

The Collected Works
of

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Volume Three

ON THE PROBLEM OF EMPATHY

Third Revised Edition

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ICS Publications
Washington, D.C.
1989

non-psychic individual experience. (The pure experience of the reduction is non-psychic when it becomes as well as when it became.) Soul is not to be separated from life.

<79> Scheler has emphasized that there is an experience of life ascension and one of life decline.⁹⁶ This is an experience and not an objective possession or the verification of discernible stages of development. The continuum of life itself is given to us as such and not as a composite of stretches connecting high points. Furthermore, the ascension to these points, the development and not only its results, is given to us. (Of course, in order to perceive the result, we must first "become conscious of" this development, i.e., make it objective. For example, we become conscious of our strength waning when we notice we are weak. Correspondingly, in "higher psychic life" we become conscious of an inclination disappearing when we find it no longer present, etc.) Nor is it a mere metaphor to compare our development with that of a plant; it is a genuine analogy in the previously defined sense of comprehending that something belongs to the same type.

Bodily "states" are no different: "feeling sick" has little to do with "pain." For instance, one can feel very healthy with a painful bodily injury such as a broken arm with complications, etc. One can also feel very ill without pain. I look at this "state" in the other and bring it to givenness to myself in empathic projection. The attentive observer sees a variety of single traits in the whole disease picture which remain hidden from the fleeting glance. This is what the "schooled view" of the physician has over the lay person. The diagnosis he makes on the basis of this picture is no longer made thanks to empathy, but thanks to his knowledge that this "clinical picture" is an effect of the cause in question. Thus he thinks he "sees" carcinoma by yellow, sunken cheeks, or he sees tuberculosis by the red spots and unnatural gleam of the eyes. But this clinical picture itself, this distinguishing of the variety of types of illnesses on which all diagnosis is based, is yielded to him by his talent for empathy cultivated by focusing on this group of phenomena and by long practice in extensive differentiation. Of course, this empathy mostly ceases at the first introductory level, not proceeding to projection into the ill condition. And the physician's relationship to his patients, with whose welfare he is en-

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trusted, is no different from the gardener's relationship to his plants, whose thriving he oversees. He sees them full of fresh strength or ailing, recovering or dying. He elucidates their condition for himself empathically. In terms of cause, he looks for the cause of the condition and finds ways to influence it.

(k) Causality⁹⁷ in the Structure of the Individual

Again, the possibility of such causal reflection is based on empathy. The foreign individual's physical body as such is given as a part of physical nature in causal relationships with other physical objects. He who pushes it imparts motion to it; its shape can be changed by blows and pressure; different illumination changes its color, etc. But these causal relationships are not all. As we know, the foreign physical body is not seen as a physical body, but as a living one. We see it suffer and carry out effects other than the physical. Pricking a hand is not the same as pounding a nail into a wall, even though it is the same procedure mechanically, namely, driving in a sharp object. The hand senses pain if stuck, and we see this. We must disregard this artificially and reduce this phenomenon in order to see what it has in common with the other one. We "see" this effect because we see the hand as sensitive, because we project ourselves into it empathically and so interpret every physical influence on it as a "stimulus" evoking a psychic response.

Along with these effects of outer causes, we comprehend effects within the individual himself. For example, we may see a child actively romping about and then becoming tired and cross. We then interpret tiredness and the bad mood as the effects of movement. We have already seen how movements come to givenness for us as alive movements and how tiredness comes to givenness. As we shall soon see, we also comprehend the "bad mood" empathically. Now, we may not infer the causal sequence from the data obtained, but also experience it empathically. For example, we comprehend intersubjective causality similarly when we observe the process of contagion of feelings in others while we ourselves are immune to the infectious material. Perhaps when the actor says, "You can hear nothing but sobbing and women weeping," we perceive a suppressed sob in all parts of the audi-

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ence. And, projecting ourselves into this soul-stirring spirit, we become seized by the mood portrayed. In this way we get an image of the causal process being enacted.

Finally, we also perceive how an individual affects the outer world by every action that changes physical nature, by impulsive as well as willful ones. For example, when I observe the "reaction" to a stimulus when a stone flying toward someone is driven from its course by a "mechanical" resistance movement, I see a causal process into which psychic connecting links have been inserted. Projecting myself into the other, I interpret that object as a stimulus and experience the release of the counter-movement. (Such processes can take place unnoticed, but it is entirely unjustified to designate them as "unconscious" or as "purely physiological.") Then I experience the stone's diversion from its course as the effect of the reaction.

Suppose I see someone act on a decision of will. For example, on a bet he may pick up a heavy load and carry it. Then I empathically grasp how the action issues from a volition, here appearing as the *primum movens* of the causal process and not as a connecting link in a series of physical causes. We have the effect of the psychic on the physical given phenomenally and also the psychic on the psychic without the mediation of a physical connecting link. This latter is so, for example, in the case of contagion of feeling not caused by a bodily expression, even if it is mediated by a form of expression to make interpretation of the experience possible.⁹⁸ But whether or not this effect is physically mediated or purely psychic, it certainly has the same structure as phenomenal causal relationships in physical nature.

Now Scheler is of the opinion, in agreement with Bergson, that there is an entirely new kind of causality in the psychic domain not existing in the physical domain.⁹⁹ This new kind of efficacy is to consist of the fact that every past experience can in principle have an effect on every future one without mediating connecting links, thus without being reproduced, either. Also coming events can affect present experience. In a broader sense, he says that psychic causality is not dependent on a limitation of every experience by what went before. Rather, in its dependence on the totality of experience, it depends on the individual's entire life. In

the first place, if we were to stick to the last formulation, we would have to completely accept the fact that every experience is conditioned by the entire series of previous experiences. But we would also have to accept that every physical occurrence is conditioned by the entire chain of causality. The fundamental difference here is that "the same causes have the same effects" in the physical domain while in the psychic domain it can be shown that the appearance of the "same causes" is essentially excluded. But he who strictly supports the relationship of causing to caused experience could hardly demonstrate a new kind of efficacy.

Let us try to make this clear by examples of what we have in mind.¹⁰⁰ A deliberate decision on a problem put to me continues to direct the course of my action long after the actual decision without my being "conscious" of this as present in current action. Does this mean that an isolated past experience determines my present experience from that time on? Not at all. This volition that remained unfulfilled for a long time has not fallen "into forgottenness" during this time, has not sunk back into the stream of the past, become "lived life" in Scheler's terms. It has only gone out of the mode of actuality over into that of non-actuality, out of activity into passivity. Part of the nature of consciousness is that the cogito, the act in which the "I" lives, is surrounded by a marginal zone of background experiences in each moment of experience. These are non-actualities no longer or not yet cogito and therefore not accessible to reflection, either. In order to be comprehended, they must first pass through the form of the cogito, which they can do at any time. They are still primordially present, even if not actually, and therefore have efficacy. The unfulfilled volition is not dead, but continues to live in the background of consciousness until its time comes and it can be realized. Then its effect begins. Thus, it is not something past which affects the present, but something that reaches into the present. Therefore, we quite agree that a reproduction of the volition does not set the action in motion. And, indeed, we will go even further and say that volition would not be in a position to do this at all. A forgotten volition cannot have an effect, and a "reproduced" volition is not an alive one, either, but a represented one. As such it is unable to affect any behavior (as little as

in a dark room we can produce the fantasy of a burning lamp to provide the necessary light for reading). It must first be relived, lived through again, in order to be able to have an effect.

Future events which "throw their shadows in advance" are no different. Scheler gives an example from James¹⁰¹ who, under the influence of an unpleasant logic course he had to teach afternoons, undertook many unnecessary activities the entire day before simply so that he would find no time for the burdensome preparation. Yet he did not "think about it." Every expectation of a threatening event is of this type. We turn our attention to another object to escape the fear, but it does not vanish. Rather, it remains "in the background" and influences our entire conduct. As a non-actual experience not specifically directed, this fear has its object in the expected event. This is not completely present, but constantly tends toward going over into actual experience, toward pulling the "I" into itself. The fear constantly resists giving itself to this cogito. Its rescue is in other actual experiences that are still blocked in their pure course by that background experience.

And of what finally concerns the efficacy of the whole life on every moment of its existence [*Daseins*] we must say: Everything living into the present can have an effect, irrespective of how far the initiation of the affecting experience is from "now." Experiences of early childhood can also endure into my present, even though pushed into the background by the profusion of later events. This can be clearly seen in dispositions toward other persons. I do not "forget" my friends when I am not thinking of them. They then belong to the unnoticed present horizon of my world. My love for them is living even when I am not living in it. It influences my actual feeling and conduct. Out of love for someone, I can abstain from activities which would cause displeasure without "being conscious" of this. Likewise, animosity against a person, inculcated into me in my childhood, can make an impression on my later life. This is true even though this animosity is pushed entirely into the background and I do not think of this person at all any more. Then, when I meet the animosity again, it can go over into actuality and be discharged in an action or else be brought to reflective clarity and so be made ineffectual. On the

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contrary, what belongs to my past, what is temporarily or permanently forgotten and can only come to givenness to me in the character of representation by reminiscence or by another's account, has no effect on me. A remembered love is not a primordial feeling and cannot influence me. If I do someone a favor because of a past preference, this inclination is based on a positive opinion of this past preference, not on the represented feeling.

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All that has been said shows that the cases Scheler brings up do not prove that there is a difference in the phenomenal structure of efficacy in the physical and in the psychic domains. We have not found a "long-range effect" in the psychic domain. And in the domain of mechanical causality, we also have a parallel accumulation of latent strength and an effectiveness of hidden strength such as we have found here. For example, accumulated electrical energy first "affects" at the moment of discharge.

Finally, we also have analogous circumstances in bodily processes. The appearance of illness is preceded by an "incubation period" in which the cause gives no indication of its presence by any effect. On the other hand, one can ascertain numerous changes in an organism long before one can find their cause. In spite of the similarity of the causal phenomenon, we cannot here deny profound differences between physical and psychic causality. Yet, to demonstrate this we need an exact study of the dissimilar structure of psychic and physical reality.

(1) *The Foreign Living Body as the Bearer of Phenomena of Expression*

We have become acquainted with the foreign living body as the bearer of a psychic life that we "look at" in a certain way. Now there is still a group of phenomena that disclose a further domain of the psyche to us in a peculiarly characterized way. When I "see" shame "in" blushing, irritation in the furrowed brow, anger in the clenched fist, this is a still different phenomenon than when I look at the foreign living body's level of sensation or perceive the other individual's sensations and feelings of life with him. In the latter case I comprehend the one with the other. In the former case I see the one through the other. In the new phenomenon what is psychic is not only co-perceived with what is

(p) *The Significance of the Foreign Individual's Constitution for the Constitution of Our Own Psychic Individual*

00> Now, as we saw on a lower level in considering the living body as the center of orientation, the constitution of the foreign individual was a condition for the full constitution of our own individual. Something similar is also found on higher levels. To consider ourselves in inner perception, i.e., to consider our psychic "I" and its attributes, means to see ourselves as we see another and as he sees us. The original naive attitude of the subject is to be absorbed in his experience without making it into an object. We love and hate, will and act, are happy and sad and look like it. We are conscious of all this in a certain sense without its being comprehended, being an object. We do not meditate on it. We do not make it into the object of our attention or even our observation. Furthermore, we do not evaluate it nor look at it in such a way that we can discover what kind of a "character" it manifests. On the contrary, we do all this in regard to foreign psychic life. Because this life is bound to the perceived physical body, it stands before us as an object from the beginning. Inasmuch as I now interpret it as "like mine," I come to consider myself as an object like it. I do this in "reflexive sympathy" when I empathically comprehend the acts in which my individual is constituted for him. From his "standpoint," I look through my bodily expression at this "higher psychic life" here manifested and at the psychic attributes here revealed.

This is how I get the "image" the other has of me, more accurately, the appearances in which I present myself to him. Just as the same natural object is given in as many varieties of appearances as there are perceiving subjects, so I can have just as many "interpretations" of my psychic individual as I can have interpreting subjects.¹¹ Of course, as soon as the interpretation is empathically fulfilled, the reiterated empathic acts in which I comprehend my experience can prove to be in conflict with the primordial experience so that this empathized "interpretation" is exposed as a deception. And, in principle, it is possible for all the interpretations of myself with which I become acquainted to be wrong.

But, luckily, I not only have the possibility of bringing my experience to givenness in reiterated empathy, but can also bring it to givenness primordially in inner perception. Then I have it immediately given, not mediated by its expression or by bodily appearances. Also I now comprehend my attributes primordially and not empathically. As we said, this attitude is foreign to the natural standpoint, and it is empathy that occasions it. But this is not an essential necessity. There is also the possibility of inner perception independent from this. Thus in these contexts empathy does not appear as a constituent, but only as an important aid in comprehending our own individual. This is in contrast with the interpretation of our own living body as a physical body like others, which would not be possible without empathy.

Empathy proves to have yet another side as an aid to comprehending ourselves. As Scheler has shown us, inner perception contains within it the possibility of deception. Empathy now offers itself to us as a corrective for such deceptions along with further corroboratory or contradictory perceptual acts. It is possible for another to "judge me more accurately" than I judge myself and give me clarity about myself. For example, he notices that I look around me for approval as I show kindness, while I myself think I am acting out of pure generosity. This is how empathy and inner perception work hand in hand to give me myself to myself.