

Formation of authentic personality and the corporeity in the light of Edith Stein¹

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Abstract: Considering that the theme of authenticity has become an important ethical framework for contemporary society, this study discusses the contributions of Edith Stein to understand the process of authentic personality formation, with special attention to the way that corporeality participates in this dynamic. This is a bibliographical research, in which some texts from Stein are examined, which directly address the theme of structure of people and their formative process, especially, *The problem of empathy, Concerning the idea of formation and Potency and act*, with originals from the years 1917, 1930 and 1931, respectively. Discussed as a process of personality formation and as a principle of individuation, Stein emphasizes the need to consider the person in act, in order to know their authentic individuality, even though there are limits to this knowledge.

Keywords: authenticity, formation, individuation, phenomenology, Edith Stein.

Introduction

Bringing determinant political-cultural consequences, the search for authenticity has been considered an important ethical framework for contemporary society, as well as the culture of sensations as subjectivation criterion (Costa, 2005; Taylor, 2011, 2013).

In our society, the body, more and more, has been taken as a compass of behavior and criterion of authenticity recognition. Frequently, being authentic means simply following one's own sensations or movements of desire, disregarding other ethical aspects that are involved in every choice.

The research was stimulated by questions that have arisen out of our clinical experience, as well as by the need for deepening themes previously studied (Coelho Júnior & Barreira, 2014; Coelho Júnior & Mahfoud, 2006). This is an urgency clearly expressed by many people: *I need to be myself! How can I be myself? Is following my sensations and desires enough to be myself?* These are some youths' and adults' recurring expressions that emerge both in the confrontation with their life world and in the examination of their own experience. Realizing one's own experience and letting oneself be guided by it has already been pointed out by authors as an essential human process for the development of one's personal potential, which does not occur free from tensions in the several contexts of social and community relationships (Bugental, 1965; Rogers, 1961/1977). Being oneself, in the sense of being authentic, highlights the problem of freedom, because we do

not always use our freedom to make choices in the direction of being ourselves (Cooper, 2003; Spiegelberg, 1972).

Edith Stein, following in Edmund Husserl's footsteps, emphasized this aspect at various moments in her work and, although she has rarely used the term *authenticity* in her texts, offers a great theoretical contribution to opening the horizon of discussion on this notion in the contemporary debate (Stein, 1936/1991, 1917/1998, 1922/1999, 1932-1933/2000, 1919-1932/2001).

In philosophical terms, if, on the one hand, the notion of authenticity is used to designate the finding of an object identity – verification of the correspondence between what is shown and its essential constituent aspects –, on the other hand, it is also used to designate a certain way of life, a way of positioning in which the person's expression is congruent with what he/she experiences in his/her interiority, referring to the problem of morality and ethics (Erickson, 1995; Ricoeur, 1990/1995). Considering this second meaning, the problem of authenticity is here assumed as a question whose existential confrontation does not take place without tensions and without a polysemy of meanings, presented by many authors in the scope of Philosophy, Psychology and Sociology (Erickson, 1995; Guignon, 2004; Taylor, 2011, 2013).

In view of this scenario, we aim to discuss Stein's contributions to the understanding of the process of formation of the authentic personality, with special attention to how corporeality appears in this process. It is a bibliographical research (Gil, 2002), also called literature review (Hart, 1998; Ridley, 2012), in which we assume the pure phenomenological psychology as aimed level of analysis, since it is directed to describing the phenomena in their essentialness, making its findings

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available to further psychology empirical studies (Peres, 2014, 2017).

In relation to the theme of formation of the authentic personality and corporeality in Edith Stein's work, we opted to analyze the articles and texts compiled in the Italian and/or Spanish language publications, and the selection criterion was the approach to the subject of structure of the human person and the dynamics of personal positioning.

Thus, for the research here presented, the following Edith Stein's publications have been chosen as main texts: *On the problem of empathy* (1917/1998); *Concerning the idea of formation* (1930/1999b); *Potency and Act* (1931/2003), and *The structure of the human person* (1932-1933/2000). Several other Edith Stein's texts have been also used to deepen the themes identified, as well as the reference to other researchers' studies who comment Stein's work or the theme approached.

The process of formation and the authenticity

Edith Stein adopted the phenomenological method from the beginning of her research, when she wrote her doctoral thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (1917/1998), and remained loyal to it until her last analyzes (Stein, 1934-36/1999c, 1940-42/1999a), even when she began a dialogue with the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy (Ales Bello, 1998, 2016; Massimi, 2013; Savian Filho, 2014, 2016; Stein, 1929/1999).

Stein (1917/1998) appropriated this Husserlian phenomenology project, initiating her analyzes with the experience of empathy. She did not seek to check it into its particularity, but into its general aspect, that is, by explaining essential aspects that structurally make up this experience. In this way, she assumed an essential description of a pure experience, starting from the phenomenological reduction according to Edmund Husserl's indications (1911/2009, 1913/2006), which were closely followed by Edith Stein who, besides student, also worked as assistant professor to his master from 1916 to 1918 (Ricci, 2010).

Analyzes of the experience of empathy led Stein to an increasing interest in the study of the structure of the person. When conducting a phenomenology of empathy, she identified how the individuality of others showed itself to consciousness, a background aspect of her analyzes. The examination of the experience of empathy revealed a kind of own structure of the person, of the subject of the experiences, taken in the scope of universality and in what is more specific to it. The individuality identified in the analyzes, initially as a Pure Self, pointed to the need for further steps of description that led Stein to identify other aspects of the structure of the person that would enable the recognition of a personal authenticity.

Edith Stein (1917/1998, 1922/1999, 1934-1936/1999) recognized that the person was subject to a change process, involving his/her dimensions of corporeality, psyche and spirit, at the same time possessing in his/

her personal being something that remained in time and was expressed in several moments of his/her life, and it was called personal nucleus (*Kern*) by her. In her analyzes of empathic experience, she had identified a set of "constant properties, as well as their identical bearer" (Stein, 1917/1998, p. 123, our translation), recognized by her as the personal soul endowed with this nucleus that defined an own way of experiencing. Warning of the existence of constant characteristics repeatedly presented as constitutive of a person, frequently seen by other authors as the aspect that would configure personal authenticity, led Stein to ask in her analyzes if the fact that something appears as constant would be enough to attribute the character of authenticity to a person's personality. Certainly, in her analyzes on psychic causality, Stein (1922/1999) warned that these characteristics could be a mere process of copying, without being anchored in a personal nucleus, and therefore, they would be attributes copied from a model, and falsified or inauthentic of a person.

A person may develop several traits that accompany his/her during a lasting period of their life – occasionally throughout lifetime –, but may also undergo changes regarding these aspects. The circumstances in which the person deals with the environment, through interpersonal relationships (community, social or mass); natural environment (food, climate, etc.), or spiritual world (educational, religious, legal, etc.), may favor a process of expressing his/her most primitive dispositions and the universal and individual potential that is brought within himself/herself, but may also contribute to a numbness of his/her most singular characteristics (Stein, 1922/1999e). Thus, the question that emerges is: how does a process of formation of authenticity occur? In other words, what are the essential characteristics of a process that contributes to the development both of the person and of what is most appropriate for him/her?

We have identified two argumentative moments in Edith Stein's work that can help us understand the process of formation of the person toward his/her authenticity. First, the one in which she emphasizes the process of formation of the person and his/her character (Stein, 1917/1998, 1922/1999, 1930/1999b). However, we also found a deepening of these analyzes, in a metaphysical-ontological discussion, in which she analyzes the principle of individuation (Stein, 1934-1936/1999, 1931/2003). They are not two different processes or principles, because, as Alfieri (2014) points out in this case, we would have the formation of several individualities in the same person; on the contrary, it is the same principle which had been approached by Stein at different times of her analyzes.. As with other themes, starting from a description and phenomenological analysis, our author looked for the last foundations of the phenomena which she analyzed, what allowed her to examine, also by means of the metaphysical-ontological way, the constituent aspects of subjectivity. We do not adopt here an in-depth argumentative explanation

of the terms of a formal ontology, which underlies the description of the formative process, mainly with regard to the principle of individuation, but we rather assume a more descriptive aspect, relating it to our research theme.

Formation of the personality

In some specific analyzes, where the themes of anthropology and education are deepened, Edith Stein (1928-1933 /1999, 1932-1933/2000) described the characteristics of the dynamics of formation of the person, explaining the components that involved this process toward the formation of authentic personality and character, a theme already discussed in her first works.

Formation is not an external possession of knowledge, but the *form taken by the human personality under the influence of multiple forces coming from outside*, or even the process of this molding. On the one hand, the material to be formed is composed of physical and psychic aptitudes with which the human being is born, of the material that is constantly added to the person from outside and that must be assimilated by the organism. The body takes this material from the physical world, the soul from the spiritual environment, from the world of people and goods with which it is to be nourished. (Stein, 1930/1999a, p. 137)

The term “formation” can have many meanings, but here it is considered at three moments: (1) the action of forming; (2) the process of being formed; and (3) the success, or end product of this process (Sberga, 2015; Stein, 1930/1999b). In order to be what the person can and should be, during lifetime he/she goes through a process of formation that forms his/her being in various ways. Considering this notion of “formation,” it is clear that it implies a process rather than an end product, that is, it does not only mean a personality that is effective and designated as authentic or inauthentic. Until reaching the state of *authentic personality*, we can talk about a *process* of formation of personality. Authenticity may therefore designate both the present of a moment in the process of formation of the person and a term that allows us to designate to what extent the formation of the personality has happened according to the dispositions originating from the personal nucleus. Thus, authentic personality would not only be a state, but the process of its constitution, the potentiality of being oneself that is genuinely updated in the course of a lifetime. Being authentic means the process by which the person transforms what is made available in his/her universal structure of being a person into something he/she possesses.

Here, the term “modeling” also must be examined. Forming something implies an underlying image or project that directs the process of formation to one direction rather than the other. The action of molding

is not considered in the sense that an educator (parents, teachers, or leaders of a group or community) shapes a person to be an ideal personality – although this may occur in various educational relationships, not without the cost of great suffering and, possibly, psychic illness. Molding refers to the action of internal life force that forms or models the matter, following an organizational principle that is proper to that form, as well as the limits imposed by the matter itself.

Therefore, knowing what it is to form a given matter requires an examination of the specificity of the matter that will be submitted to formation (Mahfoud, 2005; Stein, 1930/1999b). What is formed in the human being – that is, the “matter” that is subjected to the process of formation – is the own personality. It is the set of physical and psychic dispositions, as well as the condition of the spiritual life that is submitted to the formative process. In the case of the person, the soul itself is taken as forming agent, at the same time as the object that has been formed in the course of the very process (Parise, 2014; Stein, 1930/1999b). On the one hand, external factors, such as the natural or cultural environment, mobilize the person to act and insert nutrients into himself/herself to develop the life force; on the other hand, internal factors, such as the soul nucleus, act by impressing a proper modality of experiencing and positioning himself/herself before the contents captured (Stein, 1932-1933/2000).

The person needs to be nourished in the development of materials that feed his/her body and soul. This process may either occur spontaneously, by simple contact with the environment, or in a planned way, through people who voluntarily make available the materials to the other person being formed. The reception of this material may happen in a passive or active way, according to the degree that the person who receives these materials intellectually processes or elaborates the elements that are offered to him/her by the cultural environment, being engaged in the construction of the socio-cultural environment which he/she wishes to be formed from. (Coelho Júnior & Mahfoud, 2006, pp. 15-16)

The human soul is endowed with a vital force that directs the development of the person to a certain direction that corresponds to the realization of human nature and the primitive aspects that build his/her personal nucleus (Stein, 1932-1933/2000). The person cannot adopt any development path, cannot update his/her full potential at the same time or in any way; the person cannot be as he/she wants. The personal nucleus imposes limits – just as established habits may hinder an immediate update – to those potential characteristics that can be updated at any time (Stein, 1922/1999, 1932-1933/2000).

The person is responsible for his/her formation. “What does it mean to say the human being is responsible for himself/herself? It means to say that what he/she

is depends on himself/herself, and that he/she is asked to do something determined about himself/herself: the *human being can and must form himself/herself*" (Stein, 1932-1933/2000, p. 124, emphasis added by the author, our translation). Every formation is self-formation. This does not mean that the person is formed without help from his/her community, what would be impossible. Without the community or communities to which the person belongs, many of his/her individual characteristics would not be mobilized in the process of becoming himself/herself. Self-formation, however, means that the subject and the object of the forming action coincide (Stein, 1930/1999b). The self "can" and "must" form itself. It is a gesture of freedom that can be assumed or relegated to external and impulsive factors. The person can take the leading role of his/her development process by making decisions that are summoned during events, but this person can also make the decision to surrender to an external force or just repeat a presented personality model, even if it is not in line with the characteristics of his/her personal nucleus. The "duty," once assumed, will always bring the question about which direction this self-formation would follow. It is about the need for a clear image or the clarity of a purpose to where the formation should go.

What a human being should be is the fundamental problem of life. It is the development of human capacities, in the universal sense, but also of those capacities, or primitive dispositions, inherent to his/her personal nucleus, which must be updated in his/her formation process. When this happens, the human being not only mobilizes his/her corporeal and psychic functions, shared with plants and animals respectively, but also those spiritual, properly human functions. Then, the person develops a typical habit of responding to the values (aesthetic, moral, religious, among others) presented by life, and may have his/her existence mobilized from his/her personal center, which, in turn, will imprint its seal of originality on all experiences and on the modality of experiencing itself (Stein, 1922/1999, 1930/1999b).

The end of the formation process, says Stein (1926/1999), is the authentic personality. But what is personality?

The human personality, observed as a whole, is presented to us as a unit of qualitative characteristics formed by a nucleus, by a formative principle. This is composed of soul, body and spirit, but pure individuality, deprived of any mixture, is only imprinted on the soul. In the material living body, neither the psyche taken as the substantial unit of every sentient and psycho-spiritual being, nor the individual's life, are integrally determined by the nucleus. (Stein, 1922/1999, p. 255, our translation)

When the personality receives the inner influences from the nucleus through the soul, we can speak of an

authentic personality (Stein, 1922/1999). However, a person could live a large part of his/her life, or perhaps all of it, only engaging with psychic and physical processes that are indifferent to the unitary configuration of his/her personality, not emitting his/her positioning from his/her own nucleus or personal center, but letting himself/herself be conducted by the dynamism of impulsive and emotional reactions, or adopting criteria for his/her positioning which are strange to those who would be motivated by the legality of reason, from values available in the events. If this happens, an inauthentic personality is formed. It is "as if" the individual lacked his/her personal center; his/her experiences happen "without soul," and his/her qualitative individuality is not expressed. Certainly, as Stein (1922/1999) affirms, every individual has his/her own personal nucleus, which will have some kind of influence on the soul, and it, in turn, will influence personal experiences in relation to the way of experiencing, and even to aimed objects. However, it may occur that the person, as a result of his/her freedom, or by the particularity of his/her education, or by others significant events in his/her history – eventually stimulated not to consider his/her spiritual life with regard to the values captured or the exercise of the own will – has not found himself/herself, or has lost himself/herself. In the person, the personal nucleus may emerge when touched by some value (Stein, 1922/1999). The person may, at any moment, even if it is not possible to predict which the crucial mobilizer would be, be touched in a depth of his/her soul where authentic experiences motivate the desire to give continuity to this kind of event. Aiming at the continuity of authentic experiences – which is not automatic, since the experience is momentary and soon gives room to other deriving experiences – may stimulate the personal search for an authentic life, understood as that in which an authentic personality is experienced.

Principle of individuation

Stein (1934-1936/1999, 1931/2003) sought to deepen her analysis, identifying an ontological principle that underlies the human process of constitution of individuality. This *principle of individuation* is warned as an inherent process of the human being, which enables the person to assume the direction of being in conformity with his/her personal nucleus, and being himself/herself in his/her personal singularity (Alfieri, 2014).

Stein (1931/2003) devoted herself to discussing the ontological foundations of the experience. Right at the beginning of the work, she asks the questions: "What is the being of which I am conscious? What is the self that is conscious of its being? What is the act and the spiritual way in which I am and in which I am conscious of myself and of it?" (Stein, 1931/2003, p. 58, our translation). It is verified that the questions that point to an ontological elaboration were born from the

phenomenological analyzes of the experiences, from perceiving an “I” who experiences something, and this something is the very being.

The trajectory that goes from phenomenology to ontology does not dispense with the examination of the concrete experience; on the contrary, it seeks the formal and logical elements that work as understanding. It was on this path that Stein assumed in her discussion that the being of the human being is characterized by something that individualizes it, an individual way of being properly human. From this point, there is the discussion about how the human person takes the path of becoming an individual and what this human individual is. It is this discussion that refers to the process of individuation.

What is individual in an individual? How can we access his/her most unique and unrepeatable characteristics in relation to another individual? Stein identifies (1931/2003) that in my present being, I can perceive a current way, but also a possibility of being different from what I am. I can think about the future and about the possibility of being different, and I do so because of the recognition of the different ways that I have been in the past. The present being is the updating of a potency that is available and exists before. “Present and potentiality, as ways of being, are contained in the simple fact of being, and derived from it” (Stein, 1931/2003, p. 60, our translation). It is the personal nucleus that carries the set of potentialities possible to each human being. The possibility of being different is already inscribed in the personal nucleus, as well as the limits of updating. For a human being, his/her potential carries several human species’ common traits, which can be updated at any given moment, but, while individual, the person also carries the most singular traits which can occur. We cannot be anything we imagine.

We share with all human beings universal aspects that are characteristics particular to the human species, but we also have, by experience, an individual aspect that sets us apart from others. This power that every person has in his/her being – universal traits the person carries within himself/herself – brings an essential characteristic of his/her own that is fulfilled in his/her existence and adopts individual traits. This process of becoming an individual is identified by Edith Stein (1934-1936/1999, 1931/2003) as the principle of individuation. The person becomes an authentic individual by means of it.

“What is alive is never finished, it is always on the path that leads to its own individuality; however, it has in itself – in its soul – the power to form itself” (Stein, 1934-1936/1996, p. 291, our translation). The principle of individuation accompanies the person, allowing the process of configuration of his/her individual authenticity. Along with this principle, we recognize the freedom to determine himself/herself, as well as some vitality or force that accompanies the person in the chosen direction, in the face of the solicitations of positioning perceived in his/her experiences.

The problem that appears is as follows: if the individual is an exemplar of the human being, we always

take the risk of perceiving as singular what in fact would be a universal characteristic. The names of characteristics recognized in a person end up denominating identical characteristics present in others (Savian Filho, 2014). So, how is it possible to know what is most singular in an individual, making him/her different from the others? Stein (1934-1936/1999) does not agree with the positioning that it is the matter that would carry the differentiation of individuality, as the delimitation of a matter would not be the form, since the form is also shared with all other human beings. For this purpose, Stein (1934-1936/1999, 1931/2003) uses the term *empty form* to refer to the possibility of knowing what is properly individual.

Husserl had already discussed the ontological forms when dealing with logical categories and formal-ontological categories (Alfieri, 2014; Savian Filho, 2014). “The form is everything that updates – in the sense of delimiting – any content that is part of the potentiality of an individual” (Alfieri, 2014, p. 55). In order to discuss the path to the recognition of what is authentically individual, the concept of form presents itself as a necessary path of abstraction of knowledge, but, if taken in the same way that Husserl had done, it would allow arriving only to shared essential characteristics. Therefore, Edith Stein (1934-1936/1999, 1931/2003) will speak of an empty form: “The way Edith talks about form is unequivocal: the individual form is the individual act of conducting the essence of the species. . . . This individual way of performing the essential form will be called an empty form by Edith” (Savian Filho, 2014, p. LIV).

The uniqueness and unrepeatability that differentiate it from others, we call *individuality*, the qualitative and quantitative fulfillment to which its individual existence and *concretion* are united. In this fulfillment, there is what we can also find elsewhere, which is taken from concretion and considered abstractly. But even if we take its entire fulfillment, even if we remove everything that distinguishes it from any other, there is still something left: *something that is*. Under this form, every being is presented to us. Here we have these completely empty ways of being, which are related to formal ontology. “Something” or “object,” on the one hand; being, on the other hand. In “something” there are also two aspects: *one* that is; *what* it is; the “object,” its fulfillment and its being. Without fulfillment, there is no being. This is the reason why it is also an ontological form. *Aliquid, quod quid est, esse*: they are the fundamental ontological forms. (Stein, 1931/2007, p. 260, emphasis added by the author, our translation)

The concept of empty form – originally discussed by Duns Scotus and appropriated by Edith Stein to refer to the person – is used as fundamental ontological resource to enable the apprehension of the principle of

individuation (Alfieri, 2014). In the passage above, we see an operation of phenomenological reduction applied by Edith Stein in the analysis of the problem. In other words, it is as if she were inviting us to separate the singular characteristics to access the idea of empty form, essential aspect that would enable us to know the individual. If we subtract what is the most singular in the individual, we come to the reduction of the aspect of his/her being. At the same time, the individual presents himself/herself as a being that must be fulfilled by qualitatively unique characteristics; his/her potential must be updated in some way. How? This is precisely the individuality. The form is empty because it brings the need for being fulfilled in the individual concrete existence, through the individual's acts.

The ontological analysis, carried out by Edith Stein, favors the recognition of authenticity by providing categorical resources that allow the identification of individuality. With the individual, we receive, at the same time, his/her singularity and universal aspects. In the concrete unity, which is the person, we apprehend his/her presence as an "object" (*Aliquid*), his/her qualitatively updated fulfillment (*quod quid est*), and his/her being endowed with a human potency that is updated at every moment in his/her acts (*esse*) (Alfieri, 2014; Savian Filho, 2014). The identification of these three moments makes it necessary to recognize authenticity as an object of theoretical discussion that can subsequently support empirically several processes of research and intervention in the field of psychology. It is a question of looking at the personal presence and identifying how the empty form is qualitatively fulfilled with aspects that are constitutive of the human being.

Possibilities and limits of knowledge of the authenticity

Since Stein provides the theoretical tools for the knowledge of the authentic individuality, it is a matter of what is possible to know of it.

According to my general essence, I can have knowledge of what I am in a broad intellectual work, that is, obtain knowledge comprehensible in general concepts and words. However, the immediate self-awareness is not this knowledge, but only one of the starting points to reach said knowledge. What I am as a spiritual individual is generally not *accessible* to any rational knowledge (in a sense we have just established). As something simply unique, the individual cannot be brought back to universal concepts; at most, the individual can be called by a proper name. But for this reason, the person is not completely unrecognizable and unknown. What I am, or I with what I am, I am to me (and to others) in a certain way. This *quid* [what] is in how. I am at every moment in a given present, inclined to this or

that object, but at the same time I "feel" emotionally inclined in this way or another. (Stein, 1931/2007, p. 364, our translation)

It is possible to walk a path of self-knowledge to access what we are. We can capture it from an intellectual reflection of internal and expressive experiences, but we are also supported by interpersonal relationships, via empathy, to gather some information that would not be immediately accessible to us (Stein, 1917/1998, 1922/1999).

On the first aspect, the personal awareness of our own experiences, that is, the personal consciousness of ourselves, occurs in a gradual process of apprehension. However, knowledge of specificities has limits. It is not possible to drain the knowledge of ourselves, since we always carry a set of not yet updated potencies inherent to our nucleus, a duty that can only be known according as reality asks us. At the same time, we carry within our souls deep aspects that deposited on themselves a set of meanings that appeared in some situation and may be implicitly motivating the decisions, and we are not aware of the aspects which form us (Stein, 1934-1936/1999). Everything that enters the soul from the experiences may modify several affective dispositions, motivating very different actions. In choosing a possibility of action, one is chosen among several possibilities to actualize his/her own human potential, one chooses a direction for what one can be, not randomly and not without limits. These aspects may occur in a veiled way, not immediately or easily apprehended by the person. These are sometimes deeper dark aspects of our souls, as named by Stein (1934-1936/1999).

The specificity of the person can be known through his/her action. In it, possibilities are updated at every moment. It is by the way the person lives and expresses himself/herself that we can realize inwardly or outwardly what he/she is (Stein, 1917/1998, 1934-1936/1999). In self-knowledge, the way we are touched by and respond to the experience gives us the recognition of the moment at which we are ourselves.

The person feels the compatibility or incompatibility of what is received in his/her own being, whether it is profitable or not, whether his/her actions are or are not in the sense of his/her being. The state in which the person *is* after all contact with the outside world, and any positioning before it. (Stein, 1934-1936/1996, p. 455, emphasis added by the author, our translation)

The possibility of self-knowledge emerges in the encounter with reality. The way the person is touched, whether in his/her superficiality or in-depth, as well as the way the individual responds to the meaning perceived, informs us whether we are being ourselves or not. The personal nucleus always appears in the experiences as a

criterion that allows self-recognition by actions, not always without difficulties. Stein (1934-1936/1999) states that we can have our interiority enlightened in our depth through the events of life itself. This can occur if the person is attentive to himself/herself and seeks this knowledge, even if provisional, of himself/herself, but can also be helped in this way by meaningful relationships, which convey a set of information which can favor - or hinder - knowledge of the deepest aspects of himself/herself. In this formative process, special attention is given by Stein to religious education, since the knowledge revealed in the dogmas may bring to light personal aspects, which would not be accessed only from a human intellectual effort (Coelho Júnior & Mahfoud, 2013; Stein, 1932-1933/2000, 1934-1936/1999).

Regarding the knowledge of the other's individuality and authenticity, Stein (1917/1998, 1919-1932/2001) warned of the possibility of limits and misunderstandings. When we perceive other's expression, captured by means of changes in his/her corporeality, we intuit that the other experiences something that motivates this expression. However, secure knowledge of the experience lived by the other has limits, since the other's expression, verbal or nonverbal, may be the result of a decision that conceals the meanings and motives experienced by the subject of the experience. Although it is possible to perceive stable characteristics of others' personality to the point of recognizing changes that inform how much the other is being authentic or not in his/her actions and affective experiences, the certainty of this knowledge can only be reached according as the other expresses the meaning of his/her actions, and give us access to his/her interiority.

The isolated search for personality components is not enough to capture others' individuality. Only in a context in which the other's unity is captured, supplemented by a personal analogy and with an expression of his/her own self-knowledge, we can safely access some part of his/her individuality (Stein, 1917/1998, 1922/1999, 1919-1932/2001). We may intuit that in every other's action, something of his/her personal nucleus may be expressed, but the secure recognition of this expression does not guarantee the prediction of others' behavior. Knowing ourselves in our depth is an act of freedom and cannot be violated without our consent.

Final considerations

Then, we perceived that, in order to examine the authenticity of an individual, it is indispensable to consider the universal aspects without which any individuality would not make sense. Considering the person in act may be a way of approaching the capture of our own authentic individuality, as well as other's. This means that meaningful, community-based, formative relationships play a fundamental role in the process of individuation and knowledge of authenticity. The body appears as condition of possibility of the process of formation of the authentic personality, since it is by it that we capture, via affective experiences, the values available in the shared reality and, through it, we put our existence in act from authentic personal positions founded on personal nucleus.

Becoming authentic is the process by which every person appropriates what is universal in his/her humanity.

Formação da personalidade autêntica e corporeidade à luz de Edith Stein

Resumo: Considerando que o tema da autenticidade tem se tornado um importante referencial ético da sociedade contemporânea, discutimos neste trabalho as contribuições de Edith Stein para a compreensão do processo de formação da personalidade autêntica, com especial atenção à maneira como a corporeidade participa dessa dinâmica. Trata-se de uma pesquisa bibliográfica, em que examinamos alguns textos steinianos que abordam diretamente o tema da estrutura da pessoa e seu processo formativo, especialmente *O problema da empatia*, *Sobre a ideia de formação* e *Potência e ato*, respectivamente com originais dos anos de 1917, 1930 e 1931. Discutido como processo de formação da personalidade e como princípio de individuação, Stein acentua a necessidade de considerarmos a pessoa em ato, como meio de conhecermos sua autêntica individualidade, mesmo havendo limites para esse conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: autenticidade, formação, individuação, fenomenologia, Edith Stein.

Formation de la personnalité authentique et corporéité à la lumière d'Edith Stein

Résumé : Considérant que le thème de l'authenticité est devenu un cadre éthique important pour la société contemporaine, cet article examine les contributions d'Edith Stein à la compréhension du processus de formation de la personnalité authentique, avec une attention particulière à la manière dont la corporéité participe à cette dynamique. C'est une recherche bibliographique dans laquelle sont examinés certains textes de Stein qui abordent directement le thème de la structure de la personne et son processus de formation, en particulier, *Le problème de l'empathie*; *Concernant l'idée de formation* et *Puissance et Acte*, avec des originaux des années 1917, 1930 et 1931, respectivement. Discuté en tant que processus de formation de la personnalité et

principe d'individuation, Stein insiste sur la nécessité de considérer la personne en acte, afin de connaître son individualité authentique, même s'il y a des limites à cette connaissance.

Mots-clés : authenticité, formation, individuation, phénoménologie, Edith Stein.

Formación de la personalidad auténtica y la corporeidad a la luz de Edith Stein

Resumen: Considerando que el tema de la autenticidad se ha convertido en un importante referencial ético de la sociedad contemporánea, discutimos en este trabajo las contribuciones de Edith Stein para la comprensión del proceso de formación de la personalidad auténtica, con especial atención a la manera como la corporeidad participa en esa dinámica. Se trata de una investigación bibliográfica donde examinamos algunos textos steinianos que abordan directamente el tema de la estructura de la persona y su proceso formativo, especialmente *El problema de la empatía; Sobre la idea de formación y Potencia y acto*, respectivamente con originales de los años 1917, 1930 y 1931. Discutido como proceso de formación de la personalidad y como principio de individuación, Stein subraya la necesidad de considerar a la persona en acto, como medio de conocer su auténtica individualidad, aun habiendo límites para ese conocimiento.

Palabra-clave: autenticidad, formación, individuación, fenomenología, Edith Stein.

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