionally differed terminologically from these translators in my rendering of Stein's German.



which take our everyday familiarity with other minded persons and their experiential lives to be primarily rooted in theoretical postulation or imaginative projection are flawed from the outset, since they fail to do justice to the experiential context in which such familiarity arises. More specifically, such theories overlook the distinctive character of empathy, since they tend to presume that we do not directly experience other minded persons, but only their bodies as inanimate entities (2008: 41 [26]). On the basis of this assumption, one is naturally led to believe that the inner life of the other is something which can only be posited and accessed through a subsequent (theoretical or imaginative) step. On Stein's view, however, such a postulated gap between the directly given and foreign mindedness is completely at odds with our lived acquaintance of others, and is accordingly to be dismissed as deceptive. Rather, as she notes, when we consider the "complete, concrete phenomenon" of another person as she appears before us in a face-to-face encounter, we discover a peculiar and complex whole that "is not given as a physical body, but as a sensing lived body in which an ego inheres, an ego that senses, thinks, feels and wills. This lived body not only fits into my phenomenal world, but is itself the centre of orientation of such a phenomenal world" (2008: 13 [5, translation modified]). Empathy, for Stein, is exactly the mode of experiencing involved with this complex presence of the other as an embodied and world-directed subject, and the task of her analyses are to clarify its distinctive character.

Stein begins this clarification by considering how empathy compares with other varieties of intentional experience. Since the basic presence of the other as an embodied and experiencing subject is direct in nature, since the other's body in its posture and style of movement is immediately given to us as perceptually engaged and coloured by foreign affective shades, Stein occasionally describes certain forms of empathy as being perceptual in nature (e.g., 2008: 15, 31, 75), although she always emphasizes that empathic perception differs in crucial respects from the perceptual experience of material objects, or 'thing-perception,' as I will call it. This thought becomes more clearly intelligible if we recall that thing-perception, when considered in a phenomenological light, reveals an interplay of originary and non-originary modes of givenness. While, during a phase of perceptual experience, certain aspects of a material thing perceptually appear in vivid sensuous presence (e.g., the curved brickwork of a bridge as one swims the backstroke beneath it), in order for our perceptual experience to be lived as *of* its object (in order that, e.g., the curved brickwork appear *as* the underside of a bridge), our perceptual experience must take its object as a whole which is irreducible to its sensuously present aspects, and which includes aspects which are not currently sensuously given, but rather merely 'co-given' or 'appresented,' in a 'co-originary' fashion. As Stein points out, something analogous occurs in our experience of others as embodied subjects (2008: 14f. [6f.]). During a phase of our perception of another person, certain aspects of the other's body appear with an unparalleled sensuous presence (e.g., the increasingly reddening and scowling cheeks of a friend as I confess to her a foolish act), yet frequently a certain kind of foreign psychic content is simultaneously given 'in' the sensuously present features (e.g., the anger directly manifest in her facial expressions). In such cases, we live through a unified perceptual enactment, one that is not only directed towards the other's body as itself reaching beyond the

sensuously given, but which also includes a perceptual co-givenness of certain facets of the other's own psychic life, such that what is given is not merely a material object but an expressive whole. As Stein writes: "one must indeed designate as outer perception the complex act which co-grasps the expressed psyche with its bodily expression" (2008: 15). Thus, for a certain type of empathy, we can even say that foreign subjectivity "is given in the flesh (*leibhafter Gegebenheit*)," albeit "in the special sense of co-givenness" (2008: 31).

However, Stein emphasizes that this perceptual variety of empathy exhibits a striking contrast with thing-perception, insofar as the co-givenness of psychic states 'in' their bodily presence differs structurally (and not merely in 'content') from the co-givenness of concealed aspects of a perceived thing. It is, after all, possible for the latter to become sensuously present, and as Stein notes (following Husserl), this is not merely a contingent fact about the object but an a priori structural feature of perceptual experience (2008: 14 [6f.]). In contrast to this, and again for essential reasons, a perception of another person's bodily movements as directly embodying her pain cannot be transformed into an ordinary awareness of this pain (*ibid.*). Stein's formulation here points towards a further crucial feature of her account, namely the way she contrasts empathy and *self-awareness*. Again, this contrast is not simply a matter of a divergence in content, but crucially involves a different mode of givenness. While one's own experiential life is immediately and ordinarily lived through in the mode of self-awareness, and is so even prior to the thematising gaze of reflection, the experiential lives of other persons always present themselves as 'foreign' exactly because they are *not* given in such a fashion. Thus an invariant structural feature of all empathic experience is that the experiential life which it directly targets is not lived through ordinarily as one's own experiences are; indeed, empathized experiences are rather given as lived through originally *by the other*, and by her alone (2008: 54, 28 [38, 17]). Exactly because experiences given through empathy lack this "selfness" inherent in one's own lived experiencing (*ibid.*), and indeed do so for structural reasons, Stein maintains that empathy always involves intrinsically non-ordinary elements, even when it participates in the complex originality of perceptual experience (2008: 20).

Empathy, therefore, has a peculiar status. On the one hand, it is a characteristically non-ordinary form of experiencing which essentially contrasts both with self-experience and thing-perception. On the other hand, however, empathy functions as an epistemic parallel to these 'ordinary' forms of experience. It is a basic and direct evidential source of everyday social knowledge, providing *prima facie* justification for those judgements and beliefs of ours that concern the affective, volitional, and perceptual stances of other persons (2008: 31, 38 [19, 24]). Moreover, as a form of evidential access to *what is*, and *is here and now*, empathy differs strikingly from other non-ordinary forms of experience, such as memory, expectation, and imagination. Hence, Stein advances the bold, yet seemingly unavoidable, hypothesis that "we have in empathy"—as an irreducible and wholly distinctive type of intentional experience, involving the direct givenness of foreign subjectivity *as foreign*—"an experiencing act *sui generis*" (2008: 20 [11]).

A further distinctive feature of empathy comes into view when we explicate Stein's insight that the empathized other doesn't merely face us as an object in our

visual field; rather, other people are also given as embodied centres of orientation for their own visual fields, and as intentional subjects whose experiences are directed towards worldly objects. As Stein's analyses reveal, this is the case already at the previously discussed level of empathic perception. We do not only "see" other people's bodily members as bearers of sensations of various types—such as, in Stein's examples, the perceived foreign hand which "'presses' against the table more or less strongly," and "lies there limpid and stretched," or the person who is seen to be feeling cold "by his 'goose flesh' or his blue nose" (2008: 75, 78 [58, 61]). We also directly perceive others as engaging the style of kinaesthetic self-movement and attentive immersion characteristic of perceptual experience (2008: 85 [67f.]). As such, we simultaneously grasp the other's lived body as a centre of orientation for her perceptual acts. As Stein emphasizes, this is not to be confused with an act of imagination (*Phantasie*), in which I attempt to bring to mind how things would look were I to adopt the other's posture and position, and nor does it require a detailed understanding of the details of the other's perceptual field (2008: 79 [61f.]). Rather, this empathic grasp is more accurately described as a perceiving of the other's bodily movements as intimating a "perceiving consciousness in general," that is, a certain generic structure (2008: 80 [62]). Although Stein doesn't explicitly make this point, we might add that it is also often perceptually evident which specific objects another person is attending to, or at least in which general direction her visual gaze is turned.

Moreover, the experiential possibilities of empathy are not exhausted by our immediate perceptual contact with the other. The lived perception of the other as an embodied subject always implies tendencies towards further empathic enactments, in which the other's empathetic sense can be explicated, further determined, and potentially superseded. Some of these motivated enactments remain within the realm of empathic perception. As Stein notes, when "I empathize the pain of the injured in looking at a wound, I tend to look to his face to have my experience confirmed in the expression of suffering" (2008: 103 [84]). As with our perceptual experience of material objects, empathic perception contains its own immanent standards of correctness, in such a way that our initial grasp of the other's subjective life can be confirmed or disconfirmed through the ongoing course of empathic perception—an observation which also suggests that complex structures of typification and anticipation are already operative in that initial grasp. In other cases, however, the empathic enactments motivated by our initial perceptual contact with the other, and that serve to explicate its sense, are of an entirely different level of accomplishment (*Vollzugsstufe*). When the other's sadness faces us as directly given in her facial expressions, we frequently "feel ourselves led by it" (2008: 31 [19]), in that the theme of our empathic interest becomes not merely *that* the other is sad, but *what* she is sad about and *why* this state of affairs elicits sadness in her. In such cases, the other's experiential life "is no longer an object in the proper sense. Rather, it has pulled me into it, and I am now no longer turned to the experience but to its object, I am in the position of its subject" (2008: 19 [10]). Here we are dealing not merely with a perception of the other as an embodied and experiencing subject, but a presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of her experiences with their objective correlates. Indeed, this stage of empathy is more closely analogous to imagination or memory than perception, in that the empathizing

subject becomes momentarily aware of an experiential context in its lived concreteness, but one that differs in certain essential ways from her own current perceptual sphere. However, Stein emphasizes that here too empathy remains distinct from imagination and memory, targeting a different domain of experiences (namely, those of the other, not a past or imagined self), and having a different type of epistemic import and motivation (2008: 19f., [10f.]).<sup>14</sup>

As the final step in our survey of Stein's treatment of empathy, we should return to her claim that the other is given as a complex unity, as in individual who is simultaneously perceptually, affectively, and volitionally engaged with the world, and is so exactly in the manner of foreign embodied subjectivity. As should now be clear, when more closely considered this unified givenness of the other reveals itself as an integrated complex comprising various distinct moments of empathic awareness. These distinct moments of empathy are each directed to different aspects of the others' experiential life, and they function together through ongoing experience in a motivated fashion. A further striking feature comes into play, however, when we note that the other's various mental states themselves (as the correlates of these empathic moments) are empathically given, not as unrelated to one another, but as themselves manifesting intelligible motivational relations. And as Stein underlines, it is in light of this that empathy presents us, not merely with psychophysical unities, but with *persons*. In experiencing the other's emotional responses as motivated by objects and states of affairs that she grasps through perception or judgement, and likewise in experiencing her actions as being motivated in part by these emotional responses, the other directly manifests her personhood (2008: 127 [109]).

While I cannot explicate this line of thought fully here, two key components should be emphasized. On the one hand, the motivational relationships that connect, e.g., perception, emotion, and action, involve and manifest a form of rationality that is unique to persons (2008: 114f., 129f. [96f., 112]). While what is at stake here in the theoretical and practical domains should be more clear, the sense in which emotion exhibits rationality is perhaps less evident. Stein claims that our emotional enactments have a distinctive intentional structure, since emotional experience involves, at least in part, a quasi-perceptual experience of value that Stein (following Scheler and Husserl) terms 'value-perception,' (*Wertnehmen*) in which a person directly 'feels' an object, person, or situation as having a certain evaluative significance. "In joy the subject has something joyous facing him, in fright something frightening, in fear something threatening" (2008: 108f. [92]). Furthermore, the evaluative aspect of emotional experience is always motivated by a subject's perceptions or judgements, since a meaningful evaluative grasp of an object requires that object be first given as having certain features, namely those in light of which the emotional response is enacted (2008: 116–120 [98–102]; 2010: 133f. [159–160]). Due to their evaluative and motivational character, our emotional responses thus exhibit a certain intelligibility and responsiveness to norms, such that they can be assessed in terms of their appropriateness to the

<sup>14</sup> Stein's descriptions of this level or modality of empathy are highly suggestive but could probably benefit with more precision. Unsurprisingly, one finds a variety of interpretations in the secondary literature. See Zahavi (2014: 137f.), Jardine (2015), Shum (2012: 185–195) and Dullstein (2013: 343–346).

situation that elicits them (2008: 119f. [101]).<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, the way in which a person responds in a motivated fashion to a given situation or state of affairs frequently exhibits her unique *personality*. Stein's discussion is again distinctive in her emphasis on emotional personality, which she regards as a creative sphere of affective valuing with a determinate and enduring character. In enacting an emotional response, persons simultaneously manifest an emotional disposition or habituality, or as one can also simply say, an 'emotion' that persists beyond its specific episodic appearance.<sup>16</sup> As Stein puts it, "I not only grasp an actual feeling in the friendly glance, but friendliness as a habitual feature (*Eigenschaft*)," just as "an outburst of anger reveals to me a 'violent temperament'" (2008: 104 [86, translation modified]).

In order to underline the distinctive character of Stein's treatment of empathy, we can fruitfully compare it to the sophisticated simulationist account recently offered by Karsten Stueber, which hinges upon a distinction between two different types of empathy.<sup>17</sup> On the one hand, *basic empathy* involves a quasi-perceptual ability to recognize other persons as minded beings, as well as to identify certain of their more embodied mental states, allowing us to apprehend, in Stueber's words, "*that* another person is angry, or *that* he intends to grasp a cup". *Reenactive empathy*, on the other hand, involves imaginatively imitating the other's experiences so as to achieve a more complex understanding of the other person's mental states, a process which targets the reasons and motives which underlie her thoughts, emotions, and actions, and which allow them to be assessed in terms of their appropriateness with respect to rational norms. Crucially, Stueber claims that reenactive empathy plays a central and unique role in interpersonal understanding, since it is only through reproducing an experiential episode as if were our own that we can understand the subject of the episode as a *rational agent* (2006: 20f.). In support of this claim, he appeals to two distinctive features which he regards as necessary conditions for our mental states exhibiting rationality and norm-responsiveness, arguing that understanding mental states in terms of these features necessarily requires situating them within a first-personal perspective. Once this is established, it follows that understanding others' mental states as enactments of rational agents requires reenactive empathy, since it necessarily requires us to put ourselves "in the other person's shoes" and seek to understand her mental states as if they were our own, thus providing them with the first-personal framework necessary for their rationality to be comprehended and assessed (2006: 152, 160, 164f.).<sup>18</sup>

<sup>15</sup> For a detailed phenomenological discussion of the motivational and evaluative nature of the emotions, see Drummond (2013). See also the papers in the present Special Issue by Szanto (2015) and Vendrell Ferran (2015), which deal with Stein's account of emotional rationality as well as the contribution by Taipale (2015a), who develops Stein's view that in empathy we typically take another person's emotions to be situated in a motivational context unique to that person.

<sup>16</sup> See Goldie (2000: 12–16), Drummond (2004).

<sup>17</sup> I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer for encouraging me to relate Stein's position to this distinction from the contemporary debate.

<sup>18</sup> Stueber often presents his arguments for re-enactive empathy as criticisms of the theory of mind approach adopted by, e.g., Wellman (1990) and Gopnik and Meltzoff (1997), as well as of some hybrid theorists such as Nichols and Stich (2003), as these thinkers deny re-enactive simulation an epistemically central role in social cognition (2006: 165–171). Since Stein also explicitly rejects the claim that theoretical influence forms the basis of social understanding (see Stein 2008: 40–42 [26–27]), I will not consider the success of these arguments as criticisms of theory–theory, but will rather focus on their

The first feature of rational agency which Stueber appeals to is its *contextuality*. The thought here, briefly, is that in understanding what a person could appropriately specify as a reason for her beliefs, emotions, or actions, reference to a universal framework of norms will typically be insufficient. Rather, what counts appropriately as a reason is largely a context-dependent issue, and this context is only something which we understand through being first-personally immersed in it, or by imagining ourselves to be so immersed (2006: 152–161). The second feature of rational agency concerns the essential *indexicality* of thoughts as reasons. Stueber's argument here is that in order to understand a thought as a reason for action, that thought must be conceptualized as integrated into a unitary subjective perspective, since it is only then that it can be construed as a thought 'owned' by an agent and which could thus serve as guiding for (the same agent's) behaviour. Stueber thus concludes that another person's thought can only be understood as a thought of a rational agent—as opposed to simply an 'internal event' that one might identify in a quasi-perceptual manner—in as much as the empathizing subject understands it as a thought that could be her own, and which could, if it were her own, serve as a reason for her own action. And clearly, this way of understanding an agent's thoughts involves some form of reenactment (2006: 161–165). In short, to construe a person's thoughts, emotions, and actions as context-appropriate and as motivationally related to other thoughts, emotions, and actions had by the same person—and thus as participating in rational agency—it is necessary to imaginatively reconstruct the other person's own first personal perspective (reenactive empathy), and not merely to perceptually identify the other person's discrete mental states (basic empathy).

While I am unable to offer here a detailed comparison of the proposals offered by Stueber and Stein, it is worth noting that Stueber's distinction between basic and reenactive empathy roughly coincides with at least one of the distinctions drawn by Stein in her own account.<sup>19</sup> We have already seen that Stein distinguishes between empathic perception and empathic presentification. While the former involves my ability to directly grasp the mindedness of the other in her expressive bodily movements, the latter involves a form of self-displacement (*Hineinversetzen*) or re-accomplishment (*Mitvollzug*, *Nachvollzug*), in which the other's intentional experiences are understood in their motivational interconnectedness, through my bringing them to givenness in a manner that resembles the way my own experiences are lived through by me (e.g., Stein 2008: 18–20, 32f., 39, 51 [10f., 20, 25, 34]). Moreover, Stein would be sympathetic to Stueber's claim that the quasi-first-personal character of reenactment can often serve to deepen our understanding of the rationality of other people's actions and emotions. As she at one point notes,

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Footnote 18 continued

relation to Stein's own positive proposal. For an extensive phenomenological discussion of the social cognition debate, and a defence of a Stein-inspired position within this debate, see Zahavi (2014).

<sup>19</sup> Interestingly, another important distinction drawn by Stein coincides in many respects with Stueber's, namely that between sensuous empathy, in which the other's body is given as a lived body (i.e., as directly embodying fields of sensations), and the variety of empathy which targets the other's motivated egoic acts. On Stein's account, *both* sensuous and act-targeting empathy can occur already at the perceptual level, and equally they can *both* undergo explication through presentification (2008: 74–78 [57–62]). A more detailed discussion of the merits of Stein's proposal as compared to Stueber's would do well to assess whether her pair of distinctions allows us to accurately conceptualize a wider variety of empathic situations than does Stueber's more binary account.

understanding (*Verstehen*) a person's actions and emotions in a fulfilling manner requires "experiencing (*erleben*) the transition from one part to another within an experiential whole (not: to have [such parts] objectively)," and this is presumably something which can only be achieved through re-accomplishing the other's experiences for oneself (Stein 2008: 102f. [83f.]).

However, the epistemic role that Stein assigns to empathic presentification differs subtly but importantly from that which Stueber takes re-enactive empathy to play. While Stueber claims that we first become acquainted with others as normatively embedded, world-directed, and unitary subjects through reenactment, for Stein these features are already implicit within the empathetic sense others have for us on the perceptual level, and they rather become more richly and precisely understood through our re-accomplishing and explicating the other's experiences. On her view, empathetic presentification doesn't first introduce a domain of categories that are wholly lacking on the perceptual level; rather, it merely "allow[s] us to realize what was first vaguely meant" in our perceptually based grasp of the other person's experiential acts in her expressive bodily movements (2008: 31 [20]). One benefit of Stein's account is that it allows us to capture an experience which, it seems to me, is relatively prevalent in our daily lives, namely, those cases in which we perceive another person as being *in some way* purposively immersed in a norm-responsive practical or emotional attitude, but feel ourselves unable (or simply lack the interest required) to reenact the detailed motivational situation in which the other's action or emotion is embedded (see 2008: 133 [115]). Similarly, Stein's account might be better equipped to deal with those cases in which one is directly aware of someone else as responding in emotion or action to a situation whose normatively relevant features are evident to both self and other, an awareness which seems to frequently occur without any explicit act of reenactment taking place, one's empathetic understanding rather resting upon a shared context of normative relevance to which both subjects are attuned.

## Empathy and Emotional Recognition

We are now in a position to consider the relation between empathy and recognition. As discussed in the first section, Honneth designates by *elementary recognition* (i) a certain *universal* stance held by persons towards other persons, one which lies below the level of both objectifying judgement and any evaluative appraisal of the other's specific properties, (ii) a stance in which the *personhood* of the other is nevertheless in some way acknowledged, and (iii) a stance which nevertheless functions immediately in our evaluative and practical responses to others and which is hence *articulated* by more positive and specific acts of recognition. As should be clear from the previous section, Stein's description of empathy shows it to exactly fit the first two criteria of elementary recognition. In regard to (i), Stein argues that empathy is not to be equated simply with imaginative projection or detached theorizing, but is rather analogous to the perception of things, in that it is based in a form of intuitive experience in which other persons are directly given as embodied, world-directed, and foreign subjects, and thus as having a sense which can be further explicated through our re-accomplishing their experiential lives for

ourselves. And while such experience involves a basic form of interpersonal understanding, it is not by necessity a judicative achievement; indeed it rather serves the function of motivating, fulfilling, or falsifying our everyday social judgements. In regard to (ii) we have seen that, when considered in a phenomenological light, empathy also reveals itself to have a complex and integrated structure, one which is correlated with the diversity of senses which the other person exhibits. The other is rarely (and perhaps only in pathological cases) given as a mere physical entity, rather her bodily movements and expressive gestures immediately manifest an embodied, engaged and directed subjective life. In particular, the other's expressive emotional movements are directly grasped as intimating the distinctive responsiveness to and motivation by values characteristic of persons. As Stein formulates the point, "I consider every subject in which I empathically grasp a perception of value (*Wertnehmen*) as a person whose lived experiences interlock into an intelligible totality of sense" (Stein 2008: 133 [115]). A question immediately arises here, however, as regards (iii). For on the Steinian conception of empathy that I have here developed, while empathy permits a form of access to the other's own emotional valuations and in so doing discloses the other in her personhood, it is in and of itself a *non-emotional* and *evaluatively neutral* form of experience. In what sense, then, can we say that empathy, as a purely 'epistemic' givenness of the other as an embodied person, provides an immanent ground for and is immediately articulated by more full-blooded modes of recognition?

In the following, I will sketch an answer to this question by considering how Stein's account of the relations between empathy, emotion, and personhood might be used to clarify Honneth's conception of *emotional recognition*. As I earlier argued, what distinguishes elementary and emotional recognition is that instances of the latter involve the recognizing subject responding emotionally to the person recognized, while the former is rather the underlying experience of the other as a person that is articulated by and makes possible such emotional responses. In fact, one can find in Stein's early work a description of how, in various ways, our emotional responses to other persons articulate and are grounded in empathy. As Stein points out, there is a distinctive class of emotions which are characterized by their uniquely targeting *other persons*. "Sentiments (*Gesinnungen*) of love and hate, thankfulness, vengeance, animosity, etc., which have the other person as their object, also belong to the feeling acts in which layers of the person are exposed" (2008: 120 [101 translation modified]). However, she goes on to note that, if such emotions are indeed responses to the other person, then they must be based in "the grasping (*Erfassen*) of the foreign person," which is to say in a certain type of empathy in which the other person is given as such (*ibid.*, [translation modified]). Thus if an act of emotional recognition targets another person *as* another person, or in her personhood, then it ought to be motivated by an empathic grasp of the other in her very emotional responsiveness.

Now, one initial worry might be that this line of thought is excessively cognitivistic; indeed, it might appear that we have lost sight altogether of Honneth's insight that emotional recognition has a certain priority over an evaluatively neutral and purely cognitive stance towards the other. To my mind, however, this worry is ultimately misguided. As has already been emphasized, empathy needn't involve a



cognitive identification in any strong sense, being in its basic form more analogous to perceptual experience than to any type of judicative attitude. Furthermore, the claim that empathic givenness *grounds* emotional recognition needn't be understood as the (absurd) idea that we somehow infer our emotional responses from empathic data, nor even as entailing that empathy and emotional recognition are always two wholly separate acts. Rather, as Stein explicitly affirms, our concrete experience of the world always contains a constitutive moment of affective evaluation, such that objects are always given with some degree of axiological sense: "A value-constitution goes hand in hand with every object-constitution, every fully constituted object is simultaneously a value-object, and the value-free fact-world is ultimately an abstraction" (2010: 134 [160, translation modified]). Importantly, this also applies to empathy. When we consider our directedness towards other persons in its totality, we discover that empathy is typically accompanied by emotive elements, such that the sense others have for us involves, from the outset, not only empathic apprehension but also affective valuation. While empathically grasping another person's emotional state, we generally feel an immediate response of our own that contributes to the sense the state has for us, in that, for example, the other's anger strikes us frightening, her pride as irritating. However, it is also the case that the constitutive role, played by empathy and that played by the stirrings of affect are in principle different, and moreover that our interpersonal emotive responses are responsive to empathetic senses, without the inverse applying in the same way.<sup>20</sup>

This line of thought becomes clearer when we consider Stein's descriptions of such emotional responses. Stein takes the most minimal affective interpersonal response to be a basic form of sympathy (*Sympathie*) or antipathy (*Antipathie*) that arises when we feel ourselves being touched by or coming into contact with (*Berührtwerden*) another person. She moreover claims that such affections "are not sentiments that I hold towards a person for the sake of this or that deed or feature, but rather an attraction or repulsion exerted upon me by a simple quale, his unique character (*Eigenart*)" (2010: 222 [265f., translation modified]; see 137 [163]). Stein is here suggesting that there is a certain type of elementary other-directed affect that doesn't involve an explicit appraisal of the other in light of her specific personal features, emotional responses, or actions. Rather, and to make use of a Husserlian term of phrase, we find ourselves feeling sympathetic or antipathetic towards

<sup>20</sup> I include the caveat 'in the same way' here, since it may be that when we examine the way in which empathic enactments in their temporal unfolding are motivated, then a unidirectional foundational relationship between empathy and affective response will become unsustainable. After all, and as Stein herself points out, our epistemic interest in getting to know a certain matter more closely is itself shaped by our affective responses to that matter, as well as being dependent upon a more general stance towards the value of a specific type of knowledge (2008: 125f. [108]). One consequence of this is an active empathic interest—what Stein at one point calls the "characteristic stance (*Haltung*)" of empathy, namely our actively "turning towards and submerging ourselves within foreign lived experience" (2008: 36 [23, translation modified])—may often be rooted in our affective response to the other, as well as in our own prevailing personal values and interests. However, these more genetic-phenomenological considerations do not challenge the central theses here, namely that (i) our interpersonal affective responses are essentially motivated by and founded upon empathetic senses, and that (ii) at least certain basic forms of empathy do not presuppose an affective response.

another embodied person more in light of a certain individual *style* which is already immediately manifest in their expressive and affectively coloured movements, a style which is often extremely difficult to articulate conceptually, apart from perhaps through usually inadequate stereotypes.<sup>21</sup> While the givenness of this style is immediately infused with the element of feeling it arouses in us, it is nevertheless the case that this style is something *grasped* empathically (albeit imperfectly and approximately), and that my affective stirring is exactly aroused by *this style* and by no other. Thus, even an indeterminate and vague sympathy (or antipathy) for the other presupposes and articulates her empathic givenness as a person.

Moreover, Stein distinguishes from such minimal interpersonal affect what she calls “emotional position-takings” with regard to the foreign person, such as approval, admiration, contempt and indignation (which, interestingly, she suggests are in some sense based upon or grounded in (*aufgebaut*) primitive sympathy/antipathy). When it comes to these emotional stances we are dealing with the “moral valuation and assessment of the character of another person, her sentiments and deeds” (2010: 221f. [265, translation modified]). In such cases, it is clear that, in quite different and often rather complex ways, the emotional response can only be motivated if the relevant “persons, personal features, and personal modes of comportment” it targets are themselves given (2010: 137 [163, translation modified]). Furthermore, while primitive and higher-order forms of interpersonal affect are already interwoven in our experience at the level of perceptual empathy, they may gain further motivational import from the empathic presentification mentioned earlier (in which the motivational complexity of the other’s emotional and volitional activity is re-accomplished explicated), as well as the often more articulate forms of understanding opened up by communicative engagement.<sup>22</sup>

I take it that the foregoing analysis lends some support to the claim that empathy grounds and motivates a certain class of emotions that are directed to the other as a person. But a crucial issue remains whether such forms of emotional directedness are sufficient for a genuinely *recognitional* stance. Here too we can take guidance from the way Honneth’s examples of the forms of activity that serve to actively render the other socially visible, such as the sparkling smile directed towards a friend, or a gesture serving to welcome the other or express gratitude to her. As we saw in “[Honneth on Social Visibility and Recognition](#)” section, such gestures (i) are characterized by their *publicity*, by having a determinate sense within the social space of the encounter that the recognized subject ought to understand, (ii) serve to express a certain type of *evaluative affirmation* of the recognized person, and simultaneously (iii) intimate a readiness for a certain type of *practical engagement* on behalf of the recognizing subject. It seems to me that Stein’s fine-grained analyses can help support and further clarify Honneth’s suggestion that some forms of emotional response might fulfil these criteria. In regard to (i), Stein importantly underlines a certain not yet mentioned type of empathic achievement, namely what she calls iterative empathy (*iterierte Einfühlung*). In iterative empathy, I am not

<sup>21</sup> See Husserl (1989: 282–288, 341–343).

<sup>22</sup> Stein also claims that emotional sharing [*Mitfühlen*] is grounded in empathy (2008: 25f. [14f.]); see Zahavi (2014: 245).

simply aware of the other as perceptually, affectively, and practically engaged with her material environment, but also as empathically experiencing other embodied persons, including myself—a situation which involves a curious type of self-othering, since I become aware of myself in a wholly new way, namely as an object of empathic perception for the other (2008: 30, 80f., 106f. [18, 63, 88f.]). Now one implication of such iterative empathy is that, in emotionally responding to the other, I often grasp that the other may be empathically aware of the emotional significance of my response. To this extent my emotional response to another person, without being strictly communicative in the sense of necessarily involving an intention to convey something to her, may nevertheless be lived as an enactment that is laid open for her gaze.

Thus in assessing whether the criteria of (ii) evaluative affirmation and (iii) practical implication may apply for interpersonal affective responses, we should consider more closely the empathic awareness which a subject targeted by an emotional response might have of the subject enacting it. In fact, Stein's formulations of the form of empathy in which we are aware of others' emotions are strikingly relevant here:

Just as my own person is constituted in my own spiritual acts (*geistige Akte*), the foreign person is constituted in acts experienced empathically. *I experience his every action as proceeding from a will and this, in turn, from a feeling*. Simultaneously with this, I am given a level of the person and a realm of values in principle experienceable by him, which in turn simultaneously motivates the *expectation of future possible volitions and actions*. Accordingly, a single action and a single bodily expression, such as a *look or a laugh* can give me a glimpse into the core of the person. (2008: 127 [109, translation modified], emphasis mine)

“I not only grasp an actual feeling in the *friendly glance*, but friendliness as a habitual feature” (2008: 104 [86, translation modified], emphasis mine).

As Stein emphasizes in these passages, in seeing another person enact a certain type of glance, grimace or gesticulation, or in hearing her omit a vocal sound of a certain rhythm, we are often immediately aware of her movements as not only having a certain affective colouring, but also as immediately embodying a certain type of evaluative stance which this person has taken towards something—something which could be one's own behaviour or personal features.<sup>23</sup> While the various types of embodied affective response manifest in this way encompass a broad spectrum, it is surely the case that some of them can be accurately described as satisfying (ii), i.e., as forms of recognitive affirmation. Indeed, not only Stein's friendly glance, but also Honneth's sparkling smiles and welcoming gestures seem to illuminate just this connection. Furthermore, Stein also indicates here that the forms of evaluative comportment manifest in the other's affectively coloured bodily movements ground, in the empathizing subject, certain expectations regarding the possible actions which the other will perform. And in those cases in which the other's emotional stance is given as a response to *oneself*, we are typically led to

<sup>23</sup> See Honneth (1995b: 162–164).

expect that we are in for a certain kind of treatment from the other. This suggests one way in which such interpersonal affective responses may, in certain cases, satisfy recognitional criteria (iii).<sup>24</sup> Finally, I would like to emphasize a further implication of this line of thought, one which could have significant implications for broader debates concerning recognition. As many of the passages from Stein cited in this last section emphasize, an act of emotional recognition is a publically accessible manifestation, not merely of a certain type of elementary stance that could in principle be enacted by anyone, but of the unique *personality* of the individual enacting it. In witnessing the sparkling smile of a friend or the welcoming look of a fellow traveller, I do not merely feel myself to be the object of an anonymous evaluation. Rather, I simultaneously become aware of the subject of this stance as a person, with a determinate and unique affective style and character that reaches beyond the individual act of recognition, even if my awareness of this determinate personality is often itself somewhat indeterminate and imprecise.

## Concluding Remarks

As we saw earlier “[Honneth on Social Visibility and Recognition](#)” section, in recent publications Honneth has cast doubt on the assumption that recognizing another individual, such that they feel themselves to be affirmed as socially visible, is always an achievement that is substantially constituted by evaluative judgements and practical commitments. Rather, there are forms of person-recognition that are primarily rooted in perception and emotion. While Honneth’s treatment of the issue has tended to conflate perceptual and affective recognition, I argued (in “[Stein’s Analysis of Empathy](#)”) that Stein’s account of empathy allows us demarcate a form of perceptually-based recognition that is distinct from and makes possible emotional recognition. Identifying empathy with a basic and ubiquitous form of recognition that does not yet involve any type of evaluative or moral stance, it then becomes intelligible how a form of recognition which does involve such a stance can function—or fail to function—immediately in our experience of others. I argued that Stein’s account of other-directed emotions, which she understands as evaluative responses to other persons that find a rationally appropriate basis in empathy, illuminates the sense in our basic recognition of others can be immediately interwoven with (without necessarily involving) emotional recognition, i.e. with an expressive and affectively rooted appraisal of the other in her personhood. To put my claim slightly differently, we can actually be social visible to others in (at least) a twofold manner. On the one hand, when being basically or empathetically recognized, we may become aware of ourselves as visible to others as persons who are perceptually, affectively, and practically immersed in the world, and thus as subjects whose personal lives are perceptually accessible and directly intelligible to others, albeit in a complex and often ambiguous way. On the other hand, when being emotionally recognized, we can also become aware of ourselves as being the

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<sup>24</sup> For a detailed phenomenological treatment of respect as a moral emotion of the recognitive strand, and as grounded in empathy, see Drummond (2006).

object of a certain kind of appraisal by another person, one which allows us to expect, on the basis of past experience and familiarity with emotive and practical norms, a certain kind of treatment in our dealings with her.

Finally, I have emphasized that, in being rendered socially visible in this second sense, we also come into contact with the other as a subject of unique personal character. While this point might appear inconsequential, it underlines that in the emotional personality of the recognizing subject we find a crucial enabling condition for emotional recognition, as well as for its possible denial. Furthermore, the aspect of personality brought to light in emotional recognition belongs to its social or interpersonal dimensions, since it is a person's enduring style in her emotional responsiveness to other persons. While I cannot explore these points further here, it seems to me that a penetrating analysis of the conditions under which emotional recognition can become, in its different forms, a basic feature of our social lives—and equally, of the origin of the habitually rooted and socially reproduced forms of cognitive failure characteristic of what Honneth (1999) calls 'social pathologies'—would benefit from giving a closer consideration to the structural role played therein by emotional personality in its social dimensions, as well as to the social conditions under which such personality is shaped. Furthermore, it seems to me that such considerations might shed further light on our lived sense of being 'obliged' to emotionally recognize others, which on occasion causes us to feel remorse regarding our own 'inadequate' interpersonal responses.

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### Compliance with Ethical Standards

**Conflict of interest** The author states that he has no conflict of interest.

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