

CORPOREALITY IN CONTEMPLATION:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
EDITH STEIN AND TIBETAN BUDDHIST *LOJONG*

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Abstract

“The body” has become a major focus of intellectual inquiry across academic disciplines over the last fifty years. The interest in the body has also intensified with recent advances in studies of materiality, affect, technology, and neuro and cognitive sciences. In Christian theology, works on the body have also grown rapidly. My aim in this essay is to make a contribution to contemporary Christian theological discussions on the nature and role of the human body by turning to Edith Stein’s writings on contemplation and engaging a comparative theological study of a particular Tibetan Buddhist meditation tradition called *lojong* (Tib. *blo sbyong*).

The core issue that I address is the lack of practical traction between theologies of the body and a person’s actual relationship with her body in a life of Christian formation. Christian theology has not provided an adequate model of the body that can concretely inform Christian experience of the body and guide Christian practice. I argue that Stein’s extensive work on the body in both philosophical phenomenology and ascetico-contemplative theology can make a particularly important contribution to addressing this issue. However, Stein’s theory of the body has limitations that point to deeper issues in the ontology and anthropology she inherits from the Western Christian tradition. I argue for a comparative theological study of non-Christian sources that conceive the body in ways that shed new light on her view of the body.

The current theological literature shows three broad approaches to constructing a theology of the body: re-appropriating neglected sources within the Christian tradition; appropriating concepts and methods from academic disciplines outside Christian theology; or a combination of the two. Yet, these approaches fall short of elucidating how theoretical work on the body should concretely affect bodily experience and practice. In addition to these approaches, there is a need to study theological sources that employ models where the body is better integrated into the anthropology and contemplative framework. I turn to Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* to reflect on how the points of convergence and divergence between *lojong* and Stein can help us develop a model of the body that addresses the lacunae in Christian theology of the body. I examine the underlying ‘subtle body’ model operative in *lojong* texts and argue for explicitly using a subtle body model in Christian contemplation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BBPG	<i>Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie unter der Geistwissenschaften</i>
CWSJC	<i>The Collected Works of Saint John of the Cross</i>
DDM	<i>Blo sbyong don bdun ma (Seven-Point Lojong)</i>
DDMGP	<i>Blo sbyong don bdun 'grel pa (Commentary on Seven-Point Lojong)</i>
DN	<i>The Dark Night</i>
EES	<i>Endliches und ewiges Sein</i>
FEB	<i>Finite and Eternal Being</i>
GT I	<i>Geistliche Texte I</i>
GT II	<i>Geistliche Texte II</i>
HL	<i>The Hidden Life</i>
KW	<i>Kreuzeswissenschaft</i>
LBGT	<i>Blo sbyong brgya rtsa (The Great Lojong Collection)</i>
LBLB	<i>Blo sbyong glegs bam (Lojong Collection)</i>
LFL	<i>The Living Flames of Love</i>
POE	<i>On the Problem of Empathy</i>
PPH	<i>Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities</i>
SC	<i>The Science of the Cross</i>
SPC	<i>The Spiritual Canticle</i>
ZPE	<i>Zum Problem der Einfühlung</i>

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Scholarly work on the body has grown rapidly across all academic disciplines since the late 20th century, and theology has not been an exception.¹ While the body has been a central concern for Christian theology since its very inception, it garnered renewed and intense attention from the 1970s onwards. The reasons are many, including major intellectual, socio-political, and cultural shifts that led to new research and perspectives on the body.² In concert with these movements, new theological work began to emerge. Much of the impetus behind revisioning the body in theology came from the work of liberationist theologians who offered critical and constructive reflections on the concept of “the body.” Feminist, womanist, queer, disability, and postcolonial theologians have forwarded a range of constructive proposals that deconstruct the naturalization of a normative heterosexist conception of gendered bodies; reclaim the body and materiality from patriarchal denigration; and reinterpret the doctrine of God in opposition to a framework of spirit-matter dualism.³

¹ See James Keenan, SJ, “Current Theology Note: Christian Perspectives on the Human Body,” *Theological Studies* 55 (1994): 330 - 346; Caroline Bynum, “Why All the Fuss about the Body? A Medievalist’s Perspective,” *Critical Inquiry* 22, no. 1 (1995): 1-33; Sarah Coakley, “Introduction: religion and the body,” in *Religion and the Body*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), and *Powers and Submissions: Spirituality, Philosophy, and Gender* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers, 2002), 153-167; Constance Furey, “Body, Society, and Subjectivity in Religious Studies,” *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 80, no. 1 (2012): 7-33; Mayra Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 1-15; Ola Sigurdson, *Heavenly Bodies: Incarnation, the Gaze, and Embodiment in Christian Theology*, trans. Carl Olsen (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2016). For studies on the body in other disciplines, see Thomas J. Csordas, “Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology,” *Ethos* 18, no. 1 (1990): 5-47; Bryan S. Turner, “The Body in Western Society: social theory and its perspectives” in *Religion and Body*, 15-41; Gail Weiss and Honi Fern Haber, *Perspectives on Embodiment: The Intersections of Nature and Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1999); Frances Mascia-Lees, *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment* (Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011).

² Turner, “The Body in Western Society,” 34-9.

³ Mayra Rivera, “Unsettling Bodies,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 26, no. 2 (2010): 119.

Interest in the body, however, cut across the spectrum of denominational, ethical, and socio-political commitments as well as academic disciplines. Peter Brown's *Body and Society* and Caroline Walker Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* and *The Resurrection of the Body in Western Christendom* were groundbreaking works in historical scholarship on the body in Christianity and remain standard sources in any discussion of the body in theology and religious studies. *Religion and the Body* edited by Sarah Coakley provided a much-needed interdisciplinary approach to the diverse understandings of the body across religious traditions and the relationship between bodily practices and religious beliefs. John Paul II's collected addresses published as *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body* has become an influential text on the meaning of human bodiliness, sexuality, and love within the Roman Catholic Church. In sociology of religion, Meredith McGuire argued that the discipline overall has followed an epistemological tradition founded on a radical split between spirit and matter. It now had to take seriously the fundamental significance of our bodied nature for an adequate understanding of religion and the multiple layers of relationships between the individual and society.⁴ In the wake of her call, the field has generated new categories and methodologies that take embodiment as a fundamental reality.⁵

These works by a diverse group of scholars have advanced Christian theological reflection on human bodies and made possible avenues of further inquiry and engagement with

⁴ Meredith B. McGuire, "Religion and the Body: Rematerializing the Human Body in the Social Sciences of Religion," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 29, no. 3 (1990): 283-96.

⁵ This is reflected, for example, in the programmatic approach to study "lived religion" and, more recently, "relationality." See Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Robert Orsi, *Between Heaven and Earth: The Religious Worlds People Make and the Scholars Who Study Them* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

perspectives across disciplines and religious traditions.⁶ We now have a much more nuanced historical understanding of how Christian thinkers like Augustine, Gregory of Nyssa, and Thomas Aquinas transformed the Greco-Roman philosophical heritage, even as they adopted it, in order to undercut the philosophical streams that denigrated corporeality and proposed various forms of soul-body dualism.⁷ We also have a better grasp of the complexity of the Christian ascetic traditions and their positive valuation of the body as a field of spiritual transformation in contrast to simplistic critiques that formerly assumed that this tradition uniformly cultivated hatred of the body and oppression of women.⁸ The move beyond modern essentialism and Cartesian mind-body dualism with the emergence of postmodern thought has made it possible for scholars to give serious attention to the role of cultural construction in human identity and the challenges to assuming any monolithic entity that we can call “the body.”⁹

Yet the body remains a vexing subject. Part of the reason has to do with the challenge of pinning down what we mean when we say “the body” or its cognate term “embodiment,” and how different religious traditions, academic disciplines, methodologies, and research interests construct its meaning. The body conceived as a subject of inquiry eludes any totalizing description or explanation. As Judith Butler states it in her influential text *Bodies that Matter*,

⁶ Important works in comparative religious and philosophical studies of the body include Thomas P. Kasulis, Roger T. Ames, and Wimal Dissanayake, eds. *Self as Body in Asian Theory and Practice* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); Yasuo Yuasa, *The Body: Toward an Eastern Mind-Body Theory*, trans. Thomas P. Kasulis (Albany: SUNY Press, 1987); see also Chikako Ozawa-de Silva, “Beyond the Body/Mind? Japanese Contemporary Thinkers on Alternative Sociologies of the Body,” *Body & Society* 8, no. 2 (2002): 21-38.

⁷ On Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine, see Peter Brown, *Body and Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 285-304, 387-427; and Sarah Coakley, *God, Sexuality, and the Self* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 273-300. On Aquinas, see Raymond Hain, “Aquinas and Aristotelian Hylomorphism,” in *Aristotle in Aquinas’s Theology*, eds. Gilles Emery, O.P. and Matthew Levering (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015), 48-69; Corey Barnes, “Thomas Aquinas on the Body and Bodily Passions,” in *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity*, ed. Margaret Kamitsuka (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 83-98.

⁸ Brown, 223; Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast: The Religious Significance of Food to Medieval Women* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 294-6.

⁹ Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*, 1-2.

I began writing this book by trying to consider the materiality of the body only to find that the thought of materiality inevitably moved me into other domains. I tried to discipline myself to stay on the subject, but found that I could not fix bodies as simple objects of thought. Not only did bodies tend to indicate a world beyond themselves, but this movement beyond their own boundaries, a movement of boundary itself, appeared to be quite central to what bodies “are,” I kept losing track of the subject. I proved resistant to discipline. Inevitably, I began to consider that perhaps this resistance to fixing the subject was essential to the matter at hand.¹⁰

Butler makes the important point that materiality, language, and culture are so intimately interwoven in the complex reality which we categorize as “the body” in theoretical discourse that we do not have access to what the body “is” without linguistic constructs. The body exceeds its objectifications in thought and even its apparent materiality cannot be accessed directly. One implication that I want to draw from this passage is that since the body includes a multiplicity of phenomena (for example, inner organs on the physiological level and culturally specific habits which transcend the boundary of individual bodies on the social level) and implies a world beyond itself, the body requires multiple theories and methodologies. Anyone studying the body, furthermore, has to acknowledge explicitly the subject’s manifold character and the partial and constructed nature of theorizing the body. This means that the terms and definitions scholars choose to use in querying the body already enact specific perspectives and interests which guide their studies. For instance, “the body” is a concept and not a physical fact. Coakley argues that the recent preoccupation with the body in society and academia reflects a longing to seek in fleshliness an Archimedean point of absolute stability.¹¹ The refuge sought in the body’s materiality turns out to be a displaced longing for the lost foundation of modernity. Sharon Betcher criticizes the unexamined use of the term “the body” in feminist theology for failing to question the frequently normative understanding of “the body” operative in the concept. The consequence is to idealize able, healthy bodies and to displace and reify disabled persons as

¹⁰ Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of “Sex”* (New York: Routledge, 2011), viii.

¹¹ Coakley, *Powers and Submission*, 155.

“bodies in pain.”¹² “Embodiment,” a closely associated term with “the body,” also can be problematic if it implies an underlying substance dualism where a non-material soul or mind is conceived to be enfolded in the material body.¹³

The ambiguity of body-talk stalks theological treatments of the body. The literature shows myriad interests and perspectives without any consensus on what “the body” precisely means.¹⁴ Many liberationist works focus their energy on dismantling normative understandings of the body and the discourses and practices that legitimate exclusion of persons based on sexuality, disability, race, gender, and other socially constructed identity markers.¹⁵ They concentrate on theologically revaluing bodies and desires and emphasize how they are indispensable loci of our relation with God and each other. Convergent with them are

¹² Sharon Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh: Feminist and Disability Theologies on the Edge of Posthumanist Discourse,” *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 26, no. 2 (2010): 113.

¹³ For a critique of such a notion of embodiment, see Bonnie McLemore-Miller, “Embodied Knowing, Embodied Theology: What Happened to the Body,” *Pastoral Psychology* 62 (2013): 744; also Wesley Wildman, “Radical Embodiment in van Huyssteen’s Theological Anthropology,” *American Journal of Theology & Philosophy* 28, no. 3 (2007): 347. Thomas Csordas provides a different approach to McLemore-Miller and Wildman by defining “the body” as a “discrete organic entity” and “embodiment” as an “indeterminate methodological field” in his works on anthropological study of religion and cultural phenomenology; see Thomas Csordas, “Cultural Phenomenology: Embodiment: Agency, Sexual Difference, and Illness” in *A Companion to the Anthropology of the Body and Embodiment*, 137-156.

¹⁴ Bynum, “Why All the Fuss,” 5.

¹⁵ An early example is James Nelson’s *Embodiment* which articulated the need for a “sexual theology” that took seriously human sexual experience as a place of God’s self-revelation and framed theology as a dialogical and mutually informing engagement with sexual experience; James B. Nelson, *Embodiment: An Approach to Sexuality and Christian Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1978). Many important works followed such as: Rosemary Radford Ruether’s *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983); Nelson’s later work *Body Theology*, the first and second editions of *Sexuality and the Sacred*; multiple volumes written or edited by Lisa Isherwood (Isherwood and Stuart 1998; Isherwood 2000; Althaus-Reid and Isherwood 2008). Key works on race, sexuality, gender, and the body include Anthony Pinn and Dwight Hopkins, eds., *Loving the Body: Black Religious Studies and the Erotic* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); Kelly Brown Douglas, *What’s Faith Got To Do With It? Black Bodies/Christian Souls* (New York: Orbis Books, 2005); Anthony Pinn, *Embodiment and the New Shape of Black Theological Thought* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Marcella Althaus-Reid’s *Indecent Theology: Theological Perversions in Sex, Gender and Politics* (London: Routledge, 2000); Patrick S. Cheng’s *Rainbow Theology* (New York: Seabury Press, 2013); Susannah Cornwall, *Sex and Uncertainty in the Body of Christ: Intersex Conditions and Christian Theology* (London: Equinox, 2010).

constructive works that seek to reclaim the importance of eros in Christian understanding of love and its inextricable connection with agape.¹⁶

Other theologians focus on reassessing and reclaiming sources related to corporeality within Christianity for multifarious constructive projects. Biblical scholars continue to produce a continuous stream of works that investigate the various terms and conceptions of the body in Hebrew and New Testament anthropologies to clarify their meaning as well as to relate them critically to contemporary views on the human person.¹⁷ Many historical and systematic theologians are examining patristic and medieval sources in order to reappropriate certain insights that can shed light on problematic aspects of contemporary perspectives on the body.¹⁸ Some investigate the theologies of the body of particular historical figures while others are placing them in explicit dialogue with modern and postmodern theologians and philosophers. There are scholars who compare modern and postmodern theologians and contemporary philosophers on the themes of corporeality and materiality.¹⁹

¹⁶ Rita Nakashima Brock, *Journeys by Heart: A Christology of Erotic Power* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Pub., 1988); Carter Heyward, *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1989); Virginia Burrus and Catherine Keller, eds., *Toward a Theology of Eros: Transfiguring Passion at the Limits of Discipline* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006).

¹⁷ See Joel B. Green, *Body, Soul, and Human Life*; Tamar Kamionkowski & Wonil Kim eds., *Bodies, Embodiment, and Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010); Joan E. Taylor, *The Body in Biblical, Christian and Jewish Texts*. (London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark, 2014); Silvia Schroer and Thomas Staubli, “Bodily and Embodied: Being Human in the Tradition of the Hebrew Bible,” *Interpretation* 67, no. 1 (2013): 5-19; Matthew Thiessen, “‘The Rock was Christ’: The Fluidity of Christ’s Body in 1 Corinthians 10.4,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 36, no. 2 (2013): 103-126; Jeremy W. Barrier, “Jesus’ Breath: A Physiological Analysis of Pneuma within Paul’s Letter to the Galatians,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 37, no. 2 (2014):115-38.

¹⁸ Sarah Coakley’s *Powers and Submissions and God, Sexuality, and the Self* are important examples, even though her focus is the category of desire. Other examples include John Chryssavgis, “Soma-Sarx: the body and the flesh - an insight into patristic anthropology,” *Colloquium* 18, no. 1 (1985): 61-6; Hannah Hunt, *Clothed in the Body: Asceticism, the Body and the Spiritual Life in Late Antiquity* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012); Thomas Petri, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II’s Anthropology* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

¹⁹ See Peter Joseph Fritz, “Keeping Sense Open: Jean-Luc Nancy, Karl Rahner, and Bodies,” *Horizons* 43 (2016): 257-81; Anthony J. Kelly, “‘The Body of Christ: Amen!’ The Expanding Incarnation,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 792-816.

We also see crucial work on corporeality by theologians who are engaging philosophy in the area of the “mind-body” problem and the empirical sciences, such as neuro and cognitive sciences, evolutionary psychology, New Materialism, transhumanism, and embodied cognition.²⁰ More broadly, there is the emerging study of “lived theology” that takes practice and embodiment as key objects of inquiry and incorporate qualitative and quantitative research methods of the social sciences.²¹

The prodigious output on corporeality in theology attests to rich progress made in Christian discourse on the body. Yet, despite the advances, problems and lacunae persist in theologizing bodies. The contributions of liberationist works are vital to contemporary theology because they are driven by a theological commitment to full human liberation and flourishing and resisting against multiple forms of oppression. As some have noted, however, such works court the danger of uncritically accepting secular theories of identity, sexuality, and corporeality as positive while losing sight of the complexity of corporeality and foregoing a more rigorous examination of important yet neglected Christian sources.²²

²⁰ On natural and social sciences and theology, see Nancey Murphy, *Bodies and Souls, or Spirit Bodies?* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Wesley Wildman, *Science and Religious Anthropology* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2009); Nancey Murphy and Christopher Knight, eds. *Human Identity at the Intersection of Science, Technology and Religion* (Surrey, UK: Ashgate, 2010); Thomas Crisp, Steven Porter, and Gregg Ten Elshof, eds., *Neuroscience and the Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. Eerdmans Pub., 2016); Christopher Lilley and Daniel Pederson, *Human Origins and the Image of God: Essays in Honor of J. Wentzel van Huyssteen* (Grand Rapids, MI: W. Eerdmans Pub., 2017). On New Materialism, see Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, eds., *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010); Catherine Keller and Mary-Jane Rubenstein eds., *Entangled Worlds: Religion, Science, and New Materialisms* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017); John Reader, *Theology and New Materialism: Spaces of Faithful Dissent* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017). On transhumanism, see Steven J. Kraftchick, “Bodies, selves, and human identity: A Conversation between Transhumanism and the Apostle Paul,” *Theology Today* 72, no. 1 (2015): 47-69. The classic work in embodied cognition is *The Embodied Mind: Cognitive Science and Human Experience* by the late Francisco Varela, and Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch, which was recently revised by Thompson and Rosch and published in 2016. On embodied cognition and theology, see *Zygon* 48, no. 3 (2013), especially Léon Turner, “Individuality in Theological Anthropology and Theories of Embodied Cognition;” Fraser Watts, “Religion and Embodied Cognition;” and Daniel H. Weiss, “Embodied Cognition in Classical Rabbinic Literature.”

²¹ Charles Marsh, Peter Slade, and Sarah Azaransky eds., *Lived Theology: New Perspectives on Method, Style, and Pedagogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²² Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*, 11. See also Darnell Moore’s critical assessment of *Loving the Body*, a collection of essays on corporeality and sexuality in black religious studies and theology in “Theorizing the ‘Black Body’ as a Site of Trauma: Implications for Theologies of Embodiment,” *Theology & Sexuality* 15, no. 2 (2009): 175-188.

The historical and constructive theological works offer a corrective by reclaiming vital yet neglected sources within Christian traditions. Noting their contribution, however, liberationist, historical, and systematic-constructive works share the same problem in that the body in much of this discourse remains an abstraction and a conceptual entity. Theological treatments of the body tend to analyze the body primarily within the framework of doctrinal reflection, or deploy secular theories that are nearly exclusive in their focus on cultural construction and socio-political analysis of bodies without due rigor.²³ Most also lag far behind religious studies in interdisciplinary engagement with the most current research in the natural sciences.²⁴ If some in the field are conducting such interdisciplinary research, as in the case of Nancey Murphy, Wesley Wildman, the late Daniël van Huyssteen, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore, there is still need for further clarification and development of their thoughts on the practical impact of such work on how individuals and communities relate to their bodily life and being.²⁵

In reading the theological literature on the body, it is difficult not to feel what Jennifer Glancy bluntly expresses: “I have a long-standing frustration with analyses of bodies that tell us nothing about what it means to be a body.... [T]hose analyses do not help me tell the truth about the experience of being a body.”²⁶ The intense work carried out on the body over the past four decades in theology has strangely left the field neglecting the “tactile quiddity of bodies” and the lived experience of the body as part of one’s subjectivity. The conceptual clarifications that

²³ For cogent critiques of these tendencies, see Ola Sigurdson, “How to Speak of the Body?” *Studia Theologica* 62 (2008): 26; Bonnie Miller-McLemore, “Embodied Knowing, Embodied Theology: What Happened to the Body?” *Pastoral Psychology* 62 (2013): 746; Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*, 190-3.

²⁴ See critiques in both Wildman, *Science and Religious Anthropology*, 9; and Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, “Multidimensional Monism”: A Constructive Theological Proposal for the Nature of Human Nature,” *Neuroscience and the Soul*, 202.

²⁵ Wildman addresses the practical impact on bodily being and religious practices and experiences more than other scholars, especially in *Religious and Spiritual Experiences* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

²⁶ Jennifer Glancy, *Corporal Knowledge: Early Christian Bodies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 19.

theologians have contributed to Christian understanding of the body in relation to doctrine, ecclesiology, and ethics, while necessary and indispensable, have not sufficiently elucidated how any given theology of the body should impact a person's experience of her body.

One response to this neglect of the phenomenally lived body in theology has been a turn to phenomenology in philosophy. Swedish theologian Ola Sigurdson, for example, looks to Husserl and more recent phenomenologists. Sigurdson uses Husserl's concept of the life-world (*Lebenswelt*), the pre-given world in which the whole of our being is situated and is the condition for all our acting, thinking, and relating with others,²⁷ modified by the more existential and hermeneutical perspectives of Ricoeur, Levinas, and Derrida to construct a theology that reflects on the body's manifold character and complex interdependence with the physical and social environment.

Mayra Rivera draws extensively from Maurice Merleau-Ponty, particularly his notion of "coiling over of the visible upon the seeing body," that persons and objects co-constitute each other in perception and their relation is never an encounter between two self-enclosed, discrete entities.²⁸ She looks beyond Merleau-Ponty's contribution to a non-dualistic (subject-object) ontology and examines the works of Frantz Fanon and Linda Martín Alcoff, who critically appropriate Merleau-Ponty's philosophy to account for the issues of race, gender, and coloniality in theorizing the body.²⁹

²⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 109ff; Sigurdson, *Heavenly Bodies*, 22.

²⁸ Rivera, *Poetics of the Flesh*, 76-7.

²⁹ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skins, White Masks* (New York: Grove Press, 1967); Linda Martín Alcoff, *Visible Identities: Race, Gender, and the Self* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Christopher Ben Simpson's *Merleau-Ponty and Theology* examines in depth Merleau-Ponty's philosophy and appropriates his ideas to think through key Christian doctrines.³⁰ Pertinent to the theology of the body is the section where he places into dialogue Merleau-Ponty's elaboration of the human being as "living bodies" with patristic voices on creation, the incarnation, and the resurrection. The "living body" is in constant interaction with the environment, and its constituent parts form invisible vital relations. Hence, bodies, human and non-human, cannot be reduced to a sum of physical parts. The human being is a living body that is distinct from other bodies by virtue of its own way of being in the world, as a "conjunction" of the mental and the physical. For Simpson, Merleau-Ponty's ideas resonate with insights on materiality as part and parcel of human identity which is deeply embedded in the Christian tradition. They help to recall these insights and re-envision a fully embodied Christian theology that does not fall into reductionism nor dualism.

Dialogue with phenomenology has brought to bear on theology this tradition's rich analyses of human bodies and the diverse aspects of their interrelation with the natural and social environments. These theologians counter a tendency within theologies of the body to efface the body's materiality by stressing the primacy of discourse, or to construe the body simplistically as a passive entity onto which discourses are "inscribed." They provide a view of the body as dynamic and "mindful," and underscore the importance of interdisciplinary investigation of the body.

Yet, these sophisticated approaches to human corporeality fall short of developing fully the connection between their interdisciplinary insights with the more traditional concerns that

³⁰ Christopher Ben Simpson, *Merleau-Ponty and Theology* (London: Bloomsbury Pub., 2013), 121ff.

used to frame theological discussions of the body, namely suffering, evil, and death.³¹ They rarely discuss the doctrines of sin and redemption, even if the authors are passionately concerned about oppression, and what significance, if any, the Christian view of a “fallen” world has for a theology of the body. In looking to other disciplines, these theologies do not clarify sufficiently the moral status of bodies. Are bodies morally neutral at conception and later culturally constructed through the complex relations that exercise formative power on them? Or are there compelling theological reasons to consider them as morally ambivalent as existent in this world? Here, the problem is not the neglect of phenomenally lived bodies, but the neglect of major doctrines that address existential suffering and hope. The relative silence on sin and redemption in contrast to the pointed stress on the doctrines of creation, incarnation, and resurrection in theologies of the body brings into relief the troubled conversation that Christians have had about bodies on the one hand, and sin and redemption on the other. Talk of sin and redemption in the Western Christian tradition has predominantly proceeded within the framework of a gendered interpretation of the Fall and Anselmian atonement theory. Liberationist theologians criticized the conceptual difficulties and historical abuses of these interpretive paradigms in theologically justifying the oppression of marginalized peoples.³² Christian doctrines of sin and redemption

³¹ Bynum makes this point generally about studies on the body in theology and religious studies in “Why all the Fuss about the Body?” Even though she is raising an important issue, her characterization is not wholly accurate. Liberationist theologians who have written on the body are concerned with these issues, but they largely depart from traditional doctrinal language of sin and redemption.

³² On feminist theological view of sin, Valerie Saiving’s landmark essay remains influential: Valerie Saiving, “The Human Situation: A Feminine View,” *The Journal of Religion* 40, no. 2 (Apr 1960): 100-12. See also Judith Plaskow, *Sex, Sin, and Grace: Women's Experience and the Theologies of Reinhold Niebuhr and Paul Tillich* (Washington: University Press of America, 1980). For feminist and womanist critiques of sin and redemption, see Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *Jesus: Miriam's Child, Sophia's Prophet: Critical Issues in Christology, Second Edition* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 105-39; Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-talk* (New York: Orbis Books, 1993), 161-7; Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and the Search for What Saves Us* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001). For critical retrieval of atonement theories, see Lisa S. Cahill, “Quaestio Disputata The Atonement Paradigm: Does It Still Have Explanatory Value?” *Theological Studies* 68, no. 2 (2007): 418-32; Erin Lothes Biviano, *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice: The Loss of Self, The Gift of Self* (New York: Crossroad Pub., 2007); Kathryn Tanner, “Incarnation, Cross, and Sacrifice: A Feminist-inspired Reappraisal,” *Anglican Theological Review* 86, no. 1 (2004): 35-56.

historically have been intertwined with normative ideas of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class. Prescriptive notions of the body went hand in hand with theological interpretations of these doctrines. Revisionist theological works on the body in the 20th and 21st centuries have been largely motivated by the need to address these issues and re-envision the body in ways that are congruent with the gospel promise of liberation.

I am in broad agreement with these critiques. Nevertheless, not theorizing explicitly how these doctrines touch the body leads to a truncated theology. For what is at stake is not simply reclaiming the body's, and more broadly materiality's, fundamental significance in Christian faith and theology and dispensing with flawed doctrinal interpretations. There is a further question of how the transformative vision of gospel liberation and justice can be bodily realized in individuals and communities in a world besieged by affliction, violence, and injustice. The doctrines of sin and redemption do not only provide the language to voice both the tragic character of worldly existence and the need for eschatological hope. They also ground the transformative process that actualizes this hope in personal and communal life. Without directly engaging the meaning of these doctrines, a theology of the body cannot enunciate how Christian hope, founded on Christ's death and resurrection, can encompass and transform the existential conditions of suffering, evil, and death in one's bodily life. In that case, theological concepts will hover impossibly close to our bodies without ever touching them.

To summarize, then, in contemporary theologies of the body, it is not at all clear what difference a particular theological proposal makes to how a person engages and experiences her body in a continually unfolding transformative relationship with God in light of the reality of suffering and evil on the one hand, and the promise of the resurrection and eschatological hope on the other. The proposals remain conceptual arguments that leave unaddressed how core

Christian truths should be bodied. As Ola Sigurdson rightly argues, what matters for a Christian theology of the body is what kind of embodiment our conceptions construct for us.³³ The very notion of taking the body as a *theological* subject implies the question, “How can a given theology shape a Christian’s experience of her body?” As such, a Christian theology of the body is necessarily practical in character. This means that for any theology of the body, conceptual reflection alone is insufficient; it is also necessary to elaborate how the insights of theological reflection concretely connects to the body that is phenomenally experienced by a person and aids in her progressing toward the proper goals of Christian faith.

What is required here is something that is both more fundamental and specific than arguments for the importance of Christian practices such as worship, Eucharist, and ethical action. In order to meet the two needs of a phenomenologically enriched theology of the body and a revaluation of the doctrines of sin and redemption, I argue that Christian theology needs a model of the human body based on theological anthropologies found in the ascetical and contemplative tradition. It requires a model that can articulate how the transformative process of deepening relationship with the divine unfolds through a person’s bodied structures and processes, and serves as an interface between reflecting on faith and practicing prayer and virtue within the context of a faith community and long-term commitment. The ascetico-contemplative tradition provides perhaps the only genre of texts in Christian theology that plumbs the structures of the human person within the framework of sustained individual and communal practice of prayer and virtue, combined with a concern for practical guidance.³⁴ Christian contemplative sources, however, have been dominated by a tradition that spiritualizes

³³ Sigurdson, *Heavenly Bodies*, 599.

³⁴ On ascetic and contemplative practice in Christianity, see Sarah Coakley, “Traditions of Spiritual Guidance: Dom John Chapman OSB (1865-1933). On the Meaning of ‘Contemplation’,” *Powers and Submissions*, 40-54, and *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), esp. chs. 1 and 4.

human understanding of God in disembodied ways. This is particularly the case with the theories of the “spiritual senses” which theologians have defined and used in diverse ways to account for a special mode of perception or cognition in encounters with God.³⁵ Notable exceptions have argued for an embodied account of the spiritual senses,³⁶ but the task of constructing a model of the body that integrates the basic insights of the spiritual senses tradition and has traction in concrete practice of prayer and Christian living remains incomplete. In its current state, Christian theology offers various views of the body’s theological meaning, but the proposed options explicate neither how these interpretations specifically should inform one’s bodily experience, nor how bodily experience may shape theological understanding. We can begin to address this lacuna by constructing a model of the body that can map how the transformative grace of life in Christ unfolds in bodily being, facilitated by the practice of contemplative prayer in the broader context of ascetic practice.

My aim in this dissertation is to do the groundwork for constructing such a model through a comparative theological analysis of two sources, Edith Stein and Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*. The reason for choosing Stein has to do with the fact that her corpus offers both phenomenological and theological treatments of the body. Although she did not write a monograph exclusively on the body, her early phenomenological works examine extensively the body’s structures and its relationship with other basic dimensions of the human person. The fact that theologians working on the body have mostly looked to Merleau-Ponty and later phenomenologists and remain largely ignorant of Stein’s contributions on the subject points to

³⁵ For an overview of the Christian spiritual senses tradition, see Paul L. Gavrilyuk and Sarah Coakley, *The Spiritual Senses: Perceiving God in Western Christianity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

³⁶ Yves de Maeseneer, "Retrieving the spiritual senses in the wake of Hans Urs von Balthasar," *Communio Viatorum* 55, no. 3 (2013): 279.

the replication, witting or unwitting, of a long-standing sexist and antisemitic marginalization of Stein in philosophy and a narrowly selective emphasis on her spiritual writings in theology.³⁷

Secondly, her corpus includes theological reflections on the body from an ascetico-contemplative perspective. Stein stands out among Christian contemplative sources in that her interest in comprehending precisely the relationship between the body, soul, and spirit in contemplative practice and theology animates many of her works, especially her texts on John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. I am interested in examining how Stein as a contemplative practitioner in the Carmelite tradition understood and discussed the transformation process at the most intimate levels of the human being's structures in contemplative prayer and their relationship with the body. Her work readily addresses the issues I have identified in contemporary theologies of the body and offers a modern take on ascetic, contemplative anthropology. One would be hard pressed to find a thinker in Christian tradition whose work brings together this array of perspectives and methods with such expertise and rigor.

Yet, if Stein is an especially apt candidate because of her subtle and sophisticated views on the body and its relationship with contemplation, her thought is marked by an ambivalence that characterizes in general Christian engagements with the body. The problem stems from her use of Thomistic and Carmelite concepts and categories in her later works. Thomas' hylomorphic view of the human person as a composite, an integral *unity* of soul and body, and of natural desires as good marked a real departure from his predecessors.³⁸ The body for Aquinas,

³⁷ Jan H. Nota and Antonio Calcagno discuss at some length Stein's marginalization in phenomenology and philosophy generally. I would only add that overall she has been a marginal figure in theology as well and much of her later religious works remain understudied, especially in the English-speaking world. See John H. Nota, "Misunderstanding and Insight about Edith Stein's Philosophy," *Human Studies* 10, no. 2 (1987): 205-212; Antonio Calcagno, *Lived Experience from the Inside Out: Social and Political Philosophy in Edith Stein* (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2014), 6.

³⁸ Barnes, 93.

however, is ultimately a passive partner to the soul as can be seen in its restriction to a receptive role in rapturous knowledge of God and in the resurrection.³⁹ In the Carmelite tradition, specifically in the works of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, a sharp distinction is drawn between the (physical) senses of ordinary perception and the “spiritual” faculties, whose operations are frequently described in incorporeal terms. As Edward Howells explains, the tendency to divide the two sets of faculties does not lead to ontological dualism in Teresa and John, because the senses share in the soul’s orientation to God as the soul advances in the stages of contemplative union.⁴⁰ Similar to Aquinas, however, the body is a passive object that somehow receives in derivative form the benefits of the soul’s union with God.⁴¹ Even if the soul is held as integrally united with the body, exactly how the two are united, how the locus of divine union in the soul is related to the body, and why the body should be merely a patient in contemplation are not clear. These are issues with which Stein appears to struggle as she reflects on the body and its relationship with the soul in divine union. The complex movements of her thinking on this relationship are exacerbated by her rejection of substance dualism on the one hand, and her affirmation of the separation of soul and body after death in line with Catholic teaching. How she manages to resolve the differences between her view of the human person as a body-soul unity⁴² and the tensions in both Thomistic and Carmelite anthropologies is unclear.

³⁹ For Thomas on the body in rapture, see *De Veritate* 13.2-3; *Summa Theologica* II-II.175.1; on the body and soul after death, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV.79, 81; on the body after resurrection, *ST* I-II.4.5; sense free cognition of God, *ST* I-II.4.6 ad 2; quoted in Patrick Quinn, "Aquinas's Concept of the Body and Out of Body Situations," *The Heythrop Journal* 34, no. 4 (1993): 387ff.

⁴⁰ Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2002), 21.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 52.

⁴² In her later writings, Stein draws from Christian sources to present the human person as a tri-partite structure of body, soul, and spirit, with the soul as a particular type of spirit that is embodied. See discussion below, 78f.

At the same time, her attention to the significance and the role of the body intensifies in her later texts.

Stein and her predecessors' view of the body as a patient in contemplative practice and the conception of the soul as separable from the body imply an unresolved dualistic tension underneath explicit assertions of body-soul unity. This tension in their works is emblematic of an ongoing challenge for Christian theology. As James Keenan reminds us, the task of Christian theology is to resist fragmentation and division within its anthropology and ecclesiology and to move adherents toward full incorporation of the human person in the body of Christ.⁴³ Fuller integration of the human person as encompassing both the physical body and what Christianity has traditionally called "soul" remains a challenge.

Another problem in Stein's later thought on the body has to do with the close-knit relationship between bodily being in contemplation and expiatory suffering. Expiation is central to Stein's theory of contemplation and bodily life. The human person's integration into and conscious participation in the inner-Trinitarian relations in divine union generates in the practitioner the desire to exchange places with those who suffer and take on their suffering. The fundamental significance of expiatory suffering lies in its power to incorporate and metabolize pain and suffering out of love for and solidarity with others. I seek to retrieve in Stein the idea of embodiment as a transformative unfolding of contemplative union; actualization of divine power within the very experience of suffering; and ontological solidarity between human beings in Christ which can and must be harnessed as part of Christ's redemptive work in history. However, such a move is complicated by the knotty entanglements of expiation in the atonement paradigm with oppression of the marginalized. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, for example, has criticized

⁴³ Keenan, 342-3.

atonement theories that maintain the idea of freely chosen, vicarious suffering in the mould of Christ as originating with and strengthening in the end patriarchal and other (“kyriarchal”) frameworks of domination.⁴⁴ Womanist theologian Delories Williams also argued against any notion of substitutionary suffering and redemption, as they have historically justified the enforced surrogacy of African American women during slavery and up to the present time.⁴⁵ The thorny issues surrounding the atonement paradigm easily overshadows the salience of the theme of transformation in her thought.⁴⁶

The central issue that I tackle in this dissertation is the lack of practical traction between theologies of the body and a person’s actual relationship with her body in a life of Christian formation. I have argued above that this lacuna requires constructing a model of the human body that can allow a practitioner to map how the transformative grace of life in Christ becomes bodily actualized. I look to Stein’s work for its unique contributions to a theology of the body from the perspective of the contemplative tradition, but I note its significant problems. To summarize, the problems are: 1) the body as a passive and inert recipient; 2) unresolved body-soul dualism; 3) an expiatory model of atonement and the problem of oppression. To retrieve Stein’s contributions and to address the problems her thought typifies, I argue for a comparative study of non-Christian traditions that conceive the body in ways that shed new light on her view of the body. The current theological literature shows three broad approaches to constructing a theology of the body: re-appropriating neglected sources within the Christian tradition; appropriating

⁴⁴ Fiorenze, *Jesus: Miriam’s Child, Sophia’s Prophet*, 114-6.

⁴⁵ Williams, “Black Women’s Surrogate Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption,” 8-9.

⁴⁶ I will discuss these issues in chapter 3, but a list of the major ones include the imputing violence within the inner Trinitarian relation; construing suffering itself as intrinsically redemptive and valuable; elevating self-sacrifice at the expense of self-realization. These lines of interpretation have frequently been used to justify the oppression of various groups of people.

concepts and methods from academic disciplines outside Christian theology; or a combination of the two. Yet, these approaches fall short of elucidating how theoretical work on the body should concretely affect bodily experience and practice. In addition to these approaches, there is a need to study theological sources that employ models where the body is better integrated into the anthropology and contemplative framework.

I have chosen to examine the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and specifically focus on a meditation practice called *lojong* (Tib. *blo sbyong*). The reasons for selecting *lojong* are twofold. First, *lojong* displays striking similarities and interests as Stein's thought on contemplation and theological anthropology. The basic aim of *lojong* practice is the cultivation of *bodhicitta*, the resolve to attain and actual pursuit of perfect enlightenment for the sake of benefitting all sentient beings, that is, to become a fully awakened buddha.⁴⁷ The concrete means for cultivating this resolve is the practice of "exchanging self and other," which is carried out through *tonglen* (Tib. *gtong len*, "giving and taking") meditation. To explain briefly, in *tonglen* the practitioner visualizes taking into herself the suffering of others and giving them all her happiness, possessions, and merit. A fundamental principle of *lojong* is turning suffering into fuel for attaining enlightenment. It uses difficult circumstances, afflictions, and sickness as the very means for eliminating the root ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*) which views oneself as an independently existing, ontological essence.

These aspects of *lojong* resonate with Stein's work on contemplation in multiple ways. Stein synthesizes a theology of the cross with contemplative union, so that divine union entails voluntarily suffering in the place of others. This ethos is based on the practitioner's participation in the continuing redemptive work of Christ through this union, and Stein's view of expiatory

⁴⁷ See Dorji Wangchuk, *The Resolve to Become a Buddha: A Study of the Bodhicitta Concept in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, 2007).

suffering as an effective means of removing the consequences of sins committed by others. From very different theological frameworks and understanding of religious ends, both *lojong* and Stein present forms of contemplative practice that focalize suffering and its transformation.

Comparing the ways in which *lojong* conceives suffering from Mahāyāna doctrinal foundations and instrumentalizes it in a contemplative framework highlights the distinct transformative ethos of Stein's theology of contemplation. The similarities and differences help us to reconsider the potential value of her ideas on expiation and substitutionary suffering as comparative theological study of *lojong* provides a new perspective on the contemplative orientation of her thought and its Trinitarian foundations.

Second, *lojong* offers an example of a contemplative practice that actively uses the body and bodily images. Based on the fundamental Buddhist doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), *lojong* texts and practice draw on concepts of the body and meditation that are well established in early,⁴⁸ Mahayāna, and Vajrayāna Buddhist traditions.⁴⁹ For example, the use of the breath is a standard feature of Buddhist meditation and goes back to some of the oldest canonical texts.⁵⁰ Visualizations, such as ones used in the meditation on love and compassion (Tib. *byam pa, snying rje*) in preparation for *lojong* and others in *lojong* proper, have their roots in the much older practice

⁴⁸ I will use the term “early Buddhism” to refer to pre-Mahayāna buddhist traditions such as the Theravāda.

⁴⁹ The tantric Buddhist tradition is commonly called Vajrayāna (*rdo rje theg pa*) which means “adamantine vehicle,” or ‘Mantrayāna’ (*sngag theg pa*) which means “speech vehicle,” referring to recitation of sounds associated with particular meditation deities. As Indian tantric Buddhism was transmitted to and preserved in Tibet after Buddhism's disappearance from India in the 13th century, Tibetan Buddhism and Vajrayāna have become interchangeable terms in Western scholarship; see David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors, Vol. 1* (Boston: Shambhala Pub, 1987), 128ff; Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington D.C. & London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1993), 406ff, and *The Origins of Yoga and Tantra: Indic Religions to the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

⁵⁰ For example, the *Satipatthāna sutta*; Maurice Walshe, trans. *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha: Dīgha Nikāya* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 335-50.

of commemoration of the Buddha (Skt. *buddhānusmṛti*).⁵¹ Furthermore, the visualization of suffering as tar or dust and absorbing it into one’s heart, or pure streams of light pouring forth from one’s nostrils in conjunction with the practitioner’s breath, gestures at the concept of the “subtle body.” *Lojong* is not a tantric practice, but it is situated within the general tantric framework of Tibetan Buddhist tradition, and later developments signal incorporation of some tantric elements.⁵²

Although specifying what falls under the category of “tantra” is a complex issue, the use of “subtle body” concepts is a characteristic of tantric Buddhism.⁵³ As Geoffrey Samuel explains, the term “subtle body” is a rendering into English of the Vedantic usage of *sūkṣmaśarīra*, which refers to layers or “sheaths” (Skt. *kośa*) of more subtle bodies underlying the gross physical body.⁵⁴ In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, the concept is encapsulated in a model of inner anatomy comprised of “channels” (Tib. *rtsa*, Skt. *nāḍī*) and major points of channels intersecting to form “wheels” (Tib. *‘khor lo*, Skt. *cakra*). Through these channels flow “winds” (Tib. *rlung*, Skt. *prāṇa*) and very subtle essences (Tib. *thig le*, Skt. *bindu*) corresponding to bodily functions and forms of consciousness and feelings.⁵⁵ The undisciplined dispersion and flow of the winds throughout the

⁵¹ Paul Harrison, “Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmṛti*,” *In the Mirror of Memory: Reflections on Mindfulness and Remembrance in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Janet Gyatso (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1992), 251ff.

⁵² I will discuss this further in chapter 4. Visualizations of light flowing from or black clouds absorbed into one’s heart are not in the early *lojong* texts, but they become standard in later texts, indicating a gradual incorporation of rudimentary tantric elements. Two *lojong* texts that are markedly tantric in character are *Mtshon cha’ khor lo* (“The Wheel Weapon”) and *Rma bya dug joms* (“The Poison-destroying Peacock”). Their dates, however, cannot be determined with certainty.

⁵³ There are both Brahmanical and Buddhist sources that are categorized as tantra. Geoffrey Samuel notes that the term has been used in varying ways and encompassing a different range of characteristics by both ancient and contemporary authors; Geoffrey Samuel, “The subtle body in India and beyond” in *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body*, ed. Geoffrey Samuel and Jay Johnson (London: Routledge, 2013), 35-7.

⁵⁴ The Vedantic scheme has three bodies in increasing subtlety: *sthūlaśarīra* referring to the material body; *sūkṣmaśarīra* referring to the subtler layers; *kāraṇaśarīra* referring to the body of bliss. The final “body” would be the ultimate *atman*; Samuel (2013), 34.

⁵⁵ Samuel, ““The subtle body in India and beyond,” 39-42; see also Reginald A. Ray, *Secret of the Vajra World: The Tantric Buddhism of Tibet* (Boston: Shambhala, 2001), 232-5.

channels are seen to generate dualistic conceptions of subject and object. Subtle body practices as elaborated in detail in *mahāyoga* and *anuttarayoga* tantras involve directing and gathering the winds into the major central channel (Skt. *avadhūtī*) in order to overcome dualistic conceptions and attain complete non-dual realization of the empty nature of reality and phenomena. Such practices do not enter into *lojong*, and an in-depth examination of these practices is beyond the scope of this essay. I, nevertheless, want to highlight the concept of subtle body and its expression of the absolutely interdependent relationship between the psychic and physical aspects of a human being as important background theories that later *lojong* texts tacitly reference.

The model of the subtle body is strikingly different from Stein's theory of the body, but the differences help to bring out alternative interpretive possibilities for Stein's somatology and anthropology. They specifically raise the possibility of re-conceiving the body-soul relationship in analogous ways. Stein's use and creative reconstruction of Teresian and San Juanist categories, such as the soul as interior dwelling, "center of the soul," and "spiritual feeling," suffer from dualistic tendencies and create tensions in her work.⁵⁶ Comparative theological analysis of these categories and the subtle body can help us to see features within Stein's Carmelite anthropology that are analogous to the subtle body concept. To put it plainly, I argue that the subtle body idea is analogously present within Stein's anthropology, and by extension many Christian contemplative sources, but the integral unity of soul and body is undercut by the conceptual framework with which she is working. At the same time, her works, I argue, strain to overcome a sharp matter-spirit dichotomy in her philosophical and theological heritage in order to account better for her theory of contemplation and the body in divine union. The comparison with *lojong* and the subtle body model sets into relief these analogous features in Stein and creates a

⁵⁶ I will examine this issue in depth in chapter 3.

basis for constructing a somatology that could better address the troublesome dichotomy. Such a conception of the body would no longer render it as an inert patient of the soul's glory in divine union, but open the way to understanding the body as actively engaged at multiple levels (gross, subtle, etc). This, in turn, would make it possible to consider how such a theology of the body can concretely impact a practitioner's relationship to and experience of her body.

My argument will proceed by first examining Stein's views on the body. Chapter 2 investigates her theory of the body in the early phenomenological writings, and chapter 3 her later works. I analyze the points of continuity and difference in her theory between the early and later texts, and the main questions and interests that guided her thinking on the body in these two distinct periods of writing. My aim is not to give a comprehensive summary of the relevant texts, but to inquire which aspects of her phenomenological analysis and later theological treatments of the body, contemplation, and suffering can be retrieved for a contemporary theology of the body. I conclude with a critical appraisal of Stein's theory of the body, identifying both its potential contributions and limitations and the need for comparative theological study.

Chapter 4 introduces the historical background of *lojong* and explains its core principles as presented in key authoritative texts and commentaries. I examine the theological or buddhological foundations of *lojong* theory and practice, and the divergent hermeneutical traditions on buddha nature (*tathātagarbha*) that inform how different schools interpret the meaning of *lojong* principles and instructions. I then analyze the conception and uses of the body in major *lojong* texts.

Chapter 5 engages in a detailed comparative theological analysis of Stein's theory and *lojong*. Surveying their respective conceptions of the body and its relationship with contemplative practice, I will examine major points of contrast and inquire what difference they make in how

the theological or buddhological foundations are embodied in each source. I also examine the tantric model of the body that underlies later developments in *lojong*, and how comparing the key features of the subtle body in Tibetan Buddhist tantric tradition with Stein discloses analogous features within her contemplative model of the body. I argue for carefully comparing these features and investigating the subtle body as a mediating concept for constructing a fully embodied model of the human person in Christian theology.

Chapter 6 concludes the essay with a summary of comparative insights and a proposal for fully developing “subtle body” model for Christian theology. I argue that a comparative theological study of Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*, tantric subtle body model, and Stein’s somatology shows the trans-religious and trans-cultural character of the subtle body concept.⁵⁷ On this basis, I argue for constructing a subtle body framework that is based on Stein’s contemplative model of the body and consonant with Christian doctrines. Using this framework in Christian theology of the body can better address persistent problems of dualistic anthropology and lack of practical traction than the ones traditionally or currently deployed. It, furthermore, provides the conceptual schema for mapping bodily the transformative process of Christian formation in Christ through the practice of contemplation, and serving as an interface for theological reflection and embodied practice.

⁵⁷ For “subtle body” concepts and practices across religious traditions and cultures, see Samuel and Johnson, *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West: Between Mind and Body*. For a detailed study of “subtle body” ideas in Greek and Chinese cultures, see Shigehisa Kuriyama, *The Expressiveness of the Body and the Divergence of Greek and Chinese Medicine* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 233-70.

CHAPTER 2

THE BODY IN STEIN'S EARLY PHENOMENOLOGY

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Edith Stein's reflections on the body are found throughout the corpus of her writings. The following chapter will examine her phenomenological investigation of the body in her early works, specifically *On the Problem of Empathy* (hereafter POE) and *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (hereafter PPH),¹ which she wrote during her years as a student and later assistant to Edmund Husserl. My aim is to examine her distinct use of Husserl's phenomenological method in understanding the body as it presents itself in the experience of consciousness, and assess how her work can help meet the need for a phenomenologically enriched theology of the body. As Husserlian phenomenology attends to the thing itself which appears to us in our consciousness, it beckons us to follow the phenomenologist through the steps of her inquiry.² This entails significant amount of exposition of her thought, some of which touch indirectly on the body yet are inseparably connected. I will follow my explications with reflections on how non-somatic aspects of the human person are relevant to her understanding of the body, and close by considering the theological relevance of my study. For citations, I will provide page numbers from both the English translations of POE and PPH and the German texts from the Edith Stein

¹ Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989); *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 5 (Freiburg: Herder, 2010). Edith Stein, *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (Washington D.C.: ICS Pub., 2000); *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 6 (Freiburg: Herder, 2010), originally published in the *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* in 1922.

² Ales Bello puts it eloquently, “[Stein’s] analytical procedures recognizes an extraordinary centrality to the dimension of corporeity as the initial moment of life and as cross-road between the human being and the surrounding reality, interiority and exteriority. But to demonstrate all this one has to begin the inquiry all over again;” Angela Ales Bello, “The Language of Our Living Body,” *Comprendre: Archive Internationale pour l’Anthropologie et la Psychopathologie Phénoménologiques* 16-17-18 (2008): 16.

Gesamtausgabe, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (abbreviated ZPE) and *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften* (abbreviated BBPG).

2.2. ATTENDING TO THE PHENOMENALLY LIVED BODY

Stein's first extended discussion of the body occurs in POE. The Husserlian method of phenomenological investigation which Stein carries out in her dissertation aims to attend to phenomena that appear to us in consciousness in order to grasp the appearing thing's essential identity (*eidōs*). This essence unifies the multiple appearances of the phenomena given to the experiencing subject when perceived from different positions. Such investigation, Stein explains in the opening pages of chapter 2, proceeds in the setting of phenomenological reduction, which involves excluding everything subject to doubt, such as underlying assumptions that I and others objectively exist in the world, or that the world itself exists.³ Excluding everything that distorts our apprehension of the phenomenon itself leaves for investigation the consciousness ('pure I') experiencing the phenomenon, and its correlate, the phenomenon itself.⁴ Phenomenological investigation aims to examine and describe with maximal precision and detail the indispensable

³ POE, 3-4; ZPE, 11. The phenomenological reduction or epoché is commonly discussed in terms of the suspension of the "natural attitude" where we temporarily stop or "freeze" our intentional acts (acts of consciousness that refer to an object as in perception, memory, expectation, imagination, etc.) in order to focus on the acts and their correlates, that is, their objects. For Husserl's own discussion, see "Philosophy as a Rigorous Science," trans. Marcus Brainard, *The New Yearbook for Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy II* (2002): 258-61; Dermot Moran for discussion of Husserl's formulation and development of this concept in *Introduction to Phenomenology*, (New York: Routledge, 2000), 11-12; also Robert Sokolowski for a contemporary phenomenologist's explanation of this idea in relation to the question of what is philosophy in his *Introduction to Phenomenology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 47-51.

⁴ POE, 4; ZPE, 11. In POE and other early texts, Stein closely follows Husserl's early phenomenological method and terminology. In the opening section of chapter 2, Stein is iterating the basic Husserlian idea that consciousness is always consciousness "of" something, that knowing entails acts that "intend" objects in multiple ways and such acts that refer to an object outside the immediate domain of consciousness is designated as 'intentionality'. For further discussion on intentionality in Husserl, see Moran, *Introduction*, 16. In the essay "Psychic Causality," Stein notes that the pure I is that which is experienced as a "point of radiation of pure experiences" (*reinen Ich, dem als Ausstrahlungspunkt der reinen Erlebnisse ursprünglich erlebten*). PPH 23; BBPG, 22.

features of the “acts” of consciousness by which it intends an object that is outside the immediate domain of consciousness (therefore ‘transcendent’), and the object itself. Stein carries out her reflections on the body in this methodological framework.

Yet, the body enters Stein’s investigation obliquely, as a secondary topic, as it did for Husserl, as an issue that subserves her analysis of “Einfühlung,” which is a technical term that designates all acts of comprehending another individual’s experience and subjectivity.⁵ We could take this to mean that an attempt to retrieve her thoughts on the body is a fraught endeavor since her own writings on the subject seemingly approached it as a secondary topic, guided by her philosophical interest in the problem of *Einfühlung*. On the other hand, it may disclose a dynamic insight in her thinking on the body, one which was to underlie all her subsequent work on philosophical and theological anthropology. That is, what the body is in its (phenomenological) ‘essence’, as we fundamentally experience it, entails interdependent and intersubjective structures. How does she come to this conclusion?

In POE, Stein begins her analysis in chapter 3 where she treats empathy as a problem of constitution⁶ of oneself and others as unified “psycho-physical individuals.” Asking “What is the body? How and as what is it given to us?,”⁷ Stein proceeds to identify and explicate fundamental structures of the experienced body. While she carries out this investigation in two sections that respectively address one’s own body and “foreign” bodies belonging to other individuals, she argues that the subjective and intersubjective aspects of the phenomenally lived body form an

⁵ POE, 6; ZPE, 14.

⁶ Constitution is a key technical term in phenomenology which refers to how an object appears in our consciousness as a coherent unity that indicates a rational lawfulness governing the relationship between the parts of that unity. See Moran, 164-6.

⁷ The term “givenness” (*Gegebenheit*) in Husserlian phenomenology and as Stein uses it in POE points to the particular ways in which every experience is undergone by a specific individual. Moran calls this the fundamental “aboutness” or the “dative” character of all experience; Moran, 10.

inseparable unity in how we experience our bodies (in Stein's terms, how the body is "given" to us). She concludes her analysis at the end of chapter 3 by reiterating the point made throughout the chapter that the constitution of the foreign body and the foreign individual as a "psycho-physical unity" is an indispensable condition for our full constitution as an individual.⁸ Neither our own bodies nor our subjectivity are fully given to us without the experience of other persons as united to bodies typically similar to ours and exhibiting those irreducible features (e.g., physical sensations, voluntary movement, expressions, developmental changes) that manifest psychic life which is integrated with physical life. How so?

She begins her argument with the peculiar two-fold way in which we experience the body: as *Körper*, a physical body given as an object in external perception; and simultaneously as *Leib*, a sensing, living body that finds itself localized in the space of an outer world and occupying part of that space. In an often quoted passage, she writes:

I have my body [*Körper*] given once in acts of outer perception. But if we suppose it to be given to us in this manner alone, we have the strangest object. This would be a real thing, a physical body, whose motivated successive appearances exhibit striking gaps. It would withhold its rear side with more stubbornness than the moon and invite me continually to consider it from new sides.⁹

Stein defines "outer perception" as "acts in which spatio-temporal concrete being and occurring come to me in embodied givenness." (POE 6; ZPE 14) In outer perception, I see the object as physically present to me, presenting one of its sides to me and simultaneously co-presenting the other "averted" sides. When I perceive my body in this mode purely as a physical object, I quickly realize its unique character in relation to other physical objects. A physical object that I perceive, located at a particular distance from my body, presents to me one side and simultaneously co-presents the other sides which I cannot immediately perceive. As the whole

⁸ POE, 88; ZPE, 106.

⁹ POE, 41; ZPE, 57.

object with all of its different sides is “given” to me in perception, the object “invites” or “motivates” me to perceive in serial appearances its averted sides by moving around it. By contrast, the body as a physical object displays to me specific sides without making possible perception of further aspects (e.g., I cannot see directly my face or my back). This incompleteness of my body as a physical object raises the question from the outset of the conditions for completing or fulfilling my experience of my physical body.

Stein leaves this question open, and moves onto the analysis of the second way in which our bodies are given, as *Leib*. We experience our bodies as not only a physical body perceived in outer perception, but also as a sensing body that is united with a subject, which Stein calls the “pure ‘I.’”¹⁰ Stein defines the “pure I” as the irreducible subject of experience, which can take on the characteristic of ipseity (“selfness”) distinct from others. This pure ‘I’ is not yet the subject of actual experiences (*Erlebnisse*), but the basic structure that makes possible such experience.¹¹ We grasp this ‘I’ as a subject of actual experience when we observe that it is affiliated with a “stream of consciousness” in which the ‘I’ carries out intentional acts through sequential, temporal moments that moves from present to past, and present to future (POE 39; ZPE 54; cf. Ales Bello 61). The stream’s experiences receive their unity through the affiliation with the “present, living, pure ‘I,’” and it finds itself facing other streams of experiences that belong to

¹⁰ POE, 38-9 / ZPE 54-5. The “pure ‘I’” and other technical phenomenological terms that Stein uses all come from Husserl. However, it is important to understand that she uses them in different ways than he and develops her analysis in such a way to supplement his thought or substantially to depart from it.

¹¹ Ales Bello says that the term “Erlebnisse” refers to the acts of the subjects which are highlighted in the phenomenological epoché. Explaining the English equivalent, “lived experience,” she writes, “What we live becomes divided, split in the act of perceiving, remembering, imagining, thinking, etc., and in the contents of these acts, the perceived, the remembered, etc., which in their turn refer to the thing perceived and remembered as existing. But if we are interested in the analysis of interiority, and both Edmund Husserl and Edith Stein profess this interest, let us for the moment ignore the existing thing and concentrate our attention on the relationship between perceiving and the perceived as something living that lives within the subject, and therefore on the act lived by the subject, the act that the subject himself finds present as such, for example, the act of perceiving as the very possibility of perceiving, also in other subjects, and this thanks to a new lived experience: empathy.” A. Ales Bello, “The Human Being and its Soul in Edith Stein,” in *The Passions of the Soul in the Metamorphosis of Becoming* (Dordrecht, Netherlands: Springer, 2003), 59.

other 'I's (you, he, she, they). As each stream of consciousness and its experiences are shaped by a specific experiential context, every stream is qualitatively distinct from another stream. Hence, the 'I' as essential structure and subject of concrete experiences is characterized by an irreducible "selfness" and "qualitative variation."

The first indication we have of the body as given in a way that is different from a physical body is its omnipresence and inescapable reference to our subjectivity. While other physical objects vary in their distance to me and can appear and disappear from the horizon of my experience, the body is perpetually "here" with me and is present to me as specifically belonging to me. This aspect of belonging cannot be constituted in outer perception, but only in the body's givenness to my consciousness as my sensing body.¹²

The sensing body is constituted specifically through sensations. Sensations, according to Stein, display two essential features. First, they are "among the real constituents of consciousness," meaning we experience consciousness by virtue of sensations manifesting in it. Second, their relationship with our subjectivity, the 'I', is characterized by a unique sense of spatial distance so that sensations and the 'I' are not collapsible. We experience sensations as always localized at some place in the body and occurring at a distance from our sense of "me." The distinction between sensations and my 'I' becomes clear when we observe, Stein argues, that we can never find the 'I' in sensations in the act of reflection, in contrast to other types of acts of consciousness such as willing, judging, or perceiving which we experience as issuing from our subjectivity. Localized sensations are places in my sensing body that are given at various distances from my 'I', yet they are at the same time synthesized as the unity of my sensing body.

¹² POE, 42; ZPE 58.

The 'I' is identified with this sensing body and relates to its parts distally, but Stein states that the 'I' itself is non-spatial and cannot be localized to a specific place in the body. In an intriguing passage, she writes,

To speak of distance from "me" is inexact because I cannot really establish an interval from the "I," for it is non-spatial and cannot be localized. But I relate parts of my living body, together with everything spatial outside of it, to a "zero point of orientation" which my living body surrounds. This zero point is not to be geometrically localized at one point in my physical body; nor is it the same for all data. It is localized in the head for visual data and in mid-body for tactile data. Thus whatever refers to the "I" has no distance from the zero point, and all that is given at a distance from the zero point is also given at a distance from the "I."¹³

Although we experience sensations and awareness of self as having a spatial relationship, our 'I' is not reducible to any one location. This implies that the 'I' pervades the sensing body as a whole and simultaneously transcends it in the sense that its sphere of experience is neither limited to nor completely determined by sensations. More precisely, the 'I' organizes its relationship to sensations in terms of center-periphery with the center forming what Stein calls the zero point (*Nullpunkt*) of orientation.¹⁴ Depending on which type of sense data I experience, my sense of center or zero point will shift, as in Stein's examples of head for visual data or the torso region for tactile data. The zero point serves to enact the center-periphery relation between sensations and the 'I', providing the 'I' with a means for orienting itself spatially within the sensing body as well in the external environment.

With the introduction of the zero point, we are referred again to outer perception and the outer world. The zero point is not only in the various parts of the body in relation to relevant sensations; the sensing body as a whole is a zero point of orientation with all other physical bodies outside of it (POE 43; ZPE 59). The zero point localizes the 'I' in a general manner in the sensing body and indicates the 'I's' situatedness in an outer space beyond the sensing body, in

¹³ POE, 42-3; ZPE 58-9.

¹⁴ Calcagno, *Lived Experience from the Inside Out: Social and Political Philosophy in Edith Stein*, 74.

spatial relationship with other objects and other physical bodies. Yet, Stein explains, the analysis of sensations shows that the way we subjectively experience the spatiality of the body is incomparably different from the spatiality that obtains in outer space between things due to the distinct nature of sensations. Sensations make it possible for me to perceive through the body as a sensing unity. For example, when I see my hand, I simultaneously perceive by *bodily* perception its “field of sensations.” The physical hand and its field of sensations are given together in my experience of seeing my hand. Stein then follows with a fascinating example: “On the other hand, if I consciously emphasize certain parts of my living body, I have an ‘image’ of this part of the physical body.”¹⁵ By directing our attention consciously on a specific part of the body, we can, through the field of sensations, comprehend the identity of that part. Stein is speaking of a particular mode of knowing through sensations, a mode that is prior to conception.

Stein does not develop further this idea of bodily perception, but the implication is important and will play a significant role in how other essential features of the body are constituted. Bodily perception that is generated by the sensations unified as a whole is its own phenomenon and distinct from particular forms of perception, such as touch or sight. We might say that bodily perception is emergent from the basis of particular fields of sensations forming a system. The body as a whole, therefore, has its own awareness that yields a holistic form of perception which Stein calls “bodily perception.” It is through this form of perception that we can experience that the body as a whole is sensate and animate. We cannot, however, experience the body this way when it is given to us only through outer perception (as a physical object), situated in external space. The body, therefore, is given to us in two ways: on the one hand as a

¹⁵ POE, 44; ZPE 60-1. The German reads, “[U]nd andererseits habe ich, indem ich Teile meines Leibes beachtend heraushebe, zugleich ein ‘Bild’ des betreffenden Körperteils,” and the words “beachtend heraushebe” connote more clearly than the English translation the role that attention plays in this phenomenon.

sensing, living body; and, on the other hand, as a physical body among other physical bodies in an external environment. Crucially, we experience this doubly given body as one and the same.¹⁶ In the immediate experience of our bodies, we do not see the two ways of the body's givenness sequentially or discretely, but as identical.

What Stein establishes in the foregoing investigation is not only that we experience the human body in this two-fold manner, but furthermore that the body is given as integrally united with a conscious 'I'. In her concise formulation: "For the living body is essentially constituted through sensations; sensations are real constituents of consciousness and, as such, belong to the 'I'. Thus how could there be a living body not the body of an 'I!'" (POE 48; ZPE 64) Her inquiry into the essence of the body proceeds to elucidate this inviolable union of subjectivity and body, beginning with the body's movement.

We experience the movement of the sensing body as carried out by our 'I'. We experience voluntary movement as "I move." This subjectively executed movement coincides with alterations in the outer world. When I move, I see that the picture of the environment shifts (POE 45; ZPE 61-2). The convergence of the sensing body's movement and change in the outer world discloses an "if...then" structure of movement: "'If I move, then the picture of my environment shifts.' This is just as true for the perception of the single spatial thing as for the cohesive spatial world, and, similarly, for movements of parts of the living body as for its movement as a whole." (POE 46; ZPE 62) In voluntary movement of the sensing body, we experience the movement through bodily perception and its inseparable relationship with changing perception of spatial objects and spatial environment as a whole. Stein illustrates this

¹⁶ Marianne Sawicki notes that the phenomenon of fusion (*Verschmelzung*) of different aspects into a single unity is an important part of Stein's phenomenology of the body. Marianne Sawicki, *Body, Text, and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 116.

point with the example of a ball which I grasp through placing and moving my hand on it to apprehend its surface and shape. The experience includes voluntary movement and its if-then structure. The interdependent nature of movement and perception also applies to the movement of other objects, as in the case of a rotating ball which is given to me as a ball *and* moving when I place my hand and apprehend its surface and shape through the series of changing tactile data. The parts of the sensing body as moving organs and the perception of the spatial environment as dependent on them are given through this conjunction of bodily awareness of “I move” and shifts in external perception. At the same time, our voluntary movements coincide with our outer perception of the physical movements of the body or its limbs, and we interpret them as identical.

The interwoven, interdependent structure of movement and perception serves to underscore the unique givenness of my body as inviolably united to the ‘I’, and its situatedness in the spatial world. Living movement is permeated by my self-awareness (as an ‘I’) and the particular form of sensation-based bodily awareness. It also lays the basis for comprehending that I can alter my physical relationship with objects in space by moving my body or the objects themselves. This in turn means that with each movement, I can perceive new aspects of the world or the “old one from a new side.” (POE 47; ZPE 63) Living movement, furthermore, makes possible my representation of the spatial world and manipulation of it in fantasy. It provides the fundamental elements for mental representations of my self as bodied, the physical world, and its objects and their alterations.

Having reiterated the unity of the ‘I’ and the living body in her analysis of movement, Stein proceeds to make explicit the phenomenon of psycho-physical causality in the body. The first of these features is the living body’s relationship to feelings (*Gefühle*). There are different

types of feelings: “sensual feelings,”¹⁷ general feelings, moods, and spiritual feelings. Sensual feelings and general feelings display direct somatic connections. We experience sensual feelings such as the “pleasantness of a savory dish, the agony of a sensual pain, comfort of a soft garment” as inseparable from the grounding sensations of taste, pain, and touch. If these feelings display an essentially sensorial character, they simultaneously exhibit a subjective character as we experience them as occurring within my ‘I’ and not only as physically localized events.

General feelings have a “hybrid position” similar to sensual feelings in that I experience them as occurring within my self-awareness and as affecting the living body as a whole. When I feel vigorous or sluggish, Stein says, not only the ‘I’ feels this but the feeling permeates my body and its limbs. At the same time, I see my limbs moving in a vigorous or sluggish manner.

Stein defines moods as “general feelings” that are not somatic in nature, as in cheerfulness or melancholy. Moods permeate the psychic level but not the living body as somatic general feelings do. Yet, Stein observes, this does not mean that psychic and bodily general feelings run parallel to each other without contact; rather, they have a reciprocal influence (POE 49; ZPE 65-6). The example she gives continues to play on the theme of vigor and fatigue. On arriving at a beautiful, sunny place, I may feel a cheerful mood taking over me but failing to because I am physically tired. If I say to myself that I will be cheerful once I get some rest, the possibility for this rests “always in the phenomenon of the reciprocal action of psychic and somatic experiences.” (POE 49; ZPE 66) The physical feeling of tiredness has a hindering effect on the nature of the mood to pervade the psychic level, and such an experience exemplifies a causal relationship between the psychic and physical levels.

¹⁷ Stein designates them as *Gefühlsempfindungen* or *sinnlichen Gefühle*. POE, 48; ZPE, 65.

Stein will examine spiritual feelings (*geistigen Gefühle*)¹⁸ in depth in chapter 4, but offers a brief reflection here as they are a type of feeling. Spiritual feelings are different from the previous three as they are “accidentally psychic and non body-bound.” (POE 50; ZPE 66) They do not have a causal relationship to either the psychic or physical levels. Feelings such as joy, anger, or fear may be accompanied by psychic or physical effects, but when we inquire into what these feelings are in their essence, we can separate the intentional structure (“spiritual act” of feelings) from such effects. Put differently, these feelings are identifiable principally through their cognitive component, and related effects have the status of extrinsic accompaniments. In contrast, other types of feelings are constrained by psycho-physical causality.

Feeling, however, in its essence is incomplete; they require release: “As it were, it is loaded with an energy which must be unloaded.” (POE 51; ZPE 68) There are a variety of ways in which we can release or unload feelings. We release feelings through volition or action which are “motivated” by the feelings.¹⁹ We also release them in different forms of expression, including bodily expression. Where we do not externalize them in these ways, we can still unload the energy in a feeling by turning toward them and reflecting on them (POE 53; ZPE 70). The particular relationship between feeling and expression is one of essence (*Wesen*) and meaning (*Sinn*), not causality. A feeling prescribes the kinds of expression that are possible (e.g., joy implies

¹⁸ The terms which Waltraut Stein translates as “spiritual” is *geistig*. *Geist* here does not refer to spirit in a religious or theological sense, but pertain to mental life on the individual level and cultural life on the collective level. Stein gives her own definition at the beginning of chapter 4 of POE where she states, “Consciousness appeared not only as a causally conditioned occurrence, but also as object-constituting at the same time. Thus it stepped out of the order of nature and faced it. Consciousness as a correlate of the object world is not nature, but spirit.” *Geist* is that which turns toward the world in order to make it into an object. “Spiritual” life is that which consists in object-constituting activity and generates knowledge and culture. POE, 91f / ZPE 108f. Mary Catherine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki translate *Geist* as “mental” in their translation of the *Beiträge*. There is no real English equivalent and neither “mental” nor “spiritual” are adequate translations due to the specific semantic range these words respectively have in English. In this essay, I will follow Waltraut Stein’s translation and use the words “spirit” and “spiritual” for *Geist* and *geistig* mainly because I think they can encompass a broader range of phenomena than “mental.”

¹⁹ “Motivation” is a key term first discussed by Husserl and taken up by Stein, which I will discuss further below, 29f. Stein introduces it in the POE, 84-5; 96f.

a certain range of possible expressions, and this range would preclude grimacing), and can motivate a particular expression in an individual. This relationship consists in the feeling as essentially requiring release of energy, and in what Stein calls “motivation,” which is a coherent sequence of meaning (e.g., joy motivates me to express it through a smile). Following the principle of twofold givenness of the body, Stein notes that as I live the experience of the feeling unloading itself in expression, I simultaneously have the expression given to me in bodily perception. The feeling is given in integral unity with the physical expression. Stein notes that the givenness of the expression in bodily perception occurs without my conscious awareness of it (“in the mode of non-actuality”), but I can turn my attention to it to find that the bodily changes were effected through a feeling (POE 53; ZPE 71). This can serve as a basis for voluntarily simulating an expression (I can move my lips in such a way that another person would take it as a smile), but this is only a resemblance of an expression and cannot reproduce the unity of the feeling and expression.

The last feature of the individual body that Stein considers is its relationship with the will. Our will externalizes itself in action (POE 55; ZPE 72), and the exercise of the will is always a creative moment in which the act produces something that is not present. In the exercise of the will, Stein asserts, we experience the willing subject, the ‘I’, “employ[ing] a psycho-physical mechanism to fulfill itself, to realize what is willed.” The will, or more precisely the willing ‘I’ is the “master of the soul as of the living body.” Yet, the execution and fulfillment of the will is constrained by psychic and physical limits and external circumstances. The fulfillment of the will may confront resistance due to physical or mental fatigue, in which case each step necessary for fulfilling the willed act becomes a moment of volitional decision. In terms of circumstances, Stein argues that the will is limited by the world of objects disclosed in experience. In other

words, we can only will what is actually possible to carry out in our given context. Constraints notwithstanding, the act of will is not a causal phenomenon (POE 56; ZPE 73). The will is certainly causally conditioned and enacted through psycho-physical causality, but the causal relationships do not determine the essence of what it is. An act of will which initiates a series of steps to fulfill itself is a truly creative intervention. Stein, therefore, affirms a strong concept of freedom of will and interprets the relationship between the willing subject and the soul-body unity as one of “master” and “mechanism.”

Up to this point, Stein’s analysis of the living body in POE shows that the psyche (*Psyche*) is fundamentally dependent on the body. Stein writes,

The psychic is in essence characterized by this dependence of experiences on somatic influences. Everything psychic is body-bound consciousness, and in this area essentially psychic experiences, body-bound sensations, etc., are distinguished from accidental physical experiences, the “realizations” of spiritual life.²⁰

In the POE, the psyche designates a phenomenal “layer”²¹ of the individual, and its contents include all sentient occurrences that are connected to the body through psycho-physical causality, the mutually conditioning relationship between the physical and the psychic layer. These include sensations, movement, feelings, expressions, and volition. Based on this grounding in the body, the psyche is delimited from the strictly “spiritual” (*geistig*) layer, which concerns acts of consciousness that have an essential independence from somatic influence.

Since the body is united with a subject, Stein’s phenomenological analysis of what the body is necessarily leads to the analysis of the psyche. When she examines the psyche, Stein notes that psychic occurrences such as feelings or exercise of the will cannot be singular, isolated acts or events. They are, rather, manifestations of an underlying structure that has certain capacities and attributes. Stein calls this structure the “soul” (*die Seele*). Using Husserl’s

²⁰ POE, 49; ZPE, 66.

²¹ Sarah Borden, *Edith Stein* (London: Continuum, 2003), 33.

terminology, the “soul” here does not have religious or theological connotations. Stein’s understanding of this term develops, as with her thought on the body, over time and throughout her corpus, but in the POE she describes it as a basic structure that gives unity to the psyche and has particular attributes and categorial elements (POE 40; ZPE 56).²² These attributes include our individual dispositions as they manifest in characteristics such as the acuteness of our senses, energy of our conduct, strength and persistence of will, and the intensity of our feelings. Discrete content of our psychic experience such as the qualitative particularity of our senses, acts of will, feelings, and so forth are singular instantiations of the attributes and properties of the soul. Stein also states that categorial elements include some things that disclose the soul’s interdependence on psychic and physical “unities” such as “causality” or “changeability.” The soul, then, is a “substantial unity” in the sense that its structure and attributes are not accidental but pre-given, and its various elements form a single entity which gives psychic contents a specific individual character and pattern. For example, the capacity I have for observation or remembering can be modified by undertaking activities that strengthen them such as work in the natural sciences or memory strengthening exercises. But the sensorial and memory capacities and guiding dispositions themselves are pre-given as part of the soul and manifest in the form of individual instances of psychic experience. Following the preceding analysis of the body and its relationship with the psyche, Stein writes,

As the substantial unity announced in single psychic experiences, the soul is based on the living body. This is shown in the phenomenon of “psycho-physical causality” we have delineated and in the nature of sensations. And the soul together with the living body forms the “psycho-physical” individual.²³

²² She will expand considerably on the nature of the psyche and the soul in her subsequent essays “Psychic Causality” and “Individual and the Community,” and continue to develop the concept of the soul in her later works. In POE and PPH, soul has no metaphysical connotations, but functions as a unified structure that underlies consciousness. PPH 226f; BBPW 189f. For a summary of its development throughout Stein’s works, see Christof Betschart, “Seele,” *Edith Stein-Lexikon* (Freiburg: Herder, 2017), 335-8.

²³ POE, 49; ZPE, 66.

The soul is the unified structure underlying psychic life, and the psyche consists of body-bound consciousness. The investigation of the body, therefore, shows that the soul is founded on the body, and that the human body belongs to an individual who is a unity of soul and sensing body, or the “psycho-physical individual.” In phenomenological terms, we see how the psycho-physical individual is constituted through the body.

An important aspect of Stein’s analysis of the body is what she calls the phenomenon of fusion (*Verschmelzung*).²⁴ The psychic always appears as fused with a body. Marianne Sawicki explains,

What appears as psychic is always the psychophysical: the sentient live body (*Leib*). Furthermore, you [Stein] say, the soul is always in such a sentient body. Thus, phenomena in which soul, psyche, or body appear always blend into one another, so that their fusion (*Verschmelzung*) appear as well. You will display this fusion by describing the distinctive givenness of the live body, arguing thence to the “psychic causality” exhibited in its feelings, expressions, and purposive action.²⁵

The phenomenon of fusion does not explain the specific nature of the interaction between these different “layers” of the individual (the so-called “mind-body problem” in philosophy), but Stein is asserting that the unity of soul and body is an irreducible aspect of our experience of our body, and that when we speak of the body, we have to account for it forming a part of a whole.

2.3. MY BODY IS A LIVED BODY ONLY WHEN I SEE OTHER BODIES LIKE MINE: STEIN’S “TRANSITION TO THE FOREIGN INDIVIDUAL”

Our experience of the body, then, gives us something more than a material body; it gives ourselves as a psycho-physical individual uniting semi-autonomous “layers” or systems of

²⁴ POE, 49; ZPE, 65.

²⁵ Sawicki, 116.

function and meaning. In the account we have up to this point, however, our experience of our corporeity as well as ourselves as a psychophysical individual remains incomplete. Stein began her analysis with how odd are our bodies compared to other objects. When we perceive an object, we see one side and co-perceive its averted sides. The co-givenness of averted sides invites us to fulfill our perception of the object by looking at the remaining sides (POE 57; ZPE 75). The fulfillment, however, of these “tendencies” of an object is not possible for our bodies, because we find it permanently with us and we cannot perceive in outer perception its averted sides (our back, etc.). The incomplete givenness of our physical bodies has implications for our ability to represent ourselves to ourselves. In mental representations of ourselves in memory and imagination, we see our bodies in its entirety and not in its incompleteness as given in our individual outer perception. The possibility of representing ourselves in bodily integrity presupposes some other way in which our bodies are given to us, a way that is different from only our own bodily and outer perceptions. What Stein argues is that our body and individual self is fully given to us only when the foreign individual (based on her physical body) is constituted for us, and this constitution is possible only by means of empathy.

The German term translated in scholarly literature as “empathy” is *Einfühlung*. *Einfühlung* as used by Stein, and in early phenomenology generally, is both broader and more technical than its English equivalent, whose common usage connotes primarily the understanding of another

individual's feelings.²⁶ For Stein, *Einfühlung* encompasses diverse intentional acts whose essence is the comprehension of foreign consciousness.²⁷ What we comprehend in empathy is the content of another individual's experience. Stein begins with the example of becoming aware of a friend's pain after hearing of his brother's death and asks, "What kind of an awareness is this?" (POE 6; ZPE 14) This awareness (*Gewahren*) of the friend's pain is similar to the perception of a non-animate thing in that the pain is immediately present to me when I perceive it in his facial expression. The pain is given as *one* with the countenances. In its embodied givenness, I can examine the expression of pain from multiple sides and gain increasingly more accurate understanding of the pain just as I can when I successively bring to immediate or "primordial" (*originäre*) givenness new sides of a thing. Yet, the analogy between the comprehended pain and a thing breaks down when we see that I cannot bring the pain as a whole to full primordial givenness in my consciousness. My comprehension of it remains incomplete, or "nonprimordial" (*nicht originäre*), because the pain as the content of the experience is given primordially only to the subject experiencing it directly.

²⁶ Literature on Stein's phenomenology of empathy is large and continues to grow, especially as empathy becomes a prominent topic in philosophy, cognitive science, psychology, and the social sciences. For historical summary of origins of the problem in 20th century German philosophy and Stein's general contributions, see Dermot Moran, "The Problem of Empathy: Lipps, Scheler, Husserl and Stein" in *Amor Amicitiae: On the Love that is Friendship* (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), 269-312; see also Dan Zahavi, *Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 123-37. On how Stein's work on empathy differs significantly from Husserl's thought and the importance of her original contributions to this issue, see Marianne Sawicki, *Body and Text* and "Empathy before and after Husserl," *Philosophy Today* (1997): 123-7; Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1913-1922* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Pub., 2006), 104f. For contemporary relevance and appropriation of Stein's theory, see Elisa Altola, "Varieties of Empathy and Moral Agency," *Topoi* 33 (2014): 243-53; Rita W. Meneses and Michael Larkin, "Edith Stein and the Contemporary Psychological Study of Empathy," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 43 (2012): 151-84; Evan Thompson, "Empathy and consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies* 8, no. 5-6 (2001): 1-32. Thompson's article is deeply problematic as he uncritically makes Stein into a mouthpiece for Husserl and conflates her work on empathy with Husserl's. Moran's statement in his *Introduction to Phenomenology* that Stein's dissertation POE "represents a reliable guide to Husserl's thinking on this problem at the time [1917]," is also problematic in basically casting Stein as a mere passive spokesperson for Husserl; Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 176.

²⁷ Hereafter, I will use "empathy" for convenience.

Fundamental to Stein's understanding of empathy is this distinction between primordially (*Originarität*) and non-primordially (*Nichtoriginarität*). Stein is insistent that the empathized experience *always* belongs to *another* subject, and not to the empathizing subject, which diverges from several important theories of empathy in early 20th century Germany.²⁸ In her own precise statement, "Empathy in our strictly defined sense as the experience of foreign consciousness can only be the non-primordial experience (*nicht originäre Erlebnis*) which announces a primordial one (*ein originäres bekundet*)."²⁹ To go back to her example, when I become aware of my friend's pain, I am experiencing the non-primordial content of pain which leads me toward the primordially given experience of that pain in my friend's consciousness. The pain which I experience does not issue "live" from my 'I'. At the same time, Stein argues with characteristic acuity, empathy has primordially insofar as the act of empathizing is my own. The *act* of empathy is my own primordial experience, while the content of that empathy is non-primordial to me. Stein summarizes her analysis of empathy by saying,

In my non-primordial experience I feel, as it were, led by a primordial one not experienced by me but still there, manifesting itself in my non-primordial experience. Thus empathy is a kind of act of perceiving [*eine Art erfahrender Akte*] *sui generis*. Empathy ... is the experience of foreign consciousness in general, irrespective of the kind of the experiencing subject or of the subject whose consciousness is experienced.³⁰

There are two points to note here. First, Stein's understanding of empathy as a being "led" by another individual's primordial experience highlights the irreducibility of each individual's subjectivity and experience, and discounts the possibility of any kind of blurring of the subjective

²⁸ POE, 11-20; ZPE, 21-52. Her insistence on this irreducible difference between subjects in empathy follows Husserl and differs sharply from their contemporaries, mainly Theodore Lipps who argued that empathy was an identification or unipathy (*Einsföhlung*) of subjects. For Stein, what transpires in empathy is not a coincidence of the 'I', as Lipps would have it, but an emergence of a "we" as a new subject of a higher level. Husserl and Scheler were also critical of Lipps' theory for the same reasons as Stein, but Stein is the most explicit and clear on how and why such union of subjects is not possible in empathy and what is at stake in holding the primordial-nonprimordial distinction. Sawicki and MacIntyre argue that there are strong grounds to think that her work influenced Husserl and Scheler's subsequent writings on empathy after the completion of her dissertation.

²⁹ POE, 14; ZPE, 24.

³⁰ POE, 11; ZPE, 20.

boundary. Yet, the clarification of the primordially of the act of empathy allows her to account for the immediacy present in apprehending foreign experience and the simultaneously primordial and non-primordial nature of empathy. Secondly, Stein's explication of empathy as a type of perceptual act has important ramifications. In empathy, a subject apprehends foreign experience with an immediacy similar to perceptual acts: a whole is given with averted sides which motivate further acts. This also means that empathy does *not* involve a process of inferential reasoning or analogizing. We do not carry out the act of empathy by deliberately considering the other individual's experience and its aspects or comparing and contrasting it with similar cases in our own experience. It is immediately grasped as whole. In this, empathy is also different from other acts that concern foreign experience. Imitation, for instance, does not involve cognitive content. "Association," in which I see another person's gesture or expression and infer the reason behind it from my own experience, presupposes empathy and entails inference.³¹

Stein also makes the important point that there are different levels of empathy or three levels of "accomplishment." (POE 10; ZPE 19)³² She calls the first level "the emergence of the experience," meaning the initial apprehension of non-primordial content in empathy where the content suddenly arises before me as an object. At this level, the tendencies inviting further acts of apprehension are not yet examined and, therefore, the presentation of the experience is "empty." The second is "the fulfilling explication," in which I move into a reflective mode of deliberately examining the content (e.g., the pain) and, through the examination, turn to the

³¹ POE, 22-5; ZPE, 35-40

³² Stein explains that these three levels also apply to other acts which also involve non-primordial content, such as memory, expectation, and fantasy. In memory, for example, when I recall a past experience I am reliving that experience in a non-primordial mode, since it is not immediately given to me in the present moment. The principal difference, of course, between these acts and empathy is that the experience belongs to another subject. POE, 8-10; ZPE, 16-9.

actual object (e.g., the pain of losing the brother experienced in an enriched manner)³³ intended by the subject “in the original subject’s place.” She is iterating here Husserl’s distinction between the act of consciousness (*noesis*; e.g., visual perception), the content of the consciousness (*noema*; e.g., a perceived thing), and the object to which the consciousness refers.³⁴ In the second level, I am investigating the content in order to bring it to full givenness to myself. The third level is “the comprehensive objectification of the explained experience,” where I encounter the content again as the principal object of my empathic act, but in a fulfilled manner that is different from the empty presentation of the first level. In actual experience people may not move through all three levels and stop at a lower level of accomplishment. Yet, the levels indicate that empathy has both perceptual and cognitive dimensions. This model also leaves space for different types of empathic experience, such as those characterized mainly by cognitive empathy (i.e., what the other person is thinking), affective empathy (feeling), or both.³⁵

A last point that I would like to examine in Stein’s analysis of empathy is what she calls “reiteration of empathy.” Building on Lipps’ concept of “reflexive sympathy,” she writes,

[A]ll representations can be reiterated. I can remember a memory, expect an expectation, fantasy a fantasy. And so I can also empathize the empathized, i.e., among the acts of another that I comprehend empathically there can be empathic acts in which the other comprehends another’s acts. This “other” can be a third person or me myself. In the second case, we have “reflexive sympathy” where my original experience returns to me as an empathized one.³⁶

Like other acts of representation, another person’s act of empathy can become an object of my own empathizing. Our own experience can return to us through reiterated empathy. For

³³ Christof Betschart, personal correspondence, July 25, 2018.

³⁴ See Edmund Husserl, *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology and Phenomenological Philosophy: First Book: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 2014), 173-80.

³⁵ In contemporary discussions of empathy, there are variances between cognitive, affective, and enactive models. Stein’s model of empathy is inclusive of both cognitive and affective models while also providing possible bridges to the enactive model. See Aaltola 250f.

³⁶ She introduces this notion in the context of her critique of Lipps’ theory of empathy and his idea of “reflexive sympathy;” POE, 18; ZPE, 30.

example, when another person empathizes with my joy and I in turn empathize that person's act, the joy that I comprehend in empathy is my joy empathized by the other.

Returning to the body, Stein's theory of empathy plays a crucial role in her phenomenology of the body. The implications of the key features of one's own body, which Stein discussed previously, can now be fully examined and explicated. Empathy is what makes it possible for me to see my body as one like other, similar bodies and sharing with them a spatial world.³⁷ How do I come to recognize that my sensing body (*Leib*) given to me primordially in inner perception is a physical body (*Körper*) similar to others? How do I come to experience foreign bodies as belonging to subjects who possess all the same general properties and capacities as mine by virtue of belonging to a similar type (i.e., human)?³⁸ Stein argues that empathy is the condition of possibility for such recognition, even at the low level of passively associating my body with a body of a similar kind. The fact that we can take this apprehension for granted in conventional experience (the "natural attitude" in Husserlian terms) indicates how such experience presupposes empathy as a grounding condition.

Stein elucidates this point by examining the essential features of foreign bodies, beginning again with sensations. As explained in her analysis of the twofold givenness of the body, when we see in outer perception a part of our bodies, such as the hand, its field of sensations are co-given with it. As with perception of other objects, my hand given to me in outer perception implies tendencies due to the simultaneous co-givenness of its fields of sensations. I can fulfill these tendencies by moving from outer perception to bodily perception. In similar fashion, when I encounter another body as a physical body, its fields of sensation are co-given, or given to me in a

³⁷ POE, 63; ZPE, 80-1.

³⁸ Stein raises the important question of the range of types of bodies with which we can empathize. POE, 58-9; ZPE, 76-7.

“con-primordial” manner. Yet, unlike my own body, I cannot follow the implied tendencies and bring these fields to primordial givenness. As Stein says, “Empathic representation is the only fulfillment possible here.”³⁹

At the level of sensations, Stein calls the specific form of empathic representation “sensual empathy” (*Empfindungseinführung*) or a “sensing-in” (*Einempfindung*) (POE 58; ZPE 76). When I see a foreign physical body, I simultaneously co-perceive its sensations. For example, when another individual has her hand on the table, I co-perceive the tactile pressure as well as the felt hardness of the table. I can follow the tendencies to fulfillment of my perception of her hand by empathically putting my hand in the foreign hand’s place and feeling its sensations non-primordially. Throughout this act, Stein explains, I continue to perceive the foreign hand as belonging to another body and its sensations are “continually brought into relief as foreign in contrast with our own sensations.” (POE 58; ZPE 75) All of this belongs to the essential structure of empathic experience as Stein has presented it. What makes sensual empathy possible is our experience of the twofold givenness of the body as physical and living, the fusion of outer and bodily perception, and the possibility of altering in fantasy the body’s actual properties within the limitations imposed by its type. Perception and mental representation lay the grounds for empathic projection and representation.

Stein raises an important question here about types of bodies with which we can empathize. She writes, “[M]y physical body and its members are not given as a fixed type but as an accidental realization of a type that is variable within definite limits. On the other hand, I must retain this type. I can only empathize with physical bodies of this type; only them can I interpret as living bodies.” (POE 59, ZPE 76.) There is a range of possible bodies with which I

³⁹ POE, 57; ZPE, 75.

can empathize as my body is one instantiation of a general type that allows variations within certain constraints. The limits, however, that the type imposes are not absolute. We can understand this when we consider that our ability to empathize is not limited just to human bodies; I am able to empathize with the sensations experienced by a dog when I consider its limbs. On the other hand, the level of fulfillment possible for empathy in such a case is limited, since specific positions and movements of the dog are not possible for me and can only be presented to me in an ‘empty’ manner. Hence, we can empathize with a wide variety of bodies, but our body type determines whether or which levels of fulfillment are possible.

Stein follows her analysis of sensual empathy with an important section on the consequences of sensual empathy. Here, Stein is critical of theories that discount the importance of sensual empathy because it is through the sensations that a foreign bodied subject, the ‘I’, is constituted for us: “Thanks to the fact that sensations essentially belong to an ‘I’, there is already a foreign ‘I’ given together with the constitution of the sensual level of the foreign physical body (which, strictly speaking, we may now no longer call a ‘physical body’).” (POE 60; ZPE 77) Her assertion reiterates the earlier point that sensations are essential constituents of consciousness and therefore belong to an ‘I’. The implications of empathizing a foreign body’s sensations reaches into how we grasp a foreign body as belonging to a human subject. According to Stein, then, sensual empathy is the fundamental level at which the human individual is constituted for us.⁴⁰

The implications of the body as a center of spatial orientation are also far reaching. Stein anticipates Merleau-Ponty as she argues that spatiality is an essential characteristic of the body

⁴⁰ Sawicki argues that this is a point of significant difference from Husserl’s understanding of constitution during this time. For Stein, empathy gives what Husserl’s constitution cannot, namely the human person whose willed actions and irreducible personal structure elude constitution. According to both Sawicki and MacIntyre, Stein’s dissertation proposes that empathy is prior to and condition of possibility for constitution, and the sensing body (*Leib*) as a precondition for empathy, whereas for Husserl in *Ideas II*, the question of the priority of constitution or the sensing body is left unresolved. Sawicki, 145; MacIntyre, 103-4.

and its modes of perception, and a sensing body as a center of orientation (*Nullpunkt*) is interwoven with the external spatial world.⁴¹ When I perceive the foreign body as not only a physical body at a specific distance in outer perception but also as a sensing body, I now have the possibility of empathically projecting (*hineinversetzen*) myself into that body and thereby acquiring a new zero point of orientation and view (*Bild*)⁴² of the spatial world (POE 61; ZPE 79). The empathic representation of another's spatial orientation opens up for me the "whole fullness of outer perception in which the spatial world is essentially constituted." (POE 62; ZPE 79) With the availability of the other's outer perception, I grasp that the human subject possesses the whole capacity of perception just as I do, including all that is subsumed under perceptual acts, such as the ability deliberately to direct my attention to an object and to reflect on an act of perception.

Apprehending the foreign body as a perceiving bodied subject creates the condition for my image of the world to be enriched through empathy by the other's world image. Not only does my world image change on the basis of the empathized image, how I interpret the particular characteristics of the other's sensing body (*aufgefaßten Beschaffenheit seines Leibes*) shapes how my new world image is altered. Stein gives the example of a blind person whose lack of optical vision gives him a particular spatial orientation that is different from a visually able person. In her example, Stein remarks that a blind person empathizing the seeing person's world image would enrich his image. The reverse, however, has just as much potential for enrichment.

⁴¹ There are many points of similarity between Stein and Merleau-Ponty's writings on the body. See especially the section "The Spatiality of One's Own Body and Motricity" in *Phenomenology of Perception* and "The Intertwining - The Chiasm" *The Visible and the Invisible*. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Donald A. Landes (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), especially 141f; footnote on Stein, 503; *The Visible and the Invisible* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 130-55. Merleau-Ponty's familiarity with Stein's work is shown in his citation of BBPG in *Phenomenology of Perception* (503).

⁴² The word Stein uses is "Bild," meaning picture or image. In her footnote, she comments, "The word 'image' is a poor metaphor for the interpretation of the spatial world, for an image does not present the world to us, but we see it itself from one side." POE, 126; ZPE, 79.

A blind person would have a distinct pattern of sensorially apprehending the spatial world that would be new for a seeing person and illuminate other modes of sense perception besides vision. As Sawicki puts it, *whose* bodies we are empathizing matters.⁴³ This is significant for many reasons, but one that fits in with the immediate context of her writing is the divergence it signifies from her teacher Husserl, for whom the primary focus was on grasping the logical coherence of intentional acts between subjects that would apply regardless of particularities of individual bodies and ‘I’s. For Stein, individual bodies and the experiential variation of each subject necessarily contribute to how we apprehend the content of the other’s experience. In this case, bodily particularities determine specifically how my world image can be enriched through empathizing another’s spatial orientation. Empathy, in other words, has a hermeneutical character, and it does so because what is given through empathy is not just a sensing body, but a whole person. What empathy makes possible, therefore, is not only intersubjective knowledge of the outer world, as Husserl argued, but also the enrichment of the world’s appearance through the non-primordial apprehension of another bodied person’s world image simultaneously with my primordially perceived image (POE 64; ZPE 81-2). The knowledge empathy can give is not simply the logical coherence of acts of consciousness, but the felt textures and particularities of an irreducibly personal, bodied experience.

We now arrive at the point in Stein’s analysis where she elucidates how my body is fully given to me only through another’s perception of it:

From the viewpoint of the zero point of orientation gained in empathy, I must no longer consider my own zero point as the zero point, but as a spatial point among many. By this means, and only by this means, I learn to see my living body as a physical body like others. At the same time, only in primordial experience is it given to me as a living body. Moreover, it is given to me as an incomplete physical body in outer perception and as different from all others. In “reiterated empathy” I again interpret this physical body as a living body, and so it is that I first am given to myself as a psycho-physical individual in the full sense. The fact of being founded on a physical body is now constitutive for this psychophysical individual. This

⁴³ Sawicki, 146.

reiterated empathy is at the same time the condition making possible that mirror-image-like givenness of myself in memory and fantasy.⁴⁴

First, my body stands in relation to other bodies similar to it in a shared spatial world. I do not grasp this co-existence except through empathy, as it is not available to me through inner perception alone. Second, it is through reiterated empathy that my body in outer perception and mental representation is fully given to me. I can only bring myself as fully bodied to givenness in memory or fantasy when my body has been given to me as an object apprehended through outer perception. Since, however, my body is incompletely given in my outer perception, this “mirror-like image” of my body has to be given to me through another person’s perception of me. To see myself as a complete physical body is to see myself as another sees me, as an object apprehended in outer perception. Empathizing another’s perception of me as a complete physical body as well as a sensing body gives me to myself as an object, which is necessary in order for me to represent myself in full bodiment in mental representation. Through reiterated empathy, I am able to see my sensing body as a fully physical body, and to interpret again this physical body as a sensing body. With my body now fully given to me as simultaneously a physical and sensing body, Stein explains, I am for the first time given to myself as a psycho-physical individual in the full sense.

Stein proceeds with analyses of other essential characteristics of a foreign individual’s body, including movement, what she calls “phenomena of life,” causality, and expression.⁴⁵ She concludes chapter 3 with a consideration of the significance of the foreign individual’s constitution for the constitution of one’s own psychic individual. Whereas we can primordially experience ourselves as a psychic individual through inner perception and this possibility does not

⁴⁴ POE, 63; ZPE, 80-1.

⁴⁵ These are observable in another individual in the forms of “development and aging, health and sickness, vigor and sluggishness;” POE, 68, ZPE, 86. As Stein explains in her footnote, “causality” here indicates relation of dependence that is apprehended by a subject rather than precisely determinable physical cause; POE, 127, ZPE, 88-9. Calcagno explains that both causality and our ability to apprehend the basic structure of causality (a affects b) are part of our psychic make up, and this causality can be observed in the lived body; Calcagno, *Lived Experience*, 83.

depend on the constitution of the foreign individual, Stein reiterates her earlier point that the constitution of our bodies does depend on it. Empathy is the condition of possibility for our experience and understanding of our bodies as physical, sensing, co-existing, and co-possessing the outer world. At the same time, the physical and sensing body and its structures are necessary conditions for empathy. The body is essentially intersubjectively constituted and has properties and structures that are intertwined with other bodied subjects and an independently existing outer world, which is richly varied in its appearance through the world images of other persons. The body, therefore, is necessary for empathy, and they together make possible intersubjective objectivity.⁴⁶

Secondly, Stein's dissertation develops a theory of the body that is integrally united with the psychic individual. She does not present the body only as a mechanism that is deployed by the subject, but as thoroughly unified with the subject. Her language is not consistent on this point, as the sections on movement and the will show. The richness of her presentation, however, of the character of the unity that inheres between the psyche and the body can be seen in her analysis of the phenomena of expression in the foreign individual. The feeling of sadness and its expression in an individual's face are not perceived causally, that is as the feeling causing the expression. According to Stein, the countenance is at one with sadness and forms the "outside of sadness." In other words, we do not perceive the expression and then infer sadness; rather, we grasp the expression *as* the sadness. In phenomenological analysis, we distinguish the two but they are not given discretely in experience. What the body shows, therefore, is inseparably united with the life of the psychic individual. The whole psycho-physical individual is given to us in our experience of the body.

⁴⁶ Later, Stein considers the possibility that there can be acts of empathy without bodily mediation. *Einführung in die Philosophie*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 8 (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 165.

2.4. **BODY, SPIRIT (*GEIST*), AND PERSON**

Stein's analysis is still not complete, because the implications of what is given to us in encountering a foreign sensing body extends into the sphere of personhood and spiritual (*geistig*) life. What is given in the body is not just a psycho-physical individual that is merely numerically different from another individual but a person with a spiritual life.⁴⁷ An explication of Stein's early concepts of person and spirit requires looking at relevant sections in both the POE and her next work PPH, as she further develops her concepts in the latter work. The term *Geist* translated as spirit is not to be understood in a religious sense, but rather as the sphere of the life of consciousness that is not determined by laws of physical or psychic causality (POE 104; ZPE 122-3).⁴⁸ Although the life of my consciousness receives influences from environmental, physical, and psychic layers of my being, subjectivity also includes an active side in which I am able to carry out specific intentional acts of consciousness that can constitute as well as create objects (POE 91; ZPE 108). Perceiving, willing, thinking, reflecting, and imagining all fall under the class of such acts. The basis for a spiritual act is not causal necessity but a relationship of meaning with other intentional acts, what Stein calls "motivation." Motivation applies to all intentional experiences, but it takes different forms according to the specific act.⁴⁹ In the familiar example of

⁴⁷ Stein builds on Scheler's concept of the person as a unity of the sensate (*sinnlich*), psychic (*psychisch*), soul (*seelisch*), and spirit (*geistig*), and Husserl's transcendental ego. Sawicki, 36-41.

⁴⁸ Both the psychic and physical spheres of life operate according to causal laws. This holds true for the psyche in that its occurrences are directly tied to the body and display the basic causal structure ('a' affects 'b'). But causality in the psyche is different from physical causality in that it is experiential in nature and we apprehend the effects in qualitative terms as opposed to quantitative terms. Stein treats this topic in detail in her first essay "Psychic Causality" in PPH, 15; BBPG, 16.

⁴⁹ Stein gives a general explanation of motivation in POE, but considerably expands on it in the PPH, construing motivation as the structure of all intentional experience and as synonymous with the spiritual life of the human subject. I will discuss in further detail her concept of motivation below. PPH, 40; BBPG, 36; see also Peter Schulz, *Edith Steins Theorie der Person von der Bewußtseinsphilosophie zur Geistmetaphysik* (Freiburg: Alber, 1994), 89-90.

perception, we perceive one side of an object and co-perceive its averted sides. The co-givenness of averted sides motivates us to fulfill our perception of the object by free movement.⁵⁰ The meaning (*Sinn*) of one act motivates the subject to carry out a subsequent act. Other spiritual acts, however, are different in that an act is connected to the next act without the mediation of an outwardly perceived object. One act emerges out of another on the basis of the meaning content of the prior act, and the movement from one act to another occurs immanently within consciousness.⁵¹ Furthermore, motivation in perception remains implicit while it is explicit in other spiritual acts where the subject carrying out the act is consciously undergoing the act and accomplishes it in a way that makes it readily available for reflection.⁵²

A primary example of how motivation works can be seen in spiritual feelings (*Gefühle*), which are feelings whose essence includes cognitive acts and excludes bodily influence: “A feeling by its meaning motivates an expression, and this meaning defines the limits of a range of possible expressions just as the meaning of a part of a sentence prescribes its possible formal and material complements (POE 96-7; ZPE 114).” A feeling of joy can motivate someone to express it in a smile, or a feeling of fear can motivate a willing and the action to flee. The particular form of expression or action, however, is not strictly prescribed by the motive, the sense content of the act (e.g., joy, fear). The motive prescribes a range of possible motivated acts, and smile as the expression of joy could be one among several possibilities. A frown, on the other hand, would

⁵⁰ POE, 57; ZPE, 75. PPH 41-2; BBPG, 37.

⁵¹ PPH 41; BBPG, 36.

⁵² PPH 46; BBPG, 41.

fall outside this range and cannot be warranted by the rational coherence at play here.⁵³ This case shows that a motive can set a range of possible rational connections with the subsequent act, allowing freedom of variation within definite limits. But, Stein says, there could also be situations where a motive can allow possible acts without requiring any of them.⁵⁴ As an example, she writes, “It’s quite understandable (*verständlich*), though neither reasonable (*vernünftig*) nor unreasonable (*unvernünftig*), for a noise in my vicinity to attract my attention, or for me then to be inclined to relocate to a vicinity in which I feel comfortable (PPH 44: BBPG 39).” In contrast to the rational connection between the feeling of joy and its expression in a smile, the connection here is merely understandable and the motivated act more instinctive, even if not irrational.⁵⁵ Motivation shows that spiritual life is governed by rational laws instead of causality. The ‘I’ can always consciously live through motivation since it actively constitutes an object when taking something as a motive or it can bring an implicit motivation into explicit awareness in reflection. By contrast, causal chains of events, whether physical or psychic, cannot be consciously lived by the subject.⁵⁶

Motivation is also inseparably connected with value and discloses the central role of value in constituting the individual as a spiritual subject and human person. Taking the meaning content of an object as a motive is itself not only an act of object-constitution but also an act of valuation. Something can become a motive for me only if I first constitute it as an object and

⁵³ The technical terms and definitions of concepts related to motivation are the following: “Motive” is the sense content of an act (e.g., joy at a good news); “Motivant” is the initial act of apprehending this content as a motive; “Motivatum / motivata” are the motivated acts. Stein writes, “*Lightning* turns into my motive for the expectation of thunder, not the *perception* of lightning.” Lightning is the sense content or motive, perceiving is the motivant, and expectation is the motivatum. PPH, 43-4; BBPG, 38.

⁵⁴ PPH, 44; BBPG, 39.

⁵⁵ Christof Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2),” *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* 16 (2010): 42-3.

⁵⁶ Sawicki, 130.

apprehend it as having a certain value (*wertnehmen*).⁵⁷ Values are given to us most explicitly in the phenomena of spiritual feelings. A feeling always refers to an object and discloses what level (“height”) of value I see in it (POE 100; ZPE 118-9). When I feel joy over a good deed, to follow Stein’s example, the feeling reveals the goodness of the deed as a value facing me. The feeling is something that issues from within my ‘I’, and through feeling, I experience not only the referred object but also my own ‘I’ (POE 98; ZPE 117). More precisely, in the feeling of joy over the good deed, I can become aware that it came from a certain depth within my ‘I’. With this, I can further awaken to the fact that there are various “levels” in this depth structure and that specific feelings of value issue from particular levels which adequately correspond to the relevant object’s value. Stein writes,

Anger over the loss of a piece of jewelry comes from a more superficial level or does not penetrate as deeply as losing the same object as the souvenir of a loved one. Furthermore, pain over the loss of this person himself would be even deeper. This discloses essential relationships among the hierarchy of felt values, the depth classification of value feelings, and the level classification of the person exposed in these feelings. Accordingly, every time we advance in the value realm, we also make acquisitions in the realm of our personality. This correlation makes feelings and their firm establishment in the “I” rationally lawful as well as making possible decisions about “right” and “wrong” in this domain. If someone is “overcome” by the loss of his wealth (i.e., if it gets him at the kernel point of his “I”), he feels “irrational.” He inverts the value hierarchy or loses sensitive insight into higher values altogether, causing him to lack the correlative personal levels.⁵⁸

Stein assumes that there is a hierarchy of values as her comparison between anger over lost jewelry and souvenir of a loved one indicates, and this would be consistent with her realist stance on phenomenology and value theory.⁵⁹ Someone who is more upset over the piece of jewelry than the loved one’s souvenir, or incapacitated by the loss of material wealth would be violating

⁵⁷ PPH, 43; BBPG, 38.

⁵⁸ POE, 101; ZPE, 120.

⁵⁹ Stein argued that an adequate account of constitution requires the absolute existence of physical nature and a subjectivity with particular structures, and this realist stance was a fundamental point of difference from Husserl’s idealist turn. In an oft-quoted letter to Roman Ingarden, she wrote, “I have experienced a breakthrough. Now I imagine pretty well what ‘constitution’ is - but with a break from Idealism. An absolutely existing physical nature on the one hand, a distinctly structured subjectivity on the other, seem to me to be prerequisites before an intuiting nature can constitute itself. I have not yet had the chance to confess my heresy to the Master.” Edith Stein, *Self-Portrait in Letters: 1916-1942* (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1993), 8.

the order of values. Certain values, and therefore the correlative objects, are more important than others. The loved one's souvenir is more valuable than an ordinary item of jewelry; one's dignity of life is more valuable than one's loss of material wealth. A value's place in the general hierarchical order of values is reflected in the qualitative intensity of feeling that correspond to it. Stein calls this quality of feelings its "depth," and each feeling of value will have its own depth that is appropriate to the value. The depth of our feeling in turn reflect levels within the 'I' from which the feeling arises.

These levels within the 'I' make up for Stein the properly "personal" realm. "Person" is a technical term which develops throughout Stein's works. In her early phenomenology, Stein conceives the personal structure as denoting an individual's irreducible distinctness determined by a particular range of levels of felt values. According to Stein, our experience of feelings uncovers egoic levels at which the feelings arise. The exposure of these levels are also the disclosure of a specific range of values that an individual is capable of fully apprehending, both cognitively and emotionally. Stein calls this set range of levels and corresponding values the "personal kernel" or "core" (*Kern*), and this kernel serves to disclose particular personal types to which individuals belong (POE 108; ZPE 126). In the example of a "scientific" personal type, an individual feels the value of knowledge and especially knowledge that is still unattained. When an individual of such a scientific nature sees an object that calls for investigation and clarification, the process of elucidation and consequent knowledge stand before her as a "penetratingly felt value and drags [her] irresistibly into them." The range of values and the corresponding egoic levels exposed in this experience discloses the kernel level of this individual's personality, marking her personal type as essentially scientific and setting her apart from individuals of other types with access to a different range of values and personal levels.

Although an individual's characteristics, such as aptitude for mathematical thinking or artistic sensibility, develop and change according to conditions and influences to which she is exposed and by which she is affected, the variability of the personal structure is limited. The specific range of levels of an individual's 'I' can only be exposed or not exposed through encounters with objects and persons in the world whose values correspond to particular levels. For example, Stein states that an individual who never encounters a work of art or a natural setting would be shut out from the level of enjoyment of art or nature and her capacity for such enjoyment (POE 111; ZPE 129). For values that concern other persons such as love or hate, someone who never encounters a person worthy of such emotions would not detect the depth at which those emotions are rooted. On the other hand, every time I experience a value for the first time, I also detect a new level within myself. By the process of such exposure, my personality can unfold (*entfalten*) and form my psychic life as a whole (the soul as its unity) and its capacities (*Fähigkeiten*) according to my distinct individuality.

An important point to note in Stein's analysis of spiritual life and personhood is that feelings that have persons as the object can only be experienced in concrete encounters with other persons (POE 101; ZPE 120). Only in a personal relational context can I experience these feelings and detect the corresponding levels within myself. Accordingly, Stein says, "the comprehension of foreign persons is constitutive of our own person (POE 102; ZPE 120)." I come to apprehend values of persons, including my own, through my understanding of foreign persons. Above all other feelings, Stein asserts, love uncovers the true value of a human person. In loving, the person is valuable in herself and the person herself becomes the motive for the act of loving. The level at which I feel love also shows me that it is a deeper level than other feelings, indicating its primary place in the value hierarchy.

Based on her analysis of motivation, spiritual life, and person, Stein returns to empathy as the means by which the foreign person is constituted for us as spiritual persons. Through empathy, I can follow the coherence of another person's experiential stream, re-enacting the intentional acts of the other's 'I' by which it constitutes an object and values it at the same time (POE 109; ZPE 127). This empathetic following is a *feeling into* the motivational flow of another's experience.⁶⁰ Motivation entails connection and flow between acts in which one act is accomplished for the sake of or on the grounds of another, and such acts constitute the essential structure of the subject (the pure I).⁶¹ Hence, motivation can be felt into, as opposed to causality which cannot be lived by a subject. I can experience another individual's actions as proceeding from a will, which in turn has been motivated by a feeling. The content of her experience remains non-primordial to my 'I', while the re-enactment of the act is primordial. In this following, the relevant level of the other person and the range of values available to her are given to me.⁶² By empathy with other persons, hitherto undisclosed values within myself can come to life, and values that lie outside the range of my levels can further my understanding of values.⁶³

How do these aspects of the human person relate to the body? It is not simply that these are all bodied structures, but that the sensing body is a nexus of motivation and causality. The four phenomenal layers (physical, psychic, spiritual, personal) that Stein identifies are like self-

⁶⁰ Mette Lebeck explains that we can "feel into" motivation, but not causality. Causality functions "blindly," and remains outside subjective experiencing in the sense of a subject undergoing an act in which the subject becomes actual. This is the key difference between motivation and causality. Mette Lebeck, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein: From Phenomenology to Metaphysics* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2015), 28.

⁶¹ PPH, 46; BBPG, 40. For further discussion, see Ales Bello, "The Human Being and its Soul in Edith Stein," 59.

⁶² The fulfillment of empathy, however, is limited according to the commonality of personal structures. Only when individuals share the same personal type can they bring to complete fulfillment empathetic representations of another's experiential structure. People of different types can still bring the other's experience to givenness, but values and motivations that lie outside of one's personal structure can only come to givenness in an "empty" form. POE, 115; ZPE, 133.

⁶³ POE, 116; ZPE, 134.

regulating systems that operate interdependently in order to function as a unified whole.⁶⁴ Stein's construal of the layers within a framework of depth (the personal as the deepest layer) can be seen as a nested structure, with the outer world and then the physical body as the outer or topmost layer and moving centripetally or downward toward the personal.⁶⁵ The human person is also intertwined with the outer environment, and as she argues in the PPH, it is connected to and conditioned by external causal sources. All the layers of a person are conditioned by causality as physical and psychic structures and processes provide the basis from which spiritual and personal life can emerge and unfold. The physical and psychic layers provide material that manifest in consciousness (sensations, feelings, volitions, etc.), which enter into one's experience (*Erlebnis*). The spiritual life and personal unfolding are not determined by causality, but proceed by motivation and interaction with the world of objects and persons.

Motivation is implicated in corporeity at a more basic level than the complex structural relations of the human person analyzed in POE and PPH. According to Stein's investigation, motivation is implicitly operative in sensations insofar as they initiate our apprehension of sensible objects.⁶⁶ It becomes explicit when we face one side of a physical thing and the co-given sides motivate us to carry out sequential acts of perception through voluntary movement. The structure of the sensing body, movement, and spatial world make motivation possible, and it seems as if motivation is already interwoven into the structure of the physical and sensate world,

⁶⁴ Stein borrows the multi-layered structure from Scheler, and her construal of the relationships between the layers is based on Husserl's procedure of "isolating structures of consciousness into strata that 'build upon (aufbauen)' or are constructed upon each another [sic], whereby each lower stratum 'founds (fundiert)' the subsequent, higher ones;" Hans Rainer Sepp, "Edith Stein's Conception of the Person within the Context of the Phenomenological Movement" in *Empathy, Sociality, and Personhood: Essays on Edith Stein's Phenomenological Investigations*, eds. Elisa Magri and Dermot Moran (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2017), 50.

⁶⁵ For a diagrammatic representation of Stein's model, see Sawicki, 133.

⁶⁶ PPH, 46; BBPG, 41. See also Angela Ales Bello, "Causality and Motivation in Edith Stein" in *Causality and Motivation*, ed. Robert Poli (Frankfurt: Ontos Verlag, 2010), 142.

or its condition of possibility is built into their structure. Forms of explicit motivation operating at the level of conscious acts differ in terms of complexity, but they reflect the formal structure operative at the perceptual level and illustrate how the more complex operations at the higher levels are founded on the lower level.⁶⁷ Although Stein does not argue this explicitly, her argument suggests that the structure of intentional acts are appropriations of structures pre-set on the physical level, as in the sensing body in movement in a spatially extended physical world.⁶⁸ A sensing body comes to know through moving in such a world. Movement is fundamental to life itself, bodily life, the constitution of one's own person, foreign persons, and the world. Knowing is at its root sensate ("psychic" in Stein's terms) and kinesthetic, and therefore achieved through a sensing and moving body. Knowing at higher levels retains the formal structures of cognition on the physical and sensate levels but utilizes them in concert with other founded structures and processes (e.g., logical reasoning based on specific neurological structures and processes). Corporeal life, movement, and spatial embeddedness form the primary framework in which the processes and occurrences of the higher levels (affective, volitional, spiritual) take shape.

2.5. LIFEPower (*LEBENSKRAFT*)

I now want to turn to another property that pertains to the body which Stein introduces in her essays "Psychic Causality" and "Individual and Community" in the PPH.⁶⁹ For her

⁶⁷ PPH, 153; BBPG, 129. There are points of connection with contemporary emergence or dynamical systems theory where lower level elements give rise to more complex systems of interactions between the elements, as in the functions of the human cerebral cortex arising from diverse components of neurobiology. See Malcolm Jeeves and Warren S. Brown, *Neuroscience, Psychology, and Religion: Illusions, Delusions, and Realities about Human Nature* (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2009), 113-4.

⁶⁸ For further discussion of movement in connection with development of life forms, see Edith Stein, *Einführung in die Philosophie*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 8 (Freiburg: Herder, 2004), 117-8.

phenomenology of the body, the most important idea in these later essays is her concept of “lifepower” (*Lebenskraft*).⁷⁰ She proposes this concept in the context of her inquiry into what kind of causality exists in the psyche, and how it is distinct from causality operative in the strictly physical realm. The first essay focuses on the psychic sphere of the individual and lays the groundwork for her investigation of forms of community in the second essay.⁷¹ I can draw only on the sections that are directly relevant to the relationship between lifepower and the body in both of these essays.

To arrive at her concept of lifepower, we have to begin with her exposition of consciousness in the first essay “Psychic Causality.” Here, Stein argues that when we investigate consciousness itself without attending to its correlates (objects), we find that it is a “pure becoming” in which the phases do not connect with each other but flow into each other (PPH 9; BBPG 11). Stein distinguishes between different strata within the stream of consciousness. In the “lower” stratum, experience of psychic contents take place, delineated into specific classifications such as sensation of color, tone, or touch. Intentional acts and constitution of objects happen in the “upper” stratum. What gives unity to this varied stream is the fact that it flows from the ‘I’, having its origin in the ego (PPH 13; BBPG 15). In our experiences, we encounter qualitative variations that further point to another stratum underlying both strata. These variations affect the whole experiential stream, giving it different degrees of intensity and “coloration,” and they also affect the degree of receptivity to experiential data (both data coming from the outer world and data emerging from within the ‘I’). Stein calls these variations “life

⁷⁰ Scholars appear to differ on the exact source from which Stein takes the term and concept *Lebenskraft*. Stein herself comments on the similarity to “psychic power (psychische Kraft)” in Theodor Lipps and Max Offner, but does not credit them as sources; PPH, 22-3, n. 34; BBPG, 22, n. 30. Claudia Mariéle Wulf, editor of *Einführung in die Philosophie*, writes that the concept is taken from Henri Bergson; *Einführung*, 119, n. 63. MacIntyre on the other hand asserts that it is taken from Wilhelm Dilthey; MacIntyre, 112.

⁷¹ MacIntyre, 109.

feelings” (*Lebensgefühle*), and the primary examples are tiredness and vigor (PPH 14; BBPG 16).⁷² When I am tired, all the data I receive in my experiential stream takes on a sluggish and dull quality. When vigor is restored, it again shifts the whole stream so that my current of life quickens and a sense of vitality colors everything in my experiential stream. Life feelings disclose a type of causality, an “experiential causality” (*Erlebniskausalität*) that is analogous to physical causality in that life feelings correspond to a causal event and affects the subsequent flow of experience (PPH 15; BBPG 17). Yet, the causality here is phenomenal which is different from the physical type. Physical and psychic (Stein calls them “real”⁷³) causality concerns sources that lie outside of consciousness. In phenomenal causality, the causal change happens immanently within the stream of consciousness, as when I think of a cheerful memory and it brightens my mood (PPH 26). Nevertheless, Stein argues that causal connections with real sources make possible and affect experience. Specifically, life feelings point beyond themselves and give us our present life states (*Lebenszustände*; e.g., vigorous or tired), which issue from what Stein calls the “life sphere (*Lebenssphäre*),” the processes occurring at the physical and psychic layers of a person.⁷⁴

⁷² Stein explains that life feelings seem to be a “continuum of increments of aliveness, within which vigor and weariness occupy a position similar to warmth and cold in the realm of temperature and to greatness and smallness in the domain of size.” PPH, 19; BBPG, 19.

⁷³ “Real” here signifies that it is an actual property that exists independent of subjective consciousness, in this case as part of one’s psychophysical layers. Stein follows Husserl in clearly distinguishing consciousness from the psyche (*Das Psychische*) as part of the project of early phenomenology of rejecting empirical psychology’s reduction of consciousness to physical processes. She says that consciousness and psyche are different in their essence: “[C]onsciousness as realm of ‘conscious’ pure experiencing, and sentience [psychic] as a sector of transcendent reality manifesting itself in experiences and experiential contents.” PPH, 24; BBPG, 22. “Transcendent” in phenomenology refers to things that are not immanent to consciousness. For Stein, the psyche provides material that becomes manifest in consciousness, which applies to the relationship between life states (psychic) and life feeling (consciousness). Lifepower is both psychic and physical, a point which I will further discuss below. On how Stein’s essays relate to the debate between phenomenology and psychology, see Bello, “Causality and Motivation,” 135-7. On life feeling and lifepower, see Schulz, *Edith Steins Theorie der Person*, 87-8 and Christof Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 1),” *Edith Stein Jahrbuch* (15) 2009, 169.

⁷⁴ Stein writes that the lifesphere (*Lebenssphäre*) “forms a substratum of the current experience and carries it; the experience current is brought forth out of the lifesphere.” She, however does not explicate fully what the lifesphere comprises,” but it is crucial since it influences all experience. See PPH, 27-8; BBPG, 25-6; Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 1),” 166.

Life states in turn manifest an enduring and real property that Stein calls “lifepower (*Lebenskraft*).” There is then a psychic causality that is properly based not on life feelings, but on changing conditions or “modes” of lifepower. Real psychic states, which are dependent on changes in the quantity of lifepower, manifest in consciousness as life feelings.⁷⁵

The entire psychic mechanism requires lifepower (PPH 32; BBPG 29). Stein writes, “The total [psychic] causal occurrence may be construed as a conversion of lifepower into active experiencing, and as utilization of lifepower by active experiencing (PPH 27; BBPG 25).” There is then two types of experience to which Stein is referring in this essay. The first type is experience of psychic and physical states that are grounded in psychic and physical properties (such as sensations or feelings and foundational physical and psychic structures that make them possible). The second type is experience of consciousness that is closely tied to activities of the ‘I’.⁷⁶ Every experiencing of real (i.e., psychic and physical) states uses lifepower, and as a real property, the quantity of lifepower is limited. If such experience essentially depends on lifepower, it also brings changes to lifepower. The fluctuations registering as specific life feelings signal the state of its increase or decrease, and this means that lifepower requires modulation of its use and replenishment. For example, when lifepower begins to be depleted, its state manifests in the life feeling of tiredness, which in turn signals the need for conservation. Psychic causality, then, is a dynamic process of transferring and conserving energy, since all experiencing occurs within this process of energy conversion.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ There is, however, a possibility of error in interpreting the mode of lifepower through life feelings, because what I currently feel in a given life feeling may not accurately reflect the condition of lifepower. I may be tired but not aware of it myself, even if others can see it from my physical exterior, until I am exhausted and realize the tiredness had been there before I became aware of it. PPH, 21-2; BBPG, 21-2. Betschart explains concisely that a life state is lifepower at a particular moment. Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 1), 180.

⁷⁶ PPH, 78; BBPG, 68; Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2),” 44.

⁷⁷ Sawicki, 229.

Stein further argues that the same applies to conscious or spiritual (*geistig*) life. All egoic activity, that is any intentional act, requires a measure of lifepower for its inception. Accordingly, the initiation of an intentional act of consciousness is conditioned by psychic causality (PPH 74; BBPG 65). Yet, psychic causality affects the stream of consciousness indirectly since it manifests in consciousness through life feelings. We can understand this better when we look more closely at the relationship between life feelings and intentional feeling acts. As discussed above, the life feeling of a particular moment determines the way in which every act is carried out. When, for instance, the feeling of joy at someone's report fills my 'I', it pours into the current of my present, live experiencing and accelerates its flow and colors it in a particular way (PPH 75; BBPG 65). The present life feeling, too, is affected by this feeling of joy, which is an intentional act that is motivated by an object (i.e., the report) and its value. The depth and strength of the joy based on the felt value will alter the life feeling by quickening and intensifying (or "brightening") the experiential current. This process happens unconsciously, as an occurrence of phenomenal causality. Since acts of feeling such as joy are related to values by motivation and have a rational grounding, the interaction between feelings and life feelings show a dynamic interaction in which causality and motivation intermesh or "steadily play into one another (PPH 76; BBPG 66)."

Since life feelings manifest states of lifepower in consciousness, this interplay is conditioned by real causal connections to the changes in the quantity of lifepower. As Christof Betschart explains, Stein conceives lifepower and motivation as having a complementary relationship.⁷⁸ Motivation provides a certain direction for the course of psychic occurrence and thereby how lifepower will be implemented. On the other hand, lifepower is necessary for motivated acts.

⁷⁸ Betschart, "Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2)," 43.

Stein discerns further connections between lifepower and spiritual life. Contents of experience can affect lifepower by adding to or detracting from it. She gives the following example:

Suppose that in a state of fatigue in which I feel “lifeless” or inwardly numb, I reach for a book, for a literary work that I love, and suppose that delight over its beauty takes hold of me. Perhaps it’s hard for me at first to summon up this delight - the available power scarcely suffices for the experiencing of this content - but as the content begins to course through me, fills me more and more, and finally inundates me entirely, the fatigue goes away and I feel myself to be “as though newborn,” refreshed and lively and full of incentive for new life activity.⁷⁹

In this example, the experiencing of delight in the book’s beauty leads to an increase of lifepower, which manifests in the life feeling of increased vigor (PPH 78; BBPG 68). The content of the experiencing creates an influx of power that adds to lifepower. The phenomenon shows that lifepower can draw power from the world of objects and values.⁸⁰ Such a dynamic indicates that there is a specific form of lifepower operative at the spiritual or mental layer that is distinct from the form functioning at the sensorial layer. The sphere of mental activity seems to require and draw on a certain kind of “spiritual lifepower (*geistige Lebenskraft*).” Stein argues that spiritual lifepower is dependent on bodily based “sensory lifepower (*sinnliche Lebenskraft*),” but it has its own autonomy.⁸¹ In the example of the book, the positive impact of the book’s beauty and the correlative act of feeling delight infuse a fresh sense of vitality so that the reader gradually gains the power necessary for receiving the content, making the act of feeling, and taking further motivated acts. There is a renewal of lifepower specifically for mental activity. Yet, this cannot mean that the physically based causes of tiredness have been addressed and the spent lifepower at the somatic level has been replenished. Stein writes, “The two forms of lifepower are like “different roots of the psyche. With sensory lifepower, the *psyche* appears to be sunk into the

⁷⁹ PPH, 76-77; BBPG, 67

⁸⁰ Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2),” 55.

⁸¹ PPH, 81; BBPG, 70.

physis: into bodiliness and, moreover, by means of bodiliness into material nature (PPH 81; BBPG 70).” Sensory lifepower is directly connected to the physical body, and through it to the material world of nature. Accordingly, it has to be replenished by means that belong to the material world, such as consumption of nutrition or physical rest. Spiritual lifepower, in contrast, can receive influxes of power from the object world. There is a clear distinction between these two forms, but they are interdependent on each other. Stein explains,

[I]f we are trying to talk about *one* lifesphere and *one* lifepower, this implies that the two aren’t existing side by side and unconnected. Mental [or spiritual] lifepower appears to be determined by sensory lifepower: as a rule, mental vigor also fades along with bodily vigor. Yet aside from that, mental lifepower remains open to influxes from the object world and through them can become capable of achievements which don’t accord with the state of sensory lifepower. Conversely, sensory lifepower does not undergo any enhancement by means of mental lifepower. The mental vigor produced by an influx from without can perhaps merely camouflage a bodily-sensory tiredness and deceive us in that way concerning the true state of sensory lifepower.⁸²

Spiritual lifepower’s dependence on sensory lifepower can be seen in how mental vigor decreases along with bodily vigor. Spiritual lifepower, however, is open to the object world in ways that sensory lifepower is not. Values of objects and their apprehension in the correlative feelings can imbue fresh impulse power, and the increased spiritual lifepower can enable actions even in states where sensory lifepower is low. Hence, an individual can begin a mental activity such as reading a book in a state of fatigue and receive new impulse power from the value of beauty and feeling of delight, which provides the additional spiritual lifepower needed for the individual to carry out subsequent motivated acts of reading and enjoyment. At the same time, Stein argues that the overriding of a depleted state of sensory lifepower by increase in spiritual lifepower is temporary. Receiving new impulses of power presupposes a base level of sensory lifepower necessary for receiving experiential contents at all. When that level is lacking, the individual will not be able to receive impulses from power-giving contents.⁸³ This implies that sensory lifepower is conserving

⁸² PPH, 81-2; BBPG, 70-1.

⁸³ PPH, 84; BBPG, 73.

itself by restricting the use of spiritual lifepower, which supports Stein's view of a reciprocal relationship between the two forms of lifepower and their basic unity.⁸⁴ We need to note that there also are objects that can negatively impact one's lifepower. When I encounter certain negative social attitudes such as hatred or distrust, I can find that they can debilitate my creative power.⁸⁵

2.6. LIFEPOWER AND THE BODY

Betschart states that lifepower for Stein is the condition of possibility for all human activity.⁸⁶ Both bodily-based psychic and spiritual activities depend on and are causally affected by lifepower. Insofar as psychic life is body-bound, every psychic state is also a bodily state, and both are directly connected to and determined by lifepower. Consciousness is also body-dependent in its need for lifepower. The difference between consciousness and the psychophysical properties and states is that psychic and physical states lie outside of consciousness and manifest (*bekunden*) in them as transcendent content.⁸⁷ One implication is that a total depletion of sensory lifepower would lead to death, while complete exhaustion of spiritual lifepower would mean spiritual (cognitive and emotional) breakdown.⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Later, Stein develops further the mutual reciprocity of sensorial and spiritual lifepower in her Münster anthropology. See Edith Stein, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person: Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 14 (Freiburg: Herder, 2015), 123-5.

⁸⁵ PPH, 212; BBPG, 175.

⁸⁶ Betschart "Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2)," 61.

⁸⁷ "Transcendent" in the phenomenological sense simply refers to what does *not* intrinsically belong to consciousness but manifests in consciousness as content. See Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 58-60.

⁸⁸ On implications of exhaustion of lifepower, see Betschart "Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2)," 51-4.

By conceiving psychic or sentient life as dependent on lifepower, Stein argues phenomenological investigation has to be complemented by empirical investigation of external sources that affect changes in lifepower.⁸⁹ Stein places the human person and her psychophysical life and consciousness squarely within the networks of material nature and spiritual world (*geistige Welt*), intrinsically connected with and partly shaped by external forces. These forces include the lifesphere and sensory lifepower on the nature side, and the world of values and meaning on the spiritual side. The psychophysical and personal structures of the human being mediate how a person interfaces with these forces. The relationship between these forces is dynamic and complex. We require lifepower for activity, but we are not immediately aware of it nor can we control the source from which lifepower originates. At the same time, lifepower is affected and directed by human activity (e.g., recreation, encounter with cultural objects such as texts or art works, relationship with other human beings). Objects can exercise influence on spiritual lifepower through motivation. An important category of objects are cultural objects that are objectified forms of spiritual activity. They shape the ways in which individuals and communities utilize lifepower for developing various psychic and spiritual capacities.⁹⁰

The question of how lifepower can be resupplied leads Stein to consider a theological connection. She identifies a unique type of influx that comes from “a state of resting in God,” which does not require any base level of lifepower:

⁸⁹ PPH, 129; BBPG, 110. With this move, Stein made a significant break from Husserl who restricted phenomenology to investigation of consciousness and maintained a strict separation between phenomenology and the empirical sciences. For Husserl’s separation between phenomenology and any form of psychology, see Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, 77-8. Alasdair MacIntyre explains that Stein’s work broke new ground in asserting that an account of the ‘I’ as known by others is incomplete as it exists as part of the natural and social worlds with features of consciousness that can only be accounted by external causal relations that partly shape it. She appears to have reached the limits of the phenomenological method when she acknowledges here that a third person philosophical perspective is necessary. MacIntyre, 117.

⁹⁰ PPH, 198-200; BBPG, 164-67.

There is a state of resting in God, of complete relaxation of all mental activity, in which you make no plans at all, reach no decision, much less take action, but rather leave everything that's future to the divine will.... Compared to the cessation of activeness from the lack of lifepower, resting in God is something completely new and unique. The former was dead silence. Now its place is taken by the feeling of being safe, of being exempted from all anxiety and responsibility and duty to act. And as I surrender myself to this feeling, new life begins to fill me up, little by little, and impel me - without any voluntary exertion - toward new activation. This reviving infusion appears as an emanation of a functionality and a power which is not my emanation and which becomes operative within me without my asking for it. The sole prerequisite for such a mental rebirth seems to be a certain receptivity, like the receptivity supporting the structure of the person, a structure exempted from the sensate mechanism.⁹¹

The renewal of lifepower that Stein is speaking about in this passage pertains to spiritual lifepower, although she does not discount the possibility of its effect on sensory lifepower. The spiritual “rebirth” that comes from resting in God and surrendering to the corresponding feeling of safety and peace points, Stein says, to a fundamental receptivity that grounds the structure of the person. Similarly, Stein detects a theological significance when she analyzes how the resolve of the will can generate an impulse power from itself, even where motives do not have an energizing effect, in order to accomplish an action: “This marvelous capability of generating ‘impulse powers’ out of itself obviously indicates a power source lying beyond the mechanism of the individual personality, which flows into the willing ego and in which the ego is anchored. The closer exploration of these relationships, which we cannot pursue here, leads into the field of the philosophy of religion.” (PPH 89; BBPG 77-8) In other words, the ability to freely decide something and turn that willing into action without the availability of any motivating power indicates that it can generate the needed energy from itself. Stein argues that the origin of this self-generation cannot be traced through a causal chain, but simply points to the ‘I’ itself as the site of its occurrence (PPH 88; BBPG 77). This indicates for Stein that the ‘I’ is anchored in a source of power outside the person, *not* that the ‘I’ itself is the source. Moreover, she does not say that this source is found in the natural world, but suggestively states that this line of inquiry would lead to the philosophy of religion. The implication is that the source is divine. These two

⁹¹ PPH, 84-5; BBPG, 73.

reflections expand the scope of the interconnection between the human person and outside sources to include divine presence and power. The psychic and physical structures that Stein previously explicated in her work now interlock with this foundational receptivity of the human person.

Stein's argument proceeds interestingly from the case of divine infusion of lifepower to an analogue in human relationship:

Something similar may be possible in the communications of one person with another. The love with which I embrace a human being may be sufficient to fill him with new lifepower if his own breaks down. Indeed, the mere contact with human beings of more intense aliveness may exert an enlivening effect upon those who are jaded or exhausted, who have no activeness as a presupposition on their side.⁹²

Openness of human beings to each other can occasion transfer of power between them. The love that I show another human being can fill him with new lifepower. This example would be consistent with Stein's argument for how objects can impact lifepower. The recipient's apprehension of love as an object, its supremely positive value, and the corresponding feeling lead to a new influx of power. Stein then suggests that simply being in the physical presence of people with greater intense aliveness, presumably due to their having greater amount of lifepower, can infuse new power in a person who is spiritually or physically exhausted. She calls this a case of "contagion," but the principles of how it works are the same as in the example of love. When I am in a state of exhaustion and come into the presence of another person of greater aliveness, I apprehend their body as an object.⁹³ Consistent with her line of argument in POE that a foreign physical body (*Körper*) is grasped as a sensing body (*Leib*) of a psychophysical individual and a spiritual person, the apprehension of the other as an object is simultaneously the comprehension of that person's subjective condition of vigor through multiple bodily indications:

⁹² PPH, 85; BBPG, 73-4.

⁹³ PPH, 174; BBPG, 146-7.

“If I perceive the vigor of another, then the vigor is given for me in the glance of his eyes, in the tone of his voice, in the tempo of his speech, and in his movements.” (PPH 174; BBPG 146)

Perception of these external signs of vigor allows me to grasp the other’s subjective condition. Grasping the condition of vigor in the other person is also a constituting of an object and its simultaneous valuation, which mediates the enlivening inflow of new power.

In elaborating this idea, Stein remarks, “It’s striking how much weight sensory presence carries as a precondition of contagion.”⁹⁴ But she later qualifies the significance of bodily presence for such transfer of power by asserting that such presence is not a *conditio sine qua non* in “catching wind” of another’s vigor. She explains that a person can be swept along by another’s mental life through other means, such as reading books. In reading a text, I can re-enact (*nachvollziehen*) the author’s thought process step by step.⁹⁵ It is this re-enactment of the other’s thought process and comprehending her subjective condition that can have an enlivening effect on me. Yet, Stein’s qualification does not call into question the necessity of sensorial or bodily presence for contagion, but rather what qualifies as sensorial presence. This is a point that I will discuss further in the section on her later works, but here I will just say that a text is a bodied form. Stein seems to restrict what counts as a “sensorial presence” too narrowly to the immediately given human physical presence. Inasmuch as a text, or any media, communicates a motivation or thought process, it is materially bodied and the thought process presents the sensorial data that originally existed in the author. The full implication of this reflection is that the transfer of lifepower always requires some form of bodily presence, and bodily presence is the very condition for the possibility of interchange of lifepower between persons.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ The German reads, “Und wenn ich, von den Worten geleitet, im Verstehen die Fremden Gedankengänge Schritt für Schritt nachvollziehe, so ‘spüre’ ich die Frische.” BBPG, 147.

Stein's conception of lifepower highlights the structural openness of the human person and its interdependent relationship to external forces. It also approaches the structure and activities of the human person in energetic terms. It construes the person in terms of the flow, conversion, and conservation of energy through space and time. This presents a view of the structures of the person as dynamically in movement, receiving and responding to the energetic forces of the natural and spiritual worlds. The body, psyche, soul, personal core, consciousness all have a certain independence, but they are porous, asymmetrical structures that mutually influence each other and function as an integrated unity. Stein's use of the term *Lebenskraft* and the importance of the category of life in these essays raise the question whether she is arguing for a form of philosophical vitalism.⁹⁶ There appear to be major differences between Stein's phenomenology and vitalistic philosophies. An in-depth comparative investigation of Stein and vitalist philosophy may be interesting, especially in light of the current resurgence of interest in vitalist thought.⁹⁷ I cannot pursue further this question, but I note it here because juxtaposing Stein's work and vitalism sets into relief the centrality of life, dynamism, and interconnectedness (*Zusammenhang*)⁹⁸ in Stein's anthropology. I also raise it to make clear that I am not interested in casting Stein's thought in a vitalist mode. I am specifically interested in how her concept of lifepower connects with analogues in the Tibetan Buddhist "subtle body" tradition and the contribution this connection can make to a theological model of the body.

⁹⁶ Martin Gessman, "Vitalismus," *Philosophisches Wörterbuch* (Stuttgart: Alfred Kröner, 2009), 744-5. On differentiating Stein from vitalism, see Betschart, "Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2)," 37, 62.

⁹⁷ On renewed interest in vitalism, see Monica Greco, "On the Vitality of Vitalism," in *Inventive Life: Approaches to the New Vitalism* (London: Sage Pub., 2018), 15-28. For historical assessments of vitalism, see Scott Lash, "Life (Vitalism)," *Theory, Culture, Society* 23 (2006): 323-349; John Zammito, "Reill's Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment and German Naturphilosophie," in *Life Forms in the Thinking of the Long Eighteenth Century* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 70-91.

⁹⁸ Sawicki observes *Zusammenhang*, which connotes connection, relationship, coherence, network, or context, is one of the most common terms in Stein's vocabulary. Marianne Sawicki, "Personal Connections: The Pre-Baptismal Philosophy of Edith Stein," quoted in Marian Maskulak, *Edith Stein and the Body-Soul-Spirit at the Center of Holistic Formation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 31.

2.7. THE BODY IN STEIN'S EARLY PHENOMENOLOGY AND ITS THEOLOGICAL RELEVANCE

Edith Stein's early writings on the body contribute to addressing the need for a phenomenologically enriched theological reflection on the body in several ways. Stein's phenomenological analysis provides an in-depth examination of fundamental structures of the body as we experience it. A key finding of her investigation is that a human person's experience of her body is possible only through intersubjective comprehension. That comprehension takes place through empathy (*Einfühlung*), which is founded on the perception of the body and a non-inferential analogical apprehension of the foreign body as sensing and fused with a spiritual person. Accordingly, for Stein, an adequate account of the body has to approach it as essentially intersubjectively constituted. The need to situate the body in an interdependent network of relations in the natural and social worlds is a continuous thread in Stein's works.

Second, Stein demonstrates that we experience our body in diverse ways. Experiencing it as simultaneously physical (*Körper*) and sensing (*Leib*) is the most basic way, but it is only a point of entry to movement, spatiality, mental representation, affect, and spiritual activity. At every point, the physical, sensate (psychic), spiritual, and personal layers intersect and interact, which leads Stein to assert that the body is always a blended (*Verschmelzung*) phenomenon. A body presents an irreducible personal being and the physical and spiritual worlds into which she is incorporated. This does not explain specifically how the different structures interact and by what mechanisms, but it elucidates how the complete union between the body, soul, and spirit is an undeniable aspect of our experience of the body.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Stein says this is a question that she does not take up in PPH, nor does she in POE.

Third, as what is given in the body exceeds itself and reveals its relational nature, its interconnection to a multiverse of outer and inner phenomena, Stein's rigorous analyses identify a fundamental structure of receptivity to power sources grounded in the material and spiritual worlds. Signaled by changes in what she calls "life feeling," what Stein calls "lifepower" comprises foundational powers that makes possible both physical and spiritual activity. Stein argues that an examination of different sources that generate more lifepower indicates clearly our connection to and dependence on an external power source which she suggests is divine as one of the possible sources. She points to the reception of divine power in a contemplative mode ("resting in God") as one example of such connection. Receptivity and lifepower together also make possible transfer of power between individuals through bodily presence and affective acts. They also function as the core structure and property that make possible communal experiencing.¹⁰⁰ Lifepower, then, should be understood as connecting us to the world of physical nature, objects, persons, community, and the divine.

What is important about Stein's conception of lifepower as it relates to a theological mapping of the body is that a person can detect the presence and flow of lifepower in the experiential streams. It points to a phenomenon that we can relate to at the level of experience. According to Stein, we apprehend lifepower through life states at the psychic level and life feelings at the level of consciousness. She asserts, therefore, that we access lifepower indirectly through its manifestation. Yet, a life state as a mode of lifepower at a particular moment is something that we *sense* in the psychophysical apparatus. As Betschart notes, insofar as the psyche is body-bound consciousness, a psychic state is also a physical state.¹⁰¹ We can connect Stein's

¹⁰⁰ PPH, 197; BBPG, 164.

¹⁰¹ Betschart, "Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 1)," 177.

observations here with her earlier classifications of feelings into “general feelings,” which are somatic and pervade the ‘I’, and “moods,” which are non-somatic.¹⁰² Life feelings would seem to be a type of general feelings, since they occur in the conscious ‘I’ but directly concern my perception of the psychic and bodily state. This implies that we can direct our attention from life feelings to the bodily state to feel the ebb and flow of our lifepower. In this way, lifepower is connected to Stein’s idea of bodily perception,¹⁰³ which is a form of sensate knowing. In the context of lifepower, this sensate knowing has theological significance as shown in her reflection on the effect of contemplatively “resting in God.” In constructing a theological model of the body that has practical traction, lifepower offers us a concept that can be tested out experientially through certain modes of attention on affect and bodily states. It also provides a bridge concept to subtle energies in Tibetan Buddhist tantric anthropology, which I will examine in a subsequent chapter.

In short, Stein’s phenomenology of the body provides tools for attending to the individual body and its relational structures at the level of concrete experience. Her work on the body, furthermore, goes beyond mere conceptualization and has potential for practical implementation at the level of body-based religious practice. I now turn to Stein’s account of the body as she develops it in her later works, especially *Finite and Eternal Being* and *The Science of the Cross*.

¹⁰² See discussion above, 42.

¹⁰³ See above, 40.

CHAPTER 3

THE BODY IN STEIN'S LATER WORKS

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Whereas Stein's early works in philosophical phenomenology contributes to the need for a phenomenologically enriched theology of the body, I now turn to her reflections on the body in her later writings to examine how it can help to account for the doctrine of sin and redemption in a theology of the body. The first part examines the concept of the body in several important later texts. I first analyze her somatology in *Finite and Eternal Being* (hereafter FEB), which she subsequently applies and develops further in *The Science of the Cross* (hereafter SC). I then turn to *The Science of the Cross*, an introduction to the life and thought of John of the Cross for fellow Carmelites, where Stein presents a theory of the body within the Carmelite contemplative framework. Lastly, I look at a set of short essays in which Stein treats the theological meaning of the body in relation to contemplative union, suffering, and atonement. The second part of the chapter assesses the promises and pitfalls of Stein's later understanding of the body for contemporary theology in light of the larger aims of my essay: 1) to enrich theologies of the body with a fuller account of the phenomenally lived body; 2) to reassess the connection between the doctrines of sin, suffering, and redemption and a Christian theology of the body. I will provide page numbers from both the English translations of FEB, SC, and essays, and the German texts from the Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, *Endliches und ewiges Sein* (EES), *Kreuzeswissenschaft* (KW), and *Geistliche Texte I & II* (GT I/II).

3.2. STEIN'S LATER THEORY OF THE BODY

3.2.1. The Body in *Finite and Eternal Being*

Edith Stein continues to return to the theme of the body throughout her writing career. The story of her conversion to Catholicism in 1922 (January 1, 1922) and her joining the Carmelite order in 1933 (October 14, 1933) is well known.¹ Her entry into the church inaugurated a new period of philosophical work in which she studied patristic and scholastic thought, and sought a synthetic Christian philosophy that integrated Husserlian phenomenology and Catholic thought.²

Thinking philosophically in the context of Christian revelation and Catholic teaching, Stein's later treatments of the body display a marked departure from her early phenomenology. Unlike the works on empathy, psychic causality, and community, Stein's later works do not set out to apprehend exclusively the phenomenological essence of the body. Her thoughts on the body are now guided by questions and needs of theological, ethical, and existential nature. They move within the larger flow of Carmelite contemplation, nurtured and sustained by the rhythms of daily communal life in the convent and liturgical worship.

In her later works, Stein extensively developed her concepts of the body and how suffering can be transformed into a resource for redemption. As with her early period, we find Stein thinking on the body over multiple writings rather than dedicating a single text to the topic. FEB lays out a mature Christian philosophical anthropology, which Stein had been developing in

¹ See Waltraud Herbstrith, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, trans. Bernard Bonowitz, OCSO (New York: Harper and Row, 1985).

² On this particular topic in her work, see "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison" in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. Walter Redmond (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000), 1-38; also Beate Beckmann-Zöller, "Edith Stein's Theory of the Person in her Münster Years (1932-1933)," trans. Amalie Enns, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, 82, no. 1 (2008): 47-70.

previous lectures and publications. As a philosophical work on the question of being, Stein brings to her investigation a wide range of sources, from Husserlian phenomenology to Aristotle, Plato, Thomas Aquinas, John Duns Scotus, Teresa of Avila, and John of the Cross, to mention only the most prominent names. In this complex work, Stein uses Aristotelian and scholastic categories of form and matter, and potency and act in conjunction with phenomenological concepts. Stein's reflections on the body in FEB are set within a different philosophical framework than her purely phenomenological works, and they strive toward a general understanding of the body as part of the human being within a larger ontological order comprising inanimate, animate, angelic, and divine beings. In subsequent writings, Stein takes the concept of the body developed in FEB and weaves it together with the Carmelite theory of contemplative union and an expiatory model of Christian sacrifice.

As Stein's theological writing in SC is dependent on concepts she develops in FEB, I will examine briefly her view of the body as she explicates in the latter work before analyzing how she uses it in SC and other essays. In FEB, Stein reiterates the concept of the sensing body (*Leib*) and its double givenness as sensed and outwardly perceived (*Körper*).³ Stein, however, frames the sensing body within the broader horizon of ontology, the question of being, and reflects on the human person as a composite of form (*μορφή*) and matter (*ὕλη*).⁴ On the relationship between form and matter she writes, "Whatever is placed into existence is a something the being of which is the molding of some matter so as to form an integrated structure." (FEB 234; EES 205)

³ Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*, trans. Kurt F. Reinhardt (Washington D.C.: ICS Pub., 2002), 366; Edith Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein: Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Sein*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 11/12 (Freiburg: Herder, 2006), 312.

⁴ The entire work of FEB begins with an overview of the question of being and works through the basic categories and different types of being until it reaches the human person as the image of God and the concept of God as the Trinity. Stein's theory of the human person can only be fully appreciated when seen as part of her whole ontology, but I cannot conduct such an examination in this essay.

Everything that has actual existence comprises matter that has been structured in specific ways by form. Consonant with Aristotelian and Thomistic thought, Stein distinguishes between a principle (*Form*) that gives existents its particular structure and nature (*Wesen*), and that which has being by virtue of its reception of this principle's molding power (*Stoff*). On this basis, form and matter are tightly connected to the concepts of "actuality" and "potency." Matter as formed and becoming has potential being, which form actualizes. Stein further categorizes form into two different types: pure form (*reine Form, εἶδος*) and substantial form (*Wesensform, μορφή*).⁵ Pure form is the essence which defines what an existent is in its most fundamental sense. Pure forms are the primordial archetypes of all that exists, having their origin and coherence in the divine mind or Logos.⁶ The substantial form is the actuating principle that molds concrete matter and is inseparable from matter in actual existents. As Sarah Borden explains, the pure form is static and not subject to change, while the substantial form is the dynamic principle of growth and development that leads an existent to develop according to its essence.⁷ Substantial form, furthermore, as matter-forming is what gives each existent its individuality.⁸ What exists in the world, then, is matter that is in the process of formation through the substantial form, developing according to its essence as defined by the pure form. As existents are actualization of form in matter, they move from potentiality to actuality through the power of substantial form. For Stein, what gives this formative power and upholds its operation is the "creative, sustaining, and

⁵ FEB, 155f; EES 140f. The literal translation of *Wesensform* would be "essential form," which Kurt Reinhardt uses in his English translation of FEB. However, I am following Sarah Borden's use of "substantial form" as it communicates more clearly the intended meaning of Stein's original German term. See Borden, *Thine Own Self: Individuality in Edith Stein's Later Writings* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2010).

⁶ FEB, 231-2, 352; EES, 202-3, 301.

⁷ FEB, 234; EES, 205; Sarah Borden, 113.

⁸ Borden, 118.

ordering efficacious action of God.” (FEB 231; EES 203) It is the action of God that holds together pure form and substantial form, and makes them causally effective.

While everything that exists is formed matter, there are differences between inanimate material structures, such as rocks, and living beings such as plants, animals, and human beings. Purely material structures are formed externally in the sense that they do not have an inner animating principle that forms the structures from within.⁹ Living beings, however, are self-moving and forming. They are formed from the inside out by a power that generates movement and development in time and space. Living beings, moreover, grow by incorporating and transforming foreign material elements (e.g., food, air, water) through their structures’ metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*), in accordance with the inner formative law.¹⁰ Finally, they have generative power by which they bring forth new members of their species.

Following Aristotle, Stein calls the inner animating form of living beings the ‘soul’, and the material structure which it forms the ‘body’.¹¹ She, however, builds on this ontology to conceive the human being as a tri-unity of body, soul, and spirit.¹² The body, soul, and spirit trichotomy, with ancient roots that can be traced back to Paul (1 Thessalonians 5.23), is a feature of Stein’s early and late anthropology. The meaning of each term and the vision of their unity develop in new directions in FEB as Stein’s philosophical foci and interlocutors shift. Although the human being is an integrated whole comprised of these three different forms of being, each form demarcates a distinct class or realm of being. Individual existents, Stein explains, in each class are subject to the dominating formative power of that particular class (FEB 245; EES 214).

⁹ FEB, 248; EES, 216.

¹⁰ FEB, 263; EES, 228.

¹¹ FEB, 245; EES, 214.

¹² FEB, 363-4; EES, 310-1.

Accordingly, she argues that it is conceivable that there exist living beings who are only pure spirits without material bodies (FEB 275; EES 238). Conversely, there are beings such as plants and animals that are soul-body unities without having spiritual being. Let me explain briefly each of these three forms of being.

3.2.1.1. Spirit (*Der Geist*)

According to Stein, “spirit” denotes a “being-in-itself,” which in its essence is non-spatial and non-material. Although it is not spatial and has no physical exterior, Stein states that it does have a certain “interiority” (*Inneres*) in the sense that it has the capacity for self-communication. She describes such act as a “going out” of oneself. The spirit can do so by turning to an object (“intentionality” in Husserlian terms); by disclosing itself directly to another spirit; or by forming itself into space through molding a corporeal or foreign material element (FEB 218, 360; EES 192, 307). Spiritual being entails a dynamic movement of free self-giving to other spirits, but such self-donation does not result in any diminishment of itself (FEB 274; EES, 237). In other words, the “self” of the spirit is the very dynamic of self-giving. The possibility of self-giving further indicates rationality and freedom, as the act implies self-awareness and free choice. In this sense, spiritual life is also personal life for Stein, because only persons are endowed with reason and freedom. Reason and freedom, in turn, form the basis for loving relation, a relation defined by complete self-giving and receiving (FEB 362; EES 309).

God fulfills the criteria of absolute pure spirit that is not subject to formative laws outside of itself or by any other realm of being. God as pure spirit is not subject to becoming, which means that there is only actuality to God’s existence, and nothing potential that must be

actualized. Most importantly for Stein, God as the Trinity is the perfection of free and total self-giving (FEB 360; EES 307-8). As the archetype of all personal being, divine being has the form of an 'I'. However, as three persons in one, the divine 'I' is different from the ego of finite beings in that the divine 'I' encompasses in itself all beings and the full plenitude of being. Finite spirits, however, cannot encompass all other beings. They are limited to the structure of duality, to I-thou relationships. Finite pure spirits are, moreover, differentiated from divine pure spirit (God) by their created, limited nature and subjection to a kind of formation. Angels, for example, do not have physical material bodies that must be formed by the soul, but they have "bodies" in the sense that they have a determined form which they receive from God (FEB 409; EES 347). Human beings have spiritual being in that the human soul can rise beyond itself, but as physically bodied, they are in a continual process of formation in both the material and spiritual worlds.

3.2.1.2. *Soul (Die Seele)*

Stein's conception of the soul in FEB incorporates her earlier phenomenological idea into a much more complex notion. For my purposes, I will explain here the aspects of her concept of soul that have the most direct relevance to the body. In FEB, Stein accepts the Aristotelian-Thomistic definition of the soul as the substantial form of all animate beings, but only as a starting point for a much more elaborate conception. As the "form of the body," the soul is the principle of life animating the body and molds the material structure into bodily form.¹³

The distinguishing particularity of living (animate) forms as against lifeless (inanimate) ones consist in their supra-material power which is capable of encompassing and transforming a diversity of given material

¹³ FEB, 367; EES, 313

structures, of integrating them in an articulated whole, and which maintains and further develops the formed structural unity in a continuous process of metabolism.¹⁴

In this framework, plants and animals also have souls in that their material structures are formed by a physically invisible principle that unfolds according to a pre-figured design or essence, which determines their final shape. The plant soul is further differentiated from animal and human souls because its formation powers are exclusively directed to building out the *material* structure according to its fundamental nature or essence. In contrast, animals and human beings share a basic capacity to receive and respond to external stimuli from a cognitive and affective "center," a type of executive capacity that allows them a measure of initiative and freedom in preserving and heightening bodily life. Similar to the animal soul, the human soul as the form of the body imparts life, drives its natural development, and molds it into a personal body marked by the irreducible uniqueness of the human individual.¹⁵ Distinct from animals, the human soul further encompasses sensory perception, cognition, mental reflection, volition, and affect.¹⁶ But what really sets apart the human soul from other kinds of souls is that it is a species of spirit that is naturally bound to matter and capable of conscious experience and free choice (FEB 377, 370; EES 321, 315-6).

3.2.1.3. Body (*Der Leib*)

The concept of a "body" in its strictest sense applies to an essence that is boundaried or enclosed in a structure.¹⁷ Expressed differently, Stein says that when we speak of "bodily" being,

¹⁴ FEB, 368; EES, 314.

¹⁵ FEB, 364, 368; EES, 310, 314.

¹⁶ FEB, 434f.; EES, 366f.

¹⁷ FEB, 246; 580, n. 143. EES, 215;169, n. 161.

we are speaking of any existent that possesses its essence in a "born-out" (*ausgeboren*) form, that is, a particular structure whose essential features can be delineated in a formal way (FEB 360; EES 308). In this sense, even God has a body, spiritual and nonmaterial, insofar as God encloses or possesses fully Godself. The *human* body is not only boundaried, but it is simultaneously a material structure that is pervaded by the spiritual soul as its form. Human bodily and spiritual life connect and interface in the soul.

3.2.1.4. Body-Soul-Spirit Unity: The Human Being

Stein conceives the human being as the unity of these three forms of being: the body, the soul, and the spirit. We cannot comprehend the relationship between these three forms in the human being as three disparate entities cobbled together to perform three separate functions. The human being is all three in one being. How, then, does Stein understand their unity? The key lies in her conception of the human soul.

The human soul is unique in the order of being in that it is a bodied spirit. The being of the soul encompasses both the bodily sentient life and spiritual life of the human person. Stein writes,

The soul is the "space" in the center of the body-soul-spirit totality. As sentient soul it abides in the body, in all its members and parts, receiving impulses and influences from it and working upon it formatively and with a view to its preservation. As spiritual soul it rises above itself, gaining insight into a world that lies beyond its own self - a world of things, persons, and events - communicating with this world and receiving its influences. As *soul* in the strictest sense, however, it abides in its own self, since in the soul the personal I is in its very home. In this abode accumulates everything that enters from the world of sense and from the world of spirit. Here in this inwardness of the soul everything that enters from these worlds is weighed and judged, and here there takes place the appropriation of that which becomes the most personal property and a constituent part of the self - that which, figuratively speaking, "becomes flesh and blood."¹⁸

¹⁸ FEB, 373; EES, 316.

The soul can be likened to a "central medium" (*Die Mitte*) or "space" which holds together bodily and spiritual life and integrates the contents of both through its formative power. In terms of sentient life, the soul inheres in the body. It shapes bodily life through the stages of its natural development and the conscious activity of the I, the ego. In terms of spiritual life, the soul moves out of itself to receive influences from, to cognize, and to interact with the external world. Yet, Stein explains, the life of the soul does not consist simply in a duality of bodily and spiritual life. Its distinct function and meaning lie in forming a circumscribed interiority.¹⁹ It is a depth structure of which the ego is a part and in which the ego "dwells." Here, Stein consciously brings together Teresa of Avila's image of a castle (*Die Seelenburg*) to conceive the structure of the soul.²⁰ The I brings to consciousness specific properties and levels of the soul, but the totality of the soul's depth remains hidden and the soul cannot be collapsed with egoic life. Hence, Stein says, "The I is, as it were, the breach between the dark and deep ground and the clear luminosity of conscious life." (FEB 376; EES 320) Like a point of light that illumines any room it enters in a castle, the ego abides in the soul and carries out acts of discerning the proper value of all received contents and their integration in accordance with its judgment.

¹⁹ Sarah Borden Sharkey argues that Stein posits two models of the soul in FEB: an Aristotelian-Thomistic model, which conceives the soul mainly as a structure that contains a set of capacities (potencies) to be developed through matter; a Teresian model, which construes the soul as an interior "abode" rich in content and set characteristics. Sharkey concludes the article by saying that it is not clear whether we should read Stein as constructing a (Teresian) spatial model of the soul that includes capacities, or a capacities model that has an added content-rich interior dimension. I do not know how Stein envisaged the precise relationship between the two models, but I would argue that the importance of the spatial model is directly connected to Stein's theological interest in contemplative union with God, and her search for a way to think about the interrelationship between body and soul. I will discuss this further in the second part of the chapter. Sarah Borden Sharkey, "Capacity or Castle? Thoughts on Stein's Creative (Carmelite) Contribution to Discussions on the Soul," in *Edith Steins Herausforderung heutiger Anthropologie*, hg. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz and Mette Lebech (Heiligenkreuz: Be&Be-Verlag, 2017), 203-13.

²⁰ Stein explains at some length the importance of Teresa of Avila's *Interior Castle* (*Moradas del castilio interior*) in her essay "Die Seelenburg," which was included in the appendix of EES (but not the English translation). She makes it clear that Teresa's idea of the soul as a dwelling place or castle has philosophical importance to her thinking about the soul; "Die Seelenburg," EES, 501.

Resonant with her earlier ideas of “levels” within the ‘I’ and value, the soul as a depth structure has epistemic and ethical significance.²¹ This significance is necessarily connected to the role of the I. The life of the soul takes the specific form of the “conscious I.” The I pervades the entire body through the field of sensations, while having its most proper place or “home” in the soul (FEB 374; EES 318). The conscious gaze of the I can move in an outward and inward direction, toward external impressions and internal drives and occurrences. Stein notes that “[e]verything that I consciously experience issues from my soul.” (FEB 375; EES 319). In one’s experiences, the ‘I’ can detect the level of depth from which an experience arises. Stein is harking back to the notion that there are general gradations in the structure of human person, but she now situates those levels within the soul rather than the personal layer of the I.²² A decision to take a walk, for example, comes from a much more superficial level than a decision to choose one’s vocation. According to Stein, the levels closer to the “surface” are dominated by sense impressions and instinctual drives, while those reaching into the interior of the soul move closer to the source of genuine freedom and understanding. The different depths of the soul to which external impressions, events, or internal psychic occurrences reach depend on the degree to which the ego “possesses” or appropriates in its conscious life the levels of the soul, or in Teresian terms, the “rooms” of the castle. Stein gives us an important example of what this means in relation to our capacity to understand the proper meaning of an event:

It may happen that two human beings listen jointly to the same news and that both have an intellectually clear grasp of its contents, such as, for example, the news of the Serbian regicide in the summer of 1914. However, the one “thinks no more about it,” goes calmly on his way and a few minutes later is again busy with his plans for a summer vacation. The other is shaken in his innermost being. With his mind’s eye he envisages the approaching general European war, and he sees himself uprooted in his professional life and involved in the great world historic events. His thoughts cannot detach themselves from what has happened, and he lives henceforth in feverish anticipation of the things that are to come. In his case the news has struck deeply at his inner life, and he understands the external events from the point of view of his own

²¹ See discussion above, 63f.

²² POE, 100-12; ZPE, 118-29.

interiority. And because his full intellectual power is alive in his understanding, his mind penetrates into the context and into the "consequences" of the external event. In this latter kind of thinking, "the entire human being" is engaged, and this engagement expresses itself even in the external appearance. It affects the bodily organs, the heartbeat, and the rhythm of breathing, the individual's sleep and digestion. He "thinks with his heart," and his *heart* is the actual *living center* of his being. And even though the heart signifies the bodily organ to whose activity bodily life is tied, we have no difficulty in picturing the heart as the inner being of the soul, because it is evidently the heart that has the greatest share in the inner processes of the soul, and because it is in the heart that the interconnection between body and soul is most strikingly felt and experienced.²³

Taking as her example the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, Stein compares the effect of the killing on two people. Both persons have a clear rational (*verstandesmäßig*) grasp of the news, but the degree to which the news affects them and how they think about it are drastically different. In the first person's case, the event does not have a lasting impact and he simply continues with his daily life. The second person, however, is affected at the core of his being. His response comes from a contrasting center than the first person, providing not only a varying set of priorities and values, but also a different epistemic capacity to grasp the genuine significance of an event. A person experiences this form of knowing most acutely in the juncture of the soul and body, the heart, indicating the complete interdependence of body and soul. Stein argues that the full power of the human intellect unfolds only in such holistic and bodied form of knowing. Furthermore, this holistic intellectual capacity that engages the whole person is made possible when the person's conscious ego-life is rooted in the deepest level or innermost depth of the soul, the very ground of its being. She explains,

The personal I is most truly at home in the innermost being of the soul. *When* the I lives its life in this interiority, it is then capable of freely disposing of and freely engaging the soul's collected power. In this interiority the I is also closest to the meaning of every event, most open to the demands with which it is confronted, and in the best possible position to evaluate the significance and import of these demands.²⁴

²³ FEB, 437-8; EES, 368-9.

²⁴ FEB, 439; EES, 370.

Stein characterizes this innermost center or point²⁵ of the soul as a site where the soul's essence is transparent (*aufgebrochen*, literally "broken open") to itself.²⁶ This means that the ego dwelling at this level can experience the soul's fundamental "whatness," but in a non-discursive form which does not exhaust the soul's hidden depth through conceptual apprehension (FEB 441; EES, 371). Experiencing the soul's essence involves, for Stein, comprehending in some measure the ultimate meaning (*Sinn*) of the soul which is disclosed in the final structure (*Zielgestalt*) that the soul is destined to attain. The soul's power refers to its potency of being, which, at the innermost level, the ego experiences in its undivided, collected form, prior to its deployment in formative activity directed to molding the body; the inward and non-conscious activity of the soul (in developing the powers of cognition, memory, response); and conscious ego-life (FEB 434-5; EES, 366-7). When the conscious ego lives within this deepest center, it has full possession of itself in the sense that its self-awareness encompasses as much as possible the depths at which its thoughts, feelings, and motivations arise, and it is able to act based on this holistic knowledge. It also connects to the full undivided vital power of the soul's being before its dispersal in manifold activities.

At this point in her exposition, Stein moves into theological discourse. She makes a distinction between how the ego becomes aware of the soul's depth in natural life, and what becomes possible through divine grace. In the natural mode of being, the soul's depth becomes manifest through the voice of conscience, which guides one's choice between right and wrong actions and gives judgment over one's conduct and condition, in specific situations that confront the person with a call to make decisions (FEB 442; EES 372). But it is rarely the case that an individual consciously and habitually turns to and abides in the soul's interiority as the soul in its

²⁵ See FEB, 441; EES, 371; Stein seems to use the terms "innermost being," "innermost center," and "innermost point" interchangeably. The full significance of the image of center or point becomes clearer in her treatment of contemplative union in *The Science of the Cross*, which I will discuss next.

²⁶ "Im 'Inneren' ist das Wesen der Seele nach innen aufgebrochen." EES, 369.

natural state is disposed to relating with the external world (FEB 434; EES 366). When someone does turn inward, that turning itself initially leads to perception of the self's properties, capacities, and experiential contents. Beyond that, the ego discovers an "unaccustomed emptiness and quiet," which is not compelling enough to satisfy the ego's vital impulses and urges (FEB 443; EES 373). In other words, most people do not find non-discursive contemplation of their interiority interesting enough to stay there. There is, however, the possibility of continual abiding in the inner depth. Through the gift of divine grace, a person can be drawn into and motivated to live in the soul's innermost being. Drawing on both Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross, Stein now introduces into her writing the "mystical infused grace" which God can grant to a person. In this grace, God allow a person to experience the indwelling of God in the soul (FEB 444; EES 373). In union with God through this grace, the soul gains access to the true meaning of all existents and events, and the power to exercise the freedom to choose the right course of action in light of this understanding. For Stein, the human intellect reaches its perfection through divine union, because only in divine union does it become possible for the soul to comprehend the true meaning of all existents. Stein asserts that the genuine meaning of all existents and events cohere in the Logos, the divine Word through which God created everything. It is in the second person of the Trinity that everything finds its proper interrelation and thereby meaning and value (FEB 352, 418; EES 301, 354). Through ontological union with the Triune God, the soul can receive proper illumination about the genuine meaning of a thing, event, or type of being. This in turn provides a new epistemic basis for human freedom and action. Whereas previously a person may have acted on the basis of partial understanding, divine union gives her access to the full meaning of reality.

What does this mean for the body? Within the Aristotelian scholastic framework of form-matter, act-potency, and soul-body, Stein presents the sensing body, *Leib*, as a “be-souled body,” in contrast to the body taken only as a physical object or the dead body, which both belong to the category of *Körper* (FEB 253; EES 220). The soul as the substantial form animates the body, reveals itself in the spatial fullness of the physical body, and sets it on the course of its development. The body, then, receives the animate form of the soul, and the soul and body as a unity unfolds the essence of the soul toward its destined structure and end. The material elements (*Stoff*) that comprise the physical body (*Körper*) are “in potentia” to receive the actualizing power of the soul.²⁷ Their pliability is the potentiality subject to formation and efficacious power.

The body is also the field of expression of the spiritual soul. Spiritual life as lived through the ego finds natural expression in the body. Although much of the body’s physical processes do not enter into the conscious life of the ego, Stein remarks that (some?) bodily functions and processes can be integrated into the life of the person if she executes every bodily action “freely and meaningfully (FEB 374; 367).” Incorporated into one’s spiritual life through conscious, intentional engagement, the body contributes to the unity of personal life.

The status of the body in the depth or castle model is that of the superficial layer in the former, or the outer walls in the latter. Stein construes the body in a similar way in POE where the interdependent phenomenal layers (physical, psychic, spiritual, personal) form a nested structure with the physical body forming the outer or topmost layer. In FEB, Stein configures this depth structure in the mold of Teresa of Avila’s interior castle. Here, the physical senses would be akin to portals of the outer walls of the castle, and the capacities or faculties of cognition,

²⁷ Donald Wallenfang, *Human and Divine Being: A Study on the Theological Anthropology of Edith Stein* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2017), 78.

affect, and memory function as sentries or inhabitants of these outer chambers.²⁸ As subject to the formative activity of the soul, the body receives the influence of whatever happens in the soul, while the soul receives the influences of external impressions and events. The relationship between the body and soul is reciprocally conditioning and formative.

In FEB, Stein carefully delineates the spiritual soul and the body, detailing their respective modes of being and their interrelation. Although the soul as a type of spirit and animate form, and the body as formed matter are different genera of being that are irreducible to each other,²⁹ Marian Maskulak stresses that Stein's concept of the body and soul must be understood as an integral unity.³⁰ The human being is a single "substance" in the sense that it is a unified whole that sustains its being with a definite degree of autonomy, even if it is ultimately a recipient of the power for being and life. According to Stein's formal definition of the human person as a bodied spiritual soul, the body and soul are inseparable: "Where there is a body, there is also a soul. And conversely, where there is a soul, there is also a body (FEB 367)." The soul's spiritual life is always nurtured by and emerges in dependence on the body (FEB 371), while the body is an instrument of the ego's acts and forms an integral unity with the whole person.

We should also note that this all too brief summary of the most important ideas about the human being as a body-soul-spirit unity indicates that Stein does not speak of the spirit, soul, and body as fixed entities. Her discourse construes them in multiple ways, congruent with their manifold aspects. The outcome of her philosophical method is a conception of these three forms as dynamic structures whose key features are best understood in terms of activity and relationality. However, the capstone to her later philosophical anthropology is its contemplative

²⁸ Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979), 35-9; Stein, "Die Seelenburg," 502.

²⁹ FEB, 272; EES, 236.

³⁰ Maskulak, 9.

character. She makes clear in FEB that the soul attains its end (*telos*) only when it fully awakens to its inmost being, and that fulfillment is equivalent to contemplative union with God. Hence, it is only in her explicitly theological writings that we come to see the full implications of her later conception of the body.

3.2.2. THE BODY IN CONTEMPLATION: THE SCIENCE OF THE CROSS

The significance and implications of Stein's conception of the body within her larger anthropology in FEB are made clearer in her final work *The Science of the Cross*. It is in SC that Stein can explicate in full the perfection of the human person through divine union, because the person's end is theological and her particular conception of it depends on the contemplative theological anthropology of Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. In the following section, I will examine how Stein uses the concept of the body developed in FEB in the SC, and how she approaches the body from a contemplative framework. The topic of the body enters into Stein's examination of John's writings in three different ways. First, the body is set within Stein's broader exposition of John's theory of the stages of contemplation. Here, we encounter descriptions of those aspects of his thought that touch on corporeality, namely his treatment of the physical senses, desires, and bodily effects of contemplation. Second, in part II section 2, Stein interpolates her own anthropology to interpret John's concept of the human soul.³¹ Third,

³¹ Edith Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, trans. Josephine Koepfel, O.C.D. (Washington D.C.: ICS Pub., 2002), ch. 13; *Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Johannes vom Kreuz*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 18 (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), II.2.3.b, 126ff.

on the basis of the preceding discussions of the body, Stein articulates her own theological vision of the body in contemplative union in relation to sin, suffering, and redemption.

3.2.2.1. Stein's discussion of the Body as encountered in John of the Cross

Stein notes that John scarcely treats the physical body in his writings, but it is assumed in his use of the category of the “senses” to denote the physical senses through which a person acquires knowledge of the sense world, and the pleasures and desires that sense perception elicits in the soul.³² To understand the place and status of the body within John's writings, a brief summary of his anthropology is necessary.³³ John's primary reference point is the soul, which is equivalent to the human person as a whole. In his anthropology, the soul is a unified complex, “one suppositum,”³⁴ consisting of two distinct dimensions: the sense faculties and the spiritual faculties. The senses include the external bodily organs of sense perception, as well as the interior senses of imagination and fantasy. The imagination organizes images and forms, while fantasy functions as their archive.³⁵ Working with the intellect, the interior senses can recall images and reorganize them. The spiritual faculties consist of the intellect, will, and memory,

³² SC, 113; KW, 93.

³³ John of the Cross explains this process in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night*; John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of Saint John of the Cross*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, OCD and Otilio Rodriguez, OCD (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1991). In addition to John's own writings, I draw on Edward Howells' excellent work on John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila; Edward Howells, *John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila: Mystical Knowing and Selfhood* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2002). For an overview of his anthropology, see Steven Payne, *John of the Cross and the Cognitive Value of Mysticism* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1990), and Bernard McGinn, *Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain*, 241-345. For historical context, see Gillian Ahlgren, *Enkindling Love: The Legacy of Teresa of Jesus and John of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Publishers, 2016), especially 129-54; on the Christological foundations of John of the Cross' work, see Iain Matthew, “The Knowledge and Consciousness of Christ in the Light of the Writings of St. John of the Cross” (PhD diss., University of Oxford, 1991), 93ff.

³⁴ DN (CWSJC), 367.

³⁵ Howells, 22.

through which the soul engages in cognition, chooses and seeks out what it desires, and reflects on the past and the present.³⁶

When discussing John's theory of union, we have to note from the outset that the soul moves toward its center by the grace of God, namely by the grace of "infused contemplation." As Stein explains, this form of contemplation is distinct from the peaceful, loving surrender to God's presence that a person attains through discursive meditation on the doctrines of Christian faith (SC 182). Infused contemplation actually begins with the practitioner's failure to engage in discursive meditation.³⁷ It is strictly a gift of divine grace, a "dark knowledge" of God that cannot be accessed through discursive means and a "being seized" by God in the soul's interior. In the initial, purgative stage of infused contemplation, the senses are wholly negative in their significance. The spiritual faculties are originally intended to be directed toward the knowledge and enjoyment of spiritual objects (i.e., divine attributes), but in their natural (fallen) mode, they are oriented toward the world of the senses and acquire knowledge of the external world by apprehending an object. More problematic is that this apprehensive mode of being is driven toward gratification of the passions and attaches to secondary images of God instead of God itself. Consequently, the first stage of purgation necessarily involves detaching the whole complex of sense and spirit from sensible objects and turning toward God itself. This twofold process is the famous, or notorious, "night of the senses" and "night of the spirit."³⁸ Both nights comprise two parts, the active night and the passive night. In the active nights, the soul practices purgative

³⁶ John takes up Augustine's triad which forms the latter's anthropological basis for Trinitarian theology, and parts ways with Aquinas; SC 114. On memory not as a third "part" of the soul, see Stein's comments, *ibid.*; Dominic Doyle's argument quoted in Bernard McGinn, *Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain (1500-1650)*, (New York: Crossroad Publishing Co., 2017), 259.

³⁷ *Ascent to Mount Carmel* (CWSJC), II, 13, ii-iv; "Meditation" in medieval and later Christian tradition refers to using visualizations and other sense-based forms (tactile sensations, odor, as well as affect). See SC, 182 (KW, 152) on meditation vs. contemplation.

³⁸ *Ascent* (CWSJC), 147-8; 272-3; DN (CWSJC), 360-442

detachment from sensory and spiritual objects and pleasures by its own agency, which indicates that ascetic practices involving denial of regular physical comforts and enjoyments are assumed as preparatory and basic to contemplative life. In the passive nights, divine grace initiates and carries out the activity of purgation. John's symbol of "dark night" refers to the soul's increasing awareness of the true extent of its sinful state, and the incapacity for its faculties in their natural mode to apprehend God (SC 183; KW 153).

As the senses and spiritual faculties of the human soul are purgatively "emptied out" of their attachment to everything that is not God, the soul begins to experience in intensifying degrees the presence and activity of God's love within itself. The soul enters the illuminative way.³⁹ Once the human soul has been purified of its engrained attachment to the world, God grants the soul immediate experiences of unifying contact, which John describes as God's "touch" or "wound" (SC 195-6; KW 163). These experiences take place in what John calls the "substance" (*sustancia*), "inmost region" (*el fondo del alma*), or "center" of the soul (*el centro del alma*). Howells explains that the substance of the soul refers to the depth underlying the spiritual faculties of intellect, will, and memory.⁴⁰ The soul gains access to this depth when God begins to grant the grace of unifying contact with God's own being in contemplative union. In this stage, the activity of the corporeal senses and the natural activities of the spiritual faculties are suspended so that they cannot distract what is happening within the depth of the soul. The soul experiences the early stages of unifying contact with God as ecstasy, being drawn out of itself (SC 239; KW 198). Such an experience can be so intense that the senses feel overwhelmed and the soul can fear that it may be torn apart from the body.

³⁹ *The Dark Night* (CWSJC), 392; *The Spiritual Canticle* (CWSJC), 477.

⁴⁰ Howells, 47.

The experience of being “touched” or “wounded” by God’s being in one’s interior depth marks the beginning of the final stage of divine union. In the height of union, the human soul becomes integrated into the inner life of the Trinity, as fully as it is possible in this life. What this means is that the human soul knows and loves God no longer through the mode natural to it, but in the same way that God knows and loves himself through the Holy Spirit. In fact, the union is so deep that the human soul is able to give God back to himself, reflecting the inner Trinitarian relation of total self-giving and reception between the divine persons.⁴¹ The distinction between the soul as finite and God as infinite remains, but this union is so deep and intimate that it comes close to the hypostatic union in the Incarnation. At this highest stage of union, which John calls “spiritual marriage,” the corporeal, “lower part” of the soul has been perfectly purified so that spiritual communications do not cause any pain or discomfort (SC 215; KW 180-1). The senses share in the grace of union by becoming purified of their natural mode of being, gathered in spiritual recollection, and experience in an indirect way the divine self-communication to the soul in its inmost region (SC 272; KW 225-6).

In this theory of the stages of contemplative union and the operative anthropology, John makes a set of sharp divisions between the senses and spirit; the natural mode of knowing and supernatural (graced) mode of knowing; the supernatural mode of knowing that uses sensible forms and one that involves no sensible forms. For each set, the spirit, supernatural mode, and non-sensible mode are considered to be superior to whatever is tied to the senses. Stein comments on the soul-body relationship in John’s writings in the context of his descriptions of the “wounding by love” in the higher stages of divine union:

⁴¹ *The Living Flame of Love* (CWSJC), 706; Stein, SC, 261; KW, 215. For discussion of epistemology and Trinity in divine union, see Howells, 46-54.

No matter how exalted the wounding by love in visionary experiences may be, nothing can come up to the purely spiritual happenings in the inmost region of the soul. To this corresponds the very distinct view of the relationship of body and soul, which is to be remarked at this point. The soul as spirit is essentially dominant, even though in her condition after the fall - and this even when elevated to the highest degree imaginable on earth - she is burdened by the body, and weighed down by the earthly shell. And the ordering of grace adapts itself to this original ordering of nature and gives gifts especially and in the first place to the soul, then only in descending order and eventually through the mediation of the soul, to the body.⁴²

All sense derived experiences (e.g., visions) are inferior to spiritual events, which completely lack corporeal or sense data, in the “inmost region of the soul.” This corresponds to the hierarchical relationship between the soul and the body. The soul as spirit is created to supersede the body in order and importance, so that the grace of divine union flows in first to the soul and secondarily to the body. In this passage, the soul and body are portrayed in vertical relationship, with divine grace bestowed from above the soul. Consistent with the superior status of the soul over that of the body, John holds that the highest form of divine union in contemplation has no form or figure, and the union takes place in the deepest part of the soul. The body and its perceptive modes become inert in this process and comes to share in the effects of divine union solely as a recipient when the delights felt in the soul “overflows into the body (SC 200; KW 168).”

3.2.2.2. Stein’s Intervention on the Body in John’s Theory I: Structural Considerations

Stein is well aware that John’s faculty anthropology raises the issue of how the senses are actually integrated into the process of contemplative union. The sharp division between sense and spirit in John’s anthropology does not signify an ontological dualism, as he himself stresses repeatedly that the two parts form a single suppositum of the soul. The real target of this division is not the sensory faculties per se, but rather the conditioning of the sensorial and

⁴² SC, 198; KW, 166.

spiritual faculties in the “natural” (fallen) state to seek satisfaction in sensory objects and desires. This state overturns the purpose originally intended by God for the human person, which is the knowledge and love of God prior to enjoyment of creation. Yet, the status of the corporeal senses remains ambiguous in John, not least because the primary term of engagement in contemplation is the *soul*, freed from its enmeshment in an existence defined and driven by sensorial gratification and external preoccupations. Even when John construes the senses as sharing in the effects of divine union, they are conceived as far removed from the events happening within the landscape of the soul.

Howells argues that John’s solution to this problem is Trinitarian: what transpires in divine union for John is not the exclusion or mere suspension of the senses, but the deepening of the whole sense-spirit complex of the human soul as it becomes transformed into the form of the Trinity.⁴³ In this union, Howells argues, the soul knows God not as a distinct object, which would be appropriate for sensory knowing, but relationally, in the same way that the Father and the Son know each others in the Trinity. Stein will make a similar point in her treatment of the Trinitarian significance of John’s theory of contemplative union, but she addresses the status of the body more directly. Concluding her explanation of the *Ascent to Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night* in part II of KW, Stein notes that these works give information about the “being of the spirit” (*Wesen des Geistes*) and clarifies that contemplation is simultaneously death and resurrection of the soul (SC 153; KW 126). But for Stein, both the spirit’s being and what the new life actually involves call for further development. The content of the new life will become clear when Stein examines the *The Spiritual Canticle* and *The Living Flame of Love*, which discusses in detail the soul’s states of transformation as it moves into the highest stage of divine union, the

⁴³ Howells, 54.

“spiritual marriage.” Stein, however, makes a surprising decision when she turns to the ontology of the spirit, especially as it pertains to the human person. She is not content with presenting John’s own anthropology. Instead, she chooses to interpolate her own concept of the human person after a concise exposition of John’s view of the soul’s interiority.⁴⁴

She explains how it is that spatial images of ascent-descent, exterior-interior, and “deepest center” in John, and also the related images of the castle, outer rooms, inner rooms in Teresa are metaphors that explain the non-spatial reality of the state of the soul’s relationship with God (SC 155; KW 128). When the soul moves closer to God, that is an “ascent” in the sense that it is moving beyond itself to the apex of the order of spiritual being. The ascent is simultaneously a “descent” into the deepest point of the soul, because in John’s view, God has chosen the soul’s deepest center as the divine dwelling place and the soul’s ultimate resting point (SC 154, 178; KW 127, 150). Stein explains that the reasoning for this view rests on the science of his time, which understood bodies as gravitating toward the center of the earth because it is the central point that exercises the strongest power of attraction. Likewise, the soul is drawn into its deepest center as this point is the dwelling place of God and the power of God’s love magnetically draws the soul toward it (SC 157,155; KW 131, 129). In the imagery of the castle, the outer chambers represent the part of the soul that is closest in structural terms to the senses and sense objects. They also function to signify the soul’s preoccupation with apprehending sense objects and satisfying sensory desires over against God. Similar to the spatial metaphors in John, the Teresian imagery portrays withdrawal from engagement with sense faculties and activities in terms of

⁴⁴ SC 161; KW 132f.

moving into the inner chambers until the soul finally reaches the innermost chamber for spiritual marriage with God.⁴⁵

These images, Stein states, are vital for understanding the intended meaning of John's writings, but they are ambiguous. Interestingly, the first point she makes to clarify further their meaning is the status of the body:

It is important to clarify as much as possible, spiritually and without imagery, what these spatial images express. These images are indispensable. But they are ambiguous and easily misunderstood. What approaches the soul from without belongs to the *outer world* and by this is meant whatever does not belong to the soul herself; as a rule, it also includes whatever does not belong to her body. For even though the body is called her exterior, it is *her* exterior, at one with her in the unity of one being and not as external as that which confronts her as totally strange [*fremd*] and separate. Among these strange and separate ones, there is the difference between things which have a clearly *exterior* being, i.e., are spatially extended, and such as have an *interior* like the soul herself.⁴⁶

I read Stein's statements in this passage as attempting to address, on the one hand, the danger of understanding the spatial metaphors as literally applying to the soul's structure, and, on the other hand, the risk of inferring a dis-bodied vision of the soul in John's theory of contemplation. It is at this point that Stein iterates her own concept of the body as the soul's exterior. The emphatic statement, "*her* exterior, at one with her in the unity of one being and not as external as that which confronts her as completely foreign and separate (*gegenüberstehen*)," serves to assert as explicitly as possible the human person as an integral unity of soul and body. Her point harkens back to FEB where she defines the "soul" as such as bodied spirit. Its very *being* necessarily entails this unity with the body.

This unity is consonant with John's anthropology, but Stein apparently felt the need to stress this point here when interposing her own anthropology, in order to make sure the reader understands that John's descriptions of what occurs "in" the soul in contemplation does not indicate any kind of ontological split between soul and body. The fact that she felt obliged to

⁴⁵ Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle*, 172f.

⁴⁶ SC, 159; KW132-3.

begin her own constructive interpretation with this remark suggests strongly that John's text, taken as it is, does not make this point sufficiently clear. The implication, which she does not examine here, is that there has to be a more substantial account of how the events in the soul connect with the body (an important point for Steinian phenomenology, as we saw in her early writings, which regards the body as the condition of possibility for affective and cognitive acts). We will see below what this account involves when we get to the end of SC and also her essays. Within Stein's overall thinking, her corrective point to John's potentially imbalanced focus on the soul further implies that the body as the soul's own exterior has characteristics that are particular to the life of the individual person's soul. It is not a general body, but a specific body with all the unique attributes and particularities of an individual's lived body, reflecting the life of the individual's soul.⁴⁷ Such individual, personal formation of the soul and body is central to Stein's anthropology and serves to recapitulate its fundamental components in concrete human existence.

After drawing John's discourse on the soul firmly back to the body, Stein presents her own concept of the soul's inner structure. It is generally a restatement of her construction of the soul in FEB,⁴⁸ but with a fuller explanation of the theological dimension and its connection with John's theory of contemplative union. She reiterates the soul as comprising "greater and lesser depths" according to whether the soul's attention and interest are engaged primarily with objects, events, and persons in the external world, or with its own interior realm (SC 162; KW 135). The "inmost region" or "center point" of the soul is where God dwells and the union of love between the soul and God can take place. Stein asserts her own theory here that the soul that reaches the

⁴⁷ See POE, 40; above, ch. 2, p.15f.

⁴⁸ SC, 159-160; KW, 132-3.

inmost region and abides in it gains the freedom to “collect her entire being and make decisions about it (SC 160; KW 133).”

Stein explains the notion that there can be movement within the inner realm of the soul through the soul’s being formed as an I, which is the structure by means of which the soul attains conscious self-awareness and comes to “possess” itself (SC 160; KW 133). An individual’s conscious ego “moves” into varying depths of the soul according to the motivations that appeal to it (SC 162; KW 136). We can recall here that in Stein’s theory of motivation, motives for a person’s actions are based on valuation of an object, person or event. The soul’s self-knowledge, self-awareness, and basis of decisions and actions in relation to motives and values can only follow from the extent to which the soul has plumbed the levels of its own depths and appropriated those levels into its own self-consciousness (the life of the I). When the soul lives its life outside its inmost region, it is ignorant of the ultimate meaning and value of external and internal existents (e.g., drives, needs, feelings, thoughts), because the soul’s mode of being is still enmeshed (to varying degrees depending on the level of depth at which the soul abides) and determined by values that are not grounded in ultimate reality (SC 164-5; KW 137). The further implication that Stein makes explicit is that such a mode of being involves a dispersion of the soul’s power for being, since it is not rooted solidly in the ultimate source of being. Instead, it is hooked on and drawn out by external existents.

When, however, the soul is drawn into the inmost region by divine grace, the soul comes to possess itself to the fullest extent possible in human life. At the same time, this self-possession does not make transparent the entire inmost region, since, as the divine dwelling, it remains a mystery. More importantly, reaching and abiding in the inmost region is not ultimately about self-possession and the person’s awakening to her soul’s innermost depth. True, the soul has

recourse to a new basis for discerning and acting instead of being caught in habitual patterns of reaction to stimuli coming from the external world and internal drives, or acting solely based on one's own set of values and depth of understanding. Yet, the inmost region is the condition of possibility for something far more significant than self-possession, namely union of love with God in contemplation (SC 178; KW 149-50).

The soul, then, is not just a depth structure, but fundamentally an open one. It is open to the outer world through the "exterior" of its body, and to God through the innermost point. Corresponding to its bi-directional, expansive structure, Stein examines the soul first in terms of its own movement, and then in terms of divine union. From the latter perspective, the movement of the 'I' through the soul's levels to the inmost region corresponds to the degrees of love it holds for God. The beginning stage of infused contemplation, a movement of "ascent-descent," involves "purgation" of the soul's attachment to external existents ("night of the senses") as well as to any experience related to one's faith that conflates concepts, images, and feelings with the divine itself ("night of the spirit"). The purgative stage is painful to the soul, as it undergoes the deprivation of sensible objects and felt presence of God, and becomes keenly aware of its own imperfections.

With greater progress on the path to union, the pain of purgation gradually diminishes as the soul is increasingly "emptied" of its sensorial and spiritual attachments. Contemplation reaches its fulfillment in loving union with God. Through unifying contact with God, the soul is stably anchored in its deepest center. In such contact, God "touches" with divine being the inmost region of the soul.⁴⁹ Although felt, these touches are formless as they are direct communications of God's being itself. With each touch, the soul is inflamed with an ever

⁴⁹ SC, 177; KW, 149.

intensifying desire for God. With the deepening of its desire, the soul discovers a profound depth in the spiritual faculties of memory, will, and intellect. They become dilated to such extent that they become capable of receiving the infinite being of God. In LFL, John calls these faculties the “caves of sense - profound abyss,” because their depth becomes known only after all the attachments become eliminated in purgation.⁵⁰ Underlying the caves is the “feeling of the soul” (*el sentido del alma*), which Stein explains as the capacity of the substance of the soul to feel and enjoy the objects of the spiritual faculties (i.e., the divine attributes) (SC 208; KW 175).”

The unifying contacts are preparations for the height of divine union, which John calls “spiritual marriage.” Spiritual marriage in the center of the soul has as its prerequisite the soul’s complete self-surrender to God. For Stein, this act of giving up one’s whole self to God is the height of human freedom because the decision concerns surrendering the soul’s freedom itself. Consequent to such surrender, the soul no longer acts independently. All of its actions are initiated and completed by God, and the soul becomes simply receptive to divine action (SC 162, 188; KW 135, 158). At this stage, the entire complex of sense and spirit have been totally transformed and “become divine,” and the human soul becomes integrated into the inner life of the Trinity, as fully as that is possible in this life (SC 202, 268; KW 169, 222). In the spiritual marriage, the soul knows God in the mode of God’s own self-knowledge. Howells explains that this mode of knowing God is akin to a “shared subjectivity” in which God is to the soul as another self.⁵¹ It stands to God as the second person of the Son does to the Father, as two equal subjects distinguished only by the sense of relational distinction.⁵² As described in terms of divine union, the center point is not a “space” of the soul, but the culmination of its

⁵⁰ SC, 203, 206; KW, 170, 173.

⁵¹ Howells, 54.

⁵² *Ibid.*

transformation into divine being. It is at once the realization of the soul's purpose as created by God and radical restructuring of the inner relations between the world, senses, and spirit. In this restructuring, the soul's primary "union" with the world is overhauled from the inside out into the state of principal union with the Trinity. As discussed above, the distinction here between the finite soul and eternal God remains, but their union is so deep that it approximates the hypostatic union of the divine and human nature in the incarnation of Christ.

3.2.2.3. Stein's Intervention on the Body in John's Theory II: Continuing Incarnation, Continuing Expiation

It is in connection with the incarnation that Stein makes her second intervention on the body in John's theory. In the final section of SC titled "The Bridal Symbol and the Cross" (Brautsymbol und Kreuz),⁵³ after completing her explanation of John's notion of spiritual marriage, Stein writes, "We are at an essential point and must try, in our understanding, to penetrate even deeper than the explicit words of the saint's own explanations take us (SC 259)." Stein then interprets John's theory of divine union as a participation in the incarnation of Christ.

Now it is necessary to note that the mystical union is to be interpreted as participation in the incarnation.... Theologians, after all, like to designate the acceptance of human nature by the divine Word as a marriage with humanity. By means of it, the God-man has opened the way to individual souls. And every time that a soul surrenders so totally without reservation that God can raise her to mystical marriage, it is as though he becomes man anew. Naturally, the essential difference remains that in Jesus Christ both natures are one in one person, while in mystical marriage two persons enter into a union and their duality remains intact. However, through the mutual surrender of the two, a union results that comes close to the hypostatic one. It opens the soul for the reception of divine life and makes it possible for the Lord, through the entire subjection of the individual's will to the divine will, to make disposition of these persons as of members of his body. They no longer live their life, but the life of Christ; they no longer suffer their own pain but rather, the passion of Christ. Therefore they also rejoice in the life of grace that the Lord enkindles in other souls when the spark of divine love touches them and the wine of this love causes in them holy inebriation.⁵⁴

⁵³ KW, 213ff.

⁵⁴ SC, 261; KW, 215.

Here, Stein elaborates on the point that the union between the soul and God in spiritual marriage approximates the hypostatic union of human and divine natures in Christ. Even if the duality of finite human being and infinite divine being remains, the depth of the union is like a new incarnation of Christ. In union, the nature of human subjectivity changes such that the content of the practitioner's experience is the same as Christ's. In concert with this, the sphere of her concern and hope include other human beings, as expressed through her joy over other human individuals' reception of contemplative grace. Similarly, the nature of human agency changes so that through the union of wills, the soul no longer acts on its own but through the Holy Spirit and as a member of Christ's Mystical Body (SC 162, 188; KW 135, 158).⁵⁵

In SC, however, Stein presents a very specific view of the incarnation. Although she is well aware of an alternative line of interpretation,⁵⁶ Stein exclusively weds the incarnation with Christ's redemptive passion. The motivation for the incarnation is the redemption of creation from sin (SC 260; KW 214). Christ assumes human nature as the condition for taking on the suffering that can expiate (*sühnen*) or remove human sin and satisfy the requirements of divine justice. The apex of this suffering is Jesus' experience of abandonment by God on the cross.

But in the Incarnation he had taken upon himself the entire burden of mankind's sin, embraced it with his merciful love, and hidden it in his soul. This he did in the *Ecce venio* ["Behold, I come"] with which he began his earthly life, and specifically renewed in his baptism, and in the *Fiat!* ["Let it be!"] of Gethsemani (Lk 22:39). This is how the expiating fire burned in his inmost being, in his entire, lifelong suffering, in the most intense form in the Garden of Olives and on the cross, because here the sensible joy of the indestructible union ceased, subjecting him totally to the Passion, and allowing this Passion to become the experience of the total abandonment by God. In the *Consummatum est* ["It is finished" (Jn 19:30)], the end of the expiatory fire is announced as is the final return into eternal, undisturbed union of love in the *Pater, in manus tuas commendo spiritum meum* ["Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" (Lk 23:46)].⁵⁷

⁵⁵ The "Mystical Body" refers to the church as Christ's body, derived from Paul's notion of believers forming the body of Christ in 1 Corinthians 12:27 and Romans 12:5, and used in official church documents beginning in the 14th century; see F. X. Lawlor and D. M. Doyle, "Mystical Body of Christ," in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, 2nd edition (Detroit, MI: Gale, 2003), 99-105.

⁵⁶ SC, 260, fn. 1; KW, 214, n. 490. In FEB, Stein takes a much broader view of the incarnation as encompassing the entire cosmos and order of creation; FEB 521-3, 527.

⁵⁷ SC, 184; KW, 155.

In Stein's expiatory model of the incarnation, Christ takes human sin into his interior life and subjects himself to suffering that is necessary to expiate sin. The ultimate form of that suffering is Christ's experience of losing the felt union with God. Stein states that "the *sensible* joy of the indestructible union" [italics mine] ceased in order to note that the abandonment was restricted to Christ's human nature and did not sever the actual ontological, hypostatic union. Stein explains the reasoning for this suffering and Christ's exclusive fitness for it:

The abandonment by God in its entire profundity was reserved for him exclusively. It was possible for him to endure it only because he was at the same time God and man. As God he could not suffer, as only man he could not have grasped what a good it was of which he robbed himself. So the incarnation is a condition for this suffering; human nature, capable of and actually suffering is a tool for the redemption. Human nature as exposed to the danger of the Fall and actually fallen, is the motivation for the salvific passion and therefore also for the incarnation.⁵⁸

Total divine abandonment was necessary as the "ransom" for the "accumulated debt of sin of all times" in order to satisfy divine justice, which human beings had transgressed, and restore access to divine grace (SC 273; KW 226). Only Christ could undergo this suffering, because only as God could he endure it. Yet, he had to take on human nature precisely because human nature is capable of suffering. Hence, human nature, both the senses and the spirit, are instruments of redemption through their vulnerability.⁵⁹

Stein explicitly connects this redemptive suffering through the incarnation with John's theory of contemplative union. Contemplation reenacts Christ's redemptive passion. The purgative sufferings in the earlier period are the "expiatory flames" that eliminate every sinful desire and obstruction that prevents the human soul from full union with God (185). They are part of the "cross" that one necessarily encounters on the path to contemplative union. As the

⁵⁸ SC, 260; KW, 214.

⁵⁹ On the significance of vulnerability and the embodied nature of John's thought, see Alain Cugno, *Saint John of the Cross: Reflections on Mystical Experience*, trans. Barbara Wall (New York: The Seabury Press, 1982).

light of divine grace flows into the human soul in contemplation, the dynamic of Christ's illumination of human sin and his confrontation with it unfolds within the soul:

In order to lead the bride home, the Eternal Word clothed himself with human nature. God and the soul are to be *two in one flesh*. But because the flesh of sinful human beings riots against the spirit, all life in the flesh is battle and suffering: for the Son of Man even more than for any other human being; for the others, more in proportion to the intimacy of their bond with him. Jesus Christ woos the soul, in that he substitutes his life for hers in the battle against his and her enemies.... Relentlessly he uncovers human malice wherever it approaches him in delusion, disguise, and obduracy.... Through all this he rouses the rage of hell and the hatred of human malice and weakness against himself until they break loose and prepare the death on the cross for him. Here, in the extreme torment of body and soul, above all in the night of abandonment by God, he pays divine Justice the ransom for the accumulated debt of sin of all times and opens the sluice of paternal Mercy for all who have the courage to embrace the cross and the crucified one. Into them he pours his divine light and life. But because this light unceasingly annihilates all that stands in his way, they experience it first as night and death. This is the dark night of contemplation, the death on the cross for the *old self*.⁶⁰

The grace of divine light and life that Christ pours into human souls as the fruit of his passion and death uncovers the depth of sin and evil in their souls, reflecting Christ's confrontation with human and demonic malice and opposition in his earthly life. Just as this exposure and judgment of sin led to his death, the infusion of divine grace in contemplation also brings out before the practitioner's view the full reality of his or her sin. The soul experiences the conflict between the infused presence and activity of divine being, and one's inner obstructions to God as suffering. At its height, the soul experiences this suffering as the annihilation of the identity built on the mode of its life prior to contemplation. It is in this sense that the dark night of contemplation is the crucifixion and death of the "old self," and an intimate sharing in Christ's abandonment on the cross.

Stein further explains that the expiatory sufferings of the cross and death of the self in contemplation are inseparably connected to the power of the resurrection. The embrace of suffering as redemptive is possible only because of the new life that comes through it:

⁶⁰ SC, 273; KW, 226-7 This passage recapitulates Stein reflection on the atonement in FEB, which she wrote in light of the Council of Trent's decrees on justification. See FEB 521-22; Henry Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma (Enchiridion Symbolorum, 13th Edition)*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1957), 251-2.

The progressive collapse of nature gives more and more room to the supernatural light and to divine life. It overpowers the natural faculties and transforms them into divinized and spiritualized ones. Thus a new incarnation of Christ takes place in christians [*sic*], which is synonymous with a resurrection from the death on the cross. The *new self* carries the wounds of Christ on the body: the remembrance of the misery of sin out of which the soul was awakened to a blessed life, and a reminder of the price that had to be paid for that. The pain of yearning for the fullness of life persists until, through the door of actual physical death, entrance into the shadowless light is gained. So the bridal union of the soul with God is the goal for which she was created, purchased through the cross, consummated on the cross and sealed for all eternity with the cross.⁶¹

We can now understand fully what Stein has in mind when she construes spiritual marriage in contemplation as an incarnation of Christ. It is not only that the intimacy of contemplative union comes close to the hypostatic union in Christ. As a process of incarnation, contemplation unfolds in the pattern of Christ's crucifixion, death, and resurrection. As discussed above, the ordinary mode of the senses and the spiritual faculties break down, and they become radically re-grounded in divine being. The depth structure of the soul become manifest so that the senses and the spiritual faculties attain their full form, as "caves" that are capable of receiving the infinite being of God. This profound transformation is suffering for the human soul, initially due to purification of sin, and in spiritual marriage due to the lasting yearning for the beatific vision. Furthermore, Christ's incarnation and its redemptive purpose is the condition for the possibility of contemplative union, for which the soul was created. The cross as an emblem (*Wahrzeichen*) that holds as one the passion, death, and the resurrection has a central significance in the contemplative life: it indicates the human vocation and the possibility to become one with God through Christ's incarnation and redemption.

To summarize, then, Stein asserts her own conception of the body within her exposition of John's theory of contemplation. She accepts John's sharp division between the sensorial and spiritual life, and a hierarchical relationship between the soul and body. However, as Thibault van den Driessche expresses it, she makes clear that the renunciation of sensorial and spiritual

⁶¹ Ibid.

satisfaction, including consoling experiences of God, are preparatory means by which “the flesh finds its true identity,” through the reconstitution of desire and participation in divine union.⁶² The body participates in divine union through the “overflow” of the effects that comes from the center of the soul. Stein, however, asserts her own anthropology in her exposition of John’s theory. She pointedly stresses that the body and soul form an inseparable unity, such that the body is the *soul’s* own exterior. This implies that the body is an extension of the soul, even if its structures and processes are irreducibly distinct. Partly a reiteration of her model of the body in POE, the body is the surface or outermost layer of the person behind which lies manifold levels of the inner depth. In contrast, however, to the earlier model where levels of depth belonged to the phenomenological category of the “personal layer,” depth in SC (and FEB) refers to the soul conceived ontologically and finds its significance in relation to the soul’s inmost depth or center point. The center of the soul is not a spatial location, but an experiential site of encounter and union with God. It is not the soul’s terminus, but rather its opposite: the portal to infinity and eternal divine being. In union, the life of the body and soul are incorporated into the Trinitarian life so that the person becomes another incarnation of Christ. As a process of incarnation, contemplative union reenacts the passion, death, and resurrection. Once the soul reaches by grace the height of union, it no longer lives its life but the life of Christ.

⁶² Thibault van den Driessche, “Le sens du renoncement...: Quand Edith Stein commente Jean de la Croix,” *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 82/4 (2006): 326.

3.3. CONTEMPLATION AND ATONEMENT IN STEIN'S LATER SOMATOLOGY

Stein's somatology displays a confluence of her later anthropology, Carmelite contemplation, doctrine of the incarnation, and theory of atonement.⁶³ Adding to the complexity is Stein's use of multiple theories and images of atonement without making any clear distinctions. In the essay "Marriage of the Lamb (Hochzeit des Lammes),"⁶⁴ she interprets the the Lamb in Revelations through Leviticus and Letter to the Hebrews. The lamb signifies for Stein the sacrifice of Christ on the cross for reconciliation between God and humanity, but the sacrifice is read through the Day of Atonement rituals described in Leviticus 16. Stein associates the sin offerings of the bull for the high priest, the goat for the people, and the scapegoat with the sacrifice of Christ. She then connects it with the Christian reinterpretation of the Day of Atonement in the Letter to the Hebrews, stating that the imperfect sacrifices of the Temple are fulfilled once and for all in Christ's sacrifice of his own life. By this, she writes, "the old sacrifices lost their efficacy; and soon they ceased entirely, as did also the old priesthood when the temple was destroyed." While Stein explicitly maintained her Jewish identity after her conversion, these and other passages in her writings show that she interpreted the Christian revelation and the Church as fulfilling the Jewish religious tradition (HL 98; GL II 136). Even though she affirms that the Church grows out of and remains rooted in Israel, the Jewish faith is a preparatory stage for the revelation of Christ and her theology is far from being non-supersessionist.

⁶³ As Stein says, "The Christian mysteries are an indivisible whole." Edith Stein, "The Mystery of Christmas" in *Writings of Edith Stein*, trans. Hilda Graef (Maryland: The Newman Press, 1956), 31.

⁶⁴ Dated September 14, 1940. Edith Stein, *The Hidden Life: Hagiographical Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Texts*, trans. Waltraut Stein (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1992), 97f; Edith Stein, *Geistliche Texte II*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 20 (Freiburg: Herder, 2007), 135f.

Stein also identifies Jesus with the Passover Lamb whose sacrifice and blood saves from the angel of death, and indicates the sacrifice's fulfillment in Jesus' self-offering as food in the last supper. She is not concerned with the fact that the sin offerings of the bull and goat, the scapegoat ritual, and Passover sacrifice have different meanings.⁶⁵ Nor is she interested in grounding her view of the atonement in any particular theological authority or source. In each of her interpretive turns, the central point is the atoning value of Christ's sacrificial death, its power to eliminate the burden of sin and restore access to grace.

For Stein, the hermeneutic key that brings together the disparate biblical references and theological concepts related to the atonement is expiation (*Sühne*).⁶⁶ Stein understands Christ's redemptive work principally in terms of his death as an expiatory sacrifice. We can see the overall shape of Anselmian satisfaction theory of atonement in her thought, as Stein repeatedly interprets the death on the cross as a ransom that satisfies the requirements of divine justice.⁶⁷ She makes a succinct statement on the atonement in FEB, in light of the Council of Trent's decrees on justification:

By his suffering and death, Jesus Christ atones for the sins of all people and thus satisfies divine justice. Human nature lends itself to this atonement as a fitting instrument, because it contains the possibilities of suffering and of death. That the atonement is sufficient, indeed of superabundant value, is evident from the fact that it is the work of a divine person. It is thus as infinite in its nature as was the offense against God, and there is no human accomplishment, not even all the good works performed by the entire human race, that could serve as a substitute.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ See Stephen Finlan, *Options on Atonement in Christian Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2007), 9-17.

⁶⁶ Karl-Heinz Menke, "Sühne" in *Edith Stein-Lexikon*, eds. Marcus Knaup and Harald Seubert (Freiburg: Verlag Herder, 2017), 351-2.

⁶⁷ For Anselm, see "Cur Deus Homo," in *Basic Writings, 2nd Edition* (Peru, IL: Open Court Publishing Co., 1962), specifically I.xi-xii, xix-xx; II.vi-vii. For satisfaction of divine justice in Stein, FEB 520-2; SC, 273; HL, 91; "Mystery of Christmas," 24. For more on satisfaction in Anselm, see Katherine Sonderegger, "Anselmian Atonement," in *T&T Clark Companion to the Atonement* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), especially, 188-193.

⁶⁸ FEB, 521; EES, 435. Stein is commenting on the Council's decrees on justification; Denzinger, nos. 793-800.

Divine justice, satisfaction, infinite weight of human sin against God, and the superabundant value of Christ's sacrifice are recognizable Anselmian themes, and they are reiterated in the Council's statements. However, as Christophe Kruijen notes, there are key differences between Stein and Anselm's theory. If the major terms in Anselm are satisfaction, reparation, and restoration, Stein's main words are expiation, sacrifice, and ransom. While "*satisfactio*" is applied to the cross by theological authorities such as St. Ambrose, the word "expiation" comes directly from the Scriptures.⁶⁹ In contrast to Stein, furthermore, Anselm does not make satisfaction of divine justice a precondition, a price to pay for God to exercise mercy.⁷⁰ Rather, justice is included in and never annulled by God's mercy. For Stein, divine justice requires that sins be expiated by suffering as payment for the debt incurred.⁷¹ Kruijen argues that her preference for the notion of expiation reflects her interest in carving out conceptual space for human participation in God's justifying grace.⁷²

We can see this in how Stein weaves together expiatory sacrifice, incarnation, and contemplation, and incarnation in a series of essays written over the decade preceding the composition of SC (completed in 1942). Her clearest and most forceful articulation of the interrelationship between these ideas can be found in her short piece, "Love of the Cross (Kreuzesliebe)," which was written for her fellow Carmelite nuns to celebrate the Feast of St.

⁶⁹ Kruijen, 79.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 95-6.

⁷¹ The idea of expiation is also found in Stein's early writing on retributive justice for guilt of crime in *An Investigation Concerning the State*, trans. Marianne Sawicki (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 2006), 159-60.

⁷² Kruijen also argues that her use of expiation reflects Jewish influence. This is a difficult thesis to support, as there are so few textual evidence for it (autobiographical statements - Stein was born on Yom Kippur in 1891, and Scriptural references in essays such as "Marriage of the Lamb") and she does not draw on any Jewish religious thinkers. Christian scholars seem especially eager to trace Jewish influence in Stein's thought, but what is actually striking in Stein's work is how little Jewish sources enter into it. On the importance of Yom Kippur, see Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: 1891-1916* (Washington D.C.: ICS Publications, 1986), 71-2.

John of the Cross (Nov 24), presumably around 1934 after her entrance into Carmel in (1933).⁷³

The essay opens by asking why John of the Cross had a love for suffering. For Stein, it is rooted in the desire for union with God. John represents for Stein persons who voluntarily undertake suffering because they understand it as a means of participating in the expiatory suffering of Christ. Christ bore corrupted human nature in order to carry this burden out of the world and reconcile humanity with God. Since, however, divine justice has to be satisfied for reconciliation to be accomplished, “The entire sum of human failures from the first Fall up to the Day of Judgment must be blotted out by a corresponding measure of expiation (HL 91; GT II 111).”

The suffering that Christ endured throughout his life and in the Passion was expiatory precisely in this sense of making amends for the totality of human transgressions of divine justice, including the first sin of Adam and Eve and all of its consequences. Moreover, the work of expiation continues throughout history as willing followers of Christ voluntarily take up suffering as members of his “Mystical Body” in order to remove the sins of others. Stein writes,

Everyone who, in the course of time, has borne an onerous destiny in remembrance of the suffering Savior or who has freely taken up works of expiation has by doing so canceled some of the mighty load of human sin and has helped the Lord carry his burden. Or rather, Christ the head effects expiation in these members of his Mystical Body who put themselves, body and soul, at his disposal for carrying out his work of salvation.... Thus, when someone desires to suffer, it is not merely a pious reminder of the suffering of the Lord. Voluntary expiatory suffering is what truly and really unites one to the Lord intimately. When it arises, it comes from an already existing relationship with Christ. For, by nature, a person flees from suffering. And the mania for suffering caused by a perverse lust for pain differs completely from the desire to suffer in expiation.... Only someone whose spiritual eyes have been opened to the supernatural correlations of worldly events can desire suffering in expiation, and this is only possible for people in whom the spirit of Christ dwells, who as members are given life by the Head, receive his power, his meaning, and his direction. Conversely, works of expiation bind one closer to Christ, as every community that works together on one task becomes more and more closely knit and as the limbs of a body, working together organically, continually become more and more strongly one.⁷⁴

Whereas SC discusses expiatory suffering primarily as the reenactment of Christ’s passion in the practitioner’s progress on the way to divine union, this essay brings into relief its social and

⁷³ Waltraut Stein, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *The Hidden Life*, xx.

⁷⁴ HL, 92; GT II, 112.

ecclesial meaning. Persons who accept suffering in remembrance of Christ's suffering participate through grace in his expiatory work. Stein seems to assert that such voluntary suffering in faith and union with Christ has actual efficacy in removing other people's sins, the transgressions that require restitution and prevent them from receiving the gift of grace. This is a difficult point of interpretation in Stein's thought, because the personalist framework of her thought does not admit the possibility of a human person substituting for another person.⁷⁵ Yet, some of her writings in the *Geistliche Texte* suggest that such substitution is possible through grace. Stein is indeed quick to explain that this expiatory work is not due to human agency, but something that Christ accomplishes in those who are united with him through grace and made members of his Mystical Body.⁷⁶ Precisely because Christ is continuing to suffer in order to expiate human sin in history, the person in union are drawn into this work. Not all suffering, therefore, is expiatory. It only takes on expiatory power in union with Christ. As Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz pithily puts it, "Suffering has no purpose, but it has meaning," and this meaning is accessible only to those living in the Spirit of Christ, in whom all things hold together.⁷⁷

Although she does not explicitly name it, contemplative union as the precondition for fullest participation in Christ's redemptive work is implied throughout the essay. What differentiates it from SC is the explicit articulation of the ethical dimension of divine union. Greater intimacy with God leads a person to desire to suffer on behalf of others, in order to make restitution for their transgressions of divine justice. The desire for such suffering for others flows from the love for the other, as Christ poured out himself from love for all. This desire,

⁷⁵ For example, see Edith Stein, *Freiheit und Gnade*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 9 (Freiburg: Herder, 2014).

⁷⁶ For another articulation of the Mystical Body, see FEB, 523; EES, 438.

⁷⁷ Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, " 'Im Dunkel Wohl Geborgen': Edith Steins mystische Theorie der 'Kreuzeswissenschaft' (1942)" *Internationale Katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 5 (2007), 472.

therefore, is in itself an effect of progressive union, the “already existing relationship with Christ,” since Stein poignantly states, “by nature, a person flees from suffering.” And it expresses the practitioner’s reception of the meaning and power of voluntary suffering through Christ. Her statement about perceiving the supernatural correlations of worldly events through Christ’s power, meaning, and direction recall her Logos Christology in FEB, whose main thesis is that all things and events receive their meaning and coherence in the Logos.⁷⁸ Union in Christ, then, entails solidarity with the totality of creation, which Christ encompasses. Yet, solidarity for Stein is not first and foremost an expression of ethical concern for the other. It is rather a mode of being and action that flows out of one’s ever deepening realization of ontological unity with creation in Christ, and the vocation of the faithful to share in Christ’s continuing work of expiation. As Kruijen puts it, the ontological solidarity of human beings in Christ makes us co-responsible for every person who is not in grace.⁷⁹ The desire to suffer for others is the expression of this truth.

In connection with Stein’s Logos Christology, we also have to note the eschatological dimension of Stein’s understanding of contemplation, atonement, and incarnation. As early as 1931, in the essay “The Mystery of Christmas” (“Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis: Menschwerdung und Menschheit”), Stein reflects that the incarnation is closely intertwined with the mystery of evil and darkness of sin.⁸⁰ To the children of darkness, the Christ child brings not peace, but a sword. Against the light of his revelation, the night of sin appears all the more dark and uncanny. In “Ave Crux, Spes Unica!,” a short essay written for her convent community’s renewal

⁷⁸ FEB, 352; EES, 300-1

⁷⁹ Kruijen, 75.

⁸⁰ Stein, “The Mystery of Christmas,” 22; Edith Stein, “Das Weihnachtsgeheimnis. Menschwerdung und Menschheit,” in *Geistliche Texte I*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 19 (Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 19, 5.

of religious vows in 1939, the theme of union through the cross is set starkly within an apocalyptic confrontation with the Antichrist.⁸¹ Stein does not use the language of Antichrist and spiritual battle to spiritualize contemporary events, but to point to the eschatological meaning of contemporary historical events. Her intention is to communicate the necessity of persistent solidarity with Christ in the suffering unique to her and her community's historical context (i.e., war and Nazi rule). The temptation in their particular time is to abandon unity with Christ, because it is cruciform and likely could demand the sacrifice of one's physical life. The religious vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity serve as reminders of Christ's own self-surrender and sacrifice on the cross, and the salvific work he accomplished through it. Stein's purpose in holding up such a severe image of Christ before her community is not simply to call the members to suffer, but to recall the power that flows from Christ when they are united with him in suffering. In this sense, the cross as the means of union with the Triune God *within* the abyss and pain of suffering and death becomes the chief weapon (a Teresian theme) by which the religious and contemplatives can overcome evil in the world and transcend it (HL 95; GT II 120-1). Stein ends the essay by returning to the theme of solidarity. Through union with Christ, contemplatives become omnipresent with him and present with everyone who suffers (HL 96; GT II 121). Hence, union for Stein concerns the whole of creation, and it belongs in God's larger work of salvation. Its full significance and the place of expiation become clear only when situated within this eschatological background. Since salvation involves direct confrontation with sin and evil, and restitution for violation of divine justice, contemplation is inseparably tied with purificatory (self-focused) and substitutionary (other-focused) suffering as part of the "whole

⁸¹ Stein, "Elevation of the Cross," HL, 94-6; "Kreuzerhöhung: Ave Crux, Spes Unica!" GT II, 118-22.

Christ.”⁸² The efficacy of this suffering, as her own texts and commentators point out, comes from Christ himself and not from human resolve and intention. Understood within this nexus of Christian truths, voluntary expiatory suffering is rooted in eschatological hope in the saving power of God over against the power of evil.

In summary, Stein’s later essays extend her view of the body in SC by articulating its ethical, ecclesial, and social meaning through the concept of contemplative union and expiatory atonement. If SC focuses on suffering on the path of contemplation, the essays elucidate the salvific efficacy of that suffering for others. The bodies and souls of individuals united with Christ become instruments of redemption, just as Christ’s own body and soul were instruments. As an individual incarnation of Christ, and incorporated into the Mystical Body, the human person’s own body becomes a sentient instrument of expiation. Divine union, therefore, unfolds in human life as a continuing process of embodiment, both spiritually and physically, of expiation through voluntary suffering. Implied in this is the metaphysic of ontological solidarity with creation and all human persons, and the possibility of substitutionary suffering as an expression of love for others through the mediation of Christ. Human beings as created through the Logos are united with each other.⁸³ They are also created to be one with God. The fullness of union in contemplation bears the fruit of substitutionary sacrifice in Christ’s new incarnations in the contemplative practitioner.

3.4. CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF STEIN’S LATER THEORY OF THE BODY

⁸² “Whole Christ” means both Christ as Head and believers as members of his Mystical Body, working together; Kruijen, 110.

⁸³ “Mystery of Christmas,” 24; FEB, 352-3.

3.4.1. Stein as a Resource for Contemporary Theology of the Body

Edith Stein's early phenomenology and later writings offer a rich set of theories on the body that we can retrieve for a contemporary theology of the body. The two needs I identify for such a theology are: 1) a phenomenologically enriched understanding of the body; and 2) substantial engagement with sin, suffering, and redemption. I seek to address these needs in order to lay the basis for a model of the body that can articulate how the transformative process of deepening relationship with the divine unfolds through a person's bodied structures and processes, and serve as an interface between reflecting on faith and practicing prayer and virtue.

Stein's phenomenology of the body in POE and PPH demonstrates a way of attending to the body as it presents itself in our experience. Especially important for theological application are her concepts of sensing and moving body (*Leib*), bodily perception, lifepower, and the intersubjective nature of somatic constitution. While the concept of the sensing body originates with Husserl and is used commonly by other phenomenologists, Stein's unique contributions lie in how she clarifies its intersubjective constitution, the connection with energy in her exposition of lifepower, and the world of values as mediated by objects.⁸⁴ As I will explore further after the comparison with *lojong*, Stein's conception of consciousness, modes of attention, and lifepower have important practical ramifications for theology of the body. Stein takes Husserl's idea of the pure ego, which is the structure of consciousness that makes subjective experience possible and precedes a sense of distinct selfness (*Selbstheit*), and asserts that life feelings (e.g., fatigue, liveliness) are manifestations of actual states of lifepower at the psychic and physical layers of the individual

⁸⁴ For example, closer to Husserl is Merleau-Ponty, and in today's context is Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, who revises the concept with her own articulation of the body as "animate form." See Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, *The Primacy of Perception*, Expanded 2nd Edition (Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co., 2011), especially chs. 3 and 8.

within the level of consciousness. Stein thinks that this gap between consciousness and psycho-physical layers accounts for the possibility of error in our perceptions or feelings of the actual states of lifepower (e.g., I do not feel tired, when in fact my actual physical state is one of fatigue). In the last chapter, I take this idea to argue that as manifestations on the level of consciousness, life feelings can be a bridge for directing intentional attention to one's actual bodily state. By bringing into play Stein's notion of bodily perception, I assert contrary to Stein that her phenomenology has conceptual resources for arguing that we can actually have a somatic way of perceiving the state of our lifepower. My argument is directed to the issue of practical traction of theology of the body. If we take Stein's ideas of consciousness, attention, bodily perception, and lifepower in this direction, we have a framework for mapping out how the body enables us to sense the flow and state of energy. If we further connect these ideas with her reflection that we can have influx of enlivening energy through specifically religious states such as "resting in God," we have a basis for a theological somatology.

We also have to note that Stein's phenomenology of the body anticipated many contemporary concerns about the mutuality of influence between the bodily, affective, and mental dimensions of the human person, as well as the turn to the particularities of bodiment in postmodern thought. In Stein's phenomenology, the body is characterized by its openness to manifold influences. It is not a container but a complex of interacting dynamisms that cohere in a sensate form. Stein does not give us so much a model as a way of directing our attention to the phenomenal structures and processes that we apprehend with the body's aid. Despite her sometimes mechanistic rhetoric (e.g, the body as the "instrument" of the soul), we are ever aware that the body is actively influencing the life of the soul. The body is not just the condition of possibility, but it *is* the possibility and constraint for affective and mental life. The body, affect,

and mentality are interwoven as the loamy banks and the waters of a river constitute each other. She lucidly analyzes how the body is the condition of possibility for mental and affective activities and intersubjective relation. Her analysis yields a particularly important set of insights into the role of the body in the theory of knowledge. Whereas Husserl was exclusively concerned with the replication of logical understanding across different egos, Stein introduces a hermeneutical dimension by arguing for the indispensable influence and role of individual bodiment. The particularities of bodies (e.g., ability, race, gender, sexuality) shape a person's world image. This attention to particular bodies reflects Stein's keen insight into the interdependence of the person and the physical and social environment. In this way, her phenomenology anticipates the postmodern turn to the particular and social dimensions of the body.

Stein's later somatology incorporates her phenomenology, but develops it in light of her interest in metaphysical ontology and contemplative theology. We see this in how she constructs the soul as a theological category in FEB and subsequent works, taking both the Aristotelian-Thomistic "capacity" model and the Carmelite "spatial" model derived from Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross. The depth structure of the soul is not limited to levels of value and an unchangeable personal core as it was in POE. More importantly for Stein, it has a center that is the point of union with the Triune God. The soul takes on the features of a Teresian castle in which the 'I' can move from the outer, peripheral dwellings tied to the physical senses and external objects toward the innermost chamber at the center where it can attain the consummation of divine union.

Stein's full vision of this consummation and fulfillment of the human being unfolds in her writings on contemplation, especially SC and theological essays. Suggested in the FEB, she enters into a thorough investigation of the Sanjuanist and Teresian theories of contemplative

union in SC.⁸⁵ Stein's unique contribution to the Carmelite theory of contemplation is directly connected with the status and meaning of the body. She clarifies for the readers of John's writings that his emphasis on the life of the soul does not imply a substantial body-soul dualism nor a denigration of the physical body per se. Yet, it is ambiguous enough that Stein imports her own anthropology, which she worked out in FEB, in order to accentuate the structural unity between the body and the soul. She examines the implication of this unity at the end of the text when she connects the body in contemplative union with the hypostatic union of Christ and asserts that the practitioner's body not only approximates Christ's union, but incarnates Christ himself in a real sense. In Stein's essays, we see her taking the concept of incarnation further by situating it within the larger theological concept of Christ's Mystical Body. The contemplative practitioner is not isolated, but as an incarnation of Christ, participates in the redemptive work of the "whole Christ," both Head and Body. The means of participation for Stein is expiation, or more precisely, voluntary expiatory suffering that is bodily actualized in willing individual members of the Mystical Body.

Stein's later theory is an important resource for a contemporary theology of the body. On the question of practical traction, SC and her theological essays are explicitly concerned with the practice of prayer and solidarity with those who suffer. She begins SC with the statement that her aim is "to grasp John of the Cross in the unity of his being (*Wesen*) as it expresses itself in his life and in his works."⁸⁶ Her reading of John includes both text and life. She is concerned with not only the theoretical content of John's writings, but what gives coherence to his life, practice, and writings. In Stein's reading, what gives this unity to John's being is the lived truth of

⁸⁵ Although her subject matter is John of the Cross, Stein carries out a comparative analysis of John and Teresa's understanding of contemplation in chapter 14 of SC.

⁸⁶ SC, 5; KW, 3.

the cross, or in her terms “Kreuzeswissenschaft,” the “science of the cross.” At the end of the text, having laid out a panoramic view of John’s major works, Stein sets it in the theological frame of the cross as the hermeneutical key, a key that works only when the reader is engaged in actual practice of prayer and virtues within a community.⁸⁷ Likewise, her theological essays address the religious community, whose life is structured and permeated by the rhythm of liturgical worship, prayer, work, and fellowship.⁸⁸ Her concerns are practical and contextual. In these texts, Stein is consciously reflecting on the concrete political circumstances of Nazi rule, persecution of the Jews, and the prospect of another world war. She is attempting to address how the religious community can understand the order’s vows, and the meaning of the Carmelite charism of contemplation in its socio-political situation.

The gravity of their present situation is perhaps the main reason why the cross, as a symbol for all human suffering and everything connected with the redemptive work of Christ, stands front and center in Stein’s writings.⁸⁹ Yet, we have to make clear that her theological center is not the cross per se, but actually the resurrection and love of God. Her perspective agrees with Brian Robinette’s argument that the resurrection is the background horizon that allows the theme of redemption to come into focus and gain meaning.⁹⁰ Historically, Robinette points out, the dominance of Anselmian theory has resulted in the crucifixion swallowing up the resurrection. It is possible to read Stein in such a way that the cross overshadows the

⁸⁷ For Stein’s personal use of John’s writings for prayer and retreats, see letters #168, 193, 311, 327 in Edith Stein, *Self Portrait in Letters: 1916-1942*. For her statements on her own perspective on a sacrificial, expiatory life, see letters #129, 287, 330; also her desire to offer herself as an expiatory sacrifice in order to prevent a new world war, see letter #608 in Edith Stein, *Selbstbildnis in Briefen II*, EGSA 3 (Freiburg: Herder, 2013), 359.

⁸⁸ For overview of typical Carmelite life in Stein’s convent in Cologne, Germany and in Echt, Holland, see Francisco Fermin, OCD, *Edith Stein: Modelo y maestra de espiritualidad* (Burgos, Spain: Editorial Monte Carmelo, 1998), 176-216.

⁸⁹ On the cross as a symbol (*Wahrzeichen*), see SC, 26, 39; KW, 21, 31.

⁹⁰ Brian Robinette, *Grammars of Resurrection: A Christian Theology of Presence and Absence* (New York: Crossroad Pub. Co., 2009), 8.

resurrection, but her actual focus is not suffering.⁹¹ It is precisely because the love of God revealed in the resurrection establishes the foundation for existential hope and transformation that she holds up the cross as the “only hope” (*spes unica*) in a world set aflame with sin and evil.⁹² Within Stein’s theological vision, the way of the cross as voluntary acceptance of suffering that a person faces, by virtue of her circumstances and as an inescapable aspect of the human condition, stands for the experiential realization of the power in Christ to transcend and transform suffering. The principal interest of her theology is transformation and its practice.

Stein situates this power of transformation within the practice of contemplation. Suffering takes on meaning for Stein only by virtue of the person’s union with Christ. Only when a person has access to the coherence of all meaning and correlations of worldly events with spiritual truths through union with Christ, can the absurdity of suffering find a context in which it takes on sense. Although anyone who has received the grace of faith has access to this meaning, the fullness of meaning comes through the grace of contemplative union, which is radically transformative of the human person and the structure of subjective experience. By placing the theology of the cross in the contemplative context, it becomes a bodied praxis. For contemplation is bodied in multiple ways. First, contemplation does not happen in a vacuum, but as part of an entire structure of communal and individual practices and relationships. Already, a very particular and highly regimented form of ascetic bodiment is presupposed as the condition for contemplative prayer. Second, as Stein explains, in contemplative prayer, the body

⁹¹ On this issue in Stein’s interpretation of John of the Cross; see Ulrich Doban, OCD “Einführung” in *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, xxiii - xxv; also Christof Betschart, OCD, “Théologie de la Croix et Destinée de la Personne Humaine d’après Edith Stein” in *Une Femme pour L’Europe: Edith Stein (1891-1942)*, *Études steiniennes* (Paris: Cerf, 2009): 369.

⁹² In “Ave Crux, Spes Unica,” she writes, “The arms of the Crucified are spread out to draw you to his heart. He wants your life in order to give his. *Ave Crux, Spes unica!* The world is in flames. The conflagration can also reach our house. But high above all flames towers the cross. It will lift one who embraces it in faith, love, and hope into the bosom of the Trinity,” HL, 95; GT II, 121.

is integrated into union, even if its status is secondary to the soul. It shares in the delights of union, and the basis of its orientation and mode of operation shift from external and internal stimulus to the life of union at the center of the soul. Finally, in Stein's own constructive interpretation, the body in contemplative union shares an intrinsic link with the body of the church and the world through the redemptive, expiatory work of Christ in the members of the Mystical Body. In this light, the contemplative practitioner's individual body becomes a process of substitutionary expiation out of divine love and solidarity with all.

Stein's later theory of the body, then, addresses the need in contemporary theology of the body for a substantial engagement with sin, suffering, and redemption. The specific contribution of her thought is the way she reflects on these traditional theological subjects through the ascetico-contemplative perspective of the Carmelite tradition and her philosophical synthesis. The practical orientation of the contemplative tradition and its bodied character make this an especially salient resource for constructing a model of the body that can map the transformative process of relationship with God in connection with the issues of sin, suffering, and redemption.

3.4.2. Tensions in Stein's Theory of the Body

There are, however, several points of tension in Stein's theory of the body that complicate its retrieval for contemporary use. The first issue is the passive and inert status of the body in comparison with the spiritual life of the individual. The passivity of the body becomes accentuated in her later works. In her early phenomenology, Stein very carefully builds the analysis of the person from the body "up" to the spiritual (*geistlich*) person. The mutual feedback between the body and other phenomenal layers of the individual is a prominent feature in her

analysis. In FEB, the mutuality between the body, soul, and spirit is less pronounced, as the primacy is given to the soul as the living form of the body.⁹³ She also draws a stronger distinction between the body as matter and form as the animating power that builds up that matter in a circumscribed way. As the principle of actualization, form is dynamic while matter is static. While the human body as always be-souled does not have the status as simple matter in Stein's thought, the matter-form rubric still applies and this yields a model of the body that mostly takes on a passive role in spiritual life. We have to remember, however, that Stein intends to construct a holistic anthropology in FEB. She is critical of substance dualism and conceives the body and soul as forming a *single* substance of the human person. Furthermore, in actual existence matter and form are united, and soul and body are inseparable when the human body is taken as living and sensing (*Leib*).⁹⁴ Yet, in spite of her assertions of their integral unity, the body takes on a more reified, passive character in FEB.

The passivity and inertness of the body are also evident in the SC. Stein introduced her structure of the soul in her exposition of John's theory of contemplation by asserting its integral unity with the body as its exterior. Spiritual marriage incorporates the body, which John generally equates with the (corporeal) "senses," into the state of divine union (SC 204). They are no longer attracted to external objects, but rather to spiritual recollection, so that the activity of the senses become wholly directed by God. For both John and Stein, the body participates in the union solely as a passive recipient of the "overflow" of the effects in the soul. The effects of union move unidirectionally from the inmost to the outmost structures of the soul, or, in terms of the vertical imaginary, from the top (God) to the bottom (body).⁹⁵ The senses have thoroughly

⁹³ For example, see FEB, 274, 377; EES, 237, 321.

⁹⁴ FEB, 252-3; EES, 220.

⁹⁵ SC, 198; KW, 166.

been purified of its patterns of attachment and mode of being based on sensorial gratification, so that loving union with God becomes the primary force driving and directing their operations. Howells provides a cogent argument that in John's vision of spiritual marriage, the problem of the disjunction between the senses and the spirit finds a resolution in the deepening of the senses and faculties in their absorption into the inner Trinitarian life. Yet, we have to note that despite the claim to integration in both John and Stein's reading, the passive and derivative status of the body in relation to the effects of contemplation in the depths of the soul reduce the body to an outer shell whose connection to the soul remains unclear. The ambiguity of the nature of their connection is reinforced by the stress John places on the longing of the soul to be "torn" away from the third veil of sense-bound life and consummated in the beatific vision after death.⁹⁶ Despite Stein's effort to weave together more fully the soul and the body by importing her own anthropology into John's theory, the assertion that the body remains the soul's own exterior is insufficient to counterbalance the massive weight of significance placed on the soul in both John's works and her own interpretation. This is not to say that John or Stein falls into ontological soul-body dualism. The tension, however, between "soul" and "body" in both writers arise because of ambiguities in how they respectively conceive the soul-body relationship; their use of a paradigm of contemplation that centers on the soul as the primary category and focus of action; and their lack of conceptual moves to counterbalance the one-sided emphasis on the soul versus the body.

The second problem is implied in the first, and that is an unresolved dualistic tension that undermines the coherence of the body-soul relationship in Stein's later anthropology. In the depth model, the body's position is peripheral while the "innermost point" of the soul is the most "spiritual." Stein writes,

⁹⁶ SC, 191; KW, 161.

The innermost center of the soul is the “most spiritual” part of the soul. Although impressions which are mediated by the senses penetrate to this depth and although what happens in this interiority is actually effective even in the formation of the body, the being of the spiritual soul is detachable from all sensuality and corporeality.⁹⁷

The innermost center implies for Stein a form of the soul’s independence from external influences. Even though impressions based on the senses enter into this depth, she asserts that they do not influence the soul. She is reiterating a point she makes earlier in the text when she asserts that the “internal and innermost” denote what is “most spiritual,” “farthest removed from matter, that which moves the soul in its innermost depth.” (FEB 378; EES 321) The meaning here is that the most fundamental being of the soul as spirit is not determined by physical processes, sense impressions, or any other factor that derives from the psycho-physical aspects of the person. It has, rather, an autonomy from these other influences, and its own movement that can direct the soul if there is conscious awareness of this deepest level. Yet, she pushes beyond this to state that the soul’s detachability from sensuality and corporeality can be conceived not only phenomenologically but ontologically:

We are able to conceive of an “inner life” of the soul that persists even in separation from the body and after the cessation of all sense impressions. In this manner we envisage the life of the soul after death and prior to the resurrection of the body. And in this manner the soul lives - according to the testimony of the mystics - in those ecstatic states in which the soul is enraptured, in which the senses are non-receptive to any external impressions and the body in death-like rigidity, while the spirit acquires in contemplation its greatest vitality and attains to the plenitude of being.⁹⁸

Based on the possibility of detaching the soul from all corporeality, she argues that we can conceive the life of the soul continuing apart from the body. Such a mode of being provides the basis for construing the soul’s life after death and before the resurrection. Stein turns to descriptions of ecstatic states in the writings of Christian mystics as exemplifying such a mode in which the *sense* apparatus of the soul is immured from external impressions while the soul as *spirit*

⁹⁷ FEB, 441; EES, 371.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

receives the fullness of being. Stein has considered the conceivability of a purely spiritual being without the body from the very beginning of her philosophical career.⁹⁹ Its plausibility is found in our experience when our spiritual (*geistig*) activities attain a certain independence from bodily influences, and the meaning of the soul's life has a certain freedom from bodily determinations.¹⁰⁰ When taken to its "ideal limit," such experiences point to the possibility of pure spirits such as angels whose life consists in purely spiritual activity without dependence on material corporeality or sense perception.¹⁰¹

There are at least two problems with this view of the body and its relationship to the soul. First, the mere conceivability of the soul continuing to live apart from the body does not establish its possibility philosophically. Stein does not provide a fully extended argument for the immortality of the soul. Instead, she seems to be reiterating Church teaching and Thomas Aquinas' arguments on the immortality of the soul and rapture.¹⁰² Second, asserting the separability of the soul from the material body further reifies matter in opposition to the soul, which also serves to reinforce the passive status of the body. The general thrust of the church tradition's teaching on the separability of the soul and body seems to run against the current in Stein's thinking that affirms the integrity and inseparability of the multiple dimensions of the human individual.

Stein herself is aware of the difficulty that the view of the body's separability from the soul poses to her anthropology. She addresses precisely this issue in her section on the ontology

⁹⁹ POE, 118; ZPE, 136.

¹⁰⁰ FEB, 370; EES, 316.

¹⁰¹ FEB, 391-2; EES, 333.

¹⁰² On teachings of the Magisterium, see Denzinger, 481 (Council of Vienne), no. 738 (Lateran Council V). On the immortality of the soul and separation from body after death, see Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* IV:79, 81; on rapture, *De Veritate* 13.2-3; *Summa Theologica* II-II.175

of matter and how the state of matter in this world is in a “fallen state.”¹⁰³ The state in which the human person exists in the current world is a “fallen” state were the original state intended by God has been deformed. Drawing on Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Stein considers matter in its fallen state to have lost a vital union (*lebendiger Einheit*) with form. Hence, fallen matter does not become extended “spatial fullness” through the activity of a dynamic, intrinsic formative power (*Kraft*). Conrad-Martius conceives this fallen matter as dark, dead “pure mass” (*pure Masse*) that can only be dominated and worked upon by forces from the outside.¹⁰⁴ Stein does not take up Conrad-Martius’ notion of pure mass, but accepts the idea that fallen matter entails a rupture between the material elements (*Stoff*) and the intrinsic formative power. In the post-lapsarian state, living forms are dependent on dead matter. Yet, the framework of the fall allows Stein to conceive the ideal state of the body:

A body that would be alive in the true and full sense of the term would not be tied to ‘dead’ structural elements at all and would therefore not be vulnerable to death. Such a body would be formed out of the soul and commensurate with it, without absorbing any material elements. On the other hand, where ‘dead nature’ serves as the substructure of what we call *life* - what in reality, however, is merely a faint copy of the true life - those transmutations from death to life and from life to death are found.¹⁰⁵

A body that is commensurate with the immortal soul would enjoy an intrinsic union so that there would be no need to subsist on and incorporate dead matter. The separability of matter and form, body and soul only becomes possible in a world that has broken away from its primordial state of vital unity. Death and separation are not natural states, but the consequences of corrupted nature. Stein’s assertion, then, of the separability of the soul from the body in death and prior to the resurrection really rests on her acceptance of the doctrine of the fall and original sin.

¹⁰³ FEB, 191-5, 241; EES, 171-4, 210.

¹⁰⁴ FEB, 192; EES, 171-2.

¹⁰⁵ FEB, 256; EES, 222.

Stein's account of the separability of the soul and body reflects her effort to harmonize a fully integrated anthropology with church doctrines and Thomistic and Carmelite sources. The result is a concept of the body that is more or less reduced to the *effect* of the soul and reified into a passive state in contemplation. This only exacerbates the difficulty of trying to relate the transformations of the soul to the body in a coherent way. The momentum toward a multifaceted and mutual relation between the body, affect, and mentality initiated by her early phenomenology comes to an end in her later anthropology. With regard to the aims of this essay, the potential in Stein's thought to further explicate how divine transformative grace becomes bodied in contemplation fizzles out, even as we need to recognize that these aspects of her thought reflect the theological milieu of her context.

The third point of tension is Stein's atonement theory. To clarify, however, its strengths before turning to its critique, I agree with Kruijen that Stein's motivation for choosing the biblically based idea of expiation reflects her desire to carve out a space for human participation in God's work of justification. My way of expressing that is to point to the transformative focus of her writings on the atonement. Expiation gives Stein a way to understand how suffering in its absurdity can be "metabolized," much as living beings metabolize dead material elements to attain its final form.¹⁰⁶ What sets apart Stein's expiatory model from the "Anselmian paradigm," to use Lisa Cahill's term, is that human beings can collaborate in Christ's continuing redemptive work through the grace of union.¹⁰⁷ The contemplative framework is important not only because it is the particular Carmelite charism and her specific vocation, but more precisely because it supplies a theoretical and practical means for articulating that redemptive work within

¹⁰⁶ FEB, 263; EES, 228.

¹⁰⁷ Lisa Sowle Cahill, "Quaestio Disputata, The Atonement Paradigm," 418f.

the structures of the human person as a body-soul-spirit unity. Connected with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Mystical Body, the transformative power of expiatory sacrifice (both Christ's on the cross and his followers' in voluntary suffering) extends through the entire human race and the order of creation. In liturgical practice, the reality of this power finds its definitive expression in the Eucharist, which formed the heart of Stein's religious life. As her essay, "The Prayer of the Church" shows, Stein's view of the Mass was multifaceted, and she approaches it as a sacrifice, meal, as well as praise that cleanses, unifies and revitalizes the participants as members of Christ's body. The understanding of the Mass as a sacrifice and the entry into the grace of liturgical prayer as made possible through Christ's atoning death has a special importance in her thought. The sacrificial meaning of the Eucharist directly feeds into the ethic of solidarity, since it is the preeminent sacramental means by which believers "become [Christ's] flesh and blood."¹⁰⁸ To underscore the transformative import of her understanding of expiatory sacrifice, she emplaces it within the Trinity, where the Father and the Son reach the decision for redemption in the "eternal silence of the inner divine life."¹⁰⁹ From that secret and silent interior dialogue in God flows the mission and power of salvation. The heart of Stein's theory of expiatory atonement is this ethos of transformative solidarity in and through Christ.

Yet, is the model of expiatory sacrifice the best way to crystallize the transformative dimension of Christ's redemptive work and contemplation? The question directly concerns the body as Stein ties together contemplation, bodiment, and incarnation through the concept of expiation in her later writings. In light of multiple critiques of traditional atonement theories centered on Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice, Stein's model poses challenges for

¹⁰⁸ HL, 17; GT I, 49.

¹⁰⁹ HL, 12; GT I, 51-2.

contemporary retrieval. Such atonement theories, critics argue, impute violence into the divine life as the Father requires the death of the Son;¹¹⁰ idealizes sacrifice and suffering, which serves to reinforce self-denial as normative value especially for women in patriarchal contexts;¹¹¹ offers a way to justify theologically victimization;¹¹² and denies experiences of oppressed peoples.¹¹³ The list is not comprehensive, but the problems these critiques raise are all applicable to Stein's own theory. The requirements of divine justice must be satisfied by Christ's lifelong suffering, abandonment by God on the cross, and death. Following Christ is to body forth a life of sacrifice, both in the sense of taking on suffering for one's sins and on behalf of others and complete surrender to God. Not surprisingly, the exemplary figures of Christian life whom Stein mentions are women, specifically because they model self-forgetfulness.¹¹⁴ The fact that her own way of participating in Christ's redemptive work ultimately was the acceptance of death interpreted as expiatory sacrifice uncomfortably resembles cases of the oppressed internalizing and reenacting a toxic atonement theory.

Stein's understanding of redemption and human participation in Christ's work primarily through the concept of expiatory sacrifice may also rest on unresolved issues in the teachings of the Church on sacrifice and the Eucharist predominant in her time and ecclesial context. Robert J. Daly makes the important point that the Council of Trent left unclear how the once-and-for-all atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross is related to the Mass formulated as a true and proper

¹¹⁰ Robert J. Daly, *Sacrifice Unveiled: The True Meaning of Christian Sacrifice* (London: T&T Clark, 2009), 104-6;

¹¹¹ Erin Lothes Biviano, *The Paradox of Christian Sacrifice*, 72-3.

¹¹² Biviano, 81-5;

¹¹³ Delores Williams, "Black Women's Surrogate Experience and the Christian Notion of Redemption," *After Patriarchy: Feminist Transformations of the World Religions*, eds. Paula Cooley, William Eaken, Jay McDaniel (New York: Orbis Books, 1991), 9-10.

¹¹⁴ HL, 13; GT I, 52.

sacrifice and “truly an atoning sacrifice.” If Christ made an atoning sacrifice on the cross once and for all, in what sense precisely is the Mass an atoning sacrifice and why does it need to be continually reenacted?¹¹⁵ As Trent never explained what it meant by “sacrifice,” the ambiguity set up later Eucharistic theologies to approach the Eucharist through a narrowly Christological lens as opposed to a Trinitarian one and restrict the meaning of sacrifice to the immolation of the victim.¹¹⁶ Daly argues that conceptions of Christian sacrifice on an exclusively Christological basis makes the divine love-justice dichotomy irreconcilable. Christ has to pay the price of human transgression of divine justice, leading to theologies that impute violence into the intra-divine relation. A properly Christian understanding of sacrifice, on the other hand, as loving and free self-offering and self-gift must be established on a Trinitarian framework which makes possible the transcending of this dichotomy through the apprehension of the complete and free self-giving love between the Father and Son; the self-offering of the Son in his humanity through the entirety of his life, teaching, and works; and the believers’ self-offering in response to this gift of love and incorporation into the Trinitarian love through the Spirit.¹¹⁷ Stein has a robust Trinitarian outlook as is evident in FEB and SC, but the emphatic stress on sacrifice as expiatory and substitutionary suffering especially in the SC and spiritual essays may reflect how deeply she was shaped by the Eucharistic theology of the time with its ambiguities and tensions. Stein’s works include both the sense of sacrifice as Trinitarian self-giving love and expiatory suffering, but she does not address the issue of violence in the divine. Rather, self-giving love is often conflated with expiatory suffering, and the violence done to Christ and others become theologically justifiable by the logic of atoning sacrifice. Furthermore, the more limited view of

¹¹⁵ Daly, 107.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 159.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 10-14.

sacrifice as expiatory suffering becomes dominant both in her writings and her own sense of vocation near the end of her life. My point here is not to criticize either her personal devotion or how she understood her likely deportation and death as opportunities for expiatory suffering and atoning sacrifice for others. Her inner life and final acts cannot be reduced to theoretical arguments by a third person. Yet, there are tensions within her thought on sacrifice that are not fully worked out, and it cannot be retrieved in the contemporary context without making clear these tensions.

To summarize, the aspects of Stein's thought that I want to appropriate for a contemporary theology of the body are the following. First, Stein's phenomenology delineates core corporeal structures that remain essential (in the phenomenological sense) for a contemporary theological model of the body. These include the sensing body (*Leib*), movement, fusion, intersubjective constitution, and dynamic mutuality between the different phenomenal layers of the body.

The second aspect is the energetic framework articulated through her concept of lifepower (*Lebenskraft*). With her theory of consciousness and modes of attention, lifepower can be conceived as an aspect of bodily experience that connects it to external objects, events, and forces, including God. The concept can also serve as a means to relate to our corporeal experiences in terms of energetic flows and states. It thereby opens a way for us to direct our attention to the energetic dimension of our bodily experience.

Third, from Stein's later anthropology, I want to retrieve the contemplative framework and her transformative focus in conceiving the body. Her model of expiatory sacrifice as the paradigm for understanding redemption and exercising love for and solidarity with others who suffer is problematic in many respects. Yet, I want to recast it in order to preserve the

transformational core of her vision of contemplation in explicit connection with the realities of suffering, violence, and systemic injustice. There is a danger here of ascribing positive value to suffering and opening the door to the kind of abuses that so many theologians have rightly criticized in certain atonement theories. Yet, there is a place for claiming “generativity,” to quote Caroline Walker Bynum, in connection with suffering in theology.¹¹⁸ For while these critiques are valid, there have been very few constructive works that offer theological resources for relating to or making sense of pain and suffering as persistent aspects of one’s condition (as in cases of illness, trauma, and disability) without denying the exigency of liberation and social justice (human and otherwise) in Christian faith.¹¹⁹ Writing on the category of “the body” in disability and feminist theologies, Sharon Betcher makes this point incisively:

Disabled persons are assumed to be “bodies in pain.” We carry iconically that which our culture has rejected - a way to metabolize pain. In a culture that read Sigmund Freud’s descriptive pleasure/pain divide prescriptively, we have little or no cultural wisdom for navigating pain, for making sense of it or with it.¹²⁰

Betcher argues that since disabled persons deviate from the norm of an able, healthy body, their bodies are marked as “bodies in pain.” Reifying the disabled body in such a way ignores disabled persons’ humanity and the lived experiences of their bodies as capacious.¹²¹ It expresses the deeply embedded ethos and practice of avoiding, excluding, and projecting onto others that which signifies pain, vulnerability, and impermanence in consumerist capitalistic societies and

¹¹⁸ Bynum, *Holy Feasts and Fasts*, 301.

¹¹⁹ Important work on this front have come Sharon Betcher, Mayra Rivera, and Sarah Coakley. See Sharon Betcher, “Breathing through the Pain: Engaging the Cross as Tonglen, Taking to the Streets as Mendicants” in *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh: A Secular Theology for the Global City* (New York: Fordham University, 2014); Mayra Rivera, “Unsettling Bodies,” *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 26.2 (2010): 119-123; Sarah Coakley and Kay Kaufman Shelemay, eds., *Pain and its Transformations: The Interface of Biology and Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

¹²⁰ Sharon Betcher, “Becoming Flesh of My Flesh: Feminist and Disability Theologies on the Edge of Posthumanist Discourse” in *Journal of Feminist Studies of Religion* 26:2 (2010): 113. Her essay is a part of a roundtable conversation on the work of Nancy Eiesland in the *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 112.

cultures.¹²² Disability theology, which moves *toward* the “bodies in pain” in order to delve into the capaciousness of their flesh and inquire what insights and transformative potency they may offer, provides a counterpoint to theologies of the body that assume, wittingly or unwittingly, an able and healthy body as the norm. In this context, Betcher calls both feminist and disability theologians to renew the discourse on pain in order to reexamine its value in exposing social denial of suffering, structures of exclusion, and the necessity of learning “to navigate a world in less-than ideal ecological and economic circumstances.”¹²³

As Mayra Rivera notes, Betcher’s concern for new ways of relating to pain in theology echoes Gloria Anzaldúa’s writings on pain as a path to knowledge and the ailing body as “no longer a hindrance but an asset, witnessing pain, speaking to you, demanding touch.”¹²⁴ As a person who suffered from different forms of severe illness throughout her life, Anzaldúa breaks from and pushes against an “unspoken cultural agreement to reject any thought that might seem to welcome suffering,” and calls readers to discern how relating directly to one’s pain can yield theological and ethical knowledge and signal a form of agency.¹²⁵

Neither Betcher nor Rivera are arguing that pain has intrinsic value. They are, rather, pointing out that an adequate theological account of human bodies cannot exclude pain and suffering as inescapable aspects of human life. A theology which only seeks the complete elimination of pain and suffering implicitly upholds the view that a “whole” human being is an able-bodied, healthy individual who can function optimally within the framework of capitalist

¹²² Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh*, 69-70

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Gloria Anzaldúa, “now let us shift...the path of *conocimiento*... inner work, public acts,” in *This Bridge We Call Home: Radical Visions for Transformation*, ed. Gloria Anzaldúa and AnaLouise Keating (New York: Routledge, 2002), 553; quoted in Mayra Rivera, “Unsettling Bodies,” 121-2.

¹²⁵ Rivera, “Unsettling Bodies,” 122.

economy and its demands. They propose moving toward pain and suffering in order to uncover the potential for wisdom and transformation in connecting with the inherent vulnerability and fragility of being human. This is why the metabolic, transformational heart of Stein's theory of expiation and contemplation is worth recovering in a contemporary theology of the body. It is a deeply considered set of ideas that articulate the why and how of entering into suffering voluntarily in order to change its significance from within.

Finally, I want to retrieve the "spatial" model of the soul. Echoing Teresa of Avila, Stein asserts categorically that the spatial imagery for understanding the spiritual soul, especially in the context of contemplation, should be taken metaphorically for a reality that is in no way spatial.¹²⁶ This is partly a remark on John and Teresa's views, but it is also her own perspective on the person. Yet, as with John, Stein's descriptions of what the spatial imagery means and how it functions in relation to contemplative progress intermittently spills over into a more literally spatial understanding. This is perhaps most evident when Stein and John both grapple with the meaning of the "center of the soul" and to the reality it refers. Insofar as it is intended to signify the movement of the soul into God, it cannot be a literally spatial reference. Hence, it is a metaphor for detaching from engagement of the sensory apparatus with outer objects and the cognitive apparatus with inner objects, and a direct intending of consciousness, to use phenomenological terms, to the divine through a mode that is distinct and felt to be recessive in relation to the other apparatuses. In this case, the imagery functions on a purely metaphorical level.

However, when Stein and John both discuss the center as a site of felt contact with God, it takes on more than a metaphorical significance. This is because the presupposition that all of the

¹²⁶ SC, 153, n.1; KW, 126, n. 244.

contemplative progress happens within the body suddenly becomes directly pertinent to the discussion, even if it does not enter their discussions explicitly as their focal point remains the feeling and understanding soul. The necessity of the language of center as opposed to periphery, depth or deepest point as opposed to the surface or superficial are meant to capture and convey the consciously felt union. This cannot be situated outside the body, and therefore, the spatial imagery has to refer to the bodily context in which this experience occurs. This becomes more evident when John discusses the primary reception of grace in union in the soul and its overflow in the body, and when Stein in turn reflects on this dynamic within her anthropological framework. The reception of the grace in the depth of the soul sometimes overflow into the exterior, that is, the body. In this context, it is clear that the center imagery is no longer merely metaphorical but closer to the literal. There is an undeniable spatial sense to the center and depth imagery as they apply to John's description of the overflow of the effects of union on the body. The soul has to be bodied in order for such an overflow to happen, and the experience of "overflow" from a recessive site (soul) to a foregrounded one lends us a particular topography, implying a sensate apparatus that crosses and connects the physical senses and the mental-affective sphere situated within the body. It is precisely this more than metaphorical sense of the spatial model that I want to retrieve and develop in Stein. For it is the key to connecting the inner events of contemplative union within the human body. If we can conceive the soul in a corporeally connected way, not as detached from the physical body but dynamically interwoven with it, we may have a way to begin mapping corporeally the transformative process of deepening relationship with the divine.

Yet, the problems with Stein's theory of the body for a contemporary theological somatology are resolvable neither by simply reinterpreting Stein's own works nor by engaging

interlocutors only within the Christian tradition. As of yet, Christian theologies of the body have not been able to provide a model that has an integrated anthropology and practical traction. In addition to the work done in Christian theology so far, there is a need to study theological sources that employ models where the body is better integrated into the anthropology and contemplative framework. In the next chapter, I will examine the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and specifically focus on *lojong* (Tib. *blo sbyong*) meditation. Both *lojong* and Stein's theory are concerned with transforming suffering in the context of contemplative practice. Yet, based in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, *lojong* brings to bear an integrated anthropology that bypasses the kinds of problems that plague Stein's later theory, connects it with an energetic framework, and offers a meditation theory and practice that actively uses the body in metabolizing suffering. By comparing Stein's work with *lojong*, I aim to elucidate how *lojong* illumines aspects of Stein's theory in such a way that it can be recast and appropriated for a contemporary theology of the body.

CHAPTER 4

THE BODY IN TIBETAN BUDDHIST *LOJONG*

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I turn to Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* in order to investigate a meditation theory and practice that share key points of interest and aim with Stein's writings on the body. Similar to Stein's later theory, *lojong* is a meditative practice that is concerned with addressing human suffering and transforming it in accordance with the soteriological goal of Mahāyāna Buddhism, full buddhahood as a unity of deepest compassion, wisdom, and liberating activity. Second, underlying *lojong* theory and practice are particular models of the body that have conceptual foundations in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna philosophy. I examine *lojong* specifically for its unique conception of the body and its deployment in a meditation practice that shares with Stein's thought the concern for transforming suffering through contemplation.

The following chapter will introduce the historical background of *lojong* as a genre of Tibetan religious literature and meditation practice; a selective analysis of the fundamental *lojong* principles as found in Chekawa's ('Chad kha ba, 1101-1175) *Seven-Point Lojong (Blo sbyong don bdun ma*, hereafter DDM); the philosophical foundations for transforming suffering and different hermeneutical perspectives on these foundations; and the models of the body and their use in *lojong* practice. A note on the DDM and its basic structure: while there is a wide variety of *lojong* texts and multiple versions of versified core instructions (Tib. *rtsa tshig*, "root lines"), I will confine

my analysis to Chekawa's DDM and its commentaries as DDM has basically become the standard version of *lojong* instructions. DDM is organized into seven points under which are given specific lines of instructions that specify the practices to be carried out during the meditation session (Tib. *mnyam gzhang*, "meditative equipoise") and after the session (Tib. *rje thobs*, "post-meditation"). As listed by the early *lojong* commentator Chilibupa (Se spyil bu pa chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1121-1189) in his *Blo sbyong don bdun ma'i 'grel pa* (hereafter DDMGP), the seven points are:¹

1. Presentation of the preliminaries, the basis
2. Training in the two minds of awakening, the main practice
3. Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment
4. Presentation of a lifetime's practice in a summary
5. Presentation of the measure of having trained the mind
6. Presentation of the commitments of mind training
7. Presentation of the precepts of mind training

I will focus only on the first three points and the relevant instructions in accordance with the main objectives of my argument. To reiterate, I approach *lojong* in order to examine its conception of the body within a framework of contemplative practice that engages suffering. My aim here is to analyze its key features and set the ground for comparing its similarities and differences with Stein's model in the next chapter. The pertinent instructions and concepts are mostly included under the first three points, and this chapter is not intended to be an exposition of the entire DDM nor a Christian commentary on it.

4.2. LOJONG: AN OVERVIEW

4.2.1. Genre and History of Transmission

¹ Thubten Jinpa, trans., *Mind Training: The Great Collection* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 89.

Lojong is a native Tibetan genre which synthesizes teachings in earlier Indian works and teachings that originated with Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (982-1054 CE), better known as Atiśa, and developed by his disciples.² It is practical in character and aims to help practitioners generate universal compassion and freedom from self-centeredness.³ *Lojong* texts emerge during the “later dissemination” (Tib. *phyi dar*) of Buddhism, which tradition identifies as beginning with the arrival of Atiśa in Tibet in 1042, and belongs to the teachings of the Kadam (*Bka’ dams*) order established by Dromtonpa (‘Brom ston Rgyal ba’i ‘byung gnas, 1004-1064) at Radreng (*Rwa sgreng*) monastery in 1057.⁴ They are succinct, practical guides which aim to help Buddhist practitioners develop *bodhicitta*, which is both the resolve to attain perfect enlightenment for the sake of benefitting all sentient beings, that is, to become a fully awakened a buddha, as well as the reality itself of the mind of complete awakening.⁵ The texts that were later collected as belonging to the *lojong* teachings and edited by the 15th century Sakya masters Zhonnu Gyalchog (Zhon nu rgyal mchog, dates uncertain) and Muchen Konchog Gyaltsen (Mus chen dkon mchog

² Michael J. Sweet, “Mental Purification (Blo sbyong): A Native Tibetan Genre of Religious Literature,” in Jose Ignacio Cabezon and Roger R. Jackson, eds., *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1996), 252.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Richard Sherburne, “A Study of Atiśa’s Commentary on His Lamp of the Enlightenment Path (Byang-chub lam-gyi sgron ma’i dka’-‘grel) (PhD Diss., University of Washington, 1976), 5. Alaka Chattopadhyaya, *Atisa and Tibet: Life and Works of Dipamkara Srijnana in Relation to the History and Religion of Tibet* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1967), 309-311.

⁵ In this essay, I will follow Dorji Wangchuk’s translation of *bodhicitta* as “the resolve to become a buddha.” As Wangchuk notes, *bodhicitta* is translated in a wide variety of ways in scholarly literature, but the term includes a broad range of meanings in the Indian and Tibetan Buddhist literature. The advantage of translating it as “resolve” rather than as “altruistic intention,” “attitude,” or “mind” is that it encompasses the sense of aspiration as well as sustained resolution to attain the goal of full buddhahood in order to benefit all sentient beings. For further discussion of the manifold meanings of the term *bodhicitta* and ways to translate it into English, see Dorji Wangchuk, *The Resolve to Become a Buddha: A Study of the Bodhicitta Concept in Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* (Tokyo: International Institute for Buddhist Studies of the International College for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies, 2007).

rgyal mtshan, 1388-1469) display a great diversity in style.⁶ The major collection *Lojong Gyatsa* (*Blo sbyong bryga rtsa*, hereafter LBGT) and its earlier version *Lojong Legbam* (*Blo sbyong glegs bam*, hereafter LBLB) contain biographies (*rnam thar*), instructions (*gdams ngag*) in prose and verse, and exhortations and admonitions (*man ngag*), and commentaries. Some of these texts claim Indian origins, but the majority lack confirmed originals in Sanskrit and the convention of providing Sanskrit titles.⁷ What unifies these diverse texts is the shared theme of cultivating *bodhicitta*. Reflective of their practical character, *lojong* texts communicate the essential principles for developing *bodhicitta* in plain, accessible language, often colored with colloquial expressions, and lack in-depth philosophical discussions or literary embellishments. These characteristics of the *lojong* genre fit in well with Atiśa’s and the Kadampa’s agenda of clarifying the fundamental Buddhist teachings to both monastics and the laity, and reestablishing the monastic framework as the standard in Tibet.⁸

The Tibetan Buddhist tradition traces the origin of *lojong* teachings to Atiśa, but texts which explicitly employ the term in order to present a specific approach to developing *bodhicitta* emerge in the century following Atiśa’s death. Atiśa himself does not use the term “blo sbyong” in his works, and its earliest use does not occur until Langri Thangpa’s (1054-1123) *Eight Verses on Lojong* (*Blo sbyong tshig brygad ma*).⁹ Similarly, the tradition of the three gurus who transmitted the

⁶ Muchen Konchog Gyaltzen was a student of Zhonu Gyalchog. Sweet and Zwilling note that the *Blo sbyong bryga rtsa* is a Gelug recension of the original *lojong* collection called *Blo sbyong glegs bam*, which Zhonu Gyalchog and Muchen Gyaltzen compiled and edited. Jamyang Kongtrul included the *bryga rtsa* in the *Gdams ngag mdzod* in the 19th century, and this led to the study of *The Wheel Weapon* and *The Poison-destroying Peacock* in the Nyingma tradition. Michael J. Sweet and Leonard Zwilling, “Historical Introduction,” in Geshe Lhundup Sopa, *Peacock in the Poison Grove: Two Buddhist Texts on Training the Mind* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 14.

⁷ See *Bodhisattvamañealī* attributed to Atiśa; Jinpa 21.

⁸ Sweet, 244; Sweet and Zwilling, 2.

⁹ Jinpa, 6.

teaching to Atiśa appears first in commentaries on *lojong* root lines¹⁰ such as the DDMGP, probably the earliest available commentary to Chekawa's DDM in the 12th century, and the *Annotated Root Lines of Mahayana Lojong* (*Theg pa Chen po'i blo sbyong gi rtsa tshig*).¹¹

The term 'blo sbyong' is comprised of two words: 'blo' (lo), which is often translated into English as 'mind', specifically as faculty of thought but including the emotions in actual usage in the literature; and 'sbyong' (jong), which carries the sense of both purification and training. In his philological analysis, Sweet writes that this Tibetan compound is not found in the translation of any text with a Sanskrit original, nor is it in the Tibetan-Sanskrit lexicon *Mahāvvyutpatti*.¹² In Tibetan translations of Indian Buddhist texts, 'blo' is mostly used to translate the Sanskrit *buddhi*, intelligence or intellect; *manas*, mind or thought; or *dhī*, to think.¹³ 'Sbyong' is almost always used to translate the Sanskrit (*vi*)*sōdhana*, which means 'purification' of adventitious defilements, and often paired with 'sems' (Skt. *citta*) to form the compound 'sems sbyong'. Sweet and Zwillling explain that 'sems sbyong', *cittaviśōdhana* in Sanskrit, is synonymous with 'blo sbyong', and Tibetan scholars first rendered 'blo sbyong' into Sanskrit as *cittaśōdhana*. They suggest that the compound incorporated the sense of continued practice or training such that its original

¹⁰ There are different versions of root lines attributed to Atiśa. Although Chekawa's DDM became established as the standard version, there is another set of root lines in *Root Lines of Mahayana Lojong* (*Theg pa chen po'i blo sbyong gi rtsa tshig*) and various redactions of the same in annotated versions and commentaries such as *Mahayana Lojong* (*Theg pa chen po'i blo sbyong*) and Sangye Gompa's (Sangs rgyas bsgom pa byang chub, 1179-1250) *Public Explication of Lojong* (*Blo sbyong tshogs bshad ma*). Jinpa suggests that the internal textual evidence of these texts show different lines of transmission; Jinpa 10-11; on *Mahayana Lojong*, see Jinpa 617, fn. 472.

¹¹ In DDMGP, the colophon does not provide the author's name, but Sweet and Zwillling identify Chekawa as the author. Based on Zhonnu Gyalchog's *Compendium of Well-Uttered Sayings* (*Blo sbyong legs bshad kun 'dus*), Jinpa further postulates that the work is a compilation of notes from lectures given by Chekawa by his student Se Chilibupa (Se Spyl bu pa chos kyi rgal mtshan, 1121-89). In both cases, the final source of the content is traced back to Chekawa; Jinpa, 6; Sweet and Zwillling, 2. On Atiśa's three teachers in the *Annotated Root Lines of Mahayana Lojong*, see Jinpa, 80.

¹² Sweet, 245.

¹³ Sweet and Zwillling, 16; Leonard van der Kuijp, private conversation, May 10, 2016.

meaning could be construed as, “mental purification through repeated practice of the thought intent on enlightenment [*bodhicitta*].”¹⁴

From the writings of his disciples, Jinpa postulates that Dromtonpa is likely the first figure to use the term *blo sbyong* in the sense of a particular approach to cultivating *bodhicitta*, based on the teachings he received from Atiśa.¹⁵ Dromtonpa also figures prominently in the lineages provided in important *lojong* texts as the foremost disciple to have received *lojong* teachings from Atiśa and then passed them on to his own disciples in the Kadam tradition. In the DDMGP, we find the lineage of the three gurus who gave the *lojong* teachings to Atiśa: Dharmarakṣita, the junior Kusalī or Maitrīyogi, and Dharmakīrti of Suvarṇadvīpa, better known as Serlingpa in Tibetan tradition.¹⁶ The text elevates Serlingpa as the guru whom Atiśa revered the most among the three, and then weaves a close connection between Dromtonpa and Serlingpa by stating, “Atiśa bestowed this [teaching] upon the spiritual mentor Dromtonpa as his heart remedy practice.”¹⁷ “[T]his” in the passage refers to the particular *lojong* teaching that Serlingpa gave to Atiśa. Similarly, the colophon of *The Wheel Weapon* attributes the text to Dharmarakṣita and states that, among countless disciples in India and Tibet, Atiśa gave this teaching to the “most qualified vessel” Dromtonpa, who then transmitted it to Sharawa, Chekawa, Chilibupa down to Zhonu Gyalchog.¹⁸ Sweet and Zwilling note how multiple texts draw comparisons between Dharmarakṣita and Maitrīyogi on the one hand, and Serlingpa on the other in order to

¹⁴ Sweet and Zwilling, 17.

¹⁵ Jinpa cites passages from Chekawa and Potowa; Jinpa 7.

¹⁶ Serlingpa means “the one from the Golden Isle,” which is taken to be modern day Sumatra.

¹⁷ Se Spyil bu pa chos kyi rgal mtshan, *Blo sbyong don bdun ma'i 'gral pa* in *Blo sbyong glegs bam*, eds. Sems dpa chen po Dkon mchog rgyal mtshan (Bir, India: Tsondu Senghe, 1983), 76; reproduced from the Lhasa Bzhi sde blocks; the translation is from Jinpa, 89.

¹⁸ Jinpa, 152-3.

underscore the superiority of the latter.¹⁹ These texts distinguish Serlingpa’s approach to *lojong* from that of Dharmarakṣita and Maitrīyogi. Whereas the other two gurus taught that the practice should begin first with the meditation for equalizing self and other and then proceed to exchanging self and other, Serlingpa taught that one should begin immediately with the exchange of self and other.²⁰ According to Chekawa’s explanation as preserved in the DDMGP, the instructions of the DDM represent Serlingpa’s lineage and his particular approach. The comparisons between the gurus appear to emphasize and enhance Dromtonpa’s status as the chief disciple of Atiśa and the direct recipient of Serlingpa’s teachings.²¹ The prominence given to Dromtonpa in these lineages seems to support Jinpa’s theory that he was a key figure in shaping *lojong* as a particular branch of Atiśa’s teaching and passing it on as a body of teaching which likely originated from Atiśa’s oral instructions.²²

4.2.2. Context of Genre and Practice

The *lojong* genre is closely connected with the other major Kadam genre of *lam rim*, the stages of the path literature which gives a systematic presentation of the entire Mahāyāna “as a

¹⁹ Sweet and Zwilling, 4, 25, n. 11.

²⁰ The meditation on equalizing self and other is found in numerous texts including Sgam po pa’s *Thar pa rin po che’i rgyan*, and Tsong kha pa’s *Lam rim chen mo*. Tsong kha pa cites Kamalaśīla’s *Bhāvanākrama* as the primary source for this meditation; Herbert V. Guenther, *Jewel Ornament of Liberation* (Berkeley: Shambala, 1996), 91-8; Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, vol. 2, trans. The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Publications, 2004), 35-60; The meditation on exchanging self and other forms the core of *lojong* practice and is based on Śāntideva’s *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, chapter 8, verses 120 and 131.

²¹ This is Sweet and Zwilling’s suggestion.

²² Sources indicate that the *lojong* teachings were transmitted privately between teachers and disciples as a “hidden teaching” (*lkog chos*) following Atiśa’s death and only later made available to the public. Sweet cites an account from Go Lotsawa’s *Blue Annals* which identifies Chekawa as the person to begin teaching *lojong* publicly. Jinpa also points out that the earliest history of Kadampa categorizes *lojong* teachings as belonging to Atiśa’s scattered saying; Sweet and Zwilling, 15; Sweet, 249; Jinpa 11.

path in itself sufficient for reaching the highest goal of buddhahood.”²³ The *lam rim* literature has as its foundational model Atiśa’s comprehensive guide to the Mahāyāna vehicle, the *Lamp of the Enlightenment Path* (Tib. *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma*, Skt. *Bodhipathapradīpa*) and its auto-commentary (*Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma’i dka’ grel*).²⁴ Sherburne notes that *lojong* is also grounded in the *Lamp* and its commentary as the practices and reflections in *lojong* texts are drawn from the topics in these two texts, and the genre itself grew out of the “texts of instruction” (*gdams ngag*) composed by Kadampa scholars based on the *Lamp* and other texts transmitted by Atiśa.²⁵ Sweet and Zwillig further clarify that the Tibetan Buddhist tradition never drew a sharp distinction between *lam rim* and *lojong* as they are both centrally concerned with the cultivation of *bodhicitta*, the resolve to become a buddha.²⁶

The interrelated nature of *lam rim* and *lojong* becomes clearer when we look at some of the major elements they share and how Tibetan Buddhist schools use them within the training of monastics and lamas.

First, *lojong* texts that are based on the root verses, which later became formulated into the seven-point scheme as exemplified in the DDM, presuppose the practitioner’s training as outlined

²³ David Jackson, “The *bstan rim* (‘Stages of the Doctrine’) and Similar Graded Expositions of the Bodhisattva’s Path,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre* (New York: Snow Lion Pub, 1996), 240; on the Indian precedents of the *lam rim* genre, see Bhikku Pāsādika, “The Indian Origins of the Lam-rim Literature of Central Asia,” *The Tibet Journal* 13, no. 1 (Spring 1988), 3-11; Bhikku Pāsādika argues that while the Tibetan tradition looks to Kamalaśīlā’s *Bhāvanākrama* as the progenitor of the graded stages of the path, Nagarjuna’s *Sūtrasamuccaya* is the plausible prototype of *lam rim* literature as it developed later in Tibet; also see Pierre-Julien Harter, “Buddhas in the Making: Path, Perfectibility, and Gnosis in the Abhisamayālaṅkāra Literature,” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 2015), which aims to contribute to the understanding of *lam rim*’s historical relationship with the Abhisamayālaṅkāra as a model and its related literature.

²⁴ Jackson distinguishes the *lam rim* genre from its predecessor *bstan rim* (“stages of the teaching”) based on the *lam rim* texts’ explicit use of the framework of the three individuals (small, middle, and great capacity) which begins with Atiśa’s *Bodhipathapradīpa*; Jackson, 229; Sherburne, 9.

²⁵ Sherburne, 8-9.

²⁶ Sweet and Zwillig, 3.

in the *lam rim* lineage of Atiśa. In the DDM, this is articulated under the instruction, “First train in the preliminaries.” As early as the DDMGP, we find the following explanation:

The practitioner of this mind training must be someone who, by relying on a qualified teacher whose lineage stems from Atiśa, has trained his or her mind in the three scopes in a systematic order and has thus reached a certain level. The practitioner, having generated the two awakening minds, aspiring and engaging, is cognizant of including even [the minute] precepts of these practices. These are the prerequisites.²⁷

The training in the “three scopes” refers to the distinction, begun by Atiśa and adopted by subsequent *lam rim* authors, between three types of paths based on the scope of the practitioner’s concern: a better future rebirth; individual liberation from the cycle of *samsāra*; full buddhahood for the sake of benefitting all sentient beings.²⁸ The author then gives a brief overview of the contemplation on the preciousness of human birth, the law of karma, and the faults of *samsāra*. The contemplation of these aspects of existence together with the contemplation on impermanence form one of the main practices introduced in *lam rim* texts. Situating *lojong* practice within the larger *lam rim* framework becomes a standard feature in many *lojong* commentaries.²⁹

Second, the core practice of *lojong* is the meditation practice of exchanging self and other (*bdag dang gzhan du brje ba*).³⁰ This practice is in turn preceded by the meditation for cultivating love (*byams pa*) and compassion (*snying rje*).³¹ The motivation for and content of both the meditation for exchanging self and other, and the meditation for cultivating love and compassion

²⁷ Chilbupa, 77; Jinpa 89.

²⁸ Richard Sherburne, trans., *The Complete Works of Atiśa* (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 2000), 27-31.

²⁹ We find other examples of this across the texts included in the LBG/TLBLB such as the *Blo sbyong tshogs bshad ma* by Sanggye Gumpa (Sangs rgyas sgom pa, 1179-1250), and *Blo sbyong zhen pa bzhi gal gyi dmigs khrid zab don gnad kyi lde'u mig* by Gorampa (Go rams pa Bsod namS seng ge, 1429-1489).

³⁰ Chilbupa, 81-84.

³¹ Cultivation of love and compassion is mentioned in connection with *bodhicitta* in Atiśa’s *Bodhisattvamanyāvalī*, verse 4: “byams dang snying rje bsgom/ byang chub sems ni bsten par bya,” Sherburne, *Complete Works*, 378. The DDMGP states, “first cultivating loving-kindness and compassion, combine giving and taking.” Chilbupa, 83.

are introduced in the *lam rim* texts. The particular instructions, however, for actually executing the practice are found in *lojong* texts.

The meditation on love and compassion has its precedents in the pre-Mahayana practice of cultivating *mettā*, frequently translated as “loving-kindness” for all sentient beings.

Explanations of *mettā* and its cultivation are found in numerous Pali sources such as the *Karaṇīyamettā sutta*, *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa, and *Abhidhammattha Sangaha*.³² In the Tibetan *lam rim* proper, Gampopa (Sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen 1079-1153) treats the topic in his *Thar pa rin po che'i rgyan*, a major early *bstan rim/lam rim* texts, after the section on contemplating the law of karma. Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1357-1419) discusses it at length in his *Lam rim chen mo* as preparation for exchanging self and other.³³

Gampopa succinctly explains love as the wish that all beings may find happiness, and compassion as the wish that all beings may be freed from suffering. The content of the meditation on love involves four major elements. First, the practitioner recalls (*dren pa*) the benefits she has received from her mother. This part includes not only thinking about the daily sacrifices her mother made to care for her, such as feeding and cleaning after her, but also the fact that her mother made such sacrifices while being trapped in samsaric suffering due to the defilements of ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*), which is the cognitive obscuration preventing knowledge of the true nature of reality; and passions (Skt. *kleśa*), which refer to afflictive emotions stemming

³² Bhikkhu Thanissaro, *Karaṇīya Metta Sutta*. Electronic document available at: <http://www.accesstoinsight.org/tipitaka/kn/snp/snp.1.08.than.html>; Bhadantācariya Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñānamoli (Seattle: BPS Pariyatti Editions, 1999), 288-307; Ācariya Anuruddha, *The Abhidhammattha Sangaha*, trans. Mahāthera Nārada and Bhikkhu Bodhi (Onalaska, Washington: BPS Pariyatti Editions, 2000), II.5.6, II.7.

³³ See Guenther, 91-8; Tsongkhapa, 35-51.

from ignorance and consequent clinging attachment.³⁴ The practitioner considers the countless acts of kindness and love she received from her mother in conjunction with the depth of her mother's sufferings as she continues to wander in *saṃsāra*. The remembrance of her kindness then arouses the desire to repay her mother. This desire moves the practitioner to connect her mother's *samsāric* suffering in the larger context of other sentient beings who similarly are subject to the same suffering and cycle of death and rebirth. That larger context sets the stage for her to realize that in this endless cycle of *saṃsāra*, all sentient beings have been her mother countless times. Based on this realization, the practitioner is able to extend successively her desire for her mother's happiness (love) and freedom from suffering (compassion) to all sentient beings.³⁵ Having identified all sentient beings as one's mother in *saṃsāra*, the meditation on compassion visualizes specific and general sufferings of sentient beings. The two meditations engender both the desire that sentient beings enjoy happiness and freedom from suffering, and the resolve to provide them with that happiness and freedom.

According to the explanations given by both Gampopa and Tsongkhapa, the resolve to become a buddha for the sake of benefitting all sentient beings becomes possible only after countering the deeply conditioned pattern of grasping at the conception of a reified, independently existing self (Tib. *bdag 'dzin*) and an excessive valuing of the self over against others (*bdag la gces par 'dzin pa*). The meditation on love and compassion begins to soften and disintegrate this pattern and the dichotomous perception of the self versus other which it funds.

³⁴ On ignorance and passions, see Etienne Lamotte, *History of Indian Buddhism: From Origins to the Śaka Era*, trans. Sara Webb-Boin (Louvain: Institut Orientalise de l'Université Catholique de Louvain, 1988), 35-6; also see *Dhātuvibhanga sutta*, *Cūḷavedalla sutta* in Bhikkhu Bodhi trans., *Majjhima Nikāya: The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995). On some implications of the teachings on cognitive and moral obscurations in Mahāyāna, see Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations, Second Edition* (New York: Routledge, 2009), 52-55.

³⁵ The order may vary, but all three elements are present in the sections which treat this topic in both *lam rim* and *lojong* texts.

This opens up the possibility for the meditator to realize that the way they are suffering is neither different nor less important than her own suffering. She also comes to understand, both on cognitive and affective levels, the depth of the care she has received from her mother and from others, which she formerly did not know because of her ignorance and self-cherishing. Citing Gampopa, Chilbupa writes on this meditation, “Reflect thus and cultivate a depth of emotion such that tears fall from your eyes and the hairs of your pores stand on end.”³⁶ The intense sense of gratitude, love, and compassion generated by this meditation creates a deeply felt desire and energy to repay all these kind sentient beings by taking on the causes of their suffering and giving all of one’s source of happiness. Only after the practitioner has begun to progress in this practice is she cognitively and affectively prepared to take on the practice of exchanging self and other.

Lojong texts that adopt the seven-point scheme reiterate the requisite relationship between the two forms of meditation when introducing the practice of exchange. The DDMGP states,

[F]irst cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, combining giving and taking; undertake these practices so that your heart becomes even more moist and ripe than before. As you train in this manner and become capable of making an actual exchange - that is, allaying your dear mother’s sufferings and seeking her happiness without calculating the cost to yourself - you have reached a degree of success in this practice.³⁷

The meditation on love and compassion and exchange of self and other mutually inform and support each other. The meditative cultivation of love and compassion creates the proper condition for the meditation on exchanging self and other. Exchanging self and other draws on the power of the love and compassion generated, further deepening them. Love and compassion

³⁶ Chilbupa, 82; Jinpa, 94.

³⁷ Chilbupa, 83; Jinpa 95.

deepen the cognitive capacity to perceive self and other as intimately interrelated and their affective intensification almost inevitably pours forth into the practice of exchange.³⁸

4.3. LOJONG: TRAINING IN ULTIMATE *BODHICITTA* AND RELATIVE *BODHICITTA*

Lojong texts (DDM and others) frame the instructions according to a two-fold classification of *bodhicitta*, which has its precedent in Indian Mahāyāna commentarial literature. The training in the mind of complete awakening is divided into two categories of “ultimate” *bodhicitta* (Tib. *don dam byang chub kyi sems*, Skt. *pāramāṛthikabodhicitta*) and “relative” or “conventional” *bodhicitta* (Tib. *kun rdzob byang chub kyi sems*, Skt. *saṃvṛtibodhicitta*). These are two aspects of one *bodhicitta*, rather than two separate things. As the concepts of ultimate *bodhicitta* and relative *bodhicitta* are fundamental to *lojong*, they require some explanation before I examine their treatment in DDM and commentaries.

Lojong follows *lam rim* teachings in adopting this two-fold classification.³⁹ Ultimate *bodhicitta* can be understood as the mind which nonconceptually and directly engages the ultimate nature of reality, while conventional *bodhicitta* uses ordinary discursive, mental processes by engaging the conventional level of reality. Conventional *bodhicitta* is further divided into “aspiration *bodhicitta*” (Skt. *praṇidhicitta*) and “*bodhicitta*-in-action” (Skt. *prasthānacitta*). Aspiration

³⁸ The interrelated character of *lam rim* and *lojong* is also illustrated by how they are always taught together in the Gelug order, a tradition in which both types of teachings and genres remain fundamental to the training of monastics after their scholastic studies. *Lojong* is also considered to be fundamental to the training of practitioners in certain lineages in the Nyingma and Kagyud orders, especially after eminent figures such as Zhechen Gyaltshab Padma Gyurmed Namgyal (Zhe chen rgyal tshab ‘gyur med padma rnam rgyal, 1871-1926) and Jamgon Kongtrul (‘Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha’ yas, 1813-1899) wrote influential commentaries on DDM in the late 19th century. As there is little scholarly work on the place of *lojong* in the education of monastics and clergy, its exact import and place in the training of Tibetan Buddhist practitioners in the monastic context remains to be investigated; personal interview with Lobsang Shastri, March 15, 2016.

³⁹ Wangchuk notes that the locus classicus of the distinction is *Bodhicaryāvatāra* 1.15, but it is also used by Jñānagarbha. The phrasing “*bodhicitta*-in-action” comes from John Makransky.

bodhicitta consists in generating the resolve to become a buddha for the sake of benefitting all living beings, while *bodhicitta*-in-action is the actualization of this initial resolve through various concrete means, such as the practice of the virtues and meditative cultivation.

The ultimate-relative *bodhicitta* classification reflects the basic Buddhist principle of “two truths,” which distinguishes between how reality ordinarily appears to karmically conditioned sentient beings (*saṃvṛti satya*, conventional truth), and how it is in actuality (*paramārtha satya* ultimate truth). While the distinction goes back to early Buddhist tradition, it was further developed in the Mahāyāna tradition by Nāgārjuna.⁴⁰ Nāgārjuna argued that ordinary phenomenal reality has a valid mode of existence only in a relative or conventional sense, emerging co-dependently and known only through semantic constructions. In its fundamental nature, all reality lacks independent existence. The two truths, then, are not separate things, but one reality seen from two different perspectives.

The ultimate-relative *bodhicitta* classification also reflects the twofold nature of the Mahāyāna soteriological goal, which upholds the undivided unity of wisdom or nonconceptual, nondual realization of the empty nature of reality (*śūnyatā*), and unconfined, universal compassion (*karuṇā* or *upāya*, “skillful means”) for all living beings.⁴¹ In Mahāyāna doctrine, the bodhisattva path always involves both wisdom and compassion, with wisdom preventing compassion from falling into clinging attachment and compassion protecting the practitioner from fixating on the peace of *nirvāṇa*.⁴² Accordingly, ultimate *bodhicitta* corresponds to wisdom,

⁴⁰ Williams, 16; Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura *Nagarjuna's Middle Way: Mūlamadhyamakārikā* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2013), XXV 9.

⁴¹ Wangchuk, 236f.

⁴² Williams, 198. On tension and complementarity between compassion and emptiness in Mahāyāna, see Lambert Schmithausen, “Mitleid und Leerheit: Zu Spiritualität und Heilsziel des Mahāyāna” in *Der Buddhismus als Anfrage an christliche Theologie und Philosophie* (Mödling, Vienna: St. Gabriel, 2000), 442f.

and relative *bodhicitta* to compassion. Again, it is worth repeating that these categorial divisions are conceptual designations of aspects of a single reality, the true nature.

Categorizing the resolve to become the buddha into the ultimate and conventional can be traced back to Indian commentarial literature (*śāstra*).⁴³ In his analysis of these two terms, Dorji Wangchuk points out an important ambiguity in how Indian and Tibetan traditions understood the meaning of ultimate *bodhicitta*. In some commentarial texts, *Pāramārthikabodhicitta* can have a restricted sense of the cognizance of ultimate *bodhicitta* through the attainment of nonconceptual gnosis of the insubstantial nature (Tib. *chos kyi bdag med pa*, Skt. *dharmanairātmya*) of all phenomena, namely, the true nature of reality.⁴⁴ To follow Wangchuk's typology, this type of *bodhicitta* could be called "gnoseological *bodhicitta*" which consists in the cognizance of the true reality.⁴⁵ Some sources, however, are ambiguous in how *pāramārthikabodhicitta* should be understood. It could possibly refer specifically to the cognizance of true reality, or signify an equivalence with true reality itself and not only its gnosis.⁴⁶ The latter corresponds to what Wangchuk calls "ontological *bodhicitta*," which is equivalent to true reality as distinguished from the cognition of it.⁴⁷

⁴³ Wangchuk, 253.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 256.

⁴⁵ Wangchuk's five-fold typology includes ethico-spiritual, gnoseological, ontological, psycho-physiological, and semeiological. Ethico-spiritual *bodhicitta* encompasses both the initial resolve to become a buddha and the actualization of that goal through practice. Gnoseological *bodhicitta* in the basic sense is the nonconceptual gnosis which cognizes all phenomena as non-substantial. It has as its object the third type, ontological *bodhicitta*, which refers to true reality itself. Psycho-physiological *bodhicitta* refers to the conception of seminal fluids in tantric practices as *bodhicitta*, while the semeiological type covers the representations of *bodhicitta* in art. For fuller discussion, see Wangchuk, 196-233.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 257.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 205. Wangchuk makes the important point that the synonyms used in Indian literature for true reality such as *śūnyatā*, *tathatā*, *dharimatā*, and *tathāgatagarbha* are interpreted differently by different schools within the Buddhist tradition. Likewise, ontological *bodhicitta* is also interpreted in multiple ways, namely as emptiness endowed with positive, excellent qualities, or as without any qualities; *ibid.*, 210 - 217.

Ultimate *bodhicitta* as used in *lojong* texts generally corresponds to “gnoseological *bodhicitta*,” which is cognizance of the ultimate nature of reality through meditation. It also does have the sense of “ontological *bodhicitta*,” especially in the last instruction for ultimate *bodhicitta* practice where it states, “rest in the basis of all.” A significant group of commentators, which Jinpa calls the “southern lineage,” interprets the basis as the undivided unity of empty nature and awareness as the basis of all appearances. As instructions on practice (*bslab bya*), *lojong* as genre and tradition of teaching is primarily concerned with conventional *bodhicitta*. However, conventional *bodhicitta* is always understood to be grounded in and dynamically related to ultimate *bodhicitta*. The practice of exchange is not possible without some understanding of ultimate nature of reality as accessed (in *lojong* context) through ultimate *bodhicitta* training, for the condition of possibility for such exchange is the empty nature of reality.

The order in which DDM commentaries treat ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* vary. Some texts will begin with ultimate Bodhicitta while others will start with relative *bodhicitta*. For example, many of the major texts found in LBGTT will begin the training with ultimate *bodhicitta*, while DDM commentaries in the Gelug “hearing” lineage (*snyan brgyud*) take relative *bodhicitta* as the point of departure. In the DDM itself, the training in ultimate *bodhicitta* comes first. The training in ultimate *bodhicitta* in the second point of the DDM, “Training in the awakening mind, the main practice,” includes the following instructions:

Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike.
 Examine the nature of the unborn awareness.
 The remedy, too, is freed in its own place.
 Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path.
 In the intervals be a conjurer of illusion.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ I am using Jinpa’s translation except for his translation of “Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the actual path.” I prefer the translation, “Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path.” Jinpa, 81. Tibetan reads, “Chos rnam rmi lam lta bur bsrab / Ma skyes rig pa’i gshis la dpyad / Gnyon po nyid kyang rang sar grol / Lam gyi ngo bo kun gzhi’i ngang la bzhag / Thun mtshams sgyu ma’i skyes bur bya.” Chibbupa, 78-80.

The instructions on training in relative *bodhicitta* read,

Train in the two - giving and taking - alternately.
Place the two astride your breath.
There are three objects, three poisons, and three roots of virtue.
In all actions, train by means of the words.⁴⁹

The instructions on ultimate *bodhicitta* has as its object the nature of one's own awareness in the ultimate sense and undercutting the habitual mode of conceptualization that prevents direct, non-conceptual realization of the ultimate nature ("basis of all"). In the relative *bodhicitta* section, the practice re-engages the conceptual, discursive mode specifically to interrupt and reverse the habitual patterns of dualistic reification of self versus other through the practice of exchanging self and other. Recognizing relative frameworks *as* relative from the cognizance of its empty nature empowers the practitioner to reconstruct them to facilitate awakening.⁵⁰ The practice of exchange intensifies the attack on the ignorance which regards self and other as independently existing, substantial entities and fails to perceive their interdependent nature. *Lam rim* and *lojong* texts consider chapter 8, verses 120 and 131 of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* as the scriptural basis of this practice:

Whoever longs to rescue quickly both himself and others should practice the supreme mystery: exchange of self and other (8:120)

For one who fails to exchange his own happiness for the suffering of others, Buddhahood is certainly impossible – how could there even be happiness in cyclic existence? (8:131)⁵¹

Lojong presents a concrete way to put this exchange into actual practice through what is called *tonglen* (Tib. *gtong len*, "giving and taking"). Before I explain the specific meaning of these instructions, I first would like to examine different interpretations of ultimate *bodhicitta* in *lojong*

⁴⁹ Jinpa, 83. Tibetan: "Gtong len gnyis po sbal mar sbyangs / De gnyis rlung la bskyon bar bya / Yul gsum dug gsum dge rtsa gsum / Spyod lam kun tu tshig gis sbyangs." Chilhupa, 81-85.

⁵⁰ John Makransky, personal correspondence, June 7, 2019.

⁵¹ Śāntideva, *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, trans. Kate Crosby and Andrew Skilton (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 99, 100.

teachings. This examination is necessary because ultimate *bodhicitta* is the foundation for relative *bodhicitta*, and divergent hermeneutics inform the way in which commentators interpret the meaning of the *lojong* instructions.

4.3.1. Ultimate *Bodhicitta*: Different Hermeneutical Traditions

Jinpa explains that two distinct traditions exist within the lineages of *lojong* teaching, the “northern” and “southern” lineages, with a third alternative forwarded by Zhonnu Gyalchog who presents a synthetic interpretation that combines the viewpoints of the two lineages in his *Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights (Blo sbyong legs bshad kun ‘dus)*.⁵² The major point of difference between the northern and southern lineages is their respective interpretation of the ultimate *bodhicitta* in the instruction, “Rest in the basis of all (ngo bo kun gzhi’i ngang la bzhag).”⁵³ Lechen Kunga Gyaltzen (Las chen kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, 1432-1506), who wrote a history of the Kadam order, states,

Regarding this very *Seven-point [lojong]*, two [types of] texts which set forth the instructions appear: the southern and northern transmissions; while the southern transmission construes that “basis of all” of “Settle in the nature of the basis of all” as the uncontrived mind, since the northern transmission identify [the basis-of-all] as emptiness which lacks inherent existence, there is a special difference [between the two].⁵⁴

The southern lineage traced to Thogme Zangpo understands this basis as the empty and cognizant ultimate nature of the mind. The northern lineage traced to Rampa Lhadingpa and Radrengpa in contrast interprets this “basis of all (*kun gzhi*)” as mere emptiness of intrinsic, substantial existence of all phenomena as the ultimate nature of reality.

⁵² Jinpa, 12.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Las chen kun dga’ rgyal mtshan, *Bka’ gdams chos ‘byung gsal ba’i sgron me*, TBRC W23748, [Publisher name, location unknown], [Publication date: 19-?], fol. 8a, <http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W23748>.

This difference in approach to ultimate *bodhicitta* reflects divergent interpretations of “buddha nature” (*tathāgatagarbha*) in Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Mahāyāna *sūtras* and *śāstras* on *tathāgatagarbha* variously describe sentient beings as having in embryonic form the fully enlightened Buddha within them, as being wombs or matrices for the buddha, or as having the buddha as their essential inner nature.⁵⁵ All three senses indicate that sentient beings can become a fully enlightened buddha because the very nature of this buddha is the same as their fundamental nature. When sentient beings are subject to samsaric existence, *tathāgatagarbha* is said to be “tainted” by defilements of passion and attachment that arise from ignorance of the true nature of reality that does not recognize its interdependent nature and lacking independent existence. Yet, it is defiled only in an apparent or adventitious fashion, since in itself the *tathāgatagarbha* is pure and inseparable from the pure enlightened qualities.⁵⁶ From the perspective of enlightenment in which one realizes the true nature of reality, the *tathāgatagarbha* is not tainted and completely pure. In its realized form, it is identified with the *dharmakāya* itself, the unconditioned and ultimate reality of things that is pure of all defilements and cognitive obscurations. The *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, its commentary (*Vyākhyā*), as well as the *Śrīmālā sūtra* speak of the *tathāgatagarbha* as awareness that is nondual (does not set up independent existence but sees all phenomena as empty, undivided, beyond reification into dualities) and intrinsically pure of all

⁵⁵ David Seyfor Ruegg, *Buddha-nature, Mind and the Problem of Gradualism in a Comparative Perspective: On the Transmission and Reception of Buddhism in India and Tibet* (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1989), 17-19; Ronald Davidson, 92-103.

⁵⁶ Ruegg is citing *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*. David Seyfort Ruegg, *La Théorie de Tathāgatagarbha et du Gotra* (Paris: De L'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, Université de Paris, 1969), 314.

defilements (not subject to any attachments that arise from ignorance of emptiness of independent existence).⁵⁷

The controversy in Tibetan Buddhist tradition centered on how the positive descriptions (such as “permanent,” “pure,” and “blissful”)⁵⁸ of the ultimate nature of reality in *tathāgatagarbha* teachings should be understood in relation to the doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*), often construed in terms of *rangtong* (*rang stong*, “self empty”) and *zhentong* (*gzhan stong*, “other empty”) systems of thought.⁵⁹ The hermeneutical differences stem in part from the teaching that the Buddha presented three “turnings” of the wheel of dharma. The *Samdhinirmocana sūtra* proclaims the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching as the ‘Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma’ that presents the definitive meaning (Skt. *nīthārtha*) of the Buddha’s words.⁶⁰ The ‘First Turning’ that presented the Four Noble Truths, and the ‘Second Turning’ that taught the doctrine of emptiness were, on the other hand, provisional teachings that did require interpretation (Skt. *neyārtha*).⁶¹ The final teaching on buddha nature, however, is definitive and does not need further interpretation.

The so-called *rangtong* system, represented mainly by Gelug (Tib. *Dge lugs*) figures, accepted the validity of the teachings on the *tathāgatagarbha* but regarded them as non-definitive teachings

⁵⁷ Williams, 107, 110. *Ratnagotravibhāga* and other texts that conceive ultimate nature of reality in terms of nondual cognition of emptiness, as distinguished from the Mādhyamaka conception of it only as mere emptiness, belong to the Yogācāra literary and philosophical tradition, whose inception is ascribed to the works of Asaṅga (310-90?) and Vasubandhu (4th- 5th century CE); John Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied: Sources of Controversy in India and Tibet* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1997), 35-7. Ronald Davidson explains that the Yogācāra tradition was characterized by its deep commitment to contemplative practice and its later development established the scholastic position of the Mahāyāna, which Mādhyamaka failed to provide, as well as the intellectual foundations of the Vajrayāna. Ronald Davidson, "Buddhist systems of transformation: Asraya-parivrtti/-paravrtti among the Yogacara." (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1985): 141-2.

⁵⁸ For example, see *Ratnagotravibhāga / Uttaratantraśāstra*, I.38, II.3. Karl Brunnhölzl, trans., *When the Clouds Part: The Uttaratantra and its Meditative Tradition as a Bridge between Sūtra and Tantra* (Boston: Snow Lion, 2014), 365-66, 416.

⁵⁹ Williams, 114.

⁶⁰ John Powers, trans. *Wisdom of the Buddha: The Samdhinirmocana Sūtra* (Berkeley, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1995), 139-41.

⁶¹ Ruegg, *Buddha-nature*, 26.

that required further interpretation.⁶² It viewed the positive language used in scriptural and commentarial sources to speak about the *tathāgatagarbha* as permanent, immutable, eternal, and blissful as an expedient means of attracting and introducing the Buddha’s teachings to those who had certain obstacles, such as non-Buddhists who still clung to conceptions of an independently existing self and feared the truth of emptiness.⁶³ The deeper meaning of this teaching was held to be that of emptiness according to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka view, as the absence of intrinsic, causally independent existence (Skt. *svabhāva*) of phenomena, self, and the mind.⁶⁴ Here, the *tathāgatagarbha* is the sheer emptiness of intrinsic existence as specifically applied to the mind of sentient beings. Precisely because this mind is empty in this sense, it changes and has the possibility of becoming the buddha’s mind. Consequently, the *tathāgatagarbha* in the *rangtong* perspective points to this potential in the mind, which remains unfulfilled and requires development.⁶⁵

Those thinkers who have been classified as embracing a *zhentong*⁶⁶ view generally accepted the *tathāgatagarbha* teachings as definitive, but diverged in how they understood its relationship to

⁶² Douglas Duckworth, “Onto-theology and Emptiness: The Nature of Buddha-Nature,” *Journal of American Academy of Religion* 82, no. 4 (2014): 1077-8.

⁶³ Ruegg, *Buddha-nature*, 27.

⁶⁴ Williams, 68, 113. The Gelug (Dge lugs) order, founded by Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa, 1357-1419), is the main representative of the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka view (and thereby *rang stong* point of view) in Tibetan Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism distinguishes between Prāsaṅgika (Consequentialist) and Svātantrika (Autonomous) Mādhyamaka based on whether one argues against an opponent committed to a substantialist position, which affirms something inherently exists, by employing reasoning acceptable to the opponent solely to draw out and demonstrate clearly the undesirable consequences (*prasaṅgas*) of his thesis; or by using autonomous (*svatantra*) inferences in logical arguments to refute such an opponent’s thesis. The doxographical distinction is a Tibetan Buddhist creation which does not reflect the categories used by Indian Madhyamikas such as Nāgārjuna and his interpreters. Williams, 65-8; Sara L. McClintock and Georges B. J. Dreyfus, “Introduction,” in *The Svātantrika-Prāsaṅgika Distinction* (Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications, 2014), 2-5.

⁶⁵ Ruegg, *Buddha-nature*, 133.

⁶⁶ Cyrus Stearns argues that the term *gzhan stong* was an obscure term used in Tibetan Buddhist literature previous to its use in an innovative doctrinal manner by Dolpopa in the 14th century. Cyrus Stearns, “Dol-po-pa Shes-rab rgyal-mtshan and the genesis of the gzhan-stong position in Tibet,” *Asiatische Studien: Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft*, 49 (1995): 845-7.

the teaching on emptiness of the Second Turning.⁶⁷ Some thinkers emphasized the positive teachings on the *tathāgatagarbha* as definitive and teaching on emptiness as provisional, while other thinkers embraced both as definitive and complementary. Overall, they saw *tathāgatagarbha* in its ultimate sense as empty of all defilements yet not empty of nondual, pure wisdom. We will note from the outset, therefore, that the *zhentong* label encompasses a variety of views that differ on how to understand the positive descriptions of the *tathāgatagarbha*.⁶⁸ At one extreme is Dolpopa (Dol po pa shes rab rgyal mtshan, 1292-1361), the main *zhentong* proponent of the Jonang school, and his followers who argued that the *tathāgatagarbha* was permanent, immutable, eternal, lacking temporal momentariness, in addition to being present in all sentient beings as pure, undefiled, and having all the attributes of the Buddha.⁶⁹ According to Tāranātha (1575-1634), Dolpopa also held that the *tathāgatagarbha* as the basis is the same as the nature of the mind of sentient beings, and that the nondual pristine cognition had inherent existence, albeit in a manner that transcended the entity or non-entity duality.⁷⁰ In relation to the *rangtong* position, rigorously embraced mainly by the Gelugpa, Jonang proponents of *zhentong* argued that the Prāsaṅgika

⁶⁷ Dorji Wangchuk, “The rÑiñ-ma Interpretations of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory,” *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*, 48 (2004), 191-5.

⁶⁸ Matthew Kapstein notes that Western scholars as well as certain *rang stong* polemicists in the past too easily and mistakenly identified *gzhan stong* exclusively with Dolpopa’s view. Recent developments, however, in the study of *gzhan stong* thinkers show a complex variety of views and arguments; Matthew Kapstein, “We Are All Gzhan stong pas,” *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*, 7 (2000): 118-9. Dorji Wangchuk similarly criticizes the loose way in which scholars have applied the *gzhan stong* label to various Nyingma thinkers without clarifying what they mean by the term ‘gzhan stong’ and often not examining the specifics of the arguments in texts written by Nyingma figures; Wangchuk, “The rÑiñ-ma Interpretations of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory,” 174-8. For a concise summary of different *gzhan stong* positions on the *tathāgatagarbha*, see Brunnhölzl, 65-79. On further comparisons of *gzhan stong* thinkers, see articles under “Special Topic: The *Rang stong* / *Gzhan stong* Division” in *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, 2 (2016).

⁶⁹ Dol-bo-ba Shay-rap-gyel-tsen, *Mountain Doctrine: Tibet’s Fundamental Treatise on Other-Emptiness and the Buddha-Matrix*, trans. Jeffrey Hopkins, ed. Kevin Bose (Ithaca, N.Y.: Snow Lion Pub, 2006), 563-9; Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dolpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen* (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press, 1999), 83-5.

⁷⁰ Klaus-Dieter Mathes, “Tāranātha’s ‘Twenty-One Differences with regard to the Profound Meaning’ - Comparing the Views of the *Gzhan Stong* Masters Dol Po Pa and Śākya Mchog Ldan,” *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 27, no. 2 (2004), 299-300, 308.

Mādhyamaka view of mere emptiness was incomplete and preparatory for the nonconceptual realization of ultimate reality.

On the other hand, Śākya Chogden (Śākya mchog ldan, 1428-1507), another figure classified as *zhentong*, argued that the nondual cognition is permanent only in the sense of temporal continuity. Hence it needs to be regarded as conditioned in the sense that it is subject to arising, abiding, and cessation, and performing a function (i.e., cognizing). At the same time, it is unconditioned in the sense of not being subject to karma and obscurations.⁷¹ He further argued that the *tathāgatagarbha* present in sentient beings is only a cause that makes possible attainment of buddhahood and enlightened qualities, and should not be identified as the same basis of the mindstream of sentient beings.⁷² For Śākya Chogden, the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka doctrine of emptiness was correct at the level of logical reasoning as its function was to eliminate conceptual clinging to inherent existence. The realization, however, of ultimate truth in meditative equipoise is the luminous, nondual primordial mind that is empty of all defilements and obscurations, and exists beyond what can be determined or negated by analytical reasoning.⁷³

Besides these two figures, many scholars of the Nyingma and Kagyud schools as well as the later non-sectarian (Tib. *ris med*) movement espoused various views of the *tathāgatagarbha* as empty of intrinsic existence of relative phenomena yet consisting of pure nondual cognition and

⁷¹ Anne Buchardi, “How Can a Momentary and Conditioned Mind be Integral to *Gzhan Stong*,” *Journal of Buddhist Philosophy*, 2 (2016), 61.

⁷² Brunnhölzl, 77.

⁷³ Yaroslav Komarovski, *Visions of Unity: The Golden Paṇḍita Shakya Chokden’s New Interpretation of Yōgācāra and Mādhyamaka* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2011), 218-21.

enlightened qualities of the Buddha.⁷⁴ The divide between affirming these positive aspects of pure cognition and enlightened qualities as constitutive of the *tathāgatagarbha* on the one hand, and the strictly Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka interpretation of it as mere emptiness of intrinsic existence as the ultimate nature of beings on the other, informs how different figures interpret ultimate *bodhicitta*. Hence, in *lam rim* literature, Gampopa’s definition reflects the former understanding: “Ultimate *bodhicitta* is pervading emptiness endowed with the essence of compassion, clear, unmoving, and free from elaboration.” Tsongkhapa in his *Lam rim chen mo* extensively discusses the true nature of reality in terms of mere emptiness and regards positive teachings on ultimate nature as only provisional in meaning.⁷⁵

4.3.2. Ultimate *Bodhicitta* Practice

These two views on ultimate *bodhicitta* flow into the commentaries on *lojong* teachings, shaping how individual commentators on the DDM explain ultimate *bodhicitta* and its relationship with relative *bodhicitta*. If we were to apply Lechen’s categorization of DDM teachings into southern and northern lineages, the southern lineage commentators generally interpret ultimate *bodhicitta* as nondual unity of pure, luminous mind and emptiness, while the northern lineage commentators emphasize that its true significance is mere emptiness of intrinsic existence.

⁷⁴ On Nyingma views, see Wangchuk, “The rÑin-ma Interpretations of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory,” 183f; also Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism: Its Fundamentals and History* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 180; 207f.

⁷⁵ Tsong-kha-pa Blo-bzang-grags-pa, *The Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, vol. 3, trans. The Lamrim Chenmo Translation Committee (Boston: Snow Lion, 2002), 169-70.

Lechen remarks that Thogme Zangpo based his DDM teachings on the southern lineage, and the latter's commentary seems to support that assertion.⁷⁶ Commenting on the instruction “Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path” in an early work on ultimate *bodhicitta* in the DDM, Thogme Zangpo cites the *Point of Passage Wisdom Sūtra* (Skt. *Ārya ātyayañāna nāma mahāyānasūtra*, Tib. *Phags pa 'da' ka ye shes zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*) and writes,

From the *Point of Passage Wisdom Sūtra*, “Since the fundamental nature [is] luminosity-clarity [*'od gsal*], meditate, knowing [it] as something that cannot be conceived. Since the mind itself [*sems snyid*] is the buddha, do not look to another buddha!” In that way, it is vitally important to determine with certainty the actuality of the mind.⁷⁷

His gloss on the sūtra passage highlights the view of ultimate nature as pure, nondual luminous mind and not simply ‘mere emptiness’, indicating that he interprets the positive teachings of ultimate reality as presented in the *tathāgatagarbha* sūtras and śāstras as the definitive meaning. Thogme Zangpo's commentary on ultimate *bodhicitta* in *lojong* consistently asserts that relative phenomena is completely empty of intrinsic existence while the ultimate nature of reality (Tib. *rang bzhin*, “fundamental nature”) is luminosity and clarity (Tib. *'od gsal ba*).

In a much later commentary on the DDM, Zhechen Gyalsab (Zhe chen rgyal tshab 'gyur med pad ma rnam rgyal, 1871-1926) provides a much more expanded commentary on ultimate *bodhicitta*:

[A]ll aspects of both samsara and nirvana exhibit a wholeness: As pure light and great openness, they are undifferentiated – the natural mode of abiding. Although beings manifest through temporary delusion, they never deviate from the ultimate nature of truth, the natural mode of abiding.... The Tathāgatagarbha abides in beings from the beginningless beginning as innate wisdom, the merging of clarity and openness. The real nature of the mind is, this very instant, free from limits imposed by all the characteristics of conceptual activity – activity that of itself is self-originated and pristine awareness.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Lechen, fol. 8a.

⁷⁷ Thogs med bzang po dpal, “Don dam byang chub kyi sems sbyang ba,” in *Gsung 'bum / Thogs med bzang po dpal*, TBRC W1CZ895, vol. 1, (Sde dge: Sde dge par khang chen mo, [publication date unknown]), 509, [http://tbr.org/link?RID=O1CZ895|O1CZ895C2O0099\\$W1CZ895](http://tbr.org/link?RID=O1CZ895|O1CZ895C2O0099$W1CZ895).

⁷⁸ Zhechen Gyalsab Padma Gyurmed Namgyal, *Path of Heroes: Birth of Enlightenment*, Vol. 1 (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1995), 29.

We can note several features in Zhechen Gyalsab's understanding of buddha-nature. First, karmically conditioned existence in *samsāra* is non-dually one with nirvana at the level of ultimate nature. *Samsāra* is a mode of existence in which the ultimate nature of reality is obscured by ignorance and defilements that result from it. Second, the nature of reality in itself is characterized as completely open (empty) and clear, and these two aspects as non-dually united. It is also characterized as unconditioned by and unoriginated from an external cause, and as having pure awareness or a cognizing quality. The *tathāgatagarbha* is an active force that is fully present in sentient beings as the pure essence of reality and beyond all conceptuality. Yet, it is important to note that for Zhechen Gyalsab, the *tathāgatagarbha* as the essence of our being is “essenceless,” that is, it cannot be understood as an ontological substance that exists in the conventional mode of relative phenomena.⁷⁹

Zhechen Gyalsab's commentary on ultimate *bodhicitta* instructions in *lojong* reflects this understanding of the *tathāgatagarbha*. After establishing through investigative analysis that neither phenomena nor the apprehending mind has any intrinsic, substantial existence on their own, Zhechen Gyalsab notes that the antidote that gives the practitioner access to true nature of reality is “pristine awareness or the mind that knows subject and objects as non-produced.”⁸⁰ On the instruction, “Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path,” he writes,

Not meditating on anything, not thinking about anything, settle your gaze nakedly, firmly, and clearly, in the state where there is no mental activity. By doing so, by gazing on just that itself, the nature of existence becomes very clear, just as it is. In unsullied water there is sparkling clearness; in the still mind there is bliss; in the unobstructed sky there is what is called clarity.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid., 25.

⁸⁰ Zhechen Gyalsab Padma Gyurmed Namgyal, *Path of Heroes: Birth of Enlightenment*, Vol. 2 (Berkeley: Dharma Publishing, 1995), 276.

⁸¹ Ibid., 282.

The “basis of all” is identified with the unconfined, clear, and blissful nature of the mind that is beyond conception, subject-object duality, and existence or non-existence. Training in ultimate *bodhicitta* is to become increasingly attuned and harmonized with this pure nature of ultimate reality.

As examples of northern lineage texts, we can look at statements of Gelug commentators on ultimate *bodhicitta*. In his *Lojong Heart Instructions* (*Blo sbyong dmar khrid shar rtse chos rje la ghang ba*), the Fourth Panchen Lama Lobsang Choki Gyaltzen (Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570-1662) writes on ultimate *bodhicitta*:

Realizing the non-existence of the self, the foremost characteristic of the nature [*rang bzhin*] of all phenomena, inseparable, all-pervading, is free of the extremes of [conceptual] elaborations. The very basis of all [is] the profound emptiness.⁸²

When he discusses the verses on ultimate *bodhicitta*, the Panchen Lama stresses that the key point of the relevant *lojong* instructions is the realization that the fundamental nature of all phenomena is emptiness. Accordingly, the “basis of all,” the key point of contention between the southern and northern lineages, is “profound emptiness,” meaning sheer emptiness as the definitive meaning of ultimate nature.

The insistence on *rangtong* interpretation is much more pronounced in Tsongkhapa’s direct student Namkha Pel’s (Hor ston nam mkha’ dpal ba, 1373-1447) *Mind Training: Rays of the Sun* (*Blo sbyong nyi ma’i ‘od zer*). He explicitly states that the DDM instructions on ultimate *bodhicitta* must be understood according to the definitive meaning of the Buddha’s teachings, which is “mere emptiness” as set forth in the scriptures of the “Second Turning” and interpreted by Nāgārjuna,

⁸² Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan, Pan chen bla ma 04, “Blo sbyong dmar khrid shar rtse chos rje la ghang ba,” in *Gsung ‘bum / Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan*, TBRC W9848, vol. 4, (Bkra shis lhun po, 199?), 521, <http://tbc.org/link?RID=W9848>.

Candrakīrti, and Tsongkhapa.⁸³ Hence, Namkha Pel remarks that the first of the three lines, “Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike / Examine the nature of unborn awareness / The remedy, too, is freed in its own place,” make clear the manner of determining the mere emptiness of apprehended phenomena (object), the apprehender (subject), and the one carrying out the analytical meditation. The meditation prescribed in these three instructions are analytical (*dhyad sgom*) in that the meditator analyzes whether an object that appears to one’s consciousness, nature of awareness itself, and the one performing the analysis itself has no intrinsic, independent existence.⁸⁴ The fourth line, “Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path,” indicates the stage of resting meditation (*jog sgom*), in which one places the mind in what is not discovered under analysis, namely emptiness itself. Namkha Pel underscores that the stage of resting meditation comes only after the practitioner has completed the analytical meditation, which clearly establishes the object that must be negated (i.e., intrinsic existence).⁸⁵

⁸³ Nam mkha' dpal ba, *Blo sbyong nyi ma'i 'od zer*, TBRC W15448. 1 vol. (Lhasa, Shan kha ba 'gyur med bsod nams stobs rgyas, 19—), 172-3, <http://tbr.org/link?RID=W15448>.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 173. All Tibetan Buddhist schools employ analysis in clarifying that self-grasping is the principal object to be negated and eliminating conceptual attachment to intrinsic existence, but the Gelug commentators have their own way of presenting the relationship between analytical and non-analytical or “resting” meditation on emptiness. They emphasize the fundamental importance of conceptually ascertaining mere emptiness and then placing the mind on that mere emptiness without analysis. Non-Gelug commentators, on the other hand, present the resting meditation in terms of nondual unity of emptiness and clarity. How this affects the experience of the meditator is an open question, but there is a significant difference between Gelug and non-Gelug scholars in terms of the content of the interpretation and what the parameters of discursive descriptions of ultimate *bodhicitta* entail.

⁸⁵ Subsequent to Namkha Pel, Gelug commentators assert their unique lineage of lojong transmission, beginning with the traditional figure of Serlingpa and others but as guided by Tsongkhapa’s teachings, which they call “the great hearing lineage” (*snyan bryud chen mo*). Ngawang Lobsang Choden (Nga dbang blo bzang chos ldan, 1642-1714) in his *Complete Instruction Text of the Great Hearing Lineage Lojong* outlines this particular lineage. The order in which the instructions are given are also different in the hearing lineage, as it begins with relative *bodhicitta* instructions on exchanging self and other, and treats the ultimate *bodhicitta* instructions last. In his commentary, Ngawang Lobsang Choden reiterates many of the same points made by Namkha Pel on ultimate *bodhicitta*, categorizing the first three lines as involving analytical meditation that establishes emptiness of intrinsic existence (*rang bzhin med pa*), and the fourth line on the basis-of-all as resting meditation on the undiscoverable object. Nga dbang blo bzang chos ldan, “Blo sbyong snyan rgyud chen mo'i 'khrid yig gzhan phan nyi,” in *Gsung 'bum / Ngag dbang blo bzang chos ldan*, TBRC W1KG1321, vol 2 (Pecin, 19th cent.), 40, <http://tbr.org/link?RID=W1KG1321>. On the different approaches to the doctrine of emptiness and methods of meditation, see John Makransky, “Contrasting Tsongkhapa and Longchenpa: Buddhist Diversity as a Resource for Comparative Theology” in *New Paths for Interreligious Theology*, eds. Alan Race and Paul Knitter (New York: Orbis Books, 2019), 115-29, and Douglas Duckworth, *Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind and Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

A modern Gelug commentary by Geshe Rabten (Dge bshes rab brtan, 1920-1987) maintains the general shape of the commentarial interpretation forwarded by the previous Gelug writers. For Geshe Rabten, ultimate *bodhicitta* “involves developing the right view, or the realization of emptiness.”⁸⁶ In what almost sounds like a refutation of Zhechen Gyaltshab’s comments cited above, he writes, “Meditation on emptiness is not just making the mind completely blank and empty of all thoughts. Rather, an effort must be made in the beginning stages of meditation to discover the nature of the ignorance that is grasping the concept of a self and understand exactly how it functions.”⁸⁷ He begins his commentary with a strong emphasis on the need conceptually to clearly understand the nature of grasping after the independent existence of phenomena and the conception of a substantial self. Training in ultimate *bodhicitta* starts with extensive periods of meditative analysis of the object of ignorance (self-grasping) and how this functions in one’s mind. Through this practice, the practitioner gains greater understanding of how neither phenomena nor our minds exist in any way that can be isolated and apprehended as independent and substantial.⁸⁸ Geshe Rabten explains the instruction “Rest in the basis of all, the essence of the path,” in the following way:

The term “foundation of all” [same as basis] here is a synonym for emptiness. This instruction is the culmination of prior explanations because, after realizing the emptiness of our ignorant conception that things exist independently, we should maintain all our energy on this emptiness – the essence of the path and the very foundation of all.... By sustaining our mind in emptiness, our understanding will gradually become clearer until, after repeated meditation, we shall attain a nonconceptual, or intuitive, realization.... Keeping our mind placed on the direct negation of the independent self-existence of both the ego and the self-identity of outer phenomena is known as spacelike meditative equipoise.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Geshe Rabten and Geshe Darghey, *Advice from a Spiritual Friend*, trans. and ed. Brian Beresford (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1996), 69.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 77.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 81.

The doctrine of emptiness operative here is the complete negation of intrinsic existence and this itself as “the basis,” the ultimate nature of reality. Geshe Rabten does not ascribe any kind of intrinsic qualities in terms of clarity or cognizance to this reality as Zhechen Gyaltsab does. Accordingly, he interprets the instruction to rest or place the mind in the essence of reality as focusing the mind directly on the negation of all intrinsic existence. The result of this practice is a gradual experiential and nonconceptual understanding of emptiness. That this realization develops out of experience not mediated by conceptual thought is similar to the emphasis on the nonconceptual character of accessing the nature of mind in Thogme Zangpo and Zhechen Gyaltsab’s works. However, the essence in itself does not have any positive qualities nor is there any sense that it is an active power. Ultimate *bodhicitta* according to Geshe Rabten’s perspective is the correct realization of emptiness according to the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka view.⁹⁰

4.3.3. Relative Bodhicitta

Laying out the basic outlines of these hermeneutical differences is important for several reasons. First, a proper understanding and contextualization of *lojong* for comparative theology from a Christian standpoint requires me to appreciate the conflict of interpretations at play in

⁹⁰ In addition to the northern and southern lineages, Jinpa notes that Zhonnu Gyalchog synthesizes both hermeneutical positions in his *Compendium of All Well-Uttered Insights*, which includes major *lojong* texts, his own commentary, and his original *lojong* compositions. However, I have not been able to locate any passages that clearly show that Zhonnu Gyalchog presents a synthetic middle position. His statements, “In general, although definitely apprehending the basis of all is extremely difficult, of this these days the basis of all is construed as that uncontrived mind [sems ma bcos pa]; there is no type of meditation whatever except for resting in that state;” “Place yourself naked [rjen ne], clearly cognizant [hrig ge], and clearly present [sa le] in the state which does not act mentally in any way;” and “meditate, free from the rational mind, [on] illumination and emptiness” together with passages that place an equal emphasis on the lack of intrinsic existence do not suggest a perspective that is different in kind than someone like Thogme Zangpo. See Gzhon nu rgyal mchog, *Blo sbyong legs bshad kun ‘dus*, TBRC W1KG3712 (Delhi: N. topgyal, 1996), 78-80, <http://tbr.org/link?RID=W1KG3712>.

lojong theory and approaches to its practice. The hermeneutical divergence on ultimate *bodhicitta* reflects a deeper and much larger philosophical conflict that has a complicated history in both Indian and Tibetan Buddhism.⁹¹ It pivots on which texts (of the Second or Third Turning) a particular school or scholar takes as the definitive teachings of the Buddha; varying conceptions of the *tathāgatagarbha*; the predominance of Mādhyamaka or Yogācāra philosophy; and how the philosophical and yogic outlook of specific schools (with a long history of disputes and conflict) shape their approach to *lojong* (e.g., the supremacy of Dzogchen in Nyingma or Mahāmudrā in Kagyu which offer analogically positive descriptions of ultimate nature of reality; and the Gelug tradition's particularly rationalistic account of Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka as the solely correct way to approach ultimate nature⁹²). While such a brief and cursory treatment given here cannot account adequately for this complex context, it is necessary for me to point out the hermeneutical divisions as it pertains to *lojong* specifically. The conception of ultimate reality here is inextricably wedded to the meditation practice. As different conceptions of ultimate reality are operative in *lojong* theory and practice, it is important to understand clearly the larger context in which I am making theological comparisons.⁹³

Second, while explanations of relative *bodhicitta* instructions do not significantly differ between *lojong* commentators of varying lineages, interpretive divergences do inform how commentators approach relative *bodhicitta* instructions. For example, Thogme Zangpo, Chilibupa, Jamgon Kontrul, and Zhechen Gyaltzab (all categorizable as belonging to Lechen's southern

⁹¹ See Duckworth, *Tibetan Buddhist Philosophy of Mind and Nature*, chs. 1-4 for the Indian context and ch. 5 for the Tibetan context; Gadjin M. Nagao, *Mādhyamika and Yogācāra: A Study of Mahāyāna Philosophies*, trans. Leslie S. Kawamura (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1991); Jay L. Garfield and Jan Westerhoff, eds., *Madhyamaka and Yogācāra: Allies or Rivals?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁹² Geoffrey Samuel, *Civilized Shamans: Buddhism in Tibetan Societies* (Washington D.C.: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1993), 510-11.

⁹³ I go into the theological comparison in Chapter 5.

lineage) follow the order of the root instructions that are found in Chekawa's DDM. The DDM root lines as preserved in the Gelug hearing lineage present the instructions in a different order, and move directly into relative *bodhicitta* training with "Taking adverse conditions onto the path of awakening (Point 3 in Chekawa's DDM)" after the initial point "Train in the preliminaries," and treat the ultimate *bodhicitta* section last.⁹⁴ In addition, the hearing lineage root lines do not include the instructions, "By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies / Emptiness is protection unsurpassed," which fall under ultimate *bodhicitta* training in the third point of Chekawa's DDM. A reason for the absence might be that these instructions involve concepts of the bodies of the buddha, which is another source of major division between Gelug and non-Gelug scholars based on interpretations of the relationship between relative and ultimate reality.⁹⁵ Although both southern and northern lineage commentators expound on self-grasping and self-cherishing as the core problem which the training in the two types of *bodhicitta* target, many Gelug commentaries tend to place greater emphasis on both the karmically conditioned state of sentient beings, and the need to recognize fully the object of refutation (intrinsic existence) when practicing meditation on emptiness. Southern lineage commentators, in contrast, point out that the nondual unity of cognizance and emptiness is already the fundamental nature of reality. While conceptual analysis of the ultimate nature is a necessary part of the path leading to its realization, it alone cannot lead to the non-conceptual realization of the true nature.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ See the contemporary Gelug scholar Lobsang Peldan Chokyi Dorje's (b. 1938) text, *Blo bzang dpal ldan chos kyi rdo rje*, "Blo sbyong snyan brgyud chen mo'i rnam bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer las btus pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma'i rtsa tshig," in *Gsung 'bum / blo bzang dpal ldan chos kyi rdo rje*, TBRC W29157, vol. 5 (Pe cin: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2001), 135-6, <http://tbc.org/link?RID=W29157>.

⁹⁵ See Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, 39-47.

⁹⁶ Makransky, "Contrasting Tsongkhapa and Longchenpa," 127.

4.3.4. *Tonglen*

To turn to the relative *bodhicitta* training proper in Chekawa's DDM, it begins with the exchange of self and other through the practice of *tonglen*. The instruction on *tonglen* reads, "Train in giving and taking alternately. Put the two on the breath." The meditation session entails the practitioner visualizing taking into herself the suffering of others and giving them all her happiness, possessions, and merit. *Tonglen* flows directly from the meditation on love and compassion, which takes one's mother as the initial object. As Jamgon Kontrul ('Jam mgon kon sprul blo gros mtha' yas, 1813-1899) says, meditation on love and compassion "form the basis for taking and sending."⁹⁷ Having engendered a powerful motivation to take on the suffering of one's mother by contemplating her suffering, the practitioner takes the next step by engaging in the "taking" meditation. Chilbupa writes,

What harms this dear mother? Suffering harms her directly, while the origin of suffering injures her indirectly. So while thinking, "I shall take all these upon myself," take into your own heart in clean swaths - as if layers sheared off by a sharp knife - all the sufferings, their origin, the afflictions, and the subtle defilements to knowledge along with their propensities, all of which exist in your dear mother. This is the meditation on the "taking" aspect of awakening mind. Again, thinking, "I shall myself seek the complete happiness of my dear mother," unconditionally offer your body, wealth, and all your virtues to your mother.... Imagine therefore your body, wealth, and roots of virtue as precious [wish-fulfilling] jewels. From these emerge for your dear mother all the conditions engaging in spiritual practice, such as food, clothing, shelter, assistants, as well as reliance on a spiritual teacher - all the conditions favorable to the attainment of enlightenment - whatever she wishes. Imagine, because of this, that your dear mother accomplishes the accumulations and attains buddhahood. This is the meditation on the "giving" aspect of awakening mind.⁹⁸

Suffering harms one's mother "directly" in the sense that she experiences it directly. The "origin of suffering" refers to the twin defilements of ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*, cognitive) of the true nature of reality and the consequent afflictive emotions (Skt. *kleśa*, affective). The teachings on the two forms of defilements are found in the First and Second Noble Truths taught by early Buddhist

⁹⁷ Jamgon Kongtrul, *The Great Path of Awakening*, trans. Ken McLeod, (Boston: Shambhala, 2005), 13.

⁹⁸ Chilbupa, 82; Jinpa, 94-5.

tradition, and they are reconceived according to the doctrine of *śūnyatā* in the Mahāyāna. As to their latter re-conception, the Mahāyāna texts asserted that all phenomena were empty of intrinsic existence (*svabhāva*), while the early schools generally held that *dharmas*, the most basic factors or constituents of existence that are not further reducible to anything else, do have real existence (*svabhāva*).⁹⁹ This “origin of suffering” harms one’s mother “indirectly” as it lies at a level deeper than conscious awareness. The practitioner, then, imagines taking on herself the entire complex of suffering, which includes the experience of suffering; its deeper source, the cognitive and affective karmic obscurations; and the “karmic propensities.” “Karmic propensities” (Tib. *bag chags*, Skt. *vāsanā*) refer to the idea that past intentional actions “perfume” or leave impressions upon the mind, creating certain predispositions deep in the mindstream and later give rise to mental and affective patterns driven by clinging attachment (Skt. *tṛṣṇā*).¹⁰⁰

If the “taking” aspect seeks to eliminate suffering and its cause from one’s mother, the subsequent “giving” aspect has her happiness as its aim. The practitioner visualizes that she gives to her mother all the positive conditions, resources, and opportunities that would make it possible for her to attain complete awakening, such as her healthier body, material wealth, and roots of virtue (freedom from greed, hatred, and ignorance). The meditation continues with imagining one’s mother acquiring the requisite insight into emptiness and merit gained through positive actions, which makes it possible for her to attain full buddhahood. After completing the taking and giving aspects with her mother, the practitioner carries out *tonglen* with all sentient beings,

⁹⁹ Williams, 53-4.

¹⁰⁰ Developed in the Yogācāra tradition, the idea of karmic propensities is closely tied with the concept of *ālayavijñāna*, the base-consciousness which serves as a repository of all impressions from karmic actions and underlies the six sensory and intellectual forms of consciousness and the “tainted” consciousness of an abiding self (Skt. *kliṣṭamanas*). It is responsible for appropriating the psychophysical constituents and bringing them into existence. The base-consciousness is also connected to the idea that once purified of its defilements, the base-consciousness “turns about” or becomes fundamentally transformed (*āśraya-parāvṛtti/parivṛtti*) into buddhahood. Davidson, 76-84; 151-7.

gradually extending the scope of the meditation to include the higher beings, such as the *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and bodhisattvas.¹⁰¹

The presentation of the instructions on *tonglen* evolve with time, so that early commentaries by writers like Chilibupa and Thogme Zangpo (Rgyal sras thogs med bzang po, 1295-1369) and later texts by figures such as Jamgon Kongtrul show marked differences. Chilibupa's exposition on *tonglen* is very close in content to Gampopa's teaching on loving-kindness and compassion in the *Jewel Ornament*. As for the instruction on placing giving and taking on the breath, Thogme Zangpo merely prescribes placing the giving on the exhalation and taking on the inhalation. Chilibupa simply notes that using the breath is beneficial to *tonglen* practice and a powerful method for controlling discursive thought.¹⁰²

By the time lojong teachings reach Kongtrul, we have a much more detailed visualization in place. Expanding on using the breath, he writes,

In order to make this imagined exchange clearer, as you breathe in, imagine that black tar collecting all the suffering, obscurations, and evil of all sentient beings enter your own nostrils and is absorbed into your heart. Think that all sentient beings are forever free of misery and evil. As you breathe out, imagine that all your happiness and virtue pour out in the form of rays of moonlight from your nostrils and are absorbed by every sentient being. With great joy, think that all of them immediately attain buddhahood. To train the mind, use this practice of taking and sending with the breath as the actual practice for the period of meditation. Subsequently, always maintain the practice through mindfulness and continue to work with it.¹⁰³

In Kongtrul's commentary, the practitioner takes on the suffering of others on the in-breath by visualizing all living beings' suffering in the form of darkness or black tar entering into her nostrils and dissolving within her heart. At the same time, she imagines the sentient beings as

¹⁰¹ *Śrāvakas* means "hearers," and the term is used in Mahāyāna texts to refer (negatively) to Early Buddhist adherents. These texts present them as belonging to the "lesser" vehicle (Hīnayāna) in comparison to the "greater" vehicle (Mahāyāna) because the primary scope of liberation in the early tradition concerns individual nirvana. *Pratyekabuddhas* refer to "solitary" or "self-realized" buddhas who attain enlightenment through their own effort without instruction from a buddha. They are distinguished from perfectly enlightened buddhas of the Mahāyāna tradition by the lesser degree of their compassion and their refusal to teach others.

¹⁰² Chilibupa, 84; Jinpa, 96; Thogme Zangpo, *Rgyal ba'i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma*, 192.

¹⁰³ Kongtrul, 15.

becoming completely free from their suffering. On the out-breath, the practitioner gives all merit and happiness by imagining them flowing out of her nostrils in the form of moon rays and entering into and dissolving in all living beings. Similar to the in-breath, she beholds them as immediately attaining Buddhahood on receiving merit and happiness. Simultaneously with these visualizations, the practitioner cultivates an intense feeling of joy over the liberation and happiness of all living beings.

The form of meditation prescribed by Kongtrul creates a much more vivid and detailed visualization of taking into oneself the suffering of others and giving one's happiness to them in comparison to the version we find in Chilibupa. It is also a much more tightly integrated form that gives greater substantial function to the use of the breath. Kongtrul also strongly stresses that the practitioner is to engage in this practice after the formal meditation session is over and integrate it into every moment of one's life. Kongtrul's emphasis on integration of *tonglen* into daily life highlights the ingenious power of the instruction on mounting on the breath completely to weave this practice into each moment of life.

Here, we can see how relative *bodhicitta* practice is reconfiguring the ordinary process of thought and behavior. The imaginary of *tonglen* meditation is completely opposite of the self-cherishing attitude and behavior that operates as the practitioner's karmically conditioned mode of being. Instead of avoiding suffering and seeking happiness for oneself, the practitioner willingly and gladly takes on the suffering of others and gives all of her happiness and virtue. Through her imaginative capacity, which has hitherto only supported self-cherishing and self-grasping, *tonglen* enacts the principle of exchange, which radically reverses this deeply engrained pattern. In doing so, the meditation is also actively engaging the ultimate *bodhicitta*, as the possibility of this reversal and exchange rests on the ultimate nature of reality. In fact, we can see

that ultimate *bodhicitta* is constantly informing relative *bodhicitta* from the cultivation of love and compassion and through *tonglen*, as these practices continually break open the practitioner's reified conception of reality and vividly cross the barrier between self and other.

The principle of exchange expressed in the *tonglen* instruction has ultimate *bodhicitta* as its foundation. This is true whichever view of *tathāgatagarbha* one holds. To note how hermeneutical differences mark engagement in relative *bodhicitta* training, from a strictly Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamaka view, precisely because all phenomena have no substantial, independent existence, all suffering and its causes likewise lack intrinsic existence. The truth of emptiness becomes the space for discovering the illusion of our sense of identity and difference with others. It also becomes the space for the possibility of liberation from the defilements and obscurations. By realizing this emptiness, practitioners have the potential to eliminate negative cognitive, emotional, and behavioral patterns that produce harmful consequences and reinforce existing patterning, and to acquire fuller insight into the truth of emptiness and build up positive qualities that are contained in the teachings on the perfections.¹⁰⁴ The final purpose of such practice is to help other sentient beings by sharing the insight into the liberating power of emptiness.

For figures like Thogme Zangpo, Chilibupa, Jamgon Kongtrul, and Zhechen Gyaltseb, the ultimate nature of reality as nondual union of emptiness and pure awareness also constitutes the space of freedom from karmically conditioned existence. This infinitely open space of freedom is also the space of complete equality with others, since in the aspect of emptiness and clarity, all sentient beings are the same. Southern lineage commentaries, in contrast to northern lineage texts, hold the view that the buddha-nature that is this ultimate reality is present in all these

¹⁰⁴ The ten perfections (*pāramitās*) are: Generosity (*dāna*), morality (*śīla*), patience (*kṣānti*), vigor (*vīrya*), meditative concentration (*samādhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*) are the six perfections. Four more are added later on as listed in the *Daśabhūmika sūtra*: skillful means (*upāya-kauśalya*), vow (*pranidhāna*), power (*bala*), and knowledge (*jñāna*). For detailed explanation of the perfections and their development in Mahāyāna thought, see Williams, 200f.

beings, available to draw them toward full awakening, even though that nature is heavily obscured by cognitive and emotional defilements in many sentient beings. The relative *bodhicitta* practices such as *tonglen* increasingly allow the *tathāgatagarbha* to manifest its activity.¹⁰⁵

4.3.5. Post-meditation Instructions

Post-meditation (Tib. *rjes thob*, lit. “after attainment”) instructions follow *tonglen* practice. The first instruction reads, “Three objects, three poisons, three roots of virtue.” Post-meditation instructions guide the practitioners to continue the (relative or ultimate) training in daily life outside the formal, seated meditation practice. Continuing the training of relative *bodhicitta* in the context of daily life is, so to speak, where the rubber meets the road. “Three objects” in this verse refers to the teaching on how samsaric conditioning leads sentient beings to perceive phenomena as pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral.¹⁰⁶ If not counteracted with discriminating wisdom that realizes the empty nature of reality, sentient beings react to these perceived feeling tones by giving rise to the corresponding “three poisons” or main causes of cognitive obscuration and afflictive emotions: clinging attachment (pleasant), aversion (unpleasant), and indifference or bewilderment (neutral). In this way, sentient beings become entrenched in a ceaselessly repeating cycle of reaction to their mistaken perception.

The radically transformative orientation and significance of *lojong* begins to emerge in the post-meditation instructions, which extend the practice of exchanging self and other in concrete, mundane experiences. Relative *bodhicitta* training, using conceptual processes to undermine

¹⁰⁵ Makransky, “Contrasting Tsongkhapa and Longchenpa,” 129-30.

¹⁰⁶ *Majjhima Nikāya*, 401.

reifying patterns, equates the three objects and poisons with their very opposite, the three roots of virtue. The equation is made possible first by identifying correctly the core cause animating the reactive dynamic in which sentient beings are caught. Thogme Zangpo explains, “[A]s there are many sentient beings who give rise to the three poisons depending on the three objects, all their suffering is summed up in the self. Meditate with the thought, ‘May they possess the three virtues of non-attachment, non-hatred, [and] non-delusion.’”¹⁰⁷ The problem of clinging attachment to a substantially and inherently existing self is the fount of the three poisons. Precisely because this clinging attachment to a reified sense of self is operating, all perceptions are coopted into reinforcing this sense of substantial self and its centripetal power. This propelling mechanism causes a person to consider pleasant, unpleasant, and neutral feeling tones as inherent to the perceived objects; interpret them as desirable, repulsive, or indifferent; and respond to them accordingly by seizing onto the desire, acting on the anger, or fail to respond appropriately to a person, event, or thing. Namkha Pel references the categories established in the early Buddhist texts and the *Abhidharma* when commenting on this verse and the mechanism at play:

When the three poisons arise by these three - the occurring, not occurring, or [remaining] neutral in the six objects consciousnesses regarding the objects of the six *indriyas* - there are many who are under the power of the afflictions like any worldly realm. Having cut off all afflictions [as] all opportunities by [taking] them as our own, train by annihilating, thinking ‘May those sentient beings be endowed with the roots of virtue which are devoid of the three poisons’.¹⁰⁸

Indriya, meaning “that which predominates,” refers to the faculties or organs that are the bases for forms of perception, especially the sense organs of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and mind.¹⁰⁹ On contact with corresponding objects (e.g., visual objects, sounds, odors, etc.) and the

¹⁰⁷ Thogs med bzang po dpal, *Gsung 'bum / thogs med bzang po dpal*, TBRC W1CZ895 (sde dge: sde dge par khang chen mo, date unknown), fol. 271a, <http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W1CZ895>.

¹⁰⁸ Namkha Pel, 121-2.

¹⁰⁹ *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Vol. 1, trans. Louis de Vallec Poussin, English trans. Leo M. Pruden (Berkeley, California: Asian Humanities Press, 1988), 153-5.

emergence of appropriate forms of consciousness (visual consciousness, aural consciousness, etc), human beings experience, by virtue of previous karmic conditioning, the associated feeling tones of pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. The reactive conditioning gives rise to correlated afflictive emotions of clinging attachment, aversion or hatred, and indifference or stupidity.

Clinging attachment, hatred, and delusion all stem from self-grasping, which in turn is based on ignorance. When the practitioner is able to notice the reactive pattern and afflictive emotions when they arise, she has the space and opportunity to perceive the underlying, deeper cause. The moment of apprehending objects and recognizing the associated feelings can then become an opportunity to bring into relief the actual driver that propels these feelings forward. Connecting this opportunity with the logic of *tonglen* practice, the practitioner can use this moment to enact giving and taking in the midst of perceptual, cognitive, and affective processes that are actively engaging phenomenal objects. Kongtrul explains this process precisely and eloquently:

[W]hen attachment arises, think: 'May every bit of every sentient beings' attachment be contained in this attachment of mine. May all sentient beings have the seed of virtue of being free of attachment. May this attachment of mine contain all their disturbing emotions, and until they attain buddhahood, may they be free of such disturbing emotions.' Aversion and other emotions are used in practice by working with them the same way. Thus, the three poisons become three limitless seeds of virtue.¹¹⁰

When, for example, I experience desire or clinging attachment arise, this instruction expands the boundaries of what is ordinarily taken to be my isolated experience of desire, and intentionally takes it as an exemplar of the afflictive desire that besets all sentient beings. What I feel is immediately connected with what other people feel, and my experience is seen not as exclusive to my individual self, but as signifying a universal pattern of experience that others undergo. Furthermore, what I feel is recognized *as* suffering, instead of being naturalized or normalized. The shared condition and our interdependent ontology based on insight into the emptiness of

¹¹⁰ Kongtrul, 16.

separate selves makes possible an exchange whereby I take into the momentary feeling the same afflictive emotion all sentient beings are feeling, and send out to them the sincere wish for their liberation from such affliction. By applying *tonglen* logic, the three poisons are turned into their apparent opposites, that is, the roots of virtue (non-attachment, non-hatred, non-delusion).

The equation exemplifies the Mahāyāna teaching of emptiness and compassion as skillful means (Skt. *upāya*), the use of any phenomenon to help sentient beings realize the ultimate truth.¹¹¹ Since the defilements, and their frameworks of thought, feeling, and reaction, are empty of intrinsic existence, some measure of insight into this empty nature can empower a person to notice them more intentionally, reframe their meaning, and use their activation as opportunities for training in realization of the ultimate nature.

4.3.6. Transforming Adversity into the Path of Enlightenment

The next set of DDM root verses extends the integration of exchange “off the meditation cushion” to confronting the pervasive reality of adversity and negativity in the world. Under the third point “Taking adverse conditions onto the path of enlightenment,” we encounter the striking words, “When the world and its inhabitants boil with negativity / Transform adverse conditions into the path of enlightenment.”¹¹² Here, the perspective of DDM moves from the afflictive emotions that arise “within” a person’s subjectivity to negative actions of other sentient beings and adverse circumstances that occur in concrete life contexts and the wider environment. This third point of DDM is divided into two sections, which are customarily classified as

¹¹¹ Williams, 57, 150-51.

¹¹² Jinpa, 83; Tibetan: “Snod bcud sdig pa khol ba’i tshe / Rkyen ngan byang chub lam du sgyur.” Chibupa, 85.

“reflections” and “practices.”¹¹³ The reflections consist in relative and ultimate *bodhicitta* meditations, and the practices consist of various offering, confessional, and liturgical activities.¹¹⁴ I will restrict myself to examining the two *bodhicitta* meditations as they are most directly relevant to the essay’s aims.

The relative *bodhicitta* instructions read, “Banish all blames to the single source / Toward all beings contemplate their great kindness.”¹¹⁵ In the context of experiencing harmful actions committed against the practitioner by other human beings, nonhuman agents (demons and other beings that belong to lower realms in Buddhist cosmology), or accidents, the first instruction highlights the engrained tendency in human beings to blame someone else for suffering. *Lojong* commentaries explain that the instruction “Banish all blames to the single source” redirects this tendency away from others to the main cause, namely self-grasping. Thogme Zangpo concisely explains that self-grasping and self-cherishing are the true culprits that give rise to all suffering and harm inflicted by human and nonhuman beings.¹¹⁶ Reiterating the karmic framework, whatever harm befalls a person is the result of his or her past negative actions. Rather than seeking to blame another being, which only reinforces the sense of dualistic separation between self and other based on self-grasping, the instruction points to the fundamental cause of the karmic cycle.

¹¹³ Thogs med bzang po dpal, *Rgyal ba'i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma* in 'Jam mgon kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas, *Gdams ngag mdzod*, TBRC W20877, vol 4 (Paro: Lama ngodrup and sherab drimey, 1979-1981), 196, <http://tbrc.org/link?RID=W20877>.

¹¹⁴ The four practices (sbyor ba) include: 1) accumulating merit by various activities, such as making offerings to one's guru, the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and practicing the seven-branch prayer; 2) confessing negative actions; 3) making offerings to gods and demons who cause harm; and 4) making offerings to dharma protectors. See Kongtrul, 22-4.

¹¹⁵ Jinpa, 83. Tibetan: “La lan thams cad gcig tu gda' / Kun la bka' drin che bar bsgom.” Chibupa, 86, 92.

¹¹⁶ Thogme Zangpo, *Rgyal ba'i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma*, 196-7.

Chilbupa further elaborates on this point and says that the real issue in a situation of injury is the failure to distinguish correctly between true friends and true enemies. The real enemy is clinging onto an inherently existing self and misperceiving the apparently negative actions of other sentient beings, which in actuality aid us to become aware of our self-grasping as the real source of harm. Chilbupa places special emphasis on the body as the basis for self-grasping. He writes,

Wherever I was born, though there was no self, I have grasped at my body as [the basis of my] selfhood. Taking its side, I have resorted to rejection and affirmation depending on whether I deemed something desirable or undesirable. In this manner I have committed all three - deception, duplicity, and deviousness - toward others and, as a consequence, have accumulated afflictions and negative karma over and over again. This has compelled me, since beginningless time, to endure the incalculable sufferings of cyclic existence in general and the immeasurable sufferings of the three lower realms in particular.¹¹⁷

The body as a basis for self-clinging has roots in the earliest Buddhist teachings. A negative assessment of the body as a collection of basic factors (*dharma*) that are laced with clinging attachment and arise by the force of ignorance and karma is a fundamental idea in Buddhist doctrine, and this point is reiterated throughout Tibetan Buddhist literature, including *lam rim* and some *lojong* texts.¹¹⁸ Operating from the basis of ignorance, a human being relates to the body as the tangible basis for clinging onto a substantial sense of self. The dualistic perception that emerges from this apprehension of the body establishes the foundation for ethical transgressions, since it is what makes possible dualistic perception and, thereby, self-centered actions and enmity against others. On this soil, then, sprout the weeds of afflictive emotions of greed, hatred, and indifference or bewilderment, and unwholesome actions which create negative karma.

If the correct diagnosis is to identify self-grasping as the real source of all harm, the corollary is accurately perceiving the identity of the agents who inflict injury on the practitioner.

¹¹⁷ Chilbupa, 87; Jinpa, 99.

¹¹⁸ In early Buddhist texts, see *Saccavibhanga Sutta* and *Cūlasihanāda Sutta*, in *Majjhima Nikāya*, 163, 1098.

The commentaries reintroduce the meditation on love and compassion at this point, reminding the practitioner that the sentient beings who are harming him have been his mother and father through countless lifetimes.¹¹⁹ The practitioner reflects on how these sentient beings as his mother have cared for him and helped him with countless kind acts. The reflection aims to generate an emotional connection with the sentient being concerned beyond the prison box of dualistic perpetrator-victim relation, and shifts the focus of attention to points of empathy, such as the basic need for care, protection, and love rooted in fundamental human vulnerability, especially in the stage of infancy and childhood.

After establishing this empathic connection with the greater fullness of the sentient being's identity and karmic relation with the practitioner, the meditation moves onto compassion in which the analysis of self-grasping as the core culprit of suffering is applied to the sentient being. The context of meditation provides the practitioner a framework in which to view the injury suffered as both the consequence of his own past negative action and an act originating from the perpetrator's self-grasping. As he himself committed harm in former lives against the sentient being who loved and cared for him as a parent out of ignorance, the sentient being is likewise acting out of delusion. For both, the core problem is self-grasping, and to end the cycle of suffering in which both parties are trapped, the genuine remedy is to expose and abandon the real cause.

What makes that remedy possible is love and compassion, which upholds the true identity of oneself and the perpetrator in the larger fullness of their being. The two meditations on love and compassion equip the practitioner to understand her situation of adversity and injury in the light of the law of karma and self-grasping. He perceives both the perpetrator and himself as

¹¹⁹ Thogme Zangpo, *Rgyal ba'i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma*, 198. Chilbupa, 103-4.

suffering in different ways based on the same problematic source. As in previous *lojong* instructions, the two meditations extend to the practice of exchange where the practitioner takes on the suffering of the perpetrator and gives his wealth, happiness, and roots of virtue.¹²⁰

The ultimate *bodhicitta* instruction that follows states, “By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies / Emptiness is protection unsurpassed.”¹²¹ In Chibupa’s commentary, he explains the verse by pointing to the empty nature of all appearances. One’s view of the self, the agent of harm, the victim, and illnesses are all ultimately conceptual constructs, which we mistakenly take as having substantial and permanent existence based on ignorance. He writes,

Apart from your own conceptualization, nothing outside is an obstructor; therefore your own conceptualization is the sole object of elimination. When examined in this manner, everything comes down to your mind; and the mind too, when examined, is found to be emptiness. There is no difference between the clear-light nature of your own mind, the clear-light nature of the minds of all sentient being, and the pristine cognition of the Buddha’s enlightened mind; they are equally dharmakāya - the buddha body of reality. So who can be harmed? Who causes the harm? And how is anyone harmed? Ultimately, nothing exists as a separate reality. Conventionally, however, all illnesses and malevolent forces exist as your own concepts. Reflecting that “The concepts [too] exist as dharmakāya,” place the mind naturally at rest, free of any conceptualization. Like throwing up vomit, place your mind free of all clinging.¹²²

As with the previous ultimate *bodhicitta* instructions under the Point 2 of the DDM,¹²³ the first step here is analyzing how one’s subjectivity, experience, its objects, and one’s reactions to the experience are all conceptualizations that lack final ontological substance. Since phenomena fundamentally lack intrinsic existence, their appearance as substantial should be understood as illusory (*khrol snang*, lit., ‘illusory appearance’). As conceptualization born out of ignorance

¹²⁰ In Mahāyāna Buddhist cosmology, perpetrators of harm encompasses human beings, spirits, and gods. Samuel, 161-70.

¹²¹ Jinpa, 84; Tibetan: “‘*Khrol snang sku bzhir bsgom pa yis / Stong nyid bsrung ba bla na med.*” Chibupa, 96. Chibupa adds, “With the three views and treasury of space / the protection of yoga is unexcelled,” (*Lta ba gsum dang nam mkha’ mdzod / Rnal ’byor bsrung ba bla na med*) at the beginning of this instruction, but as Jinpa notes, this addition does not appear in other versions of the root verses nor do other commentators I have consulted cite it. Jinpa, n215.

¹²² Chibupa, 96-7; Jinpa, 107.

¹²³ See p. 17 above.

imputes substantial existence, Chilibupa categorically states that conceptualization alone (not sentient beings) is what needs to be abandoned.

The analysis proceeds to the mind that performs conceptualization and finds that it is likewise lacking in substantial being. Expressing the hermeneutical perspective of the southern lineage, Chilibupa further presents the empty nature of the mind as clear and luminous (Tib. *'od gsal ba*), and indistinguishable from the pure gnosis of buddha's enlightened mind (Tib. *sangs rgyas kyi thugs mkhyen pa'i ye shes*). Precisely because the ultimate nature of the mind is empty, luminous, and clear, the deepest nature of the mind and all phenomenal appearances are the same as the nature of the buddha.

The term that Chilibupa uses here to express this essential nature of reality is *dharmakāya*. As John Makransky explains, the term comes from the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtras*, the foundational texts of the Mahāyāna, and means the body or embodiment (Skt. *kāya*) of the actual nature of things (Skt. *dharmatā*).¹²⁴ The term and concept come from the theory of the bodies of the buddha, which is developed in the Yogācāra tradition.¹²⁵ To explain in the briefest outlines, the theory conceives the ultimate nature of reality as embodied in diverse ways: as *dharmakāya*, *sambhogakāya*, *nirmāṇakāya*, and *svābhāvikāya*. In the Yogācāra tradition, full buddhahood was understood to be the nondual realization of the true nature, that is, an undivided unity of perfect, pure gnosis free of all dualistic conceptualization, and emptiness or the thusness (Skt. *tathātā*) of reality.¹²⁶ *Dharmakāya* is this nondual gnosis of emptiness, which is realized only by a buddha. It

¹²⁴ John Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, 34; John Makransky, "Buddhahood and Buddha Bodies," *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1, ed. Robert E. Buswell (New York: Macmillan Reference, 2004): 76-79.

¹²⁵ Davidson, 396.

¹²⁶ Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, 47, 64. As Makransky explicates in detail, the theory of buddha kāya is a subject of long standing conflict of interpretations in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist traditions. I am presenting the general Yogācāra line of interpretation and will refer to Makransky's treatment for further information on the hermeneutical debates in India and Tibet; see Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, 39ff.

furthermore indicates that all of reality constitutes the realm of the buddha's enlightened activity. The Mahāyāna doctrine of enlightenment (Skt. *apratisthita nirvana*, 'unrestricted nirvaṇa') holds that when bodhisattvas attain buddhahood, the full realization of the empty nature of reality, they are able to remain within *samsāra* without any clinging attachment or hindrance to perfect wisdom and unlimited compassion, acting solely for the benefit of sentient beings.¹²⁷ Hence, *dharmakāya* connotes not only the nondual realization of emptiness available solely to the buddha, but also the enlightened wisdom and compassion manifesting throughout the entire realm of reality in diverse ways, according to the unique needs of sentient beings.¹²⁸

The *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya* then are the ways in which the *dharmakāya* (the buddha's realization of ultimate truth) manifests to beings other than buddhas. For high-level bodhisattvas who have advanced to the final stages of the bodhisattva path, ultimate truth appears in the form of the *sambhogakāya*, the "enjoyment body," in order to help them on the path to attaining full buddhahood.¹²⁹ Although the enjoyment body takes on form for the bodhisattvas, ordinary sentient beings who lack their merit and wisdom cannot perceive this particular type of embodiment. Hence, for ordinary sentient beings, ultimate truth is embodied in physical form. This is called the *nirmāṇakāya*, the "manifestation body." The historical buddha Siddārtha Gautama is a *nirmāṇakāya* that manifested to human beings in this world in order to teach the truth. There can be multiple manifestations in different times, places, and worlds according to the particular needs of sentient beings.

The fourth term *svābhāvikāya*, the "essence body," does not indicate another embodiment distinct from the other *kāyā*, but is generally used synonymously with *dharmakāya*, or as expressing

¹²⁷ Makransky, "Buddhahood and Buddha Bodies," 77.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 78-9.

¹²⁹ Williams, 180-1.

the inseparability of these three *kāyā*.¹³⁰ The four *kāyā*, then, are not four different “things,” but the one true nature of reality that embodies ultimate nature and enlightened wisdom and power in different ways.

The DDM verse, “By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies / Emptiness is protection unsurpassed,” applies the buddha bodies to the experience of adversities. The application of the four bodies does not strictly align with the meanings specified above, yet it assumes the semantic background and relates the idea to experience of injury. The main point of applying this concept is to help practitioners regard perpetrators of harm, illnesses, and their own selves from the view of ultimate truth. Chilibupa advises the practitioner to realize that perpetrators of harm and illnesses are conceptualizations. As concepts, they are empty of intrinsic existence and nothing other than the *dharmakāya*, pure nondual cognition of emptiness. Recognizing this truth, the practitioner can release the concepts and rest the mind in a state that is free from clinging onto them. In light of their ultimate nature, Chilibupa directs the practitioner to discern how the perpetrators of harm, illnesses, and one’s self disclose different embodiments of buddhahood. Empty of independent existence, their being does not have a fixed temporal origin or singular source. He identifies this “unborn” (Tib. *ma skyes pa*) aspect of true being as the *dharmakāya*.¹³¹ As unoriginated, their ultimate being also does not come to an end. This lack of termination is equated with the *sambhogakāya*. Since they in their true being have neither origin nor end, they likewise cannot be said to abide in any location. Chilibupa equates this nonabiding aspect with the *nirmāṇakāya*. Their absolute lack of substantial being (Tib. *ngos po med pa*) is called the *svābhāvikāya*.

¹³⁰ Makransky, *Buddhahood Embodied*, 61. Kongtrul, n67.

¹³¹ Chilibupa, 98.

The DDM and commentaries take the four *kayas* theory and interpret it according to the tantric *Mahāmudrā* understanding. In this framework, the four *kayas* are seen as different aspects of any experience. The *dharmakāya* is its empty nature; the *sambhogakāya* is its luminous aspect; the *nirmāṇakāya* is the visible or manifest aspect; and the *svābhāvīkāya* is the inseparable unity of these three aspects. Hence, the verse, “By meditating on illusions as the four buddha bodies / Emptiness is protection unsurpassed,” points to the possibility of becoming immediately aware of the undivided unity of the empty, luminous, and manifest nature in any experience.¹³²

The upshot of discerning these four bodies of the buddha in any experience of harm is that “you recognize that every conceptualization places the four buddha bodies in your very palms,” to quote Chilibupa.¹³³ Expressing the Mahāyāna teachings on the two truths and skillful means (Skt. *upāya*), insight into ultimate truth empowers the practitioner to see harm and its agent in their deepest nature to be the four embodiments of the true nature. Each correlated embodiment helps the practitioner to recognize the experience as the empty and unlimited field of enlightened activity. Hence, Thogme Zangpo says, “Furthermore, because apart from this agent of harm, the impetus for me to train in the two minds of *bodhicitta* would not have happened, [it is a] great kindness.”¹³⁴ The ultimate *bodhicitta* practice discloses a real dependence between perpetrator of harm and one’s own realization of the truth. Without the experience of harm, the practitioner’s own ignorance would insulate him from feeling the need to attain full awakening and engage in the necessary practices. That is the reality of the saṃsāric existence and deluded state in which sentient beings are mired. In this context, then, the practitioner

¹³² Tulku Thondup, *Buddha Mind: An Anthology of Longchen Rabjam’s Writings on Dzogpa Chenpo*, ed. Harold Talbott (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Pub., 1989), 327; 371-2. See Ken McLeod, *The Great Path of Awakening*, 80, n. 67.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ Thogme Zangpo, *Rgyal ba’i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa’i blo sbyong don bdun ma*, 200.

depends in tangible and concrete ways on agents of harm in order to awaken from ignorance and resolve to attain complete liberation from suffering for the sake of all. Thogme Zangpo's claim, then, that the agent of harm is actually performing an act of great kindness is not a sentimental platitude about seeing the positive in the negative. This kindness is the deepest reality of the experience and all who are involved in it.

Similar to the manner in which the relative *bodhicitta* instructions under Point 3 on transforming adversity reiterate the instructions we examined in Point 2 of the DDM, the ultimate *bodhicitta* instruction here echoes the previous set of verses on viewing phenomena in their true nature. Yet, the third point differs in specificity and context. The ultimate *bodhicitta* practice here is prescribed for the particular situation of harm suffered at the hands of other persons or forces (supernatural or natural). The relative *bodhicitta* practices direct discursive thought to counter the dominant narrative that constructs experience of injury from the viewpoint of a reified self. The dominant narrative construes the harm suffered as happening in isolation, without the wider causal and relational contexts, and centered on the self having primary importance over against others. Hijacking center stage, the impact and significance of the suffering is related solely to this sense of substantially real self ("Why is this happening to *me*?" or "I am alone in my suffering.") As a result, the recourse available to such a self when someone harms it is to become enmeshed in afflictive emotions and reinforce clinging onto a dualistic ontology of self-versus-other. Relative *bodhicitta* practices replace this narrative by opening up the experience of injury from the inside out. It precisely pinpoints how such a sense of isolation and narrowness of perspective are products of ignorance and self-grasping; elucidates the full scope and depth of suffering involved on both sides of the perpetrator-victim relation; and opens up a way to relate to the experience in a way that supports insight into the

true nature of the situation and positive actions in response to it. The ultimate *bodhicitta* instruction then harnesses the direction and momentum of the relative *bodhicitta* practices to guide the practitioner to meditate directly on the ultimate nature in this situation.

4.3.7. Dynamic Interrelation: Ultimate *Bodhicitta* and Relative *Bodhicitta*

Having examined the main principles and practices articulated in the second and third points of DDM, we can now summarize the nature of the relationship between the two forms of *bodhicitta* in *lojong*. Chekawa's root verses on *lojong* alternate between ultimate *bodhicitta* and relative *bodhicitta*. This alternating structure indicates the priority of ultimate *bodhicitta* and the mutual relation between the two forms of *bodhicitta*. Ultimate *bodhicitta* is the necessary grounding in *tathāgatagarbha* from which emerge the very possibility of change and freedom. Relative *bodhicitta* is the expression of ultimate truth at the level of conventional reality. The relative *bodhicitta* practices are designed to engage experiences on the level of conventional reality in ways that reconfigure the karmically conditioned patterning of the practitioner's ordinary ways of thinking, speaking, and behaving. This presupposes that relative *bodhicitta* is already based on and informed by the ultimate nature, which transcends the confines of karmic conditioning. Otherwise, it would not have the power to change the karmic patterning in the first place. At the same time, training in relative *bodhicitta* feeds into the experience of ultimate *bodhicitta* meditation in subsequent instructions. *Lojong* prescribes the continuous practice of both aspects throughout the training. The two forms of *bodhicitta* mutually inform and strengthen each other. Relative *bodhicitta* is grounded in ultimate *bodhicitta* and points the practitioner further to the ultimate.

Ultimate bodhicitta further empowers the practitioner to deepen their engagement in relative *bodhicitta* training.

It is important to note that since relative *bodhicitta* uses conceptual processes and concretely engages thought, memory, feelings, images, and sensations, its result is not direct realization of emptiness. The immediate field of its impact is the phenomenal, perceptual, and relational nexus of conventional reality. On the one hand, it softens the rigid hold of the practitioner's mind on a dualistic framework and opens it up to the unseen depths of the phenomenal world.¹³⁵ On the other hand, in the training, the practitioner repeatedly runs up against their own reified patterns of perception and the deeply molded habit of hankering after a permanent sense of self and a reality centered around that self. Yet, as *lojong* practice produces greater clarity on the depth of one's defilements and obscurations, it can also serve to increase the practitioner's motivation to practice. The overall framework of *lojong* practice helps the practitioner to increase his or her motivation to gain fuller realization of ultimate truth when confronting the depth of karmic conditioning, as *lojong* is pointing again and again at the ultimate nature and taking that as the basis for compassion (radical interdependence between self and other).

4.4. BODY IN LOJONG

Having examined the core principles and practices of *lojong* as explained in commentaries on Chekawa's DDM, I now turn to the model of the body and its uses in this tradition. The body construed in the DDM commentaries displays generally common features we find in the

¹³⁵John Makransky, private conversation, May 14, 2013.

Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna: the body as the basis for self-clinging; the body as a means of attaining enlightenment; the body as comprised of grossly physical and more subtle dimensions which are interdependent. Yet, what we find in the streams of the larger Buddhist traditions and *lojong* in particular is the interplay of multiple conceptions of the body, which are juxtaposed and at times appear to be at odds with one another. For example, what is the relationship between the body visualized as emanating streams of pure moonlight that pour into and liberate sentient beings from suffering on one hand, and the body that is renounced as a source of afflictions, a repulsive “lump of pus and blood?”¹³⁶ Depending on the textual genre, type of practices, and individual school or authors, varying concepts and models that developed by incorporating and developing older models are employed or emphasized over others.¹³⁷ While certain concepts are normative (e.g., the five aggregates from the early tradition; Mahāyāna doctrine of emptiness of both persons and phenomena; general features of tantric anatomy such as channels, winds or subtle energies, drops, and centers), different texts focus on particular aspects according to the aims of the tradition or practice concerned.

In *lojong* texts, the human body is framed by the specific meditation practices of love, compassion, and *tonglen*, grounded in the principles of ultimate and relative *bodhicitta*. As examined above, one of the main aims of *lojong* is transforming the experience of suffering by approaching it through the interplay of the two *bodhicitta* practices. It therefore uses the models of the body available in the Buddhist tradition to target the particular question of how to take suffering as the basis for gaining insight into the empty nature of reality and developing universal compassion.

¹³⁶ Kongtrul, 15; Chilbupa, 88.

¹³⁷ Willa B. Miller, “Secrets of the Vajra Body: *Dngos po'i gnas lugs* and the Apotheosis of the Body in the work of Rgyal ba Yang dgon pa” (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2013), 10.

In this chapter, I will look specifically at two models of the body in *lojong*. The first model views the body as a problematic basis for self-clinging and self-cherishing. The second model is the tantric conception of the body which approaches the body as a basis of enlightenment. This conception is exemplified most prominently in the “preliminary (*ngon ‘gro*)” practice of guru yoga and *tonglen*. I will look at each model as they are conceived and used in *lojong* texts and practice, how they are related.

4.4.1. The Repulsive Body

The first model of the body that we encounter in the DDM is in the “preliminaries” (Tib. *ngon ‘gro*, lit. ‘what goes before’),¹³⁸ which fall under Point 1, “First, train in the preliminaries.” Preliminaries denote practices that are foundational to main meditation practices (love and compassion, *tonglen*).¹³⁹ Different texts prescribe varying practices for the preliminaries, but almost all of them include four topics of reflection: reflecting on the preciousness of a human existence of leisure and opportunity; impermanence and death; the deficiencies of *saṃsāra*; and the law of karma. These thoughts are systematically organized as the “four contemplations” in *lam rim* and many other texts that include preliminaries, and they form the foundation for renouncing samsaric existence; taking refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha; and generating *bodhicitta*.

¹³⁸ In Point 1 of DDM, the Tibetan term *nten*, translated as “basis,” is inserted as an apposition to *ngon ‘gro* (preliminaries), indicating that the preliminaries are what supports the entire subsequent practice. In this sense, the English term “preliminaries” does not fully capture the sense conveyed by the Tibetan words *ngon ‘gro* and *nten*, which communicate that these practices form an indispensable foundation for what follows. The preliminaries, furthermore, frame the *lojong* teachings within the broader Mahāyāna devotional context and, in the case of guru yoga, the tantric Vajrayāna context.

¹³⁹ Jinpa, 83.

The model of the human body found in the preliminaries highlights both its value and problems. On its value, the first contemplation describes human existence as extremely rare and difficult to achieve, since one attains it only by accumulating sufficient merit through the practice of virtue in past lives. To be born as a human being, furthermore, with the types of advantages and opportunities to encounter and practice the Dharma is even more difficult to obtain.¹⁴⁰ Yet, as contemplation on the defects of *samsāra* make clear, the body is a result of clinging attachment and ignorance that propels continual rebirth and re-death in a realm of existence that grants only vulnerability, loneliness, and all manner of suffering.¹⁴¹ In the samsaric state, the body can only be a basis for mistakenly grasping onto a substantially existent sense of self and to orient oneself to the world in terms of this reified ego's desires and fears.¹⁴²

This negative presentation of the body, however, is not a blanket condemnation of the body as evil but a set of reflections that confront the reader with a basic aspect of reality, namely the impermanent and suffering character of human existence, subject to karma and the penetration of suffering into every layer of the human person, down to the most basic psychophysical components. The presentation is a soteriological line of inquiry into the body, delineating its problematic dimensions and pointing beyond its current condition. The main purpose of such stark reckoning is to inspire renunciation and consideration of the ultimate truth of emptiness and liberation. Hence, this model of the body has its precedent in some of the earliest texts in the Pali canon, such as the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* or *Dīghanakha sutta*.¹⁴³ The point of

¹⁴⁰ Gzhon nu rgyal mchog, *Blo sbyong legs bshad kun 'dus*, TBRC W1KG3712 (Delhi: N. topgyal, 1996), 28-30, <http://tbr.org/link?RID=W1KG3712>.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 58-60. For a more extensive explanation of human existence and its defects, see Patrul Rinpoche, *The Words of My Perfect Teacher* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 1994), 81-91.

¹⁴² Chillbupa, 87-8.

¹⁴³ *Mahāsatiṭṭhāna Sutta* in *Thus Have I Heard: The Long Discourses of the Buddha Dīgha Nikāya*, trans. Maurice Walsh (London: Wisdom Publications, 1987), 337-8; *Dīghanakha sutta*, in *Majjhima Nikāya*, 605.

the contemplation of the faults of the body is to clearly comprehend it in the samsaric state and identify clearly the problem of clinging attachment that afflict it.

4.4.2. The Nirvanic Body

If the first model views the human body in the samsaric state, another model of the body in DDM approaches it from the perspective of its nirvanic nature or potential. This model of the body is intimated in the comments on preparing oneself for *lojong* practice by assuming a stable seated posture and contemplation of the breath. Thogme Zangpo writes, “Setting the body straight, having counted without addition or omission, undisturbed until 21 exhalations and inhalations, become a suitable vessel of meditative absorption [Tib. *bsam gtan*, Skt. *dhyāna*].”¹⁴⁴ In addition to creating physical stability and mental calm, texts such as *Satipatthāna Sutta* and Buddhaghosa’s *Visuddhimagga* explain that undisturbed surroundings, meditative posture, and bare awareness focused on the breath lead to deepening states of meditation as well as physical and mental bliss.¹⁴⁵ The Tibetan Buddhist tradition further develops the teaching on the body as blissful and empty in its basic nature. In the DDM commentaries, this nirvanic body is found in the preliminaries and runs throughout the text. Similar to preliminaries for other practices, various DDM commentaries include taking refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, Dharma,

¹⁴⁴ Thogme Zangpo, *Rgyal ba'i sras po thogs med bzang po dpal gyis mdzad pa'i blo sbyong don bdun ma*, 191. The specifics of the “Vairocana’s Lotus” or “half-lotus” posture, the use of the breath, and their benefits for cultivating meditative absorption are explained in numerous Buddhist texts. For example, Kamalsīla’s comments in *Bhāvanākramas* in Martin T. Adam, *Meditation and the Concept of Insight in Kamalsīla’s Bhāvanākramas* (PhD diss., McGill University, 2002), 195; Tsongkhapa’s elaboration in *The Great Treatise*, vol. 3, 31.

¹⁴⁵ *Mahāsatipatthāna Sutta*, 349; Buddhaghosa, *Visuddhimagga: The Path of Purification*, trans. Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli (Kandy, Sri Lanka: BPS, 1991), IV.34-101.

and Sangha; generating *bodhicitta*; offering the “seven-branch prayer” (Tib. *yan lag bdun pa*),¹⁴⁶ and guru yoga (Tib. *bla ma'i rnal 'byor*). The ritual and devotional context set by the seven-branch prayer and guru yoga entail a particular construal of the body that expresses fundamental Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna doctrines. As I can provide only a brief explication of the body in either of these practices here, and each ritual activity expresses the similar constellation of doctrines in different ways, I will limit my examination to guru yoga.

4.4.3. Guru Yoga

The practice of guru yoga is a major feature of Tibetan Buddhism. Guru yoga *sādhana* (Tib. *sgrub thabs*),¹⁴⁷ meditational ritual with a formalized sequence, typically forms a part of preliminaries to other main practices, such as advanced tantric deity yoga (Tib. *lha'i rnal byor*, Skt. *devatā yoga*). *Lojong* texts also include guru yoga as part of the preliminaries.

The significance of guru yoga is multivalent, highlighting the devotional, liturgical, and relational aspects of Vajrayāna practice. Broadly speaking, guru yoga consists in the visualization of one's main or “root” lama (Tib. *rtsa ba'i bla ma*)¹⁴⁸ as the embodiment of the buddha or a tantric deity (Tib. *yi dam*). The practitioner typically visualizes the root lama in front or above one's head in in the tantric form of the buddha (e.g., Vajradhāra) or in the form of a tantric

¹⁴⁶ The seven-branch prayer is a ritual practice that consists in prostrations to all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and benevolent beings; offering, confession of faults; rejoicing in the merit of others; supplication for the buddhas' teaching; prayer for the buddhas to abide to help sentient beings; and dedication of merit. The classic source for this “Supreme Worship” (*anuttara-pūjā*) is the *Bhadracaryāprañidhāna-gāthā* found in the *Avatamsaka sutra*. For a concise explanation, see John Makransky, “Mahāyāna Buddhist Ritual and Ethical Activity in the World,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 20 (2000): 54-9.

¹⁴⁷ *Sādhana*, which means “means of attainment,” are meditational liturgies that guide the practice of visualizations, mantra recitations, hand gestures, and other requisite actions. Daniel Cozort, “Sādhana (*sGrub thabs*): Means of Achievement for Deity Yoga,” in *Tibetan Literature: Studies in Genre*, 332.

¹⁴⁸ Lama (bla ma) is the Tibetan term for guru. One's root lama (rtsa ba'i bla ma) gives the empowerment necessary to engage in tantric practice. Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 124-5.

deity.¹⁴⁹ Often, the lama is surrounded by a vast assembly of buddhas, bodhisattvas, tantric deities, past lineages teachers, as well as sutras and symbolic representations of the Three Jewels, all of which are understood to be emanations of the lama. The practitioner then makes a multitude of offerings to the lama, takes refuge in him, and makes supplications for his or her blessing (Tib. *byin brlabs*) in order that she may attain buddhahood. Any merit acquired through the practice is then dedicated to all sentient beings. At the conclusion of the meditation, the lama is visualized as emitting rays of light, merging with the practitioner, and dissolving into her.

The same core principles and basic structure of guru yoga are found in Zhonnu Gyalchog's text on guru yoga composed specifically for *lojong* practice.¹⁵⁰ The practitioner visualizes the guru seated on top of a lotus and moon disk on the crown of her head. She then generates devotion to the lama as inseparable in essence with and representing all buddhas, bodhisattvas, and tantric deities. Making offerings, the practitioner takes refuge in the lama and supplicates the lama for the blessing that produces ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* in the student's mindstream.¹⁵¹ The meditation proceeds with merging with the lama, dissolving the visualization into oneself, and dedication of merit acquired through the practice for attaining full buddhahood. While the general structure and content do not differ in any significant way to other guru yoga *sādhana*, Zhonnu Gyalchog connects the practice directly with *lojong* by emphasizing the necessity of depending on the guru in order to accomplish the goals of *lojong*.

¹⁴⁹ Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 254. For further discussion of guru yoga, see Alex Wilding, "Some Aspects of Initiation," *The Tibet Journal* 3, no. 4 (1978): 38-9; in relation to 'field of assembly,' see Roger Jackson, "The Tibetan 'Tshogs Zhing' (Field of Assembly): General Notes on its Function, Structure and Contents," in *Asian Philosophy* 2, no. 2 (1992) 157-172; for textual example (Gelug), see Donald S. Lopez, "A Prayer to the Lama," in *Religions of Tibet in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 282-92.

¹⁵⁰ Zhonnu Gyalchog, *Blo sbyong legs bshad kun 'dus*, 22ff; abridged version translated by Jinpa, 199-202.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 25. Gyüd (*rgyud*), the term translated as 'mindstream', refers to the continuity of activity in the practitioner's consciousness. For ordinary sentient beings, this continuum is karmically conditioned activity; Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 225.

The practitioner concretely depends on the guru by following the lama's words and conduct and by symbolic means (Tib. *brda'i sgo nas*), that is, guru yoga.¹⁵² The connection with *lojong* is also made clear in the supplication section where the practitioner asks that the ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* awaken in her mindstream and the intentions of the lama for the practitioner to be completely fulfilled.

As Samuel notes, the lama-student relationship is akin to a filial relationship and transcends mere transmission of instruction and study.¹⁵³ The practitioner encounters and learns the teachings only through the lama's kindness and his or her realization of the teachings. Guru yoga vividly illustrates the buddhological implications of this relationship in ritual form. The lama is visualized as the literal embodiment of buddhahood and providing a direct connection to all lineage teachers, historical buddha, and all buddhas and bodhisattvas. The lama's identification with the buddha is based on the understanding that the true nature of reality is empty of substantial being and that all of reality is the field of the buddhas' and bodhisattvas' enlightened activity. Envisioning the guru as a buddha or deity ritually enacts this truth, disclosing the empty and luminous nature of the guru and harnessing the depth of personal connection and the affective force of devotion for awakening to the ultimate nature. In the sequence of merging with the lama, the nondual identity of conventional and ultimate reality is directly applied to the practitioner herself. The yoga aims to deepen the practitioner's recognition of the *tathāgatagarbha* as her own fundamental nature. Both the visualization of the guru as the buddha and merging with the practitioner break down the reified sense of

¹⁵² Zhonnu Gyalchog, *Blo sbyong legs bshad kun 'dus*, 24.

¹⁵³ Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 253.

boundaried and separate existence. Makransky's incisive analysis of the significance of these dimensions of ritual practice in the seven-branch prayer applies equally to guru yoga:

To enter into the ritual is not merely to visualize these intersecting dimensions of nirvanic and samsaric existence, but to have one's body, speech, and mind symbolically entered into the stream of practice of all buddhas and bodhisattvas past, present, and future, to participate through all senses and movements of thought and body in the eternal work of universal salvation that flows from infinite buddhas and bodhisattvas to infinite living beings. As framed by the ritual, the practitioner's love for buddhas, bodhisattvas, and the beings they serve becomes so intense, the desire for oneness so profound, and the responsive infusion of transformative power received from the buddhas so powerful that the seeming wall of separation between self, buddhas, and living beings begins to break down, to reveal the shimmering insubstantial ground of voidness in which all buddhas and beings are situated. Each further glimpse of voidness elicited by the ritual further intensifies the devotion and empathy - the yearning to more fully realize the ultimate indivisibility of oneself, all buddhas, and all beings in the universal ground of emptiness: dharmadhātu.¹⁵⁴

The visualization is not simply discursive, but signifies the immersion of the person's somatic, linguistic, and mental-affective dimensions in the continuum of activities that all enlightened beings carry out for the sake of sentient beings, focalized in the figure of one's root guru. On the affective level, the contact and infusion with the presence and power of the buddhas and their blessings intensify and expand the practitioner's devotion beyond the guru to embrace the whole field of enlightened beings, oneself, and countless sentient beings. It is not only the insight into the empty luminous nature of all reality expressed in the *sādhana* that break open the sense of fixed boundaries. The force of the love, reverence, and gratitude that the practitioner feels facilitates the dissolution of the sense of separation and intimate union with buddha nature.

Also important is the energetic dimension of ritual participation. The union with the buddhas and bodhisattvas and the reception of their enlightened activities through the guru are imagined in the form of light that flows into the practitioner. Light has multiple symbolic significances beyond the purifying and liberating power and activity of enlightened beings.¹⁵⁵ It suggests potentiality, movement, fluidity, pervasiveness, and insight among other things. Light is

¹⁵⁴ Makransky, "Mahayana Buddhist Ritual," 55.

¹⁵⁵ David L. McMahan, *Empty Vision: Metaphor and Visionary Imagery in Mahāyāna Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 2002), 72-3.

also a visual representation of the luminous, clear, and empty nature of reality, a paradigmatic image of buddha nature. In guru yoga, the practitioner contacts the empowering vibrancy and dynamism of this nature figured through images of light, bodily absorbing and unifying with it.

4.4.4. The Body in *Tonglen*

Similar to guru yoga, the nirvanic nature of the body is the basis on which DDM moves the practitioner to *tonglen*. *Tonglen* follows the ultimate bodhicitta instructions under Point 2, “In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.” After the formal meditation session prescribed by the instruction “Place your mind on the basis-of-all, the essence of the path,” the practitioner integrates the insight into ultimate nature into everyday activities. Hence, the next instruction says, “In the intervals be a conjurer of illusions.”¹⁵⁶ The practitioner consciously regards each moment of daily life from the perspective of its ultimate nature, as clearly appearing yet empty of substantial being. Like all phenomena, the body in its apparent solidity is like an illusion conjured up by the trick of a deluded mind. Contact and some familiarization with its true nature form the basis for meditation on love and compassion, which breaks down the rigid boundaries of separation between self and other, and to exchange self and other. For the way the body is construed and used in *tonglen*, we can look again at Kongtrul’s evocative passage:

In order to make this imagined exchange clearer, as you breathe in, imagine that black tar collecting all the suffering, obscurations, and evil of all sentient beings enter your own nostrils and is absorbed into your heart. Think that all sentient beings are forever free of misery and evil. As you breathe out, imagine that all your happiness and virtue pour out in the form of rays of moonlight from your nostrils and are absorbed by every sentient being. With great joy, think that all of them immediately attain buddhahood. To train the mind, use this practice of taking and sending with the breath as the actual practice for the period of meditation. Subsequently, always maintain the practice through mindfulness and continue to work with it.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Jinpa, 83.

¹⁵⁷ Kongtrul, 15.

We read in the passage the two-step process of taking into oneself other sentient beings' suffering and its causes, and sending out into them one's own source of happiness and virtue. Each step concludes with envisioning the sentient beings' complete liberation and attainment of buddhahood. Conceiving one's body in terms of these capabilities indicates several things. First, the practitioner's body is not the karmically conditioned body, bound by obscurations and defilements. It is rather a body in its pure aspect that is used to benefit others, a body resonant with the form body of the buddha (*nirmāṇakāya*). The alignment, if not an overt identification, with a buddha-body is made clear in the result of the visualization, "With great joy, think that all of them immediately attain buddhahood." The body has become part of the buddha's enlightened activity. As form of that activity, the body is not simply used like an instrument by a separate subject; rather, the body as empty, nondually one in nature with the mental aspects of the individual and all enlightened qualities, constitutes that activity.

Second, it is the nirvanic body that makes possible the specifics of the exchange. Consider the instinctual discomfort that the first visualization provokes in a person who is not used to this practice: "[A]s you breathe in, imagine that black tar collecting all the suffering, obscurations, and evil of all sentient beings enter your own nostrils and is absorbed into your heart." The vividness of the image of black tar is meant not only to concretize others' suffering and its causes, but also to catalyze the sensate experience of others' affliction and one's assumption of it. The use of the breath, an intimate and autonomic movement of the body, evokes the felt sense of the body as an open structure that subsists interdependently with other sentient beings and phenomena. Ratcheting up the level of intensity and intimacy involved, the visualization draws the form of black tar into one's own heart and absorbs it there. The heart is

considered to be the center of consciousness and emotions,¹⁵⁸ which means that suffering is placed within the very nerve center of one's sensate and mental being. The purpose of the absorption is metabolization of suffering. Its possibility lies in the truth of ultimate nature. The practitioner can absorb the suffering into the core of one's being because suffering, its roots, and oneself are empty and luminous in their true nature. The absorption into the heart already anticipates the next movement of sending by contacting simultaneously the texture of affliction and the luminous empty nature of the suffering, one's body, and one's sense of identity.

On the basis of the fundamental principle that one's deepest nature is the same as the buddha's luminous emptiness, the practitioner can send out to other sentient beings all her happiness, virtue, and their source imagined in the form of pure moon rays. The brilliant, clear, unobstructed, powerful, empowering, and enlightening qualities of the light imagery enable the sensate and affective experiencing of the visualization. Engendering a strong feeling of sympathetic joy at imagining the recipients attaining buddhahood caps the sense of communion and solidarity beyond individual boundaries within the field of enlightened activity.

4.5. TANTRIC ANATOMY

The conception and use of the body in *tonglen* and guru yoga situate *lojong* explicitly within the broader Vajrayāna framework and signals the implicit tantric model of the body operating in *lojong* meditation in the later period as developed by Kongtrul and Zhonnu Gyalchog. Zhonnu Gyalchog's guru yoga text displays several elements of a tantric model of the body. First, the meditative technique of identifying with a buddha figure (here as the guru) or deity is shared in

¹⁵⁸ Geshe Lhundup Sopa, "An Excursus on the Subtle Body in Tantric Buddhism (Notes Contextualizing the Kālacakra)," *The Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 6, no. 2 (1983), 53; n. 61.

common in tantric *sādhana*s, especially deity yoga of the highest yoga tantras.¹⁵⁹ It expresses the basic tantric principle of taking the result as the path, meaning that buddhahood as the final goal is taken as the very means of reaching that goal. This presupposes that the self's ultimate nature is the same as the buddha's, reiterating the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine, and that by consciously identifying oneself with the visualized buddha or deity who embodies the ultimate nature and all enlightened qualities, one will ultimately become that buddha.¹⁶⁰ This principle is enacted in guru yoga when the practitioner merges with the figure of the guru-buddha or deity, mentally actualizing the nonduality of self and other, relative and ultimate reality. In this tantric framework, the identification with the figure of enlightenment subsumes the three aspects of enlightened body, speech, and mind. Seen from the perspective of the empty, clear, and luminous ultimate nature, these three aspects are held to be completely pure. The nondual unity of the relative and ultimate reality is the theoretical basis on which tantric practices can prescribe the merging with the enlightened figure, or the dissolution of the visualization into the heart at the conclusion. Accordingly, the body in guru yoga is seen in its basic nature as empty, luminous,

¹⁵⁹ Deity yoga consists in visualization of oneself as a tantric deity and identification with that deity through a two-part process of generation stage (*skyes rim*) and completion (*rdzogs rim*) stage. For highest yoga tantras, the generation stage generally involves visualizing oneself in the form of a particular deity within a *maṇḍala*, a symbolic representation of the cosmos typically displaying the tantric deity at the center and surrounded by its multiple emanations with attendant figures, with pure body, speech, and mind; dissolving the visualization into emptiness; and re-emerging in the form of the deity. The completion stage consists of visualizing an inner *maṇḍala*, which is comprised of vital centers (*khor lo*) and channels (*rtsa*) through which flow 'winds' (*rlung*) and consciously moving the winds into the central channel (see below for further discussion). Highest yoga tantras are classified as *Anuttarayoga tantras* in the "New Transmission" (*sar ma*) schools (Karma, Gelug, Sakya) and as *mahayoga* and *anyuyoga* tantras in the "Old Transmission" (*nying ma*) of the Nyingma school. The "Old Transmission" refers to the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet through Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava in the 8th century, while the "New Transmission" refers to the later dissemination through Atiśa and his followers in the 11th century. Nyingma has a nine-tier system of classification of the Buddha's teachings, in which the final three include *Mahayoga*, *Anuyoga*, and the final practice of *Dzogchen*, while the New Transmission schools follow a four-tier system of classifying the tantras: Kriya, Caryā, Yoga, and Anuttarayoga tantras. See Daniel Cozort, "Sādhana (sGrub thabs): Means of Achievement for Deity Yoga," in *Tibetan Literature*, 331-343. For classification of tantras, see Geoffrey Samuel, *Introducing Tibetan Buddhism* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 77-79.

¹⁶⁰ Janet Gyatso, "An Avalokiteśvara Sādhana," in *Religions of Tibet in Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 266. The visualization process is an extension and development of older Mahāyāna practice of remembrance of the buddha, *buddhānusmṛti*; see Harrison, "Commemoration and Identification in *Buddhānusmṛti*," 227.

and pure, and as capable of becoming or being recognized indivisibly one with the buddha in the form of the guru-deity.

We find a further instantiation of this view in the preliminary section before the main guru yoga practice. Here, the practitioner prepares herself for the main practice by visualizing her body as “empty like a husk, a reflection lacking substance,” and her heart “as a sphere of light.”¹⁶¹ Visually construing the body as hollow and luminous undercuts the reified sense of corporeal solidity and constricted identification with an isolated self. The point here is not to regard the body as immaterial, but to regard it in its ultimate aspect as nondually empty and clear in its phenomenal appearance. It is, furthermore, a reference to preparation for visualizing oneself as a deity and preparing the body for highest yoga tantras.¹⁶² The image of light as applied here to the heart is proleptic for the main practice in which the guru appears from the crown of one’s head and descends into the heart center.

The significance of these corporeal concepts and structures require a basic understanding of the tantric “subtle” anatomy, which is explicitly referenced in the following instructions:

With hands in the meditation position, think that the aperture of Brahma opens. From that, imagine the lama’s body [in] luminous aspect appearing like a shooting star... and descending into your heart center. Meditate, giving rise to faith and reverence which thinks, “This lama is truly the buddha himself.” Then relax the mind, visualize that the lama’s body, speech, mind and your own body, speech, and mind become like a clear and luminous sky, [and] rest [in that state] for a period of time.... When not abiding in that [state], imagine your body and your lama in your heart center as earlier. Or, imagine that he returns to his natural abode or dissolve into the crown [of the head].¹⁶³

The merging with the guru uses the visualization of specific physiological structures such as the “aperture of Brahma,” which is the crown of the head, and the heart center. These structures

¹⁶¹ Zhonnu Gyalchog, *Blo sbyong legs bshad kun ’dus*, 24.

¹⁶² For example, see Shamarpa Chokyi Wangchuk, *The Quintessence of Nectar: Instructions for the Practice of the Six Dharmas of Nāropo* in Peter Alan Roberts, trans., *Mahāmudrā and Related Instructions: Core Teachings of the Kagyü Schools* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2011), 337-8.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 25-6.

refer to the distinctive tantric model of a “subtle” body that underlies the gross physical body. The use of this subtle anatomy in the yoga facilitates a sense of union that reaches into the inner, energetic levels of the body and mind, construed as figures of light, the shooting star, and clarity. The practice of merging is not only conceptual and intentional, but simultaneously sensate. In uniting with the guru, the practitioner encounters the buddha nature in the whole of one’s being, including the mental, affective, and physical dimensions.

What has become commonly translated as “subtle body” in English literature on Indo-Tibetan tantra refers to the anatomical model frequently called “vajra body” (Tib. *rdo rje’i lus*) underlying the *tsalung* (Tib. *rtsa rlung*, “channel-wind”) practices found in the highest yoga tantras and preparatory physical exercises (Tib. *’khrul ’khor*, Skt. *yantra*).¹⁶⁴ This model conceives the body as comprising interdependent levels of increasing subtlety, with the *tsalung* structures operating at a level more refined than the grosser physical body. These structures consist of channels (Tib. *rtsa*, Skt. *nāḍī*), vital centers or “wheels” (Tib. *’khor lo*, Skt. *cakra*), subtle energy, (Tib. *rlung*, lit. ‘wind’; Skt. *prāṇa*), and subtle drops (Tib. *thig le*, Skt. *bindu*; also referred to as *bodhicitta* in tantras).¹⁶⁵ The following is a brief description of these structures and their functions.

The “winds” or subtle energies are vital currents that flow through subtle channels which branch out through the body. Different tantras enumerate and describe different types of subtle energy, which are responsible for physiological functions such as moving, breathing, speaking, and eliminating waste; and mental functions such as perception through the six senses and various

¹⁶⁴ The preparatory physical exercises called “illusory wheels” (*’khrul ’khor*) or *yantra* yoga aim to clear the subtle structures of channels so as to facilitate a smooth flow of the vital energies called ‘winds’ (*rlung*, *prāṇa*) which move through the channels. For further discussion of these exercises, see Namkhai Norbu, *The Crystal and the Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen* (New York: Routledge, 1987), 90ff.

¹⁶⁵ For a general description of these structures in Indo-Tibetan tantras, see Samuel, “The subtle body in India and beyond,” 39f; Cozort; Kelsang Gyatso

types of conception.¹⁶⁶ In Indo-Tibetan tantric perspective, the function of consciousness is inseparably united with the movement of subtle energy. Forms of consciousness or minds (visual, olfactory, aural, verbal, tactile, mental) are said to “ride” on the subtle energies as a horseman rides his mount.¹⁶⁷ Types of consciousness corresponding to the six sense faculties move toward and apprehend their objects in acts of perception by traveling on the subtle energies. Hence, these forms of consciousness cannot function without the corresponding subtle energies. At the same time, the subtle energies require direction from the mind. They are considered to be distinct yet inseparable, and completely interdependent in function. We can pause here to appreciate one major implication of this concept of subtle energy as an element of subtle physiology: the physiological and mental aspects are phenomenologically distinct but structurally inseparable. Since mental and affective aspects and functions are absolutely interdependent with the motility of subtle energies, control of the mind as well as the emotions require controlling the subtle energies. Conscious engagement with the subtle energies then takes on vital importance in the context of meditation and religious practice in general. Developing meditative concentration and stability presuppose physical, affective, and mental composure. Ritual and ethical observances also specify particular ways of shaping one’s affective and mental patterns of behavior as well as physical comportment. From the tantric perspective, shaping the three personal dimensions of body, speech, and mind for attaining the Buddhist soteriological end of enlightenment requires working with the subtle energies.

The channels are the pathways through which the subtle energies move. The most important channels are the three major channels (Tib. *rtsa gsum*): the central channel often

¹⁶⁶ Gyalwa Yangonpa, Gyalwa Yangonpa, *Secret Map of the Body: Visions of the Human Energy Structure*, trans. Elio Guarisco (Merigar, Italy: Shang Shung Publications, 2015), 265-72.

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra: An Introduction to the Esoteric Buddhism of Tibet* (New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1986), 96.

referred to as *avadhūtī* (Tib. *dbu ma*), and the side channels, respectively called *rasanā* (Tib. *ro ma*) and *lalanā* (Tib. *rkyang ma*). In the male body, the *rasanā* runs on the right and *lalanā* on the left of the central channel; the reverse is the case when the practitioner is female.¹⁶⁸ Generally, the central channel is said to run down the back of the body, close to the spinal column, approximately from the end of the sexual organ to the crown of the head, with the side channels adjacently situated. At various points along the central channel, the side channels are said to wrap around the central channel and intersect to form a wheel like structure, the *cakra*. The *cakra* number four to six depending on the tantra, and usually include the crown of the head, throat, heart, navel, and genitals.¹⁶⁹ They are described as having multiple “petals” from which subsidiary channels emerge, so that the subtle energies can move throughout the other parts of the body. In the crown and navel *cakra* abide vital essences called *tiḅle* (Tib. *thig le*, Skt. *bindu*) or *bodhicitta*. As customary with tantric tradition in general, the structures have multiple symbolic correspondences. The side channels generally correspond to the male and female; the *cakra* to different buddhas, four types of bliss, the four *kāya*, among others; the vital essences in the crown to semen, the sun, and absolute *bodhicitta*; vital essence in the navel to menstrual blood, the moon, and relative *bodhicitta*. There are many such correspondences and more complex ones in the

¹⁶⁸ Sarah Jacoby explains that in female bodies, the side channels are reversed from the male body. She further notes that tantric physiology operates according to a heterosexual model in the sense that the male and female sexes are understood as reverse mirror images of each other, and that the opposite sex aroused the practitioner. Sarah H. Jacoby, *Love and Liberation: Autobiographical Writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Visionary Sera Khandro* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 199.

¹⁶⁹ The details of the subtle body structures vary in tantras. For example, the *Hevajra tantra* lists four cakras (crown, throat, heart, genitals) and 32 *nāḁī*, while the *Kālacakra tantra* lists six (crown, between the eyebrows, throat, heart, navel, genitals) as well as 12 additional cakras located in the joints and 72,000 *nāḁī*. The variances do not indicate a tantra is factually wrong while another is not, but rather suggest that different transmissions prescribe their own particular form of visualization. *Hevajra Tantra*, 1.a.13-4, D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1980), 48-9; *Kālacakratāntra* and the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary, vv. 24-31, *The Kālacakratāntra: The Chapter on the Individual Together with the Vimalaprabhā*, trans. Vesna Wallace (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies at Columbia University: Columbia University Press, 2004), 29-39; Gyalwa Yangonpa, 230-4.

tantras, following the standard pattern of conceiving the body as a microcosm of the universe with correlated structures and processes.¹⁷⁰

The primary significance, however, of this subtle anatomy within Buddhist tantra lies in its soteriological use.¹⁷¹ The tantric model of the body reflects in a unique manner the continuity of *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. The nirvanic mind that nondually realizes emptiness, or in highest yoga tantras realization of the nondual unity of emptiness and bliss, is the true nature of the mental and physical dimensions of the person.¹⁷² In Buddhist tradition generally, these dimensions include the five psychophysical constituents or aggregates (form, feelings, perception, formations, consciousness); the six sense faculties, their objects, and corresponding forms consciousness; and the primary elements (earth, water, fire, air, space).¹⁷³ If the nirvanic mind that realizes emptiness is the fundamental nature of the body, that nature can be accessed in the body. The inner yogas of highest yoga tantras provide the means to do this.

Yet, accessing the true nature in the body is difficult. According to tantric theory, the subtle energies flowing in the bodies of ordinary individuals in the samsaric state move in the side channels and are not able to unify in the central channel. The subtle energies moving through the right and left channels cause dualistic conceptions developed in terms of subject and object, with the right channel producing conceptions of the apprehended object and the left channel the apprehending subject.¹⁷⁴ Karmic obscurations create obstructions or “knots” where the three

¹⁷⁰ Samuel, “The subtle body in India and Beyond,” 39-40; Snellgrove, *The Hevajra Tantra*, 25-38.

¹⁷¹ It is also connected to health and worldly benefits. See Samuel - 3 diff orientations; Jacoby;

¹⁷² For example, the Kālacakratāntra categorizes gnosis realizing emptiness as one of the primary elements that support and make up the body; *Kālacakratāntra* and the *Vimalaprabhā* commentary, *The Chapter on the Individual*, v. 83, 130-131.

¹⁷³ Williams, 16-7; *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, Vol. 1, 54-70.

¹⁷⁴ Gyalwa Yangonpa, 52, 239.

major channels meet in the *cakra*. As long as the subtle energies are restricted to the side channels, dualistic conceptions arise and provide the basis for reifying and clinging onto the subject and object as truly existent entities. In order to overcome dualistic conception, it is necessary to move the subtle energies into the central channel and unify them. The subtle energies themselves, furthermore, are products of karma, that is, they are products of past karma and contribute to creating more karma in their ordinary state.¹⁷⁵ Special meditative techniques, therefore, that can loosen the karmic knots, direct the subtle energies into the central channel, and dissolve them are required.

Preparatory exercises such as the “illusory wheels” (Tib. *'khrul 'khor*) combine breathing, visualizations, and physical movements that are meant to clear the channels and facilitate smooth flow of the subtle energies. The subtle body practices in the highest yoga class tantras generally consist in the following steps. The practitioner first visualizes herself as a tantric deity, approaching the subtle anatomy as an inner *maṇḍala*, and the individual structures as dwelling places of buddhas, bodhisattvas, and their consorts.¹⁷⁶ She clearly visualizes the channels and *cakra* and withdraws the subtle energies from the side channels into the central channel. To withdraw the subtle energies, she controls the breath and settles it into the navel area. The practitioner then visualizes a small seed or mantra syllable, usually the vowel ‘A’, at the center of the lowest *cakra* where the three channels are conceived to meet. Intensely focusing concentration on this syllable is said to attract the subtle energies into the central channel, and their coalescence

¹⁷⁵ The Kālacakra tantra describes the subtle energies as products of collective karma which continually brings the cosmos into existence. Wallace, Vesna A., *The Inner Kālacakratantra: A Buddhist Tantric View of the Individual* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001),

¹⁷⁶ Makransky explains that deity yoga is carried out in the ritual context of offering (*mchod pa*) in which all phenomena are seen in their primordial purity as nondual gnosis of the unity of emptiness and bliss. Since only a buddha has such realization, the practitioner must take on the form of a buddha, that is, in tantric practice, a deity. The same applies to inner yogas in the completion stage of highest yoga tantras. Makransky, “Offering (*mChod pa*) in Tibetan Ritual Literature,” 323.

generates inner heat. This heat is often called *Caṇḍāli* (Tib. *gtum mo*, lit. ‘fierce woman’), which ascends through the *cakras* and “melts” the vital essences inhering in them.¹⁷⁷ Through the power of the practitioner’s meditative concentration, the wind in the central channel moves the melted drops of vital essences up and down the series of *cakra*. This process dissolves the subtle energies into the central channel, pacifying dualistic conception. When the vital essences move through the *cakras*, the practitioner experiences forms of intense bliss. The increasing levels of bliss correspond to dissolution of types of subtle energies that generate gross and subtle conceptions. With the extinguishing of each type of conceptual subtle energies dawn successively subtler forms of awareness that cognizes emptiness with increasing profundity. In the end, a most subtle form of awareness emerges which is considered to be the primordial mind that directly and nondually realizes emptiness. The inner yoga results in a nondual gnosis of bliss and emptiness.

As the importance of bliss and male and female vital essences in this theory and practice suggest, the highest yoga tantra practices are closely tied with the use of pleasure and sexual desire for the purposes of awakening and fulfilling *bodhicitta* in both its absolute and relative aspects, emptiness and compassion. The practice builds on the Mahāyāna tenets that *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* are undivided and hence desire can be used as the very means of realizing the ultimate truth. In the inner yogas, this takes the form of reversing the usual process of emitting sexual fluids by directing them into the central channel to realize nondual gnosis of bliss and emptiness. As the tantric model of subtle anatomy conceives the female and male sexual essences to be in the bodies of both sexes, individuals can engage in solitary practice.¹⁷⁸ The parallel between the

¹⁷⁷ *The Hevajra Tantra*, I.i.31, 49-50.

¹⁷⁸ There are tensions within Tibetan Buddhist tradition on the place and necessity of sexual intercourse with a tantric consort for attaining complete enlightenment in highest yoga tantric practice. Tantras themselves seem to assume that it is part of the process, but Jacoby notes that using an actual consort seems to be rare today. Jacoby, 192-3.

types of bliss and sexual pleasure is also important as it indicates using skillfully the ordinary pleasure that usually further intensify clinging attachment to attain insight into the empty nature. The affective force of the bliss to which the texts attest also points to how the practice harnesses the fiery energy of desire to generate unconfined compassion instead of limited individual gratification.

In summary, there are several things we can note about the subtle body model. First, it is a body that can be accessed in its fullest dimensions only through meditation, specifically by visualizing oneself in one's true nature in the form of a tantric deity. In the tantric framework, the body as a whole is comprised of different levels: the coarse musculoskeletal body and organs; the subtler anatomy of channels, *cakra*, subtle energies, and vital essences; and subtlest form of awareness realizing emptiness and bliss. The subtle anatomy of channels, subtle energies, and attainments of bliss and insight are accessed through meditative visualization. The sensory feedback from the meditation practice is empirically sensed and felt in the sensate awareness of heat and bliss, indicating that there is a real interdependent connection between the subtle and gross physical structures. Yet, the field of subtle structures and processes is not accessible to ordinary perceptual modes and opens up to an individual when she has taken on the ultimate identity of buddhahood through a specific type of tantric meditation.

Second, the mental and physical aspects are distinguished phenomenologically, but they are conceived to be inseparable and completely interdependent. In the ordinary state, forms of consciousness manifest as conceptions, but mental conceptions are caused and driven by the movement of subtle energies in the subtle channels. The distinctions are functional and phenomenological, but ontologically the subtle energies, conceptions, and awareness are inseparable. The model does not envision the soteriological end as entailing a separation of the

physical and nonphysical dimensions. If the practitioner achieves full enlightenment through the highest yoga, the result is the nondual realization of the empty, clear, and blissful nature of reality. There is not a subsistence of a mental aspect and expiration of the physical aspect, but rather the direct awareness of the ultimate nature of the mental and physical phenomena. Since the types of subtle energies and consciousness do not have inherent existence, they are conceived to be absolutely interdependent and distinctly existing only on the conventional level. In this way, the subtle body model encapsulates the Mahāyāna understanding of emptiness and dependent origination.

Third, the subtle body model and inner yoga framework provide the conceptual map and meditative techniques for accessing the *tathāgatagarbha* in the body. Again, this is the tantric articulation of the indivisibility of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*, and the doctrine of emptiness and skillful means. Buddha nature is the fundamental truth of the body and the currents of conceptions and desires that run through it. Envisioning the body from the perspective of the fundamental nature itself, the practitioner takes buddhahood as the point of departure into the inner yogas. Not only are the subtle structures visualized as dwellings of enlightened beings, the basic vital forces that arise from accumulated karma and give rise to conception and desire are transmuted and utilized for awakening innate wisdom.

Fourth, it is important to stress that the subtle body practice in the highest yoga tantras, as with Buddhist practice generally, is a communal construct and medium. The communal dimension is embedded in not only the subtle body structures, but in the entire context and aim of the practice. In addition to the prerequisite study and training under qualified teachers required for approaching tantric practice, practitioners must form a relationship with a qualified guru who can give the proper initiation or empowerment (Tib. *dbang*) for tantra and guide them

in the practice.¹⁷⁹ This is symbolized in guru yoga when the practitioner envisions the guru in the midst of a field of assembly (Tib. *tshogs zhing*) that depicts his or her connection with the major teachers of the particular lineage, bodhisattvas, buddhas as well as deities and other guides and dharma protectors (e.g., *ḍākinī*, *ḍāka*, *dharmapāla*).¹⁸⁰ The central principle in such preliminaries and inner yoga proper of awakening to buddha nature is always understood to become actual through the beneficial activities and kindness of the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and especially the guru who embodies and concretely aids the practitioner to access the truth. The practitioner carries this principle of communion with the field of enlightened beings into the inner yoga practice itself, for the subtle body is the inner *maṇḍala*, the realm of enlightenment and abode in which the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and deities dwell. The community and the practitioner's communion are *felt* realities, not simply visualized ones. As she unlocks the wisdom of the buddhas in the *cakra* and seeks to attain full buddhahood for the sake of helping all sentient beings, the practitioner repeatedly relies on the presence, inspiration, and blessing of the enlightened beings.¹⁸¹

4.5.1. Tantric Model underlying *Lojong*

The subtle body model underlies *lojong* texts like Zhonnu Gyalchog's text on guru yoga as well as the DDM. While Zhonnu Gyalchog's text is not concerned with a detailed engagement with the subtle structures, it assumes them as a basis for guru yoga. In the passage on merging with the guru, the text instructs the practitioner to imagine opening the crown of the head and

¹⁷⁹ See Alex Wilding, "Some Aspects of Initiation," *The Tibet Journal* 3, no. 4 (Winter 1978), 34-9.

¹⁸⁰ Jackson, 163-4.

¹⁸¹ Makransky, "Offering," 319.

the guru's body in luminous form shooting into it like a shooting star. Then the guru's form descends into the practitioner's heart center, followed by her meditation on the guru as the buddha at her heart, who then dissolves into total oneness with her, generating a strong sense of trust and devotion. We see it in *tonglen*, where the practitioner visualizes suffering in the form of black tar and happiness and virtue as pure streams of moon rays entering and exiting the nostrils and the heart. These symbolic forms encourage the flow of subtle energies in ways that open the heart cakra, break down conceptual patterns, and free up constricted channels of the subtle body.¹⁸² Similar to deity yoga, guru yoga and *tonglen* approach the body in its ultimate nature, the steps of the practices designed to deepen the practitioner's insight and concrete realization of buddha nature in and through one's physical and mental dimensions.

In light of the subtle body model, we can gain further insight into the level of sensations intended and the aims of visualizing the *cakra* and energetic streams in *tonglen* and guru yoga. Beyond simply referencing the subtle body, the visualizations in both practices are designed to open the practitioner up to levels of sensations that are ordinarily obscured by habitual sense and conceptual patterns. Grounded in the ultimate nature, the practices allow practitioners to disengage from engrained pattern of reactions to sense and perceptual stimuli and contact another sentient layer. Samuel's argument that we might understand the subtle body practices as helping the practitioner to sense and control the central nervous and endocrine systems as if from the inside is suggestive.¹⁸³ The meditative context quiets the practitioner's awareness and allows her to access a deeper level of sense awareness. This access, in turn, expands the awareness to notice the less overt stimuli and response patterns that lie outside her usual awareness and

¹⁸² John Makransky, personal correspondence, June 7, 2019.

¹⁸³ Geoffrey Samuel, "Subtle-body processes: Towards a non-reductionist understanding," in *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West*, 252; Samuel, *Civilized Shamans*, 237.

conscious control, that “realm of barely conscious drives and desires, of the subtle levels of attraction and repulsion between people, the impulses, below or beyond individuals’ conscious awareness, that lead them to behave in the ways that they do.”¹⁸⁴ Compared to other forms of meditation, the subtle body practices spotlight how sensate, energetic currents pervade and affect the interplay of stimuli and response, conception and action, and impulse and behavior. In guru yoga, imagining the guru’s body of light entering into the crown and descending into the heart creates a certain set of sensations within the practitioner’s body, particularly in the head and heart *cakra*. Visualizing movement of light through or into these centers can simulate the sensation of bioelectric flow and make the practitioner aware of subtle sensations hitherto unnoticed. The imagery directs that flow to engender certain forms of affect, such as warmth, comfort, intimacy, and safety. Engaging the tantric anatomy softens the substantial sense of boundaries at a subtler level of sensate experience. Working intentionally at this level, the practitioner can consciously notice how these sensations are associated with her perceptions and affective responses (i.e., attraction, repulsion, indifference) and harness them for attaining fuller insight into the true nature.

Tonglen especially brings into relief how subtle level of sensations are tied to affect.

Samsaric existence depends on clinging onto the dualistic separation between what we perceive as pleasurable and painful, and disregarding what appears to be irrelevant to our sense of self and its interests. Basic ignorance of reality’s true nature leads persons to cling onto these feeling tones (pleasant, unpleasant, indifferent) and react to stimuli with desire, repulsion, or apathy. For this reason, people ordinarily are conditioned to flee suffering, one’s own and that of others, in ways that generate more suffering. *Tonglen* reverses this pattern. We can recall that the first part

¹⁸⁴ Samuel, “Subtle-body processes,” 251.

of *tonglen* entails imagining suffering, evil, and their cause as a mass of black tar and drawing it into the interior of one's body, specifically through the breath and into the tender point of one's heart. Placing one's intentionality at the heart, the practitioner then dissolves the tar, based on the body's pure, empty nature. This first act of meditation works with the sensate and emotional texture of intentionally taking on other living beings' suffering. The breath initiates the process of sensing from the interior of one's body. The practitioner now deliberately provokes the habitual reaction of repulsion at suffering in order to shine the light on the ignorance fueling it and the empty nature of the self.

If the first part works with unpleasant feelings and repulsion toward suffering, founded on self-clinging and self-cherishing, the second part undercuts the tendency to cling onto objects perceived as pleasant. The practitioner imagines sending out with one's breath all happiness, virtue, and their source to all sentient beings in the form of pure rays of light and their bodily absorbing the light streams. Intentionally highlighting objects that elicit desire, such as material wealth and accumulations of merit, the practitioner runs up against the deep habit of clinging attachment and self-cherishing. Based on the ultimate *bodhicitta* practice and meditation on love and compassion, she sends out these resources to other sentient beings. The visualizations conclude with feeling intense joy at the sentient beings' liberation and attainment of buddhahood. Generating a powerful feeling of joy infuses the counterintuitive acts of absorbing others' suffering and relinquishing all possessions with the opposite of the customary affective reactions. The use of the breath and *cakra* in the practice helps the practitioner to give attention to how subtle physiological and energetic processes impel perceptual, affective, and behavioral patterns. Although *lojong* is neither an explicitly tantric practice nor a form of inner yoga, the subtle body nevertheless implicitly plays a significant conceptual and pragmatic role, especially in

relative *bodhicitta* practices. The poisons of desire, hatred, and ignorance are operative at a level beyond the conceptual level and reach into subtle physiological structures. By Kongtrul's time, the tradition seems to indicate that engaging some aspect of the subtle body is required to enact the exchange of self and other and fulfill the aims of *lojong* practice. The subtle body model includes mental, affective, energetic and physical aspects, and conceives them as thoroughly interdependent. Hence, consciously working with the dynamics at this level is necessary fully to address fully karmically conditioned patterns.

To summarize, we can discern various models of the body in the DDM commentaries. On the one hand, the texts present the body in its karmically conditioned state, as defiled and the basis of self-clinging and self-cherishing. Consistent with the broader Buddhist tradition, this samsaric model of the body aims to motivate the reader to renounce the causes of such existence and turn toward attaining buddhahood for the sake of all living beings. It approaches the body from a soteriological point of view, highlighting its problematic aspects. On the other hand, the texts present a view of the body from the perspective of its ultimate nature as luminous and empty, and as a key to enlightenment. In *lojong* texts like the DDM commentaries, this nirvanic model of the body is placed within the horizon of the Vajrayāna tradition and displays features of the subtle anatomy. We can see the subtle body model operating in the preliminaries, specifically in guru yoga practice, as well as in *tonglen*. Both practices guide the practitioner's attention on the subtle level of sensations and energies, and how these currents shape one's conceptual, affective, and behavioral acts. The incorporation of subtle anatomy expresses the Tibetan Buddhist tradition's insight that karmic obscurations penetrate into the deepest dimensions of the person, particularly the subconscious layer that encompasses the mental and physical. By engaging some of the subtle structures and processes, the practitioner consciously

uses them to break down the reified sense of separation between self and other, and overturn the habitual patterns arising from ignorance and clinging attachment. More specifically, *lojong* practice uses the subtle structures to enact the meditative exchange of self and other, absorbing and metabolizing the suffering of other living beings and giving up one's source of happiness and virtue. The transformation of suffering into a resource for deeper realization of ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* happens bodily as much as mentally, intentionally directing and focusing one's awareness on the subtle layer of sensations and awareness. While the distinction between mental and physical aspects of the human individual persist in *lojong*, this genre and tradition of practice draws on a conceptual map of a multi-layered body that is thoroughly integrated into meditative practice.

CHAPTER 5

STEIN AND *LOJONG* IN COMPARISON

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, I examine Stein's theory of the body and contemplation in comparison with Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*. My interest here is not a general comparison, but to examine specifically how certain points of convergence and divergence between Stein and *lojong* bring out new aspects of Stein's thought; generate new insights into our thinking on the body, and uncover new constructive possibilities for a contemporary theology of the body. After an initial summary of Stein's model of the body, the chapter examines two major aspects of Stein and *lojong*'s accounts of the body. The first section discusses the concept of subtle structures and sensations. The second section analyzes the relationship between the body and transformation of suffering in contemplation and meditation.

In setting out the comparison, it is necessary to clarify what I mean by contemplation and meditation. I use the word "contemplation" in the particular sense of a nondiscursive unitive prayer, following Stein and John of the Cross' theory. As Sarah Coakley luminously explains, the Carmelite and the broader Christian "mystical theology" tradition's understanding of prayer includes a whole ascetico-contemplative complex of practices that differ according to the particular stage that the practitioner (or "pray-er" in her terms) has entered.¹ Preceding the mature form of unitive or infused contemplation, the ascetico-contemplative tradition presupposes basic restraint of ordinary desires, liturgical worship, and "meditation" in the technical sense of using discursive means such as visualizations to engage scriptural or doctrinal

¹ See Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God*, chapter 4.

truths. In contemplation proper, the practitioner loses the capacity for discursive meditation and progressively surrenders to the grace of infused contemplation and deeper union with the divine. In using “contemplation” in the specific sense, I am referring to this notion of infused contemplation. Where needed, I address the ascetical practices as undergirding contemplation.

I use “meditation” in the technical sense as specified by *lojong* philosophy and practice. The term “meditation” (Skt. *bhāvanā*, Tib. *sgom pa*) in Buddhist tradition encompasses a wide variety of practices that are explained, for example, in *lam rim* texts. Since the comparison requires focusing on the particularities of the practices examined in Stein and *lojong*, I use “meditation” to refer to distinct practices described in *lojong* instructions and commentaries.

Sometimes, however, I employ the word “contemplation” in a broader sense to refer to both nondiscursive Christian prayer and Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* as forms of religious practice that involve intentional cultivation of awareness for the realization of ultimate truth (Christian or Buddhist). I base this choice on the contemporary usage of “contemplation” in the Western context to cover meditation practices in general, and to avoid confusion with a technical understanding of “meditation” in relation to the Christian tradition.

5.2. CONCEPTS OF THE BODY: SUMMARY OF STEIN’S GENERAL MODEL OF THE BODY

Stein’s model of the body changes and develops throughout her corpus. In her later works, we saw how she builds on her earlier phenomenological model a more complex model in line with her later interests in metaphysics, Catholic thought, and ascetico-contemplative life. In terms of what remains continuous in Stein’s early and later thinking on the body, Stein consistently asserts that the body is at once physical (*Körper*) and sensing (*Leib*), a unity of “layers”

or structures of the human being. To behold a body is always to behold a subject with a psychic, spiritual (*geistig*), and personal life. The body is inseparable from the human person in their fullness of being. Stein eschews substance dualism between the physical and non-physical aspects of the human being, often reiterating that the body is be-souled. Through a dynamic relation with the physical, cultural, and intersubjective environment, human beings apprehend the human person in and through the body. Hence, the body always exceeds the physical and gives, in the phenomenological sense, the human person. In the experience of our own and other human bodies, we are given access to a rich world of the soul and spirit. To behold the body, therefore, is always to behold the whole body-soul-spirit unity.

In FEB and later works, Stein will mostly use the term “soul” or “spiritual soul” to cover the psychic and spiritual (*geistig*) phenomenal layers discussed extensively in her early writings. While her concept of the soul in later texts include the psychic and spiritual structures, it also differs significantly in that she expands the earlier concept with the aid of medieval scholastic philosophy and Catholic theology, especially from the asectico-contemplative tradition of John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila. Stein takes the official Catholic magisterial definition of the soul as the form of the body to articulate within this conceptual framework how the soul is responsible for living movement, development, perception, volition, and consciousness. Her later notion of the soul as “a species of the spirit” enfolds the functions and structures of the psychic, spiritual, and personal layers of her phenomenological model.² The soul as a type of spirit means that it is characterized by inner acts of intentionality and self-giving, which also implies rationality and freedom. As sentient soul, it pervades the body and all its parts; as spiritual soul, it “rises above itself” in the sense that it is responsible for the acts of cognition and relating with the world (FEB

² FEB, 299, 362.

373). The specific form that the soul takes in order to sense, know, and relate with the world is the conscious 'I'.

There is a further refinement of the model beyond the soul as sentient and spiritual in this dual sense. In addition to the capacity model of the soul, Stein appropriates the spatial model of the soul found in Carmelite theology, which she uses to explain the theological significance and function of the soul. Beyond its capacities, the soul is a graded structure that “descends” to an innermost centerpoint which is the place of divine dwelling and union with God. The graded structure reiterates the phenomenological model of layers that move “down” from the physical, psychic, spiritual, and personal, but now the deepest core is open to the eternal God and to knowledge of the true value of all existents through divine union. Stein retains the idea that the different depths of the soul disclose levels of value. The deeper the soul “descends,” the more it is capable of recognizing the true value of events and persons in the world. When the soul stably abides in its centerpoint by virtue of divine union, it receives knowledge of the world through God and thereby has access to the genuine theological meaning of all worldly events.

Again, it is the conscious 'I' that experiences the movement toward its center, but the light of consciousness never exhaustively exposes the depth of the soul. Open to the infinite, the soul ultimately remains a mystery to the conscious 'I'. At the centerpoint of the soul, the 'I' in union with God is a pure recipient of grace, as the human person is integrated into the inner life of the Trinity. As the consciousness of divine union is given as part of the gift of union, the 'I' at this point in the contemplative journey is constituted by divine grace and action.³ The kind of knowledge and way of being that unfolds at this point in the development of the soul, then, is

³ When discussing different kinds of divine union in Teresa and John, Stein writes, “This certainty remains hers after the experience of union with God. It was part of the experience itself, essentially helping to construct it, even though it can only be brought into relief afterwards. The consciousness of union does not join the union from without, rather it belongs to the union itself.” SC, 171.

accessible only through contemplation, which according to John of the Cross' definition is an infusion of grace and unifying contact with divine being.

Stein's mature anthropology is principally theological and contemplative. The human person is primed for contemplation by virtue of the structure and nature of the spiritual soul, which is united with the body. What facilitates the fullest unfolding of the human soul is contemplative life, a life that includes the threefold movement of purgation, illumination, and union within the context of communal, ecclesial, and sacramental life. Stein builds creatively on John's theory of contemplation and synthesizes expiatory atonement, contemplative prayer, and incarnational theology. As the life and suffering of the contemplative is no longer the individual's but Christ's life and suffering, divine union takes on expiatory efficacy. Stein further sets the idea of divine union within the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ and gives the body a pronounced communal dimension. Consequently, it appears in her later essays that she moves beyond her earlier idea of solidarity between individuals through freedom and responsibility to ontological fluidity and unity between persons. It would seem that a person who has received the grace of divine union could voluntarily accept suffering in order to expiate for other people's sins and open a pathway for them to receive divine grace.

5.3. UNCOVERING SUBTLE LEVELS OF SENSATION

5.3.1. Subtle Sensations in Stein

A comparative theological reading of Stein and DDM related texts highlights several important things when we consider critically retrieving Stein's conceptions of the body for

contemporary theology. One of the most interesting points that comparison highlights is the uncovering of subtle levels of sensations. Subtle sensations in both Stein and *lojong* function to facilitate the fulfillment of the goals of their respective forms of practice (i.e., contemplation in Steinian sense; love and compassion meditation, *tonglen*, or guru yoga in *lojong*).

The idea of subtle sensations is present in nascent form in Stein's early phenomenology where she discusses lifepower (*Lebenskraft*) and resting in God.⁴ Although it is not as overt as physical sensation, Stein argues for a clear enlivening effect that comes from infusion of lifepower when a person rests in God and such revitalization cannot be separate from some kind of sensate knowing. As with John, Stein conceives feelings as having an epistemological function. Sensual feelings and moods are types of feeling that involve certain non-discursive forms of knowing, such as the taste of a dish or sense of general liveliness. "Spiritual" (*geistig*) feelings issue from levels of the soul and entail valuation of objects. Insofar as spiritual feelings are connected with meaning, and objects of meaning have the potential to increase lifepower or vitiate it in the case of negative meaning, I argue that they are connected with subtle levels of sensing and knowing.

The idea of subtle sensations comes up more explicitly in Stein when she defines "personal experience of God" in the proper sense in *Wege Der Gotteserkenntnis (Ways to Know God)*, her essay on the symbolic theology of Pseudo-Dionysius. Distinct from natural knowledge of God inferred by reason from our knowledge of the created world, supernatural personal knowledge of God is marked by the certain feeling of God's presence (*Gefühl der Gegenwart Gottes*) to the person.⁵ As with the prophet Isaiah in his vision of God, Stein notes, this clear and certain feeling of divine presence occurs in the person's "innermost being." This feeling, she says further,

⁴ PPH, 84-5; BBPG, 73.

⁵ Edith Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis: Studie zu Dionysius Areopagita und Übersetzung seiner Werke*, Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe 17 (Freiburg: Herder, 2003), 47.

is a being “touched by God inwardly [*das innere Berührtwerden von Gott*] without word and image,”⁶ an intimate knowing or awareness (*Kenntnis*) that marks the beginning of divine union in contemplation.

The terms “feeling of God’s presence,” “innermost being,” and “inner touch” come directly from John of the Cross. She examines the idea of “touch” again in *The Science of the Cross*, where she discusses the beginning of divine union. While faith is a gift that God grants to a person to accept revealed truth, infused contemplation is a personal encounter with God “through a *touch* in his inmost region.”⁷ John uses the term “touch” to describe divine action in the soul in the beginning stages of divine union, which culminates in spiritual marriage.⁸ According to John, God “touches” the soul at its “substance,” which is synonymous with its innermost depth or center. As Bernard McGinn explains, the substance of the soul is not a reified thing or a conceptual essence but “a dynamic actuality at the basis of the soul’s powers of knowing, remembering, and loving.”⁹ John uses the term to speak about the deepest aspect of the soul that makes it possible for the spiritual faculties of intellect, memory, and will to receive God. Since contemplative union is a union not only of wills but of personal being, to use Stein’s term, the contact occurs at the deepest level of both God and the soul. John calls this depth “substance.”

McGinn states that John conceives this original idea of substance to account for how mystical knowing can function when all the sense and spiritual faculties become suspended in divine union. For John, the spiritual faculties in their ordinary state have to be, in a sense,

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ SC, 177.

⁸ DN, 23.11-12 - 24.3 (CWSJC, 453-5); LFL, 2.8-20 (CWSJC, 660-5).

⁹ McGinn, *Mysticism in the Golden Age of Spain*, 259.

destroyed and reconstituted through the stages of contemplative union until they are fully restored in spiritual marriage. They have to be emptied out completely of all attachment to created things in the purgative stage. This then raises the question, “How then can the soul who has attained union know, remember, or will anything, since it no longer has access to the natural process of understanding and knowing based on sense experience?”¹⁰ John’s solution, according to McGinn, is to give the soul an inner depth which God is able to infuse with “quasi-sensations” (e.g., warmth, illumination, ‘subtly wounded’)¹¹ to grant supernatural acts of knowing and loving. The acts of knowing and loving become possible by virtue of the faculties’ deepening in union, and John calls the transformed faculties “profound caverns of feeling.”¹² The acts of knowing and loving at this level happen by virtue of reception of divine being and action, and not by the autonomous activity of the faculties positioned at a greater depth. They are able to receive the light and warmth of divine love and the clear knowledge of divine attributes through what John calls “the feeling of the soul.” This “feeling of the soul” is the power and strength of the substance of the soul to receive what McGinn calls “the supernatural quasi-sense experiences” which God infuses into the caverns, and to enjoy the proper, divine objects of the spiritual faculties in union. For John, the soul as created in the divine likeness must have in itself an image of divine infinity, “potential (not naturally active) depths that are open to divine action, that is, what he calls ‘divine touches’.”¹³ The structures of “substance,” “caverns,” and “feeling of the soul” account for the soul’s potentially infinite capacity to receive infinite divine being.

¹⁰ McGinn, 308.

¹¹ LFL, 3.3-5 (CWSJC, 674-5)

¹² LFL 3.18-22 (CWSJC 680-2)

¹³ McGinn, 308

In her commentary on John, Stein inflects these concepts and imagery with her own anthropology. She writes,

God touches with his being the inmost region of the soul (which our holy Father St. John also calls her substance). God's essence however is nothing other than his being and himself. He is himself a person, his being is personal being; the inmost region of the soul is the heart and fountainhead of her personal life and at the same time the actual place where she meets other personal life. It is only possible for one person to touch another in their inmost region; through such a touch one person gives the other notice of his presence. When one feels one has been touched interiorly in this manner, one is in lively sentience with another person [*Wenn man also in dieser Weise sich innerlich beruehrt fuehlt, so ist man mit einer Person in lebendiger Fuehlung*].¹⁴

Stein's exposition of divine union does not diverge from John in terms of content, but she highlights its personal aspect in a way that John does not.¹⁵ We can see in the passage clear references to Stein's concept of the person as she writes about it in FEB. Union is personal in the Steinian sense that it is the divine spiritual being's free self-giving to another spiritual being that has the structure of interiority to receive it. Her concept of personal being in this passage derives primarily from her concept of the Trinity, which expands her earlier philosophical anthropology (FEB 349). The Triune God as love and as the archetype of all spiritual, personal being is characterized by the inner relation of total mutual self-giving and receiving. As love, divine being entails a multiplicity of persons who are distinguished not by substantial essence, but by the eternal generation of a 'Thou' (Son) from the 'I' of the "Father" and the eternal self-giving and receiving between the two in the form of the Spirit. In contrast to finite creation, what is given and received in intra-divine life is one, eternal and infinite nature and being (FEB 351; EES 300), which means that there is no distinction of substantial essence as they share one divine being. While the ontological separation of I-Thou remains fixed in finite personal beings, there is full unity of being among divine persons. The distinction of persons, however, indicates a

¹⁴ Ibid.; *Kreuzeswissenschaft*, 149.

¹⁵ John also uses personal imagery to explain divine union, as when he explains the difference between possession of God through grace and union as a difference between betrothal and marriage in *The Living Flame of Love* (3.24; CWSJC, 682). And, of course, he is thoroughly Trinitarian throughout his work. But John's concepts of substance, (spiritual) feeling, and inner touch take on different resonances as Stein brings to it her later anthropology.

boundaried “interiority” that makes possible self giving and receiving. Divine union for human beings is predicated on the archetypal structure of this triune divine being. What makes human beings “personal” beings for Stein is that they have this self-contained “interiority” that simultaneously demarcates individual being, and makes it possible to receive divine being and give oneself in self-surrender. This is the condition for the possibility of any genuinely personal relationship between human beings as well as the formation of human community (I and Thou that make a ‘We’) where there is mutuality and reciprocity. Divine union represents the fulfillment of the potential of human personal life, since in divine union the union and mutual love unfold at the greatest depth of the human person, which remains inaccessible to other created beings.

It is in the context of her trinitarian concept of the person and spatial model of the soul that Stein uses John’s language of interior or subtle sensations at the onset of divine union. Her appropriation, furthermore, resonates in multiple ways with her earlier phenomenology. Somatic sensations and types of feelings have epistemic significance for Stein. She argues that physically caused sensations are real constituents of consciousness that presents the body in experience as a living, sensing body belonging to a subject. Sensorial feelings (e.g. taste of a dish), general feelings, moods, and spiritual (*geistig*) feelings all involve some type of valuation in different degrees, and spiritual feelings (e.g., joy, love, hate) specifically signal human person’s response to an objective world of values.¹⁶ Although Stein distinguishes types of feelings that are directly caused by somatic factors and types that are not, all feelings are inextricably connected to the physical level, whether as caused by corporeal factors or creating physical “effects.” The

¹⁶ POE 100-1. Mary Catherine Baseheart points out that Stein reaches the rational level through the sensorial and affective dimensions of the human person; see Mary Catherine Baseheart, *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997), 40.

important point here is that Stein's early work delineates clearly the sensations and affect as structures that give nondiscursive forms of knowing, a conceptual insight and argument that most of her contemporaries and predecessors seemed not to share. When, therefore, she employs the concept and language of subtle sensations in the later works, Stein radically expands her earlier understanding of the sensorial and affective structures and iterates in a new register their epistemic importance in light of a new spatial-model of the soul and framework of contemplative union. "Inner touch" or lively sentience (*lebendiger Fühlung*) indicates the conscious experience of encountering divine being at the deepest point of a person's interiority. Like the language of depth, Stein employs the language of subtle sensations to speak about a kind of knowing and loving that transcends ordinary modes of intellect, affect, and sense perception, and overcomes the subject-object binary through a theory of contemplative, personal (in the Steinian sense) union.¹⁷

5.3.2. Comparison with *Lojong* and Tantra

The idea of subtle sensations accessible through meditative practice at a deeper or more subtle level than the gross physical body is integral to *lojong* and the Tibetan Buddhist tradition generally. As examined above, underlying *tonglen* and guru yoga is a model of the body conceived according to its nirvanic nature or potential. The nirvanic model of the body, as blissful and empty in its fundamental nature, makes possible the practice of guru yoga, the exchange in

¹⁷ In this, she is extending the affective Dionysian tradition inherited through John. John and Stein's use of the language of sensations extend the affective Dionysian tradition which focuses on the primacy of the *affectus* over the intellect by incorporating the language of quasi or subtle sensations into the affective dimension of divine union. See Andrew Louth, "Patristic Mysticism and St. John of the Cross" in *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Luis Girón-Negrón, "Dionysian Thought in Sixteenth-Century Spanish Mystical Theology," *Modern Theology* 24, no. 4 (2008): 693-706.

tonglen, and the visualizations involved in its later development. The visualization of merging with the deity-guru, absorption of others' suffering and its causes, sending one's merit to all living beings as rays of pure light all rely on the concepts of *cakras* and subtle energy ("wind," *rlung*) which form part of the tantric model of subtle physiology. The "subtle body" model used in *tsalung* practices in the highest yoga tantras conceive the body as comprised of interdependent levels of increasing subtlety. At the outermost level is the gross physical body made up of visible structures, and at a more interior level are the subtle body structures of the channels, *cakras*, subtle energies, and subtle drops. In many *Sarma* tantras, a most subtle form of wind and mind called the "indestructible drop" resides in the centerpoint of the heart *cakra*.

Similar to Stein's model, individuals are not aware of these structures and sensations in their ordinary state due to cognitive obscurations and afflictive defilements. In Stein's terms, an 'I' that has not been integrated into the centerpoint is motivated or driven by what approaches it from the created world rather than by the wisdom and love flowing from divine union. Attachment to created objects and one's own 'I', which results in seeking sensual gratification or limited intellectual quests, obstructs the soul's discovery of the depth structures and their operation (e.g., caverns, feeling of the soul). Both Stein (following John, Teresa, and the Carmelite tradition generally) and the Tibetan Buddhist tradition posit structures at a level that is deeper or more subtle than the empirically observable level of physical, emotional, and mental functions. For both sources, these structures in their fullest or undistorted dimensions are accessible only through particular contemplative or meditative practice as well as manner of life. As part of this contemplative or yogic perspective, they both assume preparatory ascetic formation, in Sarah Coakley's sense of integration of intellectual, spiritual and bodily practices

over a life-time,¹⁸ that purify or eliminate these obstructions. As the purgative process progresses and a practitioner moves into the more “advanced” stages of the particular contemplative or meditative practice, the subtle structures are uncovered and engaged. In Tibetan Buddhist tantra, the practitioner takes on the form of the buddha to practice the highest yoga tantras which work explicitly with the *tsalung* structures and processes partially utilized in non-tantric practices like *lojong*. To take on the form of the buddha is to experience oneself as the unity of emptiness and appearance. It is not just a discursive device or visualization, which can be automatically reified and turned into an object of clinging.¹⁹ In Stein, the practitioner discovers the depth structures by the virtue of divine action in contemplative union.

There are, however, major differences. A common characteristic of Stein’s early and later understanding of the human person’s structure is its multi-layered or leveled depth. In POE and PPH, Stein constructs the individual as comprised of the sensory, psychic, spiritual, and personal phenomenological layers. In FEB and later writings, Stein combines the layered model with the capacity and spatial model of the soul and the body-soul-spirit framework. Although the levels of depth and subtle structures and sensations at the deepest part of the soul in contemplative union share similarities with the Tibetan Buddhist subtle body model, Stein conceives the interiority in terms of spiritual soul, which is a different species from the body, since the soul belongs to the category of vital form. Although the body as sensing does not have the status of simple matter in Stein’s thought, it belongs to the category of “formed matter” whose sensorial life does not seem to enter into the “purely spiritual” dynamics of contemplative union with God (SC 157). While the path of contemplation leads her and her predecessors to describe the soul in

¹⁸ Sarah Coakley, *The New Asceticism: Sexuality, Gender, and the Quest for God* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), 18.

¹⁹ John Makransky, personal correspondence, October 1.

spatial terms, she holds these as metaphors that communicate a completely non-spatial, and therefore non-corporeal, reality (SC 155, 159). Subtle sensations that occur in union concern “purely spiritual” events that are happening in the soul, not the body. Yet, it is not clear precisely in what sense Stein understands the purely spiritual via John as not sharing in sensory life (SC 157). Does “sensory” here mean conditioned by the sensory stimuli and response mechanism and established pattern of being, or does it mean a wholesale rejection of all corporeal connections? Is the point here that the “purely spiritual” events in the soul’s innermost being is solely formed and directed by divine action in the sphere of contemplative union, rather than any stimuli from non-divine sources; or is she asserting that the spiritual and the corporeal are ontologically separated? When considering the whole of Stein and John’s thought, the latter position is highly unlikely as they both eschew substance dualism between body and soul. Yet, the language they both use when discussing the spiritual events of union in the soul’s depth and its radical separation from the senses causes ambiguity and confusion. Why? It seems to stem from a lack of linguistic and conceptual categories that can speak of such events without resorting to binary terms that impose an either-or choice (*body or soul*) or can unwittingly imply substantial dualism when the actual content of their thought seems to indicate phenomena that fall on both sides of the categorial line. Precisely because Stein and John lack sufficient concepts and categories, they speak of the body’s incorporation into divine union in terms of a hierarchical flowing over of the effects of union in the soul to the body (SC 197), a well-worn trope in Pseudo-Dionysian mysticism. Yet, if they assert, at least rhetorically, that there is a radical disjunction between the innermost events of union in the soul and sensory life, how and by what structural means do the effects of union traverse from the interior of the soul into the body?

In contrast to Stein's theory, the Tibetan Buddhist tantric model maintains a corporeal framework when accounting for the sensate and energetic structures and phenomena in meditation. Rather than using a binary overarching framework like body and soul, which in actual practice makes it impossible to overcome an ontological gap between the physical and nonphysical aspects when trying to account for inner phenomena in contemplation, the Tibetan Buddhist tradition forwards a model of multiple forms of consciousness which always require corporeal forms ("winds") as their support or vehicle. Without such corporeal forms, mental functions are not possible. As Lhundup Sopa explains,

According to the tantras, there is no moment of consciousness or mind which is not associated with some sort of corporeal element that serves as its vehicle. Thus, the tantras will not admit to a realm of disembodied consciousness.... [W]herever there is mind, they say there is also a corporeity on which, in a manner of speaking, it may be said to ride.²⁰

In this model, if there are sensate phenomena at a significantly more refined or subtle level than the gross level of sensorimotor activity and ordinary state of existence, such phenomena must entail the activity of subtle forms of consciousness and wind that operate at that level. When a practitioner purifies various concept-generating winds in highest yoga tantric practice, the most subtle form of awareness that cognizes nondually emptiness and bliss that emerges is still united inseparably with a correspondingly subtle form of energy that serves as its vehicle.

Comparing Stein's notion of subtle sensations and depth structures with the Tibetan Buddhist model of the body found in *lojong* and tantra proper leads us to ask how subtle sensations actually fit in Stein's anthropology. Are we to understand such sensations as purely metaphorical in the same way as spatial imagery in divine union? If they are used analogically to indicate the resemblance between how corporeal senses function when contacting an object, and how purely spiritual "sensations" function when receiving divine action, that still leaves

²⁰ Lhundup Sopa, 61.

unanswered how we are to understand the link between the nonphysical and physical sensations.²¹

5.4. CONSTRUCTIVE RESOURCES IN STEIN FOR SUBTLE BODY MODEL

There are passages in her writings, however, that suggest that certain structures mediate between the physical and nonphysical aspects of the individual. As I argued in chapter 3, it is possible to read her notion of the soul, as a multi-leveled depth structure with the centerpoint as the most profound level, as corporeally connected. She herself implies that there is some kind of corporeal link between these depth structures and the purely physical body when she discusses the reactions of two individuals to the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in FEB.²² One person hears the news and goes on as if nothing happened, while another person is affected at the core of his being. This second individual views the event through his interior depth and “thinks with his heart,” which means that he has accessed a deeper level of values and priorities that empowers his capacity to understand the greater significance of the assassination, its context, and future consequences. In describing this mode of knowing from one’s interior, Stein says, “He ‘thinks with his heart’, and his *heart* is the actual *living center* of his being. And even though the heart signifies the bodily organ to whose activity bodily life is tied, we have no difficulty in picturing the heart as the inner being of the soul, because it is evidently the heart that has the greatest share in the inner processes of the soul, and because it is in the heart that the

²¹ On the metaphor and analogy distinction in discussing the spiritual senses, see Mark J. McInroy, “Origin of Alexandria,” in *The Spiritual Senses*, 25.

²² FEB 437-8.

interconnection between body and soul is most strikingly felt and experienced.”²³ Stein then proceeds to explain how the ‘I’ that is fully recollected in the innermost being of the soul is closest to the true meaning of every event and best able to respond to the demands confronting it.

In SC, when Stein discusses the “thoughts of the heart,” she makes clear that the “heart” refers to the “ground of [the soul’s] being,” and the “most interior region,” which the soul discovers is the place of divine dwelling and union in contemplation (SC 157). As a part of its structure, the life of the soul flows from the heart as its ground whether or not it receives the grace of divine union. The heart for Stein also indicates a primordial and nondiscursive awareness that precedes any discrete activity of the intellect and other faculties. The “thoughts” that arise from this ground are not clear intellectual perceptions, but a “noticing” or simple awareness at the depth of whatever arises, before consciousness splits into activities of specific faculties. The noticing involves a recognition of the value of whatever arises, and whether to allow what is rising to emerge or not for interior perception (SC 158). Such noticing is possible for souls who are completely recollected in their inmost region and vigilantly remain watchful over these “first movements” at the depth. Since souls as a rule are not recollected but live at much more superficial levels where the activities of the intellect, memory, and will are motivated and driven by sense-based conditioning and stimuli, deep recollection requires the grace of divine action.

In these two passages, Stein conceives the heart as at once the physical and affective center of the human person, and the inmost region of the soul. It is where the interior events of the spiritual soul can be noticed and felt in a pre-intentional manner, that is, before cognition takes shape through the apprehension of an object. If the heart, as the epistemic and affective

²³ FEB, 438.

center, encompasses both the corporeal and spiritual dimensions of the human person and contemplative union, it raises the question of how the framework of “hierarchical soul-body overflow” of the effects of contemplative union applies here. If the heart is at once both physical and the interior region of the soul, would it be sharing in the union both indirectly and directly?

The answer is not clear, because Stein does not develop the concept. It may be, however, that these passages provide a resource and a space for an alternative line of thinking on the body-soul relationship in Stein’s thought. The “heart” can be read as a meditating structure between the physical and nonphysical aspects, lying at the intersection of the overtly physical and nonphysical dimensions and mediates between them by its capacity for pre-intentional noticing, and sensing of inner phenomena that unfold at the subtlest levels of the practitioner’s being in contemplation. Similar to the subtle body model underlying lojong and *tantra* generally, it has potentially practical and theoretical significance. The Tibetan Buddhist subtle body model functions theoretically to hold together the physical (wind/subtle energy) and nonphysical aspects (consciousness, mind), based on the foundational doctrine that all phenomena are empty of intrinsic existence and only arise interdependently. It functions practically to notice consciously subtle levels of sensations and to engage these sensations in ways that facilitate realizing the goal of nondual realization of emptiness and bliss. Similarly, on the theoretical level, Stein’s idea of the “heart” sets a context for subtle sensations and their epistemic functions that is simultaneously corporeal and spiritual. It is more than a structure, as the heart is the means of awareness and sensing at the higher stages of contemplation. It interconnects the body and soul as both structure and capacity. Practically, the “heart” opens up the possibility of focusing attention on the awareness and sensations at the subtle levels in contemplation. It provides a locus and a

means to direct attention and relate intentionally to such phenomena, which move between the polarizing and reductive categories of “body” and “soul.”

In addition to the “heart,” Stein’s ideas of lifepower and life feelings also suggest a mediating structure that plays across the physical and nonphysical categories. All physical, psychic, and spiritual (*geistig*) life and activity require lifepower. All active experiencing, according to Stein, is a conversion and utilization of lifepower (PPH 27; BBPG 25). This is true for individuals and supraindividual entities such as communities, organizations, and nation states. In Stein’s conception, individuals experience lifepower only indirectly through its manifestation as life feelings in consciousness. As the sphere of consciousness is distinct, although inseparable, from the psychic and physical layers of the individual, life feelings such as vigor or tiredness may not reflect accurately the actual life state, the specific mode of life power at a particular moment in time. Yet, life feelings as manifestations do point to the status of life power in an individual and provide in Stein’s thought a link that transcends the sphere of consciousness and connects to the psychophysical layers and the external environment and influences, indicating that the individual is an open structure engaged and shaped in a dynamic interchange of energetic forces.

The relationship, furthermore, between spiritual acts in consciousness (e.g., feeling, thought) and lifepower as a real property is reciprocal. Motivation guides intentional acts and thereby provides a certain direction to how lifepower will be implemented.²⁴ The increase of lifepower affects the entire stream of experience so that the manifested life feeling “colors” the stream and can “fill” it. Meaning mediated through objects and their valuation can modulate the status of lifepower, so that positive meaning, as in the example of reading a beloved book in a

²⁴ Betschart, “Was ist Lebenskraft (Teil 2),” 43.

state of fatigue, can have a vitalizing impact, even if such effects are temporary (PPH 76-77; BBPG, 67).

To clarify the reciprocal nature of the relationship between the sphere of consciousness (life sphere, *Lebenssphäre*) and life power as a real property, we can recall that Stein distinguishes sensory (*sinnliche Lebenskraft*) and spiritual (*geistige Lebenskraft*) lifepower. On the one hand, the concept of sensory lifepower articulates how the psychic structure of the individual is sunk into the body and by means of the body, connected to material nature. On the other hand, the concept of spiritual lifepower accounts for the interdependent nature of our interaction with the world of objects and physical energy. Spiritual lifepower is determined by sensorial lifepower, and it is inseparable from the latter. Spiritual lifepower, however, is open to influxes from the object world and, through the enlivening impact of meaningful objects, can make possible accomplishments that exceed the true state of one's lifepower (PPH 81-2; BBPG, 70-1). Stein asserts that such enlivening impact of objects on spiritual lifepower does not mean real increase in sensory lifepower, since the latter fundamentally requires replenishment through sensory-based means (e.g., rest, food). However, in pointing to the unique examples of "resting in God" and interpersonal love, she also indicates that the line between sensory and spiritual lifepower cannot be drawn too sharply. The state of "resting in God" involves "complete relaxation of all mental activity, in which you make no plans at all, reach no decision, much less take action, but rather leave everything that's future to the divine will (PPH 84-5; BBPG 73)." In contrast to simple cessation of activity due to lack of lifepower, resting in God gives the feeling of safety and peace, which increase with the individual's surrender to God. Such surrender and rest gradually infuses the person with new life and impulse to new activeness.

Similarly, when a person receives love from another in a state of physical or spiritual exhaustion, that reception of love can have an enlivening and restoring effect on the individual (PPH 85; BBPG 73-4). Although the infusion of new life from resting in God and receiving love from another person may not be sufficient fully to renew depleted sensorial lifepower, Stein suggests that the effects amount to more than simply masking a depleted life state. There is a real enhancement of one's life state in such cases, but the integral unity of the sensory and spiritual layers means that complete renewal depends on both physical and spiritual sources.

Stein's concept of the relationship between sensory and spiritual lifepower points to how our relation with the material world unfolds not only through perception or tactile contact, but through a process of energetic interchange at a subtler level. This implies that the *physis* is porous, and not self-enclosed and isolated. When we consider, furthermore, that the different structures of the human individual in Stein's anthropology are open systems best considered as forms of dynamic activity rather than static structures, we can read the boundary separating individual bodies and the environment as not consisting in a substantial and ontologically distinct barrier (i.e., the physical body) as much as a distinct activity and process of energy conversion. The concept further implies that the boundary that sets apart the spiritual layer from the psychophysical layer is also porous and can be considered more in terms of the activity and process of energy conversion that is distinct to spiritual life, and the sphere of objects and values, than a solidified barrier. In other words, boundaries are activities for Stein, much as "form" in the Aristotelian-Thomistic sense entails forming activity and power in her later works.

Lifepower and life states, and life feelings and life sphere as a group of concepts do not fit neatly into the categories of the body and spiritual soul. They account for the dynamic interchange of physical and spiritual energies at a subtler level than overt physical contact, object

perception, and consciousness. As such, lifepower and its related structures mediate between physical and nonphysical structures both within the human person and between the individual and the broader environment. It articulates an anthropology where the structures are in dynamic flow, distinguished by boundaries that are porous and implicitly construed as distinct activities and processes rather than as solid and self-enclosed entities.

Building on this sense of porousness and dynamism, the concepts also lift up receptivity as a fundamental structure of the human person. In PPH, the concept of receptivity points to the embeddedness of the human individual in the nexus of material and spiritual contexts. It leads Stein to consider, even if briefly, the theological significance of this structure, as in the phenomenon of what she calls “resting in God” and its effect on sensory and spiritual lifepower. Construed in terms of lifepower, receptivity can be understood in Stein’s thought as not only a structure, but a unique type of activity: an activity of surrender and mode of act that does not intend an object for egoic knowing. It implies what becomes explicit in her theological writings, that the structure of intentionality in this type of receptivity becomes inverted, so that the ego becomes the object (of divine presence and action) rather than the subject, and its mode of knowing can be understood as openness rather than apprehension. Receptivity as a foundational structure and activity characterizes both the physical body and the nonphysical layers of the human person. It is a condition for connectivity and relationality (*Zusammenhang*), encapsulating the core principle of Stein’s thought that human being (anthropological structure) and knowing (empathy and knowledge) are essentially relational.

As with her concept of the “heart,” Stein’s thoughts on lifepower have theoretical and practical significance. Stein posits lifepower to account for phenomena of life and vitality across the psychophysical and spiritual aspects of the human person. The structures and processes

involved do not strictly fall into either the physical or spiritual categories, but operate at a level that lies between the two. It, therefore, marks out a dynamism in the human person that interfuses both the physical and nonphysical structures. The use of the term *Lebenskraft* connotes such dynamic force. We could call it energy, as the word indicates something more subtle than gross physical structures and activities, and more tangible than the strictly spiritual (*geistig*) structures and activities. Despite the ambiguity of energetic terms like *Lebenskraft*, Stein makes a compelling case for its phenomenological validity. We clearly do experience changing states of vitality and power to carry out physical, psychic, and spiritual activities, and the process of conserving, using, and replenishing the reservoir of such power is an integral part of daily bodily life. Theoretically, Stein's thoughts on lifepower phenomenologically account for this aspect of physical and spiritual life, and highlight a dimension that plays across the body-soul divide.

Practically, the concept of lifepower opens up a subtle level of energetic flow for conscious attention. Although Stein conceives the connection between lifepower and consciousness as indirectly mediated through life feelings, she also avers that apprehension of objects and valuation has concrete effects on life feelings, and both sensory and spiritual life power. Stein concedes, then, that a person has a measure of intentional control over sensory life power, even if the impact is not sufficient to replenish it without dependence on material nourishment. This raises the question, is the epistemological gap between life feelings and the true status of life power (life state) at a given moment in time a fixed and permanent feature of these structures, or can the gap be closed by training one's attention? Put differently, if Stein admits that intentional activity of consciousness can modulate life power on both sensory and spiritual levels, does that not imply that attention can be deliberately directed to life power, with life feelings providing a

bridge for one's attention to the status of lifepower at a particular moment in time? Stein does not develop her thoughts in this direction, but her account of lifepower implies the possibility.

To summarize, Stein proposes that there are anthropological structures that mediate between physical and nonphysical aspects of the person. She situates the "heart" at the intersection of the body and spiritual soul, and identifies it with the locus and activity at the soul's depth. In terms of activity, the "heart" bridges both knowing and sensing. "Thoughts of the heart" consists in pre-intentional, primordial awareness that encompasses the qualities of both knowing and sensing at a very subtle level. Similarly, lifepower and related ideas of life state, life feeling, and life sphere point to an energetic dimension and power that enfold the whole structure of the human person and connect it with the material and spiritual environment. These ideas imply that Stein thought of the structures of the individual more as distinct activities rather than reified entities. They imbue her thought with a sense of dynamism and flow, and help us conceive of the human person in terms of activity, relationality, and interconnectedness. Lifepower also has epistemological significance in that life feelings signal its status and potentially direct individuals toward greater activation or conservation. The activity of knowing the status of lifepower is mediated through life feelings (e.g., vitality, fatigue). Again, as with her idea of "thoughts of the heart," Stein presents feeling or sensing as a form of knowing at this subtle energetic level. Both sets of ideas related to the heart and lifepower are not categorizable as strictly physical or nonphysical, but function across both spheres and seem to be mediating structures and processes.

When we examine Stein's concept of subtle sensations in comparison with Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* and tantra, we see that the comparison raises the question of how subtle sensations actually fit into Stein's anthropology. Although the answer is not clear, the ideas of the

heart and lifepower suggest that she had in mind mediating structures that bridge the body and spiritual soul, so that the soul's structures can be connected to the body in a more grounded manner. These concepts can serve as launching points for constructing a model of the body that incorporates the idea of subtle structures, which are analogous to the Tibetan Buddhist model. Broadly speaking, the more obvious analogues are not difficult to see. Stein's appropriation of subtle sensations of inner touch, the depth structure of levels, the centerpoint, and the role of the heart in knowing and loving find analogous structures in the Tibetan Buddhist ideas of dissolution of conceptual winds in the central channel and the resultant experience of bliss; the principal importance of the heart *cakra* as the center; and the subtlest form of awareness and wind emerging from the heart to realize fully emptiness and bliss.

Yet, a model of subtle structures based on Stein cannot be the same as the Tibetan Buddhist model we have examined. Stein's thought and the Carmelite sources she draws on do not have anything like the detailed map of channels, *cakras*, and subtle drops found in Tibetan Buddhist texts. Nor is there a robust account of how consciousness of union includes any deliberate use of the body and subtle structures. Indeed, it is the comparison with the Tibetan Buddhist model that makes it possible for us to consider the very notion that corporeal structures of subtle energies interdependent with mental intention can be used in contemplation. The body in Stein and her Carmelite and Scholastic sources is only a passive recipient in the progress of contemplation. The double constraints of soul as form-body as formed matter rubric, and the separation of the soul and the body in death make it difficult to conceive the body in a participatory manner. It is the soul that exercises formative and vitalizing power, not the body. The doctrinal affirmation that the soul separates from the body after death and reunites in the resurrection inevitably drives an ontological wedge between the two that is hardly resolved by the

assertion that the two will be reunited in the resurrection. But a comparative analysis of Tibetan Buddhist sources and Stein, and the retrieval of her distinct ideas on the heart and lifepower open up new avenues of exploration for constructive modeling of the body and the human person.

On a more fundamental level, as Mark Heim reminds us, the theological bases and understanding of soteriological ends are different between the Christian and Buddhist traditions represented by Stein and the Tibetan sources.²⁵ The theological foundation of Stein's theory of the body and contemplation is divine creation of the human person and primordial call to the beatific vision marred by human sin. Contemplation involves the spiritual soul's growing union with the Triune God through a cruciform process of purification and illumination. The central concept in her theory of contemplation is the Sanjuanist notion of the infusion of divine grace in the soul, and the soteriological end consists in the latter's final absorption in the inner-Trinitarian life through the spiration of the Spirit. In this height of union, Stein like her Carmelite predecessors maintains that the absolute distinction between the finite creature and eternal Creator never disappears. In contrast, the buddhological basis of *lojong* and tantra is the fundamentally empty and luminous nature of reality covered over by ignorance (*avidyā*) and consequent defilements (*kleśa*). Meditation entails engaging in both conceptual and nonconceptual understanding of the empty nature of all phenomena, and thereby overcoming clinging onto dualistic perception. As Makransky iterates, different modes of practice lead to soteriologically different results, and in the Tibetan Buddhist context, meditation and virtues specifically aim for the nondual realization of emptiness and clarity, or bliss in tantric practice.²⁶

²⁵ S. Mark Heim, *The Depth of the Riches: A Trinitarian Theology of Religious Ends* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans Pub., 2001), 21-2.

²⁶ John Makransky, "Thoughts on Why, How, and What Buddhists Can Learn from Christian Theologians," *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 31 (2011), 121.

In summary, comparing Stein with Tibetan Buddhist sources on the body and contemplative practice discloses subtle structures in Stein's anthropology and their theoretical and practical significance for bridging the body-soul divide, which remains problematic in her and her theological predecessors' thought. Tibetan Buddhist conception of the meditation and subtle body, while incommensurable in terms of theological-buddhological foundation and soteriological end, bring to light hitherto undetected constructive possibilities in the Christian context through Stein's unique and creative work in theological anthropology.

5.5. CONTEMPLATION/MEDITATION AND TRANSFORMING SUFFERING

In this second section, I will examine how comparing Stein's theory of the body and contemplation and Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* intensifies and recasts the significance of substitutionary, expiatory understanding of atonement and contributes to integrating the doctrines of sin and redemption with a theological model of the body that has both theoretical and practical traction.

5.5.1. Substitutionary Suffering

Near the end of her seminal work *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, Caroline Walker Bynum writes,

[W]e may, more than we realize, need positive symbols for generativity and suffering. Our culture may finally need something of the medieval sense... that generativity and suffering can be synonymous. Perhaps we should not turn our backs so resolutely as we have recently done ... on the possibility that suffering can be fruitful.²⁷

Her provocative statement points to the tendency in our culture to construe anything that threatens human mastery as something that we need to control or eliminate. In her book, she

²⁷ Bynum, *Holy Feast and Holy Fast*, 301.

suggests that the risk in taking such a narrow view of fragility, suffering and death can potentially lead to violence against individuals or groups on whom a dominant group can project undesirable attributes it wants to reject, such as vulnerability and receptivity. It can also lead to callousness to pain and suffering that we cannot get rid of or alleviate. In her essay on the body, Bynum further makes the point that contemporary works on the body in religious studies and theology have largely avoided the traditional concerns of suffering, sin, death, and redemption, which used to frame theological discussions of the body.²⁸ In both works, she suggests that some kind of space needs to be made in theological discourse on the body on the condition of suffering, death, and their connection with doctrine of redemption.

Similarly, in her interpretation of the theology of the cross in conversation with Tibetan Buddhist *tonglen*, Sharon Betcher incisively criticizes how contemporary urban living is built on aestheticization of fear. Dwelling in cities involves training in “unseeing” bodies that are in pain and suffer, especially bodies of disabled persons and homeless individuals.²⁹ Moreover, in the context of Western Protestant individualism and reduction of spirituality to private inner experience, visibility of suffering, abject persons is regarded as an intrusion on one’s sense of personal autonomy and bodily integrity, and the danger that a breach in the sense of boundaried separation will lead to contagion of suffering.³⁰

Both Bynum and Betcher grapple with and highlight the need for a reevaluation of pain and suffering in contemporary society and Christian thought, in order to make space for

²⁸ Bynum, “Why all the Fuss about the Body?” 5.

²⁹ Betcher, *Spirit and the Obligation of Social Flesh*, 69-70.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 76.

“generativity” of suffering.³¹ As I argued in chapter 1, such reevaluation has not been a significant part of contemporary theological discourse on the body. In this light, Stein’s work is important for how it weaves together her concept of the body with reflections on expiatory atonement, substitutionary suffering, sin and evil, and theory of contemplation. In addition to the contributions of her phenomenological somatology, Stein explains how the body, through the rigorous process of contemplative union, incarnates Christ’s redemptive presence and action in the world.

Stein notes two aspects of this incarnation in and through contemplative union. At the level of inner personal experience, the pains and privations of the purgative process in contemplation re-enact the pattern of Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection as the soul’s ordinary sensitive and spiritual modes of existing are radically emptied of their misdirected attachments to nondivine objects and dismantled.³² Also, the infusion of divine grace in contemplation brings out into the open the full depth and force of the contemplative practitioner’s sin. The soul’s identity built on its previously conditioned mode of life is annihilated in the process of purgation and confrontation with the true reality of one’s sin. The purgation opens the way to illumination and union, in which supernatural light and divine life divinize the soul’s faculties. Interpreting John, Stein understands contemplation as a process of incarnation, unfolding in the pattern of Christ’s crucifixion, death, and resurrection.

Second, at the level of relational connection and ethics, the practitioner in contemplative union incarnates the continuing expiatory work of Christ in body and soul.³³ The fruit of

³¹ Betcher proposes reinterpreting Luther’s theology of the cross and substitutionary atonement in light of *tonglen* as a practice of “breathing in” the suffering of others and wishing them well, based on the “sweet exchange” where Christ assumed all abjection and human beings were freed from sin and its effects. *Ibid.*, 95-6.

³² SC, 273.

³³ “Love of the Cross,” HL, 92.

voluntary expiatory suffering flows from contemplative union. Contemplative union gives the practitioner access to the true meaning of persons, objects, and events and direction that Christ provides, since Christ as Logos is the source of all true meaning. Union with Christ as Logos is also union with all human beings and creation. Connected to her Logos Christology is her interpretation that incorporation in Christ's Mystical Body entails participation in the continuing redemptive work of Christ in the world. Intimately united with Christ, the person desires to suffer in order to join in Christ's work of expiation that makes restitution for continuing transgressions of divine justice. The desire for substitutionary suffering flows from Christ's love and atoning sacrifice for the world, as the person in union receives the meaning and power of such sacrificial love from Christ. Divine union unfolds in human life as a continuing process of embodiment, both spiritually and physically, of expiation through voluntary suffering.

When we read together her theory of contemplative union, expiation, and substitutionary suffering, we can see that the ontological significance of contemplative union for Stein is enormous. Stein of course maintains that the ontological status of the human person does not change in union, and the finite-eternal divide is never blurred between God and the soul. Yet, she is not strictly aligned with John and the broader heritage of Christian mystical theology, in the Pseud-Dionysian sense of nondiscursive, unitive knowledge of God, when she comments on John and says that contemplative union is not simply of wills, but of "persons" in the Trinity.³⁴ "Person" is a key term in Stein's thought and involves the entire structure of the human individual. The implication of this point can be seen in how she builds on John and the mystical theology tradition to interpret the contemplative practitioner's relationship with the force of sin, evil, and redemption in the world. By virtue of union, the contemplative practitioner's suffering

³⁴ SC, 179; Stein also characterizes deepest union as that between persons in "Exaltation of the Cross," HL, 104.

becomes Christ's own suffering, and vice versa. Incarnating Christ, the person's free acceptance of suffering from love for others has the same kind of redemptive power for others. What unfolds from life in divine union is not simply ethical modes of action, but a new embodiment and presence that have saving efficacy on the world. In Stein's thinking on contemplation, the impact of the transformation of the soul and body in divine union is radical and universal.

5.5.2. Comparison with *Lojong*

Placing Stein in comparative conversation with *lojong* on suffering heightens the uniqueness and constructive potential of her thought by re-contextualizing her ideas away from the familiar intra-Christian debates on atonement theories, and shifting the focus in light of the Stein's and *lojong*'s shared interest in contemplative and ethical practice. The centrality of expiation in Stein's later theory of atonement, contemplation, and body both created unresolved tensions in her theology, and functioned as the transformative principle that allowed her to conceive of contemplation as metabolizing suffering. Contemporary critiques of atonement theory based on ideas of penal substitution and vicarious suffering are not without merit when applied to Stein's work, since her writings clearly support such a theory. Any serious theological examination of Stein's view of atonement has to confront the fact that it is problematic for not addressing adequately: the imputation of violence in the Trinity; the dangers of emphasizing sacrifice and suffering in contexts of patriarchal oppression; the use of such atonement theory to justify victimization; the lack of explicit and substantial reflection on its relation to oppressed peoples' experiences; and a confused understanding of sacrifice that may be based on a narrow

Christological as opposed to fully Trinitarian framework.³⁵ Yet, Stein's theory of expiatory sacrifice, the body, and contemplation also makes important contributions that revisionist theological treatments of atonement and body lack. Despite the problematic tensions in her later thought on these issues, she provides a theological account of how suffering can be generative and sets forth atonement theory in terms of a concrete practice of substitutionary suffering. This practice of accepting suffering on others' behalf is based on *felt* ontological solidarity, which is realized through the grace of contemplative union. The theological significance and freshness of these dimensions of her theology are not easy to highlight when we approach Stein's later thought only within the context of intra-Christian theological discourse. It is too easy to cast her theory of expiation in terms of its theoretical and historical flaws or orthodoxy when the interlocutors are either revisionist critics or traditionalist apologists for certain atonement theories and doctrines of sin and redemption. When we examine, however, her thought in comparison with Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*, the points of convergence and divergence teach us the importance of her unique insights into the place of atonement theory in Christian practice and especially its connection with the body.

A major point of convergence between Stein and *lojong* has to do with their common focus on approaching suffering through the practice of contemplation or meditation. Stein opens the *Science of the Cross* by making clear the centrality of practice and integration:

When we speak of a *science of the cross*, this is not to be understood in the usual meaning of *science*; we are not dealing merely with a theory, that is, with a body of - really or presumably - true propositions. Neither are we dealing with a structure built of ideas laid out in reasoned steps. We are dealing with a well-recognized truth - a theology of the cross - but a living, real, and effective truth.³⁶

³⁵ For discussion of these critiques, see again chapter 3, 141f.

³⁶ SC, 9.

Stein's main interest in examining John's work and life is not theoretical analysis but the practice of the theology of the cross. Contemplative prayer is the principle form of that practice. Her later essays in the *Geistliche Texte* wed her theory of contemplation with the ethos of solidarity and substitutionary suffering. This first point sets Stein apart from dominant preoccupation of Christian theologians who have treated atonement and redemption exclusively on the level of theoretical argument. In her explicit concern with how a theology of the cross must be lived in concrete practice, Stein is closer to more recent theologians such as James Cone and Shawn Copeland, who reclaim the cross as generative of meaning and embodying God's call to solidarity as discipleship.³⁷ Stein still appears unique in the way she takes the idea of voluntary expiatory suffering and specifies its practice in terms of contemplation. Yet, if she stands out among Christian theologians for approaching the issues of atonement and suffering through the framework of contemplative practice, she finds a deeply similar perspective in Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*. Similar to Christian theology, the idea of suffering in the place of others is a central principle of Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*.

As we saw, this principle is expressed as "exchanging self and other." The main textual source for its *practice* is chapter 8 of Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, and, *tonglen* provides the specific means for putting it into practice. Like Stein, *lojong* takes up suffering in the context of meditative practice and thereby instrumentalizes it within a broader soteriological horizon. DDM's *tonglen* instruction reads, "Train the two - giving and taking - alternately. Place the two astride the breath." Preceded by love and compassion meditation on the benefits one has received from one's mother and all sentient beings, and the depth of their suffering and its fundamental causes,

³⁷ See James H. Cone, *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (New York: Orbis, 2011); M. Shawn Copeland, *Knowing Christ Crucified* (New York: Orbis, 2018).

the practitioner moves into enacting an actual exchange of self and other in *tonglen*. To quote again Kongtrul's comments on the instruction,

In order to make this imagined exchange clearer, as you breathe in, imagine that black tar collecting all the suffering, obscurations, and evil of all sentient beings enter your own nostrils and is absorbed into your heart. Think that all sentient beings are forever free of misery and evil. As you breathe out, imagine that all your happiness and virtue pour out in the form of rays of moonlight from your nostrils and are absorbed by every sentient being. With great joy, think that all of them immediately attain buddhahood. To train the mind, use this practice of taking and sending with the breath as the actual practice for the period of meditation. Subsequently, always maintain the practice through mindfulness and continue to work with it.³⁸

The exchange of self and other in *tonglen* uses experiences of suffering as a means to break down the sense of an independently existing substantial self, separation from others, and deeply conditioned self-cherishing. Taking on the suffering of others and sending out one's wealth, happiness, and roots of virtue have several key functions. First, as a relative *bodhicitta* practice, it engages the conceptual mode to reverse the deeply conditioned pattern of dualistic reification of self-other, self-grasping, and self-cherishing. Second, it both draws on and further deepens one's engagement with ultimate *bodhicitta*, the direct, nonconceptual engagement with the empty luminous nature of reality. Empowering the practitioner to approach relative reality as empty in their ultimate nature, *tonglen* practice helps to reconstruct relative frameworks to promote awakening.³⁹ Third, it integrates these dimensions for the purpose of benefitting others, which is the fundamental point of all Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhist practice aiming at full buddhahood.

The practical functions of *tonglen* find parallels in Stein's explanation of suffering for others:

Everyone who, in the course of time, has borne an onerous destiny in remembrance of the suffering Savior or who has freely taken up works of expiation has by doing so canceled some of the mighty load of human sin and has helped the Lord carry his burden. Or rather, Christ the head effects expiation in these members of his Mystical Body who put themselves, body and soul, at his disposal for carrying out his work of salvation.... Thus, when someone desires to suffer, it is not merely a pious reminder of the suffering of

³⁸ Kongtrul, 15.

³⁹ Makransky, personal correspondence, June 9, 2019.

the Lord. Voluntary expiatory suffering is what truly and really unites one to the Lord intimately. When it arises, it comes from an already existing relationship with Christ. For, by nature, a person flees from suffering. And the mania for suffering caused by a perverse lust for pain differs completely from the desire to suffer in expiation.... Only someone whose spiritual eyes have been opened to the supernatural correlations of worldly events can desire suffering in expiation, and this is only possible for people in whom the spirit of Christ dwells, who as members are given life by the Head, receive his power, his meaning, and his direction. Conversely, works of expiation bind one closer to Christ, as every community that works together on one task becomes more and more closely knit and as the limbs of a body, working together organically, continually become more and strongly one.”⁴⁰

First, substitutionary suffering for expiation is a practice of at-one-ment with the ultimate reality of divine life and the created reality of the world. It is a mode of discipleship that is most proper to the contemplative life, because contemplation leads to the most intimate form of union possible. As *tonglen* practice attacks the core Buddhist problematic of self-grasping and self-cherishing, substitutionary suffering for Stein strikes at the basic alienation between the human person and God that expresses itself in the instinct to flee suffering and regard others as separate from oneself. A contemplative moves into suffering not out of a distorted attraction to pain, but from a nonconceptual realization that she is truly one with all creation. That realization is a gift of grace that comes from contemplative union, and the consequent flowering of Christ’s life in her body and soul. Substitutionary suffering is an expression of the healing of the rupture in the human-divine relation at the depths of one’s being. It is also a continual process of healing the wound of separation by assuming the consequence of others’ sins as Christ’s embodiment in the world.

Second, as the ultimate and relative *bodhicitta* practices are interdependent and mutually informing, there is a correlative relationship between expiatory substitutionary suffering and union with Christ. The love that motivates a person to freely take up suffering in the place of others to expiate their sins arises from her union with Christ. Such practice of voluntary

⁴⁰ “Love of the Cross,” HL, 92.

suffering is rooted in the ultimate foundation of divine union. On the other hand, its actual practice binds one closer to Christ, as Stein says, and leads to deeper union.

Third, as the ultimate purpose of *lojong* and all Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna practices aim to help others attain liberation from suffering, Stein conceives contemplation as intrinsically connected with ethics. The reenactment of expiatory suffering in the stages of contemplative prayer unfolds outwardly in the practice of substitutionary suffering and solidarity. To live in divine union for Stein *is* to live in solidarity with all human beings and creation.

Reading Stein's thought on expiatory suffering and contemplation in comparison with *lojong* helps us to understand substitutionary suffering primarily as a practice that aims at transforming concrete experience of suffering and attaining a soteriological end. Contemplation and meditation in Stein and *lojong* respectively create a path for metabolizing suffering through substitution. The comparison highlights how the real import of atonement for Stein is not theoretical coherence, but rather its practice as part of contemplation and the deepening understanding that arises from that practice. Its full meaning emerges only from increasing receptivity to divine grace and meaning given through contemplation.⁴¹ We should note here that as in *lojong*, communal relationships of love and commitment, worship and contemplation, form the ground from which substitutionary suffering arises as an ethos. Sacrificial love and solidarity expressed through such practice of exchange are fruits of a long process of contemplative prayer and communal living.

A second point of comparison is the role of the body in contemplative or meditative transformation of suffering in Stein and *lojong*. The body plays a central role in both Stein and *lojong*'s account of how contemplation and meditation metabolizes suffering. For Stein, the body

⁴¹ SC, 10.

becomes a process of substitutionary expiation out of divine love and solidarity with all. Her conception of the body in union has a fluidity to it in that it moves through space and time as a figure of divine union and Christ's action in flesh and world. The body attains this dynamic status as a recipient of the overflow of the effects of contemplative union in the depth of the soul, and the resulting incarnation of Christ in the contemplative.

In *lojong*, the body serves as an object of meditation, both as a locus of self-clinging and means of exchanging self and other in relative *bodhicitta* practice. Under karmic conditioning, one's physical body becomes the primary basis for identifying with a substantially existing self. *Lojong* counters this conditioning by actively visualizing and engaging the body as an instrument of exchange. In its later development, as evident in Kongtrul's text, *tonglen* draws on the tantric model of the body by using the breath and imageries of tar and light to engage the *cakras*, channels, and subtle energies. The use of the physical body, visualization, and subtle body structures function to soften the sense of independent existence and separation between oneself, other sentient beings, and cosmic bodhisattvas and buddhas. Imageries used in *tonglen*, and relative practices as a whole, empower the mind and body to realize the empty nature, and deepening experience of the empty nature makes possible increasingly powerful and effortless practice of *tonglen*.⁴²

While the body has a central significance in both Stein and *lojong*, Stein follows John and the broader Latin mystical tradition by conceiving the body as a passive recipient in contemplation. The body's status is set hierarchically below the soul, so that its participation in union is secondary. The body clearly has an active role within contemplative life as whole, as it presumes ascetical practices, liturgical participation, and communal life. But within

⁴² John Makransky, personal correspondence, October 1, 2019.

contemplation itself, the body becomes disengaged and the process centers on the soul. The focus of contemplation is the soul, which is united with the body but at the same time immortal and separable. This gap is never completely resolved in how contemplation is theorized. The assertion of their original unity and reunion in resurrection notwithstanding, their ontological difference serves to conceive the body-soul relation in higher stages of contemplation as akin to their separation in rapture and death, and to reinforce the notion that the body has nothing to contribute.

The foundational difference between *lojong* and Stein lies in how the two conceive the body's ultimate nature. In *lojong*, the body ultimately is not a different species from the nonphysical mind. The two are clearly different processes with phenomenologically distinct features, but they are conceived in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition as exhaustively interdependent and empty in their fundamental nature, an anthropology based on the Mahāyāna doctrines of emptiness and interdependent origination. Based on these primary doctrines, later *lojong* commentaries incorporate tantric concepts so that the practitioner engages the body at the overtly physical and subtle levels. Yet, the practitioner uses visualizations and subtle structures only in the preliminaries of guru yoga and relative *bodhicitta* practice of *tonglen*, and foregoes discursive means in ultimate *bodhicitta* practice of directly engaging empty nature. In this sense, Stein and *lojong* are similar in that the direct engagement with ultimate nature or God in contemplation and meditation is nondiscursive and does not involve active use of the body. However, the doctrinal basis and incorporation of tantric elements in *lojong* result in a meditation philosophy and practice that approach and use the body as inseparably connected to the nonphysical and subtle dimensions of the person throughout the entire practice. The mind is never considered to be merely internal to the body and, therefore, of secondary importance as in

Stein and her broader tradition. Such distinction does not apply, because the true nature of reality is the same for mind, body, and all phenomena. Hence, in the DDM we see that ultimate *bodhicitta* begins with meditation on *phenomena* as empty of intrinsic existence (“Train to view all phenomena as dreamlike”) rather than isolating one’s attention from them. The same conception of the body-mind relationship underlies all forms of meditation practice in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Even in Dzogchen and Mahāmudrā practices that are primarily nondiscursive, the tradition presupposes that the body and subtle body are actively engaged in the process, even if the practitioner does not intentionally direct her attention to them.⁴³

Third, both Stein and *lojong* take seriously the corrupted status of the body. Stein’s articulation of her theory of the body, expiatory atonement, and substitutionary suffering have as their concern the force of sin and evil. Stein wrote FEB, SC, and her essays in the *Geistliche Texte* that explore the theological meaning of suffering and expiation in the concrete sociopolitical situation of Germany and the broader world. Her writings and thinking on these themes are reflections on the theological significance of sin and evil as Stein saw them afflicting Germany and Europe in the 1930s and 1940s,⁴⁴ and the specific role of contemplation in addressing them. Although Stein does not devote a major work to an extended theological discussion of sin and evil, many passages throughout her works show that she took them with radical seriousness. As she explicates in FEB, original sin had the effect of rupturing the primordial union of material

⁴³ John Makransky, personal conversation, April 27, 2015.

⁴⁴ Stein makes many references in her writings and letters that make it clear that Nazi policies and the situation of the Jewish people were grave concerns for her. She was prescient about what the persecution of the Jewish population would bring and warned of future conflagration of violence in her letter to Pope Pius XI in 1933. “Letter to Pope Pius XI,” <https://www.ccr.us/dialogika-resources/primary-texts-from-the-history-of-the-relationship/stein1939april>; other references can be found in *Geistliche Texte* such as “Ave Crux, Spes Unica,” and “The Marriage of the Lamb,” as well as throughout her personal correspondences in *Selbstbildnis in Briefen II (1933-1942)*.

body and soul and led to their subjection to sin and separation in death.⁴⁵ In “Exaltation of the Cross,” she writes that the power of sin vitiates the whole person - body, soul, and spirit - so that clarity of knowledge and purity of love degenerate into clinging to objects that are not divine and subjugation to passions.⁴⁶ In her commentary on John in SC, Stein examines how the reality of sin affects the structures of the senses and spiritual faculties, and how contemplative union recapitulates Christ’s passion. Due to the corruption of sin, the human soul and body are conditioned by turning toward and clinging onto sensible objects. Sin expresses itself in the mode and patterns of attachment to nondivine things as if they hold primary value over the divine, and the inability to live collected in the soul’s depth and center. The latter loss leads to ignorance of divine will, lack of discernment, and the incapacity to act according to the true meaning and value of objects, persons, and events.

Lojong commentaries reiterate the Mahāyāna understanding of the body as karmically conditioned. It is the result of clinging attachment that propels continual rebirth and re-death in samsara, and it forms the basis for mistakenly grasping onto a substantially existent sense of self once rebirth takes place. There is, furthermore, the underlying tantric model of the body in later articulations of *lojong* teachings as we see in Kongtrul’s presentation of *tonglen*. The tantric model has as its background the principle that the nirvanic mind realizing emptiness is the fundamental nature of the body itself and therefore can be accessed in the body. At the same time, samsaric conditioning hinders accessing that nature because the subtle energies (“winds,” *rlung*) that serve as vehicles of consciousness are not unified in the central channel, generate dualistic conceptions, and provide the basis for clinging attachment. Similar to Stein and John’s understanding of the

⁴⁵ FEB, 256.

⁴⁶ “Exaltation of the Cross,” HL, 103.

senses and spiritual faculties conditioned to clinging onto nondivine objects, the tantric model uncovers how karmically conditioned habits of stimuli-response create energetic patterns at the level of subtle structures. *Lojong* practice targets specifically these types of conditioning and seeks to counter it.

In their respective approach to the body and suffering through the framework of contemplative practice, Stein and *lojong* conceive the relationship between the body and suffering as one of transformation. The fundamental cause of suffering is traced to an ontological rupture of divine-human alienation in Stein, and ignorance and afflictive clinging attachment in Tibetan Buddhist *lojong*. Precisely because the body is in a corrupted condition and subject to vulnerability, pain, and death, it demands transformation. On the other hand, their respective doctrines of ontological union with ultimate reality (i.e., Triune God, or empty luminous nature) make it possible to instrumentalize suffering in the service of their distinct soteriological ends (i.e., divine union, or nondual realization of empty and luminous nature of reality).

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1. COMPARATIVE INSIGHTS

Comparative analysis of Stein and *lojong* offers several important insights for constructing a contemporary theology of the body. First, both sources demonstrate a particular understanding of the body within an asectico-contemplative framework. The Christian contemplative and Tibetan Buddhist meditative traditions provide a distinctly developmental model of the body where a long process of mental, physical, and affective training is required to heal its deformations and make possible its conformation with its ultimate end. Both sources make the case that it is only within such a context of committed formation process that the transformative possibilities become unveiled in the structures of the person. For Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* and tantra, these structures are explicitly integrated with the physical body through the mediation of the subtle body model. For Stein, these structures are situated within the soul, but she conceives key structures such as the heart, subtle sensations, and lifepower that do not strictly fall into simplistic categories of body and (spiritual) soul.

In connection with this point, we arrive at a second insight. Comparison with *lojong* places Stein's theories of subtle structures and sensations in the context of the tradition of the tantric subtle body model. Putting Stein's thought in this new context opens up the possibility of re-examining structures in her anthropology that play a mediating role between the categories of body and spiritual soul. Examining the parallels with these concepts and Tibetan Buddhist

notions of subtle energy, *cakras*, and their relationship to the mind further makes it possible for us to consider a different way of conceiving the place and significance of subtle sensations in Stein's thought as subtle energies that signal an interdependent relationship between physical and nonphysical aspects of the person. This, I have argued, has practical implications for constructing a model of the body for contemplative practice. Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* and tantra point us to the possibility of further developing Stein's ideas of subtle structures in a practicable direction, so that the heart, subtle sensations, and energies can become explicit foci of attention and cultivation.

Third, comparison lifts up Stein's idea of substitutionary suffering as a means to metabolize suffering and construe atonement theory as principally a practice of discipleship. The shift of interlocutors from intra-Christian polemics to Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* facilitates the illumination of her distinct insight. The relevance of that insight, furthermore, becomes clearer when we listen to contemporary voices such as Sharon Betcher and Mayra Rivera who argue for Christian theologies of the body that can articulate how suffering as a part of the human condition can be generative, even as we seek to heal and liberate ourselves and others from its inner and outer causes. Based on the ascetico-contemplative traditions, Stein and *lojong* prescribe practices that entail actively moving into one's own and others' suffering in order to metabolize it in the viscera of ultimate reality. The ethos that emerges is not passive resignation, but empowered solidarity and loving presence born from one's intimate union with ultimate reality.

6.2. NEXT STOP: SUBTLE BODY

To close the essay, I would like to reflect briefly on how the project I have argued for in the essay needs to develop in order to construct a full model of the body for Christian theology. The essay has examined Edith Stein's early and later theories of the body in comparison with Tibetan Buddhist *lojong* and tantric model of the body. I have argued that the comparative study can help to address the need for a phenomenologically enriched theology of the body and a reevaluation of the doctrines of sin and redemption; and provides the groundwork for constructing a model of the body that can map how the transformative grace of life in Christ unfolds in bodily being, facilitated by ascetico-contemplative practice. I have argued that a necessary part of constructing a model of the body equipped adequately to address these needs is the inclusion of structures that mediate between the physical and nonphysical dimensions. To put it more directly, it requires explicitly incorporating the idea of a subtle body into Christian anthropology.

The justification for such a move partly rests on the argument I have already made, that the tensions that appear in Stein's treatment of the body, soul, and contemplation are not isolated to her but reflect unresolved issues in the wider tradition, and the presence of subtle structures in her thought already gestures at the possibility of conceiving a "subtle body." In addition, such an idea is not foreign to neither the Christian tradition nor its Hellenistic heritage. The notion of an "inner" body as opposed to the "outer" or sensitive physical body in Christian tradition goes back to Paul's notion of the outer person and inner person (2 Cor 4:16), with the inner person later conceived as an immortal soul in the wake of, at least in the Latin West, Augustine's creative

synthesis of Christianity and Neoplatonic philosophy.¹ Neoplatonists from the second to the sixth century also developed a similar idea in the concept of the “vehicle of the soul” (*ochêma pneuma*), which, as Crystal Addey explains, mediated between the physical body and the soul. It was considered to be less material than the former, but more material than the soul.² Through ritual participation, the vehicle of the soul was to be purified so as to receive divine insight and wisdom.³ We also find the concept of inner breath, literally “wind” (*pneuma*), in ancient Greek thought as an energetic and formative force that is intimately connected to mental and sensate functions.⁴ Shigehisa Kuriyama’s poetic work lucidly delineates the points of resonance between this Greek understanding of wind and the Chinese counterpart of *qi*. He further cites Gérard Verbeke who averred that the Christian notion of an immaterial *spiritus* is a product of a gradual internalization of *pneuma*, from external wind and physical breath to an independent inner force later in Greek thought.⁵ The pedigree of concepts of a “subtle” body and inner energy correlated with breath and spirit in Christianity does not by itself warrant a full incorporation of such structures in theological anthropology, but it does mean that the lineage of such ideas crisscross “East” and “West,” and indicate that a Christian adaptation is not simply an instance of cultural and philosophical appropriation.

In order to construct a detailed model of the body that can be actually used in Christian contemplative practice, the subtle structures identified by Stein need to be made an explicit part

¹ Dailey, Patricia. "The Body and Its Senses." *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Mysticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 264-76.

² Crystal Addey, “In the light of the sphere: The ‘vehicle of the soul’ and subtle-body practices in Neoplatonism,” in *Religion and the Subtle Body in Asia and the West*, 151ff.

³ *Ibid.*, 154.

⁴ Kuriyama, 259f.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 260.

of theological anthropology. They have to be construed as mediational structures that bridge and play across the visible physical body and the invisible soul or mind. To the point about practical traction, these structures will need to function as foci of conscious attention, as accessible at a subtle sensate level, understood as uncovered and refined through the training involved in contemplative practice.

The larger implication of incorporating a subtle body model in Christian theology of the body reaches into ontology. To assert such structures is to contend that the body and soul are not two different species, but have a common underlying nature. In the Mahāyāna tradition, the commonality is their ultimate empty and luminous nature. What are the options in Christian theology? With a shift in ontology, then, what would be the implications for the divine-human distinction that is a mainstay of *unio mystica*? Also related to these issues is the question of grace in contemplation. How does an ascetico-contemplative theological anthropology that adopts a subtle body model change or not change the principle that contemplation strictly speaking is divine action in the person, and not something that the practitioner does? These are questions that such a constructive project will have to address fully if the practical traction and theological viability within the Christian tradition and specific communities are to be balanced.

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