

THE ROLE OF INTEREST AND EMPATHY  
IN THE FORMATION OF PERSONS

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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The Role of Interest and Empathy in the Formation of Persons

By

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## Abstract

Persons are a result of acts, particularly actions with others, i.e., personal relations. In this paper, I will show, through the notions of interest and empathy, that persons are formed as a result of activity in a sensuous and social world. It will be shown that the capacity to put one's self in the place of the other, and to act and interact in a community with others, allow the individual to evolve into a full-formed, self-conscious, sensuous, and social person.

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## Introduction

Personhood, and the social forces that form persons, are pragmatic matters. Persons are a result of acts, particularly actions with others, i.e., personal relations. Activity in a sensuous and social world forms persons. These are the major claims I will investigate in what follows.

Interest and empathy are two notions central to the process of person formation. Both notions share a common feature: they must be defined in the context of relation. Interest, as analysed by John Dewey and empathy as analysed by Edith Stein, constitute necessary aptitudes of personhood; they are necessary, though not sufficient, to explain the meaning of being a person.

Interest is defined as a feeling that accompanies or causes special attention to an object or a class of objects. I feel and think a certain way about a certain other, i.e., I am interested, and act accordingly to fulfill my various goals. Interest is a substantial factor in personal relations in which two or more people are connected on the basis of being mutually or reciprocally interested. A person, it will be shown, is necessarily a person-in-a-social-world.

Persons are formed by actions, and action is inescapably sensuous and interested. Seemingly obvious, such a claim contrasts starkly with a dominant view of persons seen as knowing subjects possessing wills. Person as subject implies an individual can be defined in terms of a thinking self without feeling, sensuousness, or bodily comportment. In contrast, the 'person-in-action' necessarily includes the sensuous individual relating to



other feeling persons: persons as we know them require a sensuous and social world, a relationship with a community of others.

John Dewey's analyses focus upon the others amongst whom we live: those with whom we interact. Dewey examines the process of development which occurs reciprocally between the person and person in the community. 'Others' are necessary for a person's process of self-creation. Inter-personal relations, and their subsequent influences, are central to the persons we become, the community of which we are a part, and the society in which we live. Like Dewey, John Macmurray stresses the importance of 'relation' in his discussion of persons as there must be other persons with whom to act. Self knows itself only in relation to its otherness, otherwise it is a pre-reflective (non self-conscious) self, and is not fully realized. When it goes out of itself to recognize the selfhood of others, it returns into itself and recognizes its own selfhood. Without others, I would be an isolated agent, which, according to Macmurray, is a self-contradiction. This idea of agency can be thought of in terms of Newton's 'third law of motion' which is based on forces of action and reaction. This law insists that there can be no force without two objects interacting. So, by analogy, if for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, a person cannot act unless there is an other to counteract. Such a concept can be extended to the idea that you cannot touch without being touched, for example. Any definition of a non-interactive self plays into the self-contradiction Macmurray identifies. I say this not to highlight only the physical aspect of persons, but rather, the whole person, i.e., embodied minds. There are not simply other bodies or other objects. Rather, the importance is other subjects, i.e. persons which are bodies with subjectivity.

As active persons advance through the world of others (people and things), there is necessarily a drive to action: a drive which may best be described in terms of interest. Interest is a necessary condition for action. The interested person is motivated, where motive means a feeling which initiates action or which determines movement (yet does not determine action) (Macmurray 1957: 195-196). The distinction between movement and action is an important one as action requires self-consciousness, thoughtfulness, while movement can be merely organic.

Combined with motive, which is not necessarily conscious, a person's activity is also influenced by intention, which is mind-oriented, future-directed and as such a precursor to action. In other words, motives are those feelings which lead to the physical 'movement' of a person (in a particular direction), i.e., act, while intention is the knowledge (thoughts) which helps one arrive at a certain decision which will lead to a particular action (as opposed to a mere act). According to John Macmurray, the motive of an action is contained within intention as its negative aspect (Macmurray 1957: 195).

Motives and intentions, which lie behind activity, come from within the person and as such, cannot fully explain interest. My reason for this claim lies in my suggestion that interest is part of what links a person to an other. The fact that it acts as a connector suggests that it cannot be confined to a single individual. Interest is shared. In other words, as opposed to existing wholly within an individual, interest lies between person(s) and the other(s) towards whom attention is being directed.

Interest connects a person with another. When this connection happens to be between people, a situation may present itself such that one's special focus may rise to

the level of empathy. According to Edith Stein, empathy is a special interest based on our capacity to 'relate' to an other. It is an indirect feeling such that it requires reflection of sorts. The reflection involved in coming to understand the feelings of another is comparable to the process which takes place in coming to know one's self: there is a process of objectification followed by reflection. The term 'self-othering' has been used for this process in which the conscious self projects, and then re-cognizes, it's self. Such re-cognizing of the self is required for one to be self-conscious. Subsequent to this self-awareness, there is an opportunity for one to give meaning to feeling in that with self-consciousness comes reflection, the reflection that is needed for understanding feeling. In contrast to sensations, it is by mediation, i.e., reflecting on our experiences, that we find meaningful the feelings which are aroused. The 'reflection' which takes place when we give feelings meaning is comparable to the process involved in coming to understand what another is experiencing. Reflection provides an opportunity for one to give meaning to feeling. Similarly, by imagining certain feelings as experienced by another, people have an ability to empathize with what someone else may be undergoing. Empathy is based upon meaning, such that there is an understanding for what another is going through. From this explanation, it becomes clear that for an empathic experience to take place there must be interaction between people; interest is a pre-requisite for empathy to occur. Personal interaction provides an opportunity for experiencing concern and respect for each other. In persons, concern and respect enables empathic experience. The projection of one's self into the other's world, thus enabling an empathic experience, is crucial to the maintenance of community.

Person is necessarily person-in-a-social-world, and I suggest that persons in a social world operate, at least to some extent, by way of interest and empathy. The continued reciprocal relations between persons maintain communities and societies, and likewise communities and societies maintain persons. I will explain these ideas beginning in chapter one with an overview of the history of personhood. I will then focus on person as explained by Kant and Hegel who, I suggest, provided the groundwork for many subsequent analyses of personhood. As examples of expounding upon the foundational work of Kant and Hegel, I choose to focus on Johns Dewey and Macmurray for their perspectives on the place of interest and intention, respectively, in persons. Following this discussion, I will present Edith Stein's concept of empathy which, I suggest, is another central feature of personhood: interest in another person is a prerequisite for empathy. Sensuous and interested actions form the social persons that we are.

## Chapter 1 - Interest: Persons and Their Social Relations

Historically, personhood has not always been as important a concept as it is today.

Human beings have not always been conceived as individuals to be respected for who they are; rather, emphasis was first placed historically and culturally more on the 'role' one played. In other words, people were identified by those things in which they were involved rather than their character or personality. By studying the origins of the terms which eventually lead to our current understanding of person, I will shed light on our perspective on the individual person. In fact, I suggest there are some similarities between the terms I will now discuss and the pragmatic perspective. Both historical and contemporary pragmatism point to the importance of people interacting as it is personal relations that are the basis of person and community formation.

In an early conception of personhood, *persona* meant the role an individual played in a social group, specifically, a theatrical group:

It is a well-known fact that in its original use the word *persona* was the designation of the *mask* worn by the actor on the ancient Roman stage and came to be used of the *actor* himself and his *part* in the play; and hence of the *part* that a man plays in social intercourse generally, and especially those forms of social intercourse in which a definite task is assigned, just as in a play, to

a particular man, to which all that he is or does when not engaged in the performance of that task is irrelevant. (Webb 1971: 35)

A persona suggests an appearance, and not at all an authentic or distinctive person. The 'character' which an actor assumes is pretended and, therefore, the feigned 'person' depicted through the acting is not to be taken as who that person is in reality. This explanation demonstrates the traditional tendency of identifying a person by the 'role' they play.

To speak of persona in relation to appearance and reality suggests that understanding early perspectives on persons requires understanding some early ontological beliefs. Questions were posed historically about the nature of Being, and in the process, a number of concepts were coined which were thought to accurately convey the 'definition' of Being, such as *substantia*, *ousia*, and *essentia*, all of which portray Being differently. *Substantia* originally meant 'standing under' and thereby suggested, in relation to people, their insignificance or lack of centrality. *Ousia* stood for a being which was all encompassing, while *essentia* did not take hold until considerably later. When it did, *essentia* meant much the same as *ousia*, except *essentia* came to suggest a lack of individuality as it referred to common characteristics of Being or a being (i.e., a universal):

That nothing could be properly considered as *ousia* or real being, which was not something existing, so to say, upon its own account,

something to which attributes might belong, but which could not belong in this way to anything else; which was, in the phase which had come to be appropriated to such a thing, a *subject* or *substratum*. Hence a mere ‘universal’ such as a ‘man,’ which is no more what I am than it is what you are or what you are than what I am, could not rightly be called *ousia*, but only an individual being, this or that individual man... namely a *distinguishable nature* of its own and that *concrete independence* which cannot be ascribed to what is only an accident or attribute of something else. (Webb 1971: 40-41)

Eventually, *ousia* and *substantia* were given more exact definitions. *Ousia*, which was originally applied to ‘being,’ generally, in the sense that it referred to qualities that were shared by several ‘concrete actualities’ finally came to mean ‘intelligible character.’ *Substantia*, which originally meant much the same as *ousia* evolved such that it acquired the meaning ‘concrete independence.’

The next important historical-conceptual development concerns a progression towards the individuality of persons. Although it began as simply meaning a ‘role’ played by a person, *persona* was eventually defined as “the individual subsistence of a rational nature” (Webb 1971: 48). ‘Rational nature’ here means one who has “a full recognition of his or her self as at once distinct from other selves and as sharing along with other selves in a common nature” (ibid). This definition of person led to the idea of

personality. Personality is based upon the recognition of self in the context of ('standing against') society or others. One is only a person, therefore, in so far as one stands in relation to other persons. The definition of persona fluctuated between the Greek definition of 'standing under', characterized by unchangeable individuality, and the classical Latin definition, implying social activity or relationships. The classical Latin definition was called "res incompletae" (Webb 1971: 53) by René Descartes (1596-1650). By this, Descartes meant that we cannot fully understand our own nature without being in relation to others. It is important to note that it was Descartes who directed attention towards the subject; the Cartesian revolution centered the subject as a substantive object of inquiry marking a pivotal moment in the history of Western Philosophy. This seed of curiosity in the subject which Descartes planted led to a problematization of the subject after it had been considered a priori for so long. This began the search for answers regarding the nature of the subject; the 'I.' Early modern analyses of persons and subject are rich in their own right, but here I shall focus my introductory remarks on two mature and highly influential philosophies, those of Immanuel Kant and G.W.F. Hegel.

\* \* \*

Kant understood person to possess will. In this sense, Kant points to action over knowledge as the domain appropriate to persons. This perspective of Kant's led to a view of persons and morality according to which all rational beings are necessarily aware of the moral law and ought to act in accordance with it. Although I wish to focus upon



personhood generally, some analysis of morality is required as it is there that personhood proper may be found. According to Kant, all rational beings are autonomous, and to act autonomously (as opposed to heteronomously) is to act in accordance with the moral law. Kant puts forth three original predispositions (animality, humanity and personality) which belong to humankind. He describes animality in terms of general survival. It is defined as “physical and purely mechanical self-love” (Kant 2001: 376) which Kant goes on to describe as the animal instinct of self-preservation, procreation, and ‘social impulse’ (ibid). The relevance of Kant’s designation of social impulse as one of the basest of human predispositions will become more clear throughout this paper. The theme of persons as social by nature is reinforced further in Kant’s definition of humanity. In his description of a slightly advanced version of self-love compared to animality, Kant highlights the issue of comparing. He says,

we judge ourselves happy or unhappy only by making comparison with others. Out of this self-love springs the desire *to acquire value in the opinion of others*. This is originally a desire merely for *equality*, to allow no one superiority above oneself, bound up with a constant care lest others strive to attain such superiority; but from this arises gradually the unjustifiable craving to win such superiority for oneself over others. (Kant 2001: 377)

In his descriptions of both animality and humanity, Kant's explanation includes a description of how self-love may manifest itself in negative ways. Characteristics such as the 'bestial vices' of gluttony, drunkenness and lasciviousness in animality and the 'diabolical vices' of envy, ingratitude and spitefulness in humanity (ibid) are unfavourable human tendencies which must be overcome. Kant's definition of personality and his subsequent morality provides an explanation of how these vices are overcome. The predisposition to personality Kant defines as:

[T]he capacity for respect for the moral law as in itself a sufficient incentive of the will. This capacity for simple respect for the moral law within us would thus be moral feeling, which in and through itself does not constitute an end of the natural predisposition except in so far as it is the motivating force of the will. Since this is possible only when the free will incorporates such moral feeling into its maxim, the property of such will is good character. (Kant 1960: 23)

Kant's notion of personality, like his morality, is rooted in practical reason. For Kant, it is from the predisposition of personality that moral feeling will arise, whereas animality gives rise to natural predisposition. The progression from animality to humanity and finally to personality is one which we should all want to undergo, following his recommendation that we ought to live according to the moral law. Although achieving

personality implies growth towards an increasingly 'rational' self, and therein an increasingly moral self, Kant clearly states that this growth towards a moral existence is one which includes feeling, i.e., moral feeling. It is important to note that, in his specific mention of moral feeling, Kant makes a clear distinction between reason and feeling, yet the integration between the two is crucial to his morality.

The above quotation touches on how Kant defines practical reason, in contrast to theoretical reason, as the standpoint from which humans make choices according to which they act. Human agency operates by way of practical reason; it is our rational nature which enables us to formulate maxims that are necessarily based upon ends which we set for ourselves. "A *maxim* is the subjective principle of action, and must be distinguished from the *objective principle*, namely, practical law. The former contains the practical rule set by reason according to the conditions of the subject (often its ignorance or its inclinations), so that it is the principle on which the subject *acts*; but the law is the objective principle valid for every rational being, and is the principle on which it *ought to act* that is imperative" (Kant 2001: 178). In comparison, (non-rational) animals 'act' merely on instinct, simply from moment to moment with no 'ends' in mind. Kant continuously encourages the idea that human reason gives us the ability to recognize the moral law and therefore, we ought to act according to it. The rationale behind Kant's suggestion comes across in the notion of his 'kingdom of ends' which one commentator describes as follows:

To view people theoretically, as objects of knowledge, is to view them as part of the world that is imposed upon us through the senses, and, to that extent, as alien. But insofar as we are noumenal, or active beings, we join with others in those intersubjective standpoints which we can occupy together, either as thinkers or as agents. When we enter into relations of reciprocity, and hold one another responsible, we enter together into the standpoint of practical reason, and create a Kingdom of Ends on earth. (Korsgaard 1996: 212)

The groundwork for Kant's theory, i.e., idealism, results in his proposal being quite different from the pragmatic theory of persons I am suggesting, wherein persons become what and who they are largely as a result of their sensuous activity within a world of others. Kant's introduction of reason as the guide for our actions is incorporated in this pragmatic perspective, though with more emphasis on the socio-historical conditions of reason and personhood. Although Kant sees feeling as potentially detrimental to achieving our ultimate goal of the highest good<sup>1</sup>, he admits its indispensability. The pragmatic perspective does not suggest the sensual is the only aspect of persons which is important. Certainly, our rationality is crucial to who we are, but as part of our fuller existence as sensual, social beings.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Highest Good is the systematic totality of good ends to which the moral law directs us" (Korsgaard 1996: 27).

According to Kant, human beings, due to their rationality, are always 'capable' of making morally sound decisions. To elaborate upon the above definition of personality, rational beings use practical reason to decide upon the maxims which will guide their actions. One must adopt maxims which are in accordance with the categorical imperative, which means that the maintenance of a sound morality requires that the rules by which one chooses to act are universalizable. A morally defective maxim, when universalized, will be contradictory no matter what the private interests of the person willing that particular maxim:

In order for there to be a categorical imperative, something must have absolute value... In speaking of the objects of inclinations as having conditioned value, Kant means that whatever value they have is dependent upon some desire. They are not objectively valuable, since their worth is conditional upon someone valuing them and upon their being valued for the satisfaction of desires.

(Jones 1971: 16)

Accordingly, moral acts cannot be the result of our sensuous natures. Sensuous desires are individual or personal, whereas universalizable maxims resulting from reason are not subject to the laws of nature and are free from personal sensuous inclinations. Kant's categorical imperative, i.e., a law for the will of every rational being (Kant 2001:189), is borne out of reason and subordinates our sensuous desires to reason. Actions which take place as a result of desire display a subordination of reason to desire, and so, act in

conflict with the moral law. The lack of perfection in the actions of human beings is due to the fact that, although rational, they are influenced by their sensuous natures. As suggested above, however, it is the sensuous self which enables persons to tap into their moral feeling. Nevertheless, for Kant, only intentions resulting from maxims as they are decided upon rationally, and, therein, decided upon freely, can be properly judged.

The rationally decided upon maxim is central to Kant's morality, but his moral theory would be nonsensical without his explanation of freedom. Freedom for Kant is a crucial part of his construct of a 'world' composed of two distinct realms, of sense and of reason. Freedom is an essential aspect of the world of reason whereas it is not possible in the world of sense, which is phenomenal and subject to the laws of nature. The world of reason, on the other hand, allows for freedom, which Kant defines as the ability of the will to choose. The fact that we can act freely if we so choose, means that we have the option of acting according to the moral law. One may or may not choose to act according to the moral law, but Kant proposes that one ought to. Our motive to be 'good' comes from the fact that we are rational and have the capacity to 'improve the world.' With an intelligible nature, persons have an option to act according to the moral law and therein strive towards bringing about the Highest Good. "The thought of that higher vocation is the motive of morality" (Korsgaard 1996: 170).

Being good means one has incorporated the moral law into one's maxims as opposed to subordinating the moral law to one's sensuous desires. The maxims we choose are a result of a combination of our disposition and propensity. Disposition is defined by Kant as "the ultimate subjective ground of the adoption of maxims" (Kant



2001: 375). Kant suggests that rational beings ‘choose’ evil when they choose to subordinate their rational nature to their sensuous nature because autonomy of the will is the moral law, and in giving up our freedom, we are choosing to act against the moral law. Kant’s argument is one which insists upon the actuality of our freedom despite the fact that we are sensuous beings living in a phenomenal world, a world in which everything is governed by natural laws. “Kant shares the modern stress on freedom as self-determination. He insists on seeing the moral law as one which emanates from our will” (Taylor 1989: 83). This modern stress on self-determination found in Kantian philosophy foreshadows the pragmatists; persons have the freedom and rational capability to act in a particular way, and should make good use of such agency.

While we may choose to act in ways that will improve the world, Kant insists that human beings actually have a propensity to evil. It is natural for us to subordinate our rational nature to our sensuous nature:

Here, however, we are speaking only of the propensity to a genuine, that is, moral evil; for since such evil is possible only as a determination of the free will, and since the will can be appraised as good or evil only by its maxims, this propensity to evil must consist in the subjective ground of the possibility of the deviation of the maxims from the moral law. (Kant 2001: 379)

Kant's discussion always refers back to the moral law in the context of freedom. The moral law is fixed and permanent in all rational beings who must use their free will to make a rational decision about whether or not they will act in accordance with this law and thus confirm their freedom as expressed in action. We must choose to act rather than be acted upon or led by our feelings. Feeling is indeed an important ingredient in rational decision making. Kant suggests that there should be moderate influence, as opposed to a complete domination, of the senses in inspiring action.

It is difficult to conceive of how, as a result of rational choice, we allow ourselves to be governed by our sensuous desires (or feeling). Kant explains precisely how such a 'free choice' is possible with his conception of will designated as having two 'components:' desire and practical reason. Kant refers to these two aspects of will as *Willkür* and *Wille*, respectively. *Willkür* is a combination of the sensuous and rational (moral) realms. It is "the expression of man's transcendental freedom, his ultimate spontaneity - [and] is thus, like man himself, inextricably involved in both the phenomenal and noumenal orders" (Kant 1960: xcvi). *Willkür*, as both rational and sensuous, is free in addition to being influenced by desires and incentives. Kant claims that our experience of obligation to the moral law occurs in *Willkür*. The sensuous and rational aspects of *Willkür* are such that when one acts, free will and responsibility are both confirmed in one's rational 'desire.'

*Willkür*, which has 'a radical capacity for free choice,' is said by Kant to work in conformity to *Wille*. In fact, *Wille* does not make decisions, nor adopt maxims, nor act. It is the atemporal, unchanging rational incentive to which *Willkür* refers in all decision



making processes. *Wille* is like the voice of conscience to *Willkür*. “*Wille* must be able to arouse desires or aversions in *Willkür*. The feeling which can be aroused by *Wille* is called moral feeling and consists in the ‘simple respect for the moral law’” (Kant 1960: civ). It is *Willkür* that recognizes the moral law, the categorical imperative, the importance of affirming one’s rational, moral nature over and above one’s sensuous nature. Although Kant does draw a clear distinction between the rational and the sensuous as noumenal and phenomenal, respectively, he clearly empowers will such that not even our sensuous desires diminish our freedom.

Thus, Kant insists upon the fact that rational beings are always free to choose (for example, between the rational and sensuous). It is important to recognize that with this explanation of our freedom to choose, Kant does not promote the moral, rational self at the total expense of the sensuous, natural self. While he does insist that the subordination of the sensual is important, he is not saying that this subordinated nature is an inferior aspect of the self which persons would be better off without. According to Kant, it is only a lesser aspect of the self to the extent that it presents obstacles for one striving to achieve their moral ideal. Despite this, the sensual self is that which gives substance to morality; morality would be impotent without feeling. Kant is not promoting a self which develops into an all-rational being devoid of sensual ability or feeling. Rather, it is a matter of moral maturity; having control over how to make decisions and act accordingly. Kant is laying the groundwork for what I am suggesting is a cogent philosophical perspective on personhood.

Aspects of Kant's notion of freedom were adopted by Dewey and Macmurray.

For Dewey, we are compelled to:

seek for freedom in something which comes to be, in a certain kind of growth... We are not free because of what we statistically are, but in as far as we are becoming different from what we have been... freedom resides in the development of preferences into intelligent choices... it consists in a trend of conduct that causes choices to be more diversified and flexible, more plastic and more cognizant of their own meaning, while it enlarges their range of unimpeded operation. (Dewey 1960: 280-286)

Although he rejects theories which suggest freedom is antecedently possessed, Dewey points out that each person does possess some element of freedom, but there is a substantial process of development which must take place in order to actualize or maximize that freedom. "The possibility of freedom is deeply grounded in our very beings. But like all other possibilities, this possibility has to be actualized, and, like all others this possibility can only be actualized through interaction with objective conditions" (Dewey 1960: 286). The difference between Kant and Dewey lies in Dewey's emphasis upon interaction with objective conditions and social others. Dewey examines the process of development which occurs reciprocally between the person and person in the community. 'Others' are necessary for a person's process of self-creation.

Inter-personal relations, and their subsequent influences, are central to the persons we become, the community of which we are a part, and the society in which we live.

John Macmurray focuses on the idea of freedom in the context of the person-in-action. Macmurray, like Kant and Dewey, highlights the issue of choice (and therein reason): "Reason is the capacity to behave consciously in terms of the nature of what is not ourselves" (Macmurray 1935: 7). We must work with reason to act a certain way, moving beyond our natural preferences towards a broader, mature existence. "Free will is simply to be able to determine the indeterminate, that is, the future... The agent, in action, generates the determinate as the object of knowledge... Freedom of the agent, so far from being incompatible with the possibility of knowledge, is the ground of that possibility" (Macmurray 1957: 135). Freedom is that which enables self-development. Persons have the freedom to make choices and act, both as individuals and as a community, according to those choices. This gives persons the capacity to grow as selves which subsequently contribute to the growth of the whole community of persons.

Kant, Dewey and Macmurray all stress the importance of choice. We are free agents who have the option to choose to actively pursue personal growth or to choose torpor. Macmurray, implying a similar belief to that of Dewey's, says: "Action is thus the actualizing of a possibility and as such, it is choice. It does not mean that an action is preceded by a choice; nor that a mysterious 'act of will' somehow connects a theoretical selection with a physical movement... The actual choice is the doing of the action" (Macmurray 1957: 139-140). It seems they overcome the obstacle of dualism by

suggesting existence is to be found in action; action is that which unifies 'the two realms.'

\* \* \*

The progressive development of Kant towards pragmatism is foreshadowed in the work of G.W.F. Hegel. Hegel's analysis of the person is a progression from the self at the stage of consciousness to the self at the stage of self-consciousness through the process of 'self-Othering.' While the concept of self-Othering may seem to be closely linked to Kant's transcendental ego, Hegel's self-other is in fact not a noumenal transcendental object as outlined in the Kantian Categories. The Hegelian self is phenomenal in nature, and the process of becoming self-conscious is achieved through objectification: "the 'I' sets itself over and against itself, makes itself its own object and returns from this difference into unity with itself" (Hegel 1971: 11). To look at oneself, one must go outside oneself, and posit oneself as object. Upon objectification, the self as an immanent other becomes known, and therein, returns into itself.

[I]n reality, self-consciousness is reflection out of the bare being that belongs to the world of sense and perception, and is essentially the return out of otherness. As self-consciousness, it is movement. But when it distinguishes only its self as such from itself, distinction is straightway taken to be superseded in the sense of

involving otherness... For self-consciousness, then, otherness is a fact, it does exist as a distinct moment; but the unity of itself with this difference is also a fact for self-consciousness. (Hegel 1967: 219-220)

Upon achieving this return of the self from self-otherness, self-consciousness is realized. The development of self-consciousness may be further explained in Hegel's master/slave dialectic of recognition, which insists upon the other as a necessary condition of the possibility of self. Hegel's master/slave dialectic is a social dialectic or process of becoming.

In the master/slave dialectic, individuals on the road to self-consciousness progress from being equal to each other in that they are in the same predicament of desiring recognition from the other in order to be a complete self. This dynamic interaction ends finally with each being equal as mutually respecting self-conscious individuals, recognizing one's own self (self-consciousness) and also recognizing the other as a self. From the stage at which they are identical mere consciousnesses, they choose potential non-being or death in an effort to achieve recognition from the other. This willingness to risk life in favour of achieving a higher level of selfhood through recognition by the other is a move away from the natural or biological desire to preserve one's life. The power to overcome one's natural instincts for survival also achieves a reassertion of freedom. Hegel describes this confrontation as a 'life or death struggle' which begins with desire for unilateral recognition only, achieved by way of proving

one's power over the other and thus confirming selfhood. Since destroying the other would leave the 'master' alone and 'powerless,' the relationship must become one of domination and submission. For an interval of time, the master is in a position of domination. He lives in and for himself while the slave, giving in to his survival instinct, chooses to live, even though living entails living for the master, to serve the master. Eventually, the master becomes overly dependent upon the slave, instilling more power in the slave. This leaves the master powerless while the slave has honed his skills and has developed a will of his own. In other words, the independent consciousness trades places with the slave and eventually becomes the dependent consciousness who lives for the other. The development of this relationship leads to both parties recognizing that it is to their advantage to enjoy a mutual exchange, i.e., they work to maintain a symbiotic relationship. "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged" (Hegel 1977: 111). Hugh Reyburn expresses the Hegelian process of development as follows: "Of the countless forces that play around the self only those touch it that are accepted by it, and they alone are its environment. The social and physical environment alike are my environment only if I apprehend them and take them into my life" (Reyburn 1967: 78).

According to Hegel, a process of development leads to the formation of a person. He insists upon the importance of the other, as it is through the other that one finds one's self. As a commentator explains:

...unity of universal and individual self-consciousness is what Hegel calls “person”... The term person is used as a concept in which the unity of the universal and individual self are understood under the predominance of the latter, in that the person is reduced to the subject’s self-reflections upon a universality accessible to it.

(Siep 1989: 93)

The self interacts with the world by way of self-othering; a process in which the other must be made a part of the self in order for the given object or person to be known. The importance of such inter-action and intersubjectivity is that one finds one’s self in the process of coming to know an other. Making the ‘other’ a part of the self in coming to *know* an object or an other person is a central aspect of Hegel’s philosophy. Hegel’s ‘intersubjectivity’ results in his communitarianism, which, by definition, insists upon the importance of the ‘other’ for the development of the self (both as an individual person and as a member of society). As Siep describes it:

I am aware of myself as an individual self only by abstracting from all my external determinations. The thesis, then, is that one’s individuality is not based on public determinacies... [O]ne finds oneself, as it were, only by dissolving one’s emotional and customary unity with others. (Siep 1989: 95)

Hegel insists upon the necessity of interaction in the community for self-development; an active self as opposed to the 'subject' as a mere product of predecessors and contemporary society. He is not, therefore, proposing a system which diminishes individuality; rather, an individual realizes themselves by digesting both the self-Other and the Other into a unity which is, Hegel claims, one's own. As Siep puts it:

life in a state organized by rational principles is absolutely necessary even for the identity of every person if the person is not to be subject to the whims of forces inside or outside himself, including his own subjective freedom to dissolve all determinacies. Only in the state do persons participate in a "substantiality" that is conceptually necessary... [T]he individual gradually appropriates the customs, emotional ties, social roles, and so on that have dominated it all along and confronts them with the rights of persons to an external sphere of freedom as well as with the internal moral authority to subject all standards to criticism. (Siep 1989: 99-100)

John Dewey adopted Hegel's notion of the importance of community for self-development. As we have just seen, Hegel's system includes a description of the process of development of an individual who initially exists as mere consciousness. With experience in a community of others, the individual evolves from a being that is



conscious into a self-conscious person. It is Kant who set the stage for Hegel and others who followed. Kant's 'individual' progresses as a self by way of free will. Using this free will, the individual chooses to act in a particular way according to the ability to reason and recognize the moral law. From Kant's self-asserting, free, rational individual to Hegel's self-conscious person in a community, a solid foundation was established upon which Dewey's system could be built; a system which is more progressive as he accentuates the importance of the interested person in action, in the social world. For Dewey, personhood is not possible without community: community is what defines person, and likewise, persons come together to define community.

Dewey stresses the importance of contingency and adaptability of the self and society. His perspective recognizes the independence of persons and the self-determination of the individual. The unity of the self, as it is described by Dewey, is based upon action. Preferences and choices lead to self-motivation; personal interests are central to the self and its formation. Dewey's active self inter-acts of necessity with things and other selves external to the self, i.e., in the sensuous and social realms. The formulation of one's own opinions and beliefs, i.e., making certain choices, forms who we are. For Dewey, our choices are representative of the maturation of the self. Persons are active beings who make choices according to their various interests. The individual as a whole is interested and the total rational, sensual being is in action as opposed to movement. The distinction between movement and action is an important one as action requires self-consciousness, thoughtfulness, while movement can be merely organic.

Dewey claims:

It is not too much to say that the key to a correct theory of morality is recognition of the *essential unity of the self and its acts*, if the latter have any moral significance; errors in theory arise as soon as the self and acts are separated from each other, and moral worth is attributed to one more than the other. (Dewey 1960: 151)

Dewey's view insists that self is a self only insofar as it acts, i.e., it is an actor, and, therefore, it does not simply react to external stimuli. Dewey points out that "[s]timuli from the environment are highly important factors in conduct. But they are not as important as causes, as generators of action. For the organism is already active, and stimuli themselves arise and are experienced only in the course of action" (Dewey 1960: 152). Dewey's mention of 'organism' within his discussion of the centrality of action and motive of the self shows his naturalism. The organic perspective may be considered in light of the work of Hans Jonas, who discusses the 'biological' active self in order to determine where one's motives lie. The relevance in discussing Jonas' organic perspective is to help us to understand Dewey's proposal that persons-in-action are a part of a community and communal interaction is comparable to the organic phenomenon. For personhood to be fully expressed or defined, persons must participate in the community, and this organismic metaphor illustrates the holistic concept of communitarian individuality. The community is like an organism, where the individual is expressed through the community and the community is expressed through a community of

individuals. Like Dewey, Jonas believes that “only those beings are individuals whose being is their own doing” (Jonas 1974: 187). He proposes the notion of the individual as self-created, dynamic, and in a constant state of becoming. Jonas believes that any and all organisms can possess individuality as a substantial quality and a necessarily organic phenomenon. He begins his investigation with the following task in mind: “I shall try to show how individuality is grounded in the mode of being of an organism, and to exemplify how its more propounded grades emerge as the original groundwork offered by this mode on its primary level” (Jonas 1974: 188). Individuality is often interpreted in terms of simple numerical distinctions, and it seems as though Jonas is following this trend as he begins his discussion with an analysis of identity. Identity, in the context of Ancient philosophical thought, certainly did entail an attempt to solve the problem of ‘the one and the many,’ but Jonas interprets identity in the context of biological continuity. There is unbroken continuity in an individual despite the changing of its parts. Organisms undergo change by internal means rather than external, and therein imposed, means.

I have elsewhere attempted to show how already in the ‘simplest’ true organism - existing by way of metabolism and thereby self-dependent and other-dependent at once - the horizons of selfhood, world and time, under the imperious alternative of being or non-being, are silhouetted in a pre-mental form. (Jonas 1984: 74)

Jonas suggests that metabolizing beings have a sort of freedom in their necessity of self-renewal. Metabolic functions which are usually considered insignificant with regards to having any substantial influence upon individuality should be considered more seriously. Jonas' perspective helps clarify the pragmatists' continuity of mind and nature. Stimuli change the direction of an action underway, but interest is central to understanding that activity:

An interest is the dominant direction of activity, and in this activity desire is united with an object to be furthered in a decisive choice.

Interest is regard, concern, solicitude, for an object; if it is not manifested in action it is unreal. A motive is not, then, a drive to action, or something which moves to doing something. It is the movement of the self as a whole, a movement in which desire is integrated with an object so completely as to be chosen as a compelling end. (Dewey 1960: 154)

The reference to the 'movement of the self as a whole' described as 'a movement in which desire is integrated with an object so completely as to be chosen as a compelling end' is analogous to the organic interpretation of the person-in-the-world which may be highlighted by looking at the term organism which refers to a complex structure of mutually dependent elements whose relations and properties are for the most part determined by the role they play in the whole. From this definition, we see the holistic

concept of communitarian individuality; interested persons growing together within their community. The relating of Dewey to the naturalistic point of view emphasizes this natural tendency of persons to grow together in a social world. Just as there is biological continuity, there is continuity in communities of persons growing together and moving forward in the world. Persons move forward as they continue to develop and make choices to take different paths in life within the community of which they are a part. In addition, Dewey's description of interest as 'regard, concern, solicitude for an object' reinforces my claim about persons as social and feeling individuals. The activity of persons involves interest in sensuous life. According to Dewey, the social relationships which form a community lie between individuals with common goals. Dewey's insistence upon the dynamic connection between the integrated persons of a community comes across in his description of the movement of the self 'as a whole' as a self which is integrated with an other.

Dewey insists upon the importance of interest. In his analysis, he points out that "the word interest suggests, etymologically, what is between, –that which connects two things otherwise distant" (Dewey 1916: 149). The nature of interested choice is not unidirectional, but, rather, is to be understood as a series of dynamic processes. Interest suggests an 'in-between' of sorts. The word 'interest' is derived from *inter*, meaning 'between,' and *esse*, meaning 'to be.' Interest, which is that 'feeling' which guides our actions, can exist only if there is a self and other in relation. According to Dewey interest means "that the self and world are engaged with each other in a developing situation" (ibid).

Interest embodies the essence of human activity for Dewey. It is the “active or moving identity of the self with a certain object... We say of an interested person both that he has lost himself in some affair and that he has found himself in it” (ibid). In his discussion of interest, Dewey suggests that there is an ‘engrossment of the self in an object.’ Such an immersion of the self into an ‘object of interest’ or an ‘other’ reinforces the importance of relation and the inescapable fact of person being person-in-a-social-world. Dewey insists upon the indispensability of the other for an accurate conception of the self and morality. The necessary relation between self, act and other is central to Dewey’s concept of action. There can be no act without an other. The essential unity of the self and its acts necessarily involves an other. Dewey asserts that “the kind and amount of interest taken in a thing reveals and measures the quality of selfhood which exists” (ibid). Those things encountered throughout life which are objects of interest, or driving forces which motivate, form one’s character.

Interest, as manifested in human inquiry, for example, is not an activity isolated to a solitary individual for strictly private purposes. One commentator describes the cooperative experience of inquiry as “a shared experience, something which is characteristic of all members of the community, carried out by a cooperative effort in which the methods and results are shared with others. It is also a method carried out for goals that are common to all” (Roth 1962: 83). This description of inquiry exemplifies one aspect of Dewey’s notion of interest. It is a useful example in that it explains one way in which human interest is necessary; if there is no interest, there is no purposeful activity.

Inquiry is often looked at in terms of the search for truth. In light of this, I wish to explain Dewey's notion of interest and shared inquiry as follows; truth is not something static that exists in a self, it is something dynamic that exists between selves. Action and communication are central to Dewey's notion of shared interest. The creation of community is a community built in and through act and language. Not the solipsistic self, but the action of selves engaged with other selves, is what fundamentally grounds inquiry. Inquiry establishes common interest and common interest establishes community. Through this selves recognize each other and are constituted as selves. Consider, for example, a person who is clinically depressed. There is no drive to action, no desire to interact with others; a depressed individual is utterly disinterested. No connection can be made between this person and an other. The individual shares no common goal with anyone else as all goals cease to exist when depression overwhelms a person.

Dewey impresses upon his readers that "error arises when we think of the object as if it were something wholly external to the make-up of the self, which then operates to move the foreign self" (Dewey 1960: 155). According to Dewey, objects of interest are a part of the self such that a person's interest in things constructs the self. 'Others,' persons and things, present themselves as objects of interest due to the fact that they hold some significance with regards to who one is and who one will become. One's perspective is modified according to various influences, and the influences work in both directions, i.e., to and from the person and, likewise, to and from the other. In other words, the developmental process is not uni-directional; rather, the change and development which



occur in the self and in the world are mutually implicatory of each other, i.e., personal development is a process of reciprocal exchange. There cannot be change in the self without there also being change in the other, i.e., person-in-the-social-world and the world.

Interest is that which lies between the agent and its object of choice. If we consider the fact that the dynamic of personal development is unceasing, such that there is always change occurring, the notion of interest as an 'in-between' begins to make sense. All personal interest and change is made possible by relation, and thus there is necessarily more than one individual involved. To attempt to be purely self-interested is thus a mistake and a misfortune, as Shusterman explains:

Dewey insisted that the individual best realizes himself not by consciously cultivating his own particular distinction but by immersing himself in associated life. For concentrating on the project of self-creation will rob one of the wide sympathies and materials needed to transform the self in richer ways. Similarly, self-transformation was aimed not at radical novelty for its own sake but rather at continuous and coherent growth. (Shusterman 1997: 28)

Shusterman describes Dewey's tendency towards a philosophy of the interested person-in-the-community. There are things, i.e., people, information, events, which affect a



person in ways that lead to significant, creative growth, meaningful development that alters the person. Self-development and human agency are notions which rest upon the fact that persons are always involved in dynamic relationships, and make choices subsequent to inter-action and experiences with other people and things. The pragmatic approach taken by Dewey asserts that our interests are part of our person and it is our choices that actualize the various potentialities of our character. Shusterman suggests that:

the aim of coherent, enriching change was captured by the ideal of creative growth. Rejecting not simply the idea of a “fixed, ready-made, finished self” but even the notion of any fixed or final ends for self-realization, Dewey concluded that ‘*the end is growth itself.*’ (Shusterman 1997: 39)

Shusterman emphasizes the importance of constant growth. Persons always have more to contribute to each other. As long as there is interaction of persons, there is growth. To suggest that there is an ultimate goal to this process of development makes no sense to Dewey, as the end of growth could mean nothing other than isolation or death. Persons are necessarily social and interested. We proceed throughout our lives encountering a variety of others who influence us in different ways. Change is constant and requires interest. In order to maintain one’s activity, interest requires motive. As one works towards a goal, activity will follow a certain path. Another interest may then

present itself through a new motive such that the direction of activity is altered. A choice must be made when one must decide between two (or more) preferences. Dewey says of preference that it involves “every appetite and impulse, however blind... [it] antecedes judgement of comparative values; it is organic rather than conscious” (Dewey 1960: 148). When ‘torn,’ “we hesitate, and then hesitation becomes deliberation” (ibid). Once torn between ‘objects’ of preference, a spontaneous, impulsive action cannot take place, and thus, in its stead, an intentional decision must be made, that is, a choice must be made. Choices take place when motives present themselves, and depending on its motive, a new-found interest may change the direction of activity and the self partaking in it.

The notion of the intentional decision tends to emphasize mind. As such, while an important phenomenon, it is not the most relevant aspect of the sensuous person with which this thesis is concerned. Nevertheless, as an important aspect of the person-in-action, an overview of where intention fits into my concept of the person-in-the-social-world is necessary. I will discuss intention in the context of John Macmurray’s portrayal of person.

Macmurray highlights the difference between the relation between self and matter and the relation between self and other self. The latter involves feeling and is only possible in mutual personal relations. Relations with matter do not manifest the personal:

[T]he relation between a person and what is alive in the world calls into activity all the capacities of consciousness that are aroused by

material reality together with new capacities which lie dormant in the relationship with matter. For these new activities the vague term feeling is perhaps the most usual expression. They are activities through which we are aware at once of life in the world and in ourselves... The object in the relationship, because it is less than personal, is incapable of calling into action the whole capacity of personal consciousness. This can only be expressed when the 'other' in the mutual objective relationship is itself personal.

(Macmurray 1935: 136)

A person is able to relate to another largely as a result of understanding one's own feelings or personhood, which are then projected into feelings for others. Such a relation cannot exist between a person and inanimate objects. Feeling selves are in-the-world and are able to come together as a result of feeling. Feeling is an embodied relation which requires an understanding of self. A discipline of the self and the subsequent coordination of the aspects of the self is translated into an ability to coordinate with others. Macmurray explains such relations:

The inner signs [of discipline] are the feelings of freedom and joy and ease in action which testify that all the necessary factors are cooperating harmoniously in the production of the desired effect.

But we must remember that human activity is essentially a

cooperation between individuals and that the discipline which will produce a human result must succeed not merely in integrating the various capacities of the individual but in integrating individuals themselves in a community of free cooperation (Macmurray 1935: 48)

In his analysis of ‘educating the emotions,’ Macmurray affirms the role of emotion in personhood, and discusses it in terms of a drive to action. Feelings are not blind desires; rather, they guide persons in specific directions. It is in this discussion that Macmurray introduces the notion of intention. Intention necessarily entails both reason and feeling. Intention emphasizes the rational, and as such, it is a reminder of Kant’s discussion of free will. Kant does not suggest that the self should develop into an all-rational being devoid of sensual ability or feeling. In his description of *Wille* and *Willkür*, Kant explains that the sensual self is that which gives substance to morality. Much like Macmurray’s proposal about ‘educating the emotions,’ Kant insists upon the importance of moral maturity; having control over how to make decisions and act accordingly.

One way to appreciate the meaning of intention and the importance of feeling in personal motivation is to consider the difference between act and function. An act involves a purposeful decision. Acting on purpose could also be described as acting intentionally. As we saw in Kant’s morality, an intentional act involves both reason and feeling with the person necessarily aiming for a particular result or outcome. Compared

to the intentional nature of act, function may be described as a more organic, basic behaviour (or movement). Function need not be meaningful, whereas act is interested and meaningful. Most or all animals merely function whereas persons have the ability to act. Functions are not the result of any interest and therefore there is no dynamic as such when a person's senses are operating. Agency, which entails acting out of interest, is more than just the functioning of the senses. One wills not only to see but to look, not only to hear but to listen, not only to feel but to touch. Acts are intentional and, therefore, they have a reason behind them.

According to Macmurray, the capacity for intentional activity is part of what defines us in terms of the person-in-a-social-world. He explains that there are interactions within a community which our rational, sensual self enables us to comprehend. Interest is based upon the fact that various objects hold some significance with regards to who one is and who one will become:

The distinction we have drawn between a personal and an 'objective' knowledge of one another rests upon this, that all objective knowledge is knowledge of matter of fact only and necessarily excludes any knowledge of what is matter of intention. What is intended is never matter of fact, though it may be a fact that I intended it. For what is intended is always future, and there are no future facts. (Macmurray 1961: 39)

For Macmurray, objective knowledge as matter of fact is based on the here and now.

Intention, on the other hand, has future implications. Intention is not a matter of fact of the present:

To realize my intentions, I must make use of the Other. Action, then, involves a relation to the Other. This relation, however, is a practical relation. It is not a matter of fact, but matter of intention. At any moment, I stand in specifiable relations to everything in the world. This is a matter of fact. But when I act, I enter into relation with something other than myself in virtue of my intention. This is true even of reflective activities. It makes the difference, for instance, between seeing and looking. To look at something is to see it with the intention of knowing it, and this transforms the seeing from matter of fact to matter of intention. (Macmurray 1961: 113)

Individuals are necessarily interested persons in a social world. When a person acts, the action must be interested and must involve an other. The purposeful or intentional actions in which persons are engaged take place in a community of interrelated individuals who come together as a result of being mutually interested and social. This interested inter-action between self and other is that which forms person, and subsequently, forms community. There is a constant drive to action in persons; action

which is motivated and interested such that there is a constant development of all persons involved.

Defining personhood over the ages has involved many theories beginning with the ancient philosophers' analyses of both Being and individual beings. Various thinkers contributed to metaphysical thought and the nature of being, until finally Descartes' famous 'cogito ergo sum' introduced a new perspective; Descartes attempted to 'discover' the world by first 'discovering' the self. This shift in focus introduced a new starting point for subsequent metaphysical investigations. As a result of this perspective Kant and Hegel both proposed philosophical systems which contribute significantly to metaphysics, and more specifically, to the concept of person.

In an attempt to illustrate the development of human beings, Kant proposes three original predispositions, the final and most sophisticated predisposition being personality. This is the highest level of development for persons, according to Kant; a level at which human reason has been honed to such an extent that the individual can recognize the moral law, and act in accordance to it. There must be a sophisticated level of development of the rational self in order for persons to have moral 'feeling' and act as a result of choices made by practical reason. I propose that this recognition of the moral law is an important concept in the development of theories of personhood. That person is necessarily person-in-a-social-world reinforces the importance of this capacity for respect of the moral law as it is central to one's ability to respect an other. This is a crucial factor in the establishment of community which provides the environment necessary for



personal growth and development. The relationship between person and community is reciprocal; the development of each is dependent upon the other.

Similarly, following Kant, Hegel's analysis focuses upon personal development through an examination of self-consciousness. According to Hegel, there must be a process of self-othering, or objectification of the self, in order to know the self. Objectification of the self, and the return of the self-other back into the self, is necessary for self-consciousness to be achieved. Self-consciousness then enables recognition of the self as an other, thus making possible recognition of an other as being like one's self. Without this recognition, there could be no respect for others. Making both the self-other and the other a part of the self explains Hegel's intersubjectivity and subsequent communitarianism. These steps are necessary for self-development, self-respect and recognition of the other, all of which create a condition which allows for development of the whole, and further development of the self.

Hegel's communitarianism is echoed in Dewey's insistence upon the importance of interest and inter-action. Dewey asserts that there is a process of development which occurs between the person and persons in the community. The influence of inter-personal relations on individuals is central to personhood and the community which is formed as a result. A person is necessarily a sensuous person-in-action, according to Dewey. Because persons exist in a social world, action necessarily becomes inter-action. However, the interaction between persons would be meaningless without interest. For Dewey, the essence of human activity is interest. Interest connects people and is the in-



between which makes meaningful relations between person and other(s) possible, and this creates a condition for the reciprocal growth of the person and the community.

Kant, Hegel and Dewey each have theories about self-development which contribute the definition of person which I am proposing in this paper. For Kant, the individual must work to become increasingly rational, subordinating the sensual aspect of the self to the extent that practical reason may guide the individual to act according to the moral law. Hegel promotes the development of individual consciousness, as well as a dynamic between self-conscious selves who demand recognition from each other. The recognition of one's self as an other, and the relation between the self and other, are central to Hegel's notion of becoming. Dewey insists that person is sensuous, and is also necessarily an active person-in-the-social-world. The active person must be interested; it is interest that connects a person to an other, creating grounds for interaction and growth. When combined, personal growth which leads to a rational, moral existence. Self-consciousness and recognition of others within the community; and interested, active, sensuous person-in-the-world are all crucial to the formation of person.

## Chapter 2 - Self and Other: On Feeling Empathy

We have seen how interested persons interact and work together towards a certain goal or towards particular ends. But, the interaction of persons goes beyond the basic social interaction which we have examined so far. Persons, in addition to feeling interested, have the capacity to feel for others, i.e., have the ability to empathize. Part of the communal interaction which forms persons includes having an understanding of the other and for the other. A person is able to imagine the experience of another and this person, in response to his interest in the other, will assess the other's experience and act accordingly. This special interest based on our capacity to 'relate' to an other is called empathy. One of the most sophisticated aspects of human experience is our capacity to feel empathy.

Edith Stein analyses individuality in an attempt to discover what it is that makes up persons. According to Stein, 'person' cannot be objectified, and hence a problem presents itself for understanding the personal 'I.' When a person states such things as "I am here," or "I feel your touch there," she objectifies that upon which she is focusing, and the objectification is made easy because it is a specific area or object which can be physically determined. Stein suggests that such objectification is not possible if dealing with the personal 'I.' The 'I' of the personal self cannot be located, for to locate it would be to completely change its nature. In fact, it may be said that it would cease to be the personal 'I' upon being identified. There is a process of isolation which must take place in order to identify any given 'physical' feeling, and such a process cannot take place

when trying to identify personal feeling. Stein's solution to the problem of the indistinguishable aspect of person is the "zero point of orientation" (Stein 1964: 40) which she explains as follows:

The various parts of the living body constituted for me in terms of sensation are various distances from me... 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 the parts of my living body, together with everything spatial outside of it, to a "zero point of orientation" which my 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 given at a distance from the "I." (Stein 1964: 40)

This seems to be an objectification of sorts in that the said 'zero point' attempts to 'isolate' this unknown aspect of person in order to identify 'it.' Perhaps what is accomplished with Stein's zero point of orientation is an objectification of feeling. Thus, in the personal 'I' it is actually feeling which the person experiences: the zero point of orientation is 'orientation' towards a feeling, and this is the only way to identify the

personal aspect of the self. It appears as though, despite the attempt at finding a 'location,' an obscurity remains with the 'I' which cannot be overcome.

Stein tries to identify the personal aspect of the self, i.e., learn more about the personal 'I,' in an attempt to better understand the experience of empathy. In order to comprehend the concept of empathy, first it is important to make a clear distinction between sensations and feelings. Sensations are purely physical and may be thought of in terms of an effect whereas feelings are psychological and may be thought of in terms of an affect. Stein makes reference to the difference between the two by indicating that feelings entail reflection (mediated) whereas sensations are more direct (immediate). For instance, for an empathic experience, we look at the man who is cold as opposed to the sensation of coldness. The process of reflection enables us to conclude that the man's discomfort arises from his sensations (Stein 1964: 56). Hence, there is a process where, rather than an immediate or direct cognition of the feeling of the other, we recognize the sensation felt by the other and, from there, perceive the feeling of that sensation.

In coming to understand the other person as sentient and putting myself in his or her place, I gain a new perspective and a new 'zero point of orientation.' By recognizing the other as sentient, a person is able to feel for the other and recognize the other as another 'I.' By putting myself in the place of the other, I am able to experience empathy. The capacity of a person to understand what an other is experiencing is a factor in explaining what lies behind personal relations and the subsequent growth of persons. In one part of her exploration, Stein proposes that the feelings within the 'psycho-physical' individual have a reciprocal "influence" on one another (Stein 1964: 46). The relation

between my physical and personal self is correlative to a possible relation between my personal self and an other's personal self, i.e., an other's feelings. Stein's notion of psycho-physical causality helps to explain empathy. One may wish to consider the empathic experience as imagining our 'sensations' as being 'in' the other person:

When I now interpret it as a sensing living body and project myself into it, I obtain a new image of the spatial world and a new zero point of orientation. It is not that I shift my zero point to this place, for I retain my "primordial" zero point and my primordial orientation while I am empathically, non-primordially obtaining the other one. On the other hand, neither do I obtain a fancied orientation nor a fancied image of the spatial world. But this orientation, as well as the empathized sensations, is con-primordial, because the living body to which it refers is perceived as a physical body at the same time and because it is given primordially to the other "I," even though non-primordially to me. (Stein 1964: 57)

This is Stein's description of the relation between one's physical and personal self being correlative to the possible relation between one's personal self and an other's personal self; an other's feelings. Stein analyses psycho-physical causality in an attempt to better understand empathy.

One way to look at psycho-physical causality is through our capacity of imagination. I can imagine myself having a particular experience such that feelings of sadness or happiness are aroused by unpleasant or pleasant thoughts, respectively. For example, imagining myself visiting vineyards in France, tasting fine wines and enjoying gourmet meals, all the while in the company of someone I love, I develop feelings of great happiness. Likewise, I am able to empathize with the feelings of an other who has the good fortune to enjoy the same marvellous experience. I use the example of imagining myself in a certain situation in order to provide the idea behind my ‘feeling’ what another feels and behind Stein’s notion of psycho-physical causality. Stein says, “Feeling can release an act of reflection that makes the feeling itself objective” (Stein 1964: 49). I suggest that reflection upon a feeling which, in turn, objectifies that feeling may be compared to an imagining of that feeling. That same process of imagining a feeling takes place when we experience empathy from what another is feeling. Thus, empathy is like a form of imagining. An empathic ‘feeling,’ i.e., an empathic experience, is not direct, and similarly, imagining myself in a painful situation does not initiate feeling directly. Both empathy and imagining one’s self having a certain experience function by way of self-othering and, therefore, they are mediated. The explanation behind empathy applies to feelings which are a result of the psycho-physical make-up of human beings; this make-up allows for a correlation of one person’s feeling self with an other’s person’s feeling self. Feelings are objectified and reflected upon and thereby they become meaningful; such feelings hold meaning for me which arouses feelings in my personal self, and that same meaning allows me to understand the feelings of another.

'Feelings' experienced by one's 'I' can be aroused either by direct stimulation to one's self, or by witnessing an other having an experience which the 'personal-I' understands. Both empathy and imagining myself in a certain situation are 'about' something. People have the ability to understand their fellow man and subsequently, upon observing an other's experience, a feeling is aroused as if it were one's own experience. The mediated nature of empathy lies in the fact that it is 'about' something; it has meaning. Although there is a difference between having one's own feelings and 'feeling' for another, there is a correlation between the two which lies in the fact that human beings find meaning in experiences. The process of objectification that takes place in the 'act' of feeling enables people to 'feel' either directly or empathically. I have the ability to understand things I feel (directly or indirectly) because the feelings hold meaning for me - meaning which arouses feelings in my personal self.

Persons have the ability to comprehend an expression resulting from an other's experience. One important aspect of body language which is telling of a person's feeling is facial expression. In addition to the face, we are able to recognize mood and feeling from one's comportment. For example, a slouched posture might suggest that a person is tired or depressed, or holding the body in a very stiff and rigid manner may indicate pain or nervousness (Stein 1964: 72). There are many bodily expressions just as there are an assortment of feelings by which one may be overcome. A crucial aspect of human communication lies in 'body language.' Things expressed in words are made considerably more meaningful by a particular expression or type of bodily comportment. Similarly, when a person is either unable, or refuses, to express themselves verbally, then



it is by way of facial or bodily expression that the general sentiment of that individual may be understood or apprehended. Such bodily expressions can help people avoid miscommunication, or may aid others in getting a sense of how someone feels.

Stein suggests that seeing one's own zero point of orientation as one amongst many as opposed to the zero point allows persons to see their living bodies as physical bodies like others. She claims that, "I see myself as another or as another sees me" (Stein 1964: 59). Stein goes on to say, "[to] consider ourselves in inner perception, i.e., to consider our psychic 'I' and its attributes, means to see ourselves as another and as he sees us. Empathy and inner perception work hand in hand to give me myself to myself" (Stein 1964: 81-2). Inner perception is important because in recognizing ourselves objectively we are able to find meaning in our experiences and (the subsequent) feelings. Objectification of one's self for self-understanding is helpful, but judgements made by an other person, a friend or an onlooker, can also be meaningful for self-discovery. Our knowledge of self comes not only from within, but is influenced by external factors, such as other persons whose company we keep. Stein admits that it is often the case that another may judge me more accurately than I judge myself: "For example, he notices that I look around me for approval as I show kindness, while I myself think I am acting out of pure generosity" (ibid). Knowledge of the other, and the empathic experience which helps one relate to the other, contributes to self-knowledge.

As discussed in chapter 1, in his master/slave dialectic of recognition, Hegel describes a dynamic which evolves between two selves. Before each self is established as an equal, mutually respecting self-conscious individual, there is a confrontation



between the two which begins as a 'life or death' struggle. The coveted recognition of the other begins with one self attaining power over the other, i.e., the establishment of a master/slave relationship. Killing the other would leave the master alone, powerless and without recognition; giving in to the other would be giving up a chance to assert his or her freedom. As the slave lives for the master, to serve the master, the master becomes dependent upon the slave; the relationship of domination and submission eventually evolves into an overly dependent master relying on an increasingly confident slave, until eventually the roles are reversed. The slave has honed his skills and, therein, confirms that he has a will of his own while the master is rendered powerless in the absence of the slave's recognition; the independent consciousness trades places with the slave and eventually becomes the dependent consciousness who lives for the other. Finally, both parties recognize that it is to their advantage to enjoy the mutual exchange of a symbiotic relationship. The dynamic between two selves as described by Hegel may be compared to Macmurray's discussion of personal relations and the influence persons have on one another. Interest in the other stimulates personal growth (in many directions). "The ground of choice, that is, the determination of the action, lies in the agent's knowledge of the other" (Macmurray 1957: 168). Relations between people bring about various outcomes as a result of the dynamic created when personalities interact; an optimistic person will evoke a different reaction than a pessimistic person. Macmurray distinguishes between positive and negative motivation in his discussion of personal relations. Positive and negative motivation are generated from feelings of love and fear, respectively; an other may help or hinder us in achieving our goals by instilling in us

positive or negative feelings. Both positive and negative feelings should be present to some extent in order for a goal to be met. If a person is overcome completely by fear, the result is a paralysing fear, a feeling which is not helpful in motivating a particular action. The mix of fear and love leads one, in the confusion of feelings, to reflect upon the situation. In other words, fear and love incite the use of reason when carrying out intentions. One way to consider Macmurray's portrayal of the relation of feelings and motivation is to see fear as the inhibitor which instills apprehension such that one stops to consider one's action, while love is that which maintains the drive to action.

Dewey's discussion of interest resembles Macmurray's proposals regarding love and fear, and the role they play in motivation. If there is no interest, there is no purposeful activity, and a poor human existence. Depression was given as an example of causing a lack of interest. When an individual is depressed, there is no drive to action, no desire to interact with others. Macmurray's notion of fear may be compared to depression and the way in which it instills torpor. Love, on the other hand, may work in the opposite way. It can accentuate one's desire to interact with others and to pursue individual and common goals. For example, a happy child growing up in a loving, caring home can be motivated to do well in school and participate in group activities, thus displaying a desire to be part of a community. For Macmurray, love and fear represent a crucial aspect of the human drive to action and inter-action.

Macmurray's discussion of the roles of love and fear in motivation may be extended to the concept of empathy. "Love is love for the other, and fear is fear for oneself" (Macmurray 1961: 69). Mutuality is implied in this claim. For Macmurray,

love necessarily involves an other, but in addition, fear (for oneself) is also usually based upon the behaviour of an other (ibid). According to Macmurray, there are three categories of apperception, each of which gives rise to different social dynamics. The three categories he designates are said to give rise to their own modes of morality. Of these three modes, two are negative. The positive mode is a communal apperception in which there is a ‘personal unity of persons.’ In contrast, the negative (impersonal) modes consist of a contemplative mode, which is submissive, and a pragmatic mode, which is based upon aggression. I believe these positive and negative modes may be related back to the notion of love as a positive motive and fear as a negative motive, where fear gives rise to submission or aggression. The negative modes are said to result in society rather than community and are, therein, unacceptable. Society is impersonal; it is “for the sake of protection and presupposes fear. A community [on the other hand] is for the sake of friendship and presupposes love” (Macmurray 1961:151). Because negative modes are said to result in society, society is seen as the impersonal maker and arbiter of rules. Community, on the other hand, while abiding by society’s rules, is based on friendship and love. The so-called pragmatic, aggressive mode is rejected by Macmurray for obvious reasons, but the explanation behind the criticism of the contemplative, submissive mode is less apparent:

Mysticism is an essential element in all reflective experience, though it is not usually recognized as such, because its role is normally subordinate. It is, however, essentially contemplative,

and, in form at least, aesthetic. Self-identification with the whole, with the Other that includes oneself, is mysticism. The dramatist identifies himself with characters in his drama; so do the actors on the stage as they play their parts in the drama, and the spectators as they watch the spectacle, each remaining himself the while. But this is only theoretically possible - only in a play. If it is made the basis of society and so life as a whole, it creates illusion.

(Macmurray 1961: 143)

It is interesting that Macmurray refers to actors on a stage. You will recall the discussion in my introduction referring to the evolution of terms which led to our current understanding of the word person; I make specific mention of the word *persona* and its original meaning as the mask worn by the actor on the ancient Roman stage. In examining this term, Webb points out that the 'character' which an actor assumes is certainly pretended and, therefore, the feigned 'person' depicted through the acting is not to be taken as who that person is in reality. Adding to Webb's sentiment, the example of self-identification given above, if implemented in society, would result in the subordination of individual persons to the whole, according to Macmurray. He believes persons would sacrifice their individuality were they to identify themselves with others in a submissive way. "The self that apperceives life in this fashion is an isolated and therefore a divided self. He is at once a spectator-self and a participant-self. But his real life - his own private life - is as a spectator" (ibid: 142). Macmurray is suggesting that

neither the spectator-self nor the participant-self can achieve true personal development. The spectator-self is isolated, i.e., looking 'in' from the 'outside,' and, therefore, deprives their 'person' due to the lack of interaction. An individual playing the role of mere spectator cannot produce for himself or for his community without engaging in dynamic interactions or personal relations. To be a person is to be in the midst of, and to participate in, the 'action' of one's world. Only from inter-action can one achieve personal development and, concurrently, contribute to the growth of one's community. In the meantime, the participant-self simply behaves according to and in response to the actions of others, and therefore, is merely filling a role.

The relation of one person to another involves action, and results in an understanding of the self and the other to the advantage of both participants. Macmurray's view correlates with Hegel's explanation of the dialectic of recognition. Macmurray claims:

Personal relationships override all the distinctions which differentiate people... [o]n the other hand, it does not mean that these differences can be ignored or should be overlooked in the personal life. The differences remain, and become the basis of the infinite variety of experience which can be shared in the life of the personal relationship. When two people become friends they establish between themselves a relation of equality... There is and can be no functional subservience of one to the other. If the

relation is one of inequality, then it is just not a personal relationship. But, once a personal relationship is established the differences between the persons concerned are the stuff out of which the texture of their fellowship is woven. (Macmurray 1935: 60).

Macmurray claims that if a relation of inequality exists between two individuals, a personal relationship, properly speaking, cannot manifest itself. This can be compared, again, to Hegel's master/slave dialectic, in which we see a relationship of inequality between two individuals who are willing to risk life for recognition from the other. The interaction which finally results from Hegel's dialectic of recognition is a relationship which requires both self-conscious individuals to acknowledge each other, respect each other, and then they will benefit from each other. It is this kind of interaction which is required for personal growth. Similarly Macmurray insists that interest is part of what links a person to another, and interaction and interest is necessary for them as selves. The process of maturation and growth described by both Hegel and Macmurray is essential for the formation of person, as well as for the affirmation of freedom.

The personal life is just that life in which we are seeking freedom in our relations with one another. It is that central core of our experience in which we are seeking to accept one another and to be accepted for what we are, so that we may be ourselves and express

ourselves for one another. And that is freedom. Freedom is what we seek, and if we are successful we find, in all those relations in which we treat each other as equals for no reason but to be ourselves together. (Macmurray 1935: 61)

Both Macmurray and Hegel insist upon the importance of freedom. Hegel's progressive dynamic between the 'master' and the 'slave' illustrates the structure of recognition, and the importance of the development of individual consciousness, which finally achieves the end of being one with community or the Absolute. Macmurray advocates a comparable communal order in which there is freedom and recognition in the relations between persons. He insists that there can be no personal life without freedom, and both Hegel and Macmurray maintain that freedom is necessarily made manifest in a community of persons. Persons have the freedom to make choices and act, both as individuals and as a community, according to those choices. This freedom to choose and act gives persons the capacity to grow as a self which subsequently contributes to the growth of the whole.

This discussion of persons with the freedom to make choices, act according to those choices, and grow and mature as a result, brings to mind the discussion of Kant in chapter one. What makes us persons as opposed to mere human beings is the complexity of our thoughts, feelings, and especially our freedom. All of these factors give us our ability to act and interact in a special way. Kant partially explains the complexity of personhood with his proposal of two distinct realms: sense and reason. Persons are said

to be subject to both, yet must work towards a more rational existence, an existence in which we are not controlled completely by the sensual. According to Kant, we must choose to act rather than be acted upon or led by our feelings. Kant is not promoting a self which develops into an all-rational being devoid of feeling. Rather, it is a matter of moral maturity; having control over how to make decisions and act accordingly. Persons are complex especially because they have this freedom to choose. Freedom is an essential aspect of the world of reason whereas it is not possible in the world of sense, which is phenomenal and subject to the laws of nature. The world of reason allows for freedom; freedom is the ability of the will to choose. The rational/moral choices made by persons are combined with the sensual, feeling aspect of the self which allows for a different kind of understanding. Personal interaction, which calls forth our rational and sensual capacities, creates a communal bond which goes deeper than interaction within a purely phenomenal/sensual realm.

Kant insists that rationality enables human beings to make sound decisions, but in order to make use of rationality one must undergo a certain amount of growth. As discussed in chapter one, Kant's proposed levels of human maturity are illustrated by the predispositions of animality, humanity and personality. With personality, persons have the capacity for moral feeling and can choose to act in a way that shows respect for the moral law. Both personality and morality, according to Kant, are rooted in practical reason. Kant suggests that human agency operates by way of practical reason, whereas (non-rational) animals act merely on instinct, from moment to moment, with no ends in mind. Human reason enables us to recognize the moral law, and therefore, according to



Kant, we ought to act according to it. Kant's theory is quite different from the pragmatic theory of persons I have suggested throughout this paper, wherein persons become who and what they are largely as a result of their sensuous activity within a world of others. Kant's assertion that personality is dependent upon the development of rationality seems to suggest the opposite of the pragmatic position described here. However, as noted in chapter one, in his specific mention of moral feeling, Kant makes a clear distinction between reason and feeling, yet asserts that the integration between the two is crucial to his theory of morality.

The communal interaction which helps form persons includes having a special capacity to understand one another. Stein has shown how the mutually interested, social nature of persons entails a dynamic including a sensitivity that enables an empathic response to the experience of another. This capacity for heightened sensitivity is part of what makes us persons-in-a-social-world. Stein examines the person in the context of the psycho-physical individual, i.e. one's personal, feeling self and one's physical self. Stein analyses psycho-physical causality in an attempt to better understand empathy. In her attempt to understand the feeling aspect of persons, Stein first tries to objectify the 'I' of the personal-I, i.e., the feeling part of the self, by identifying what she calls the 'zero point of orientation.' According to Stein, this 'zero point' is "where" we "feel." Once she completes this objectification of sorts, she explains how a correlation exists between one's physical and personal self and one's personal self and another's personal (feeling) self. The correlation between persons can be drawn because one has the ability to understand another's experience, and can therefore 'feel' for another when they are

having a certain experience. The experience of empathy requires reflection upon our own experiences, thereby giving experience meaning. The special interest between persons as manifested in empathy reinforces my claim about persons being interrelated, interconnected, and interested in each other.

Stein's explanation of empathy demonstrates how interested persons have an affinity for one another. This mutual understanding reinforces my claim about person formation being the result of activity in a sensuous and social world. Persons interact and grow together in a community. When one opens themselves to 'feel' what an other is feeling or what an other has felt, there is an opportunity to learn about an other and subsequently, to learn about one's own self through the other's experience. It has been shown that empathy is one notion central to the process of person formation as it is one mode of personal connection which promotes inter-personal relations, understanding and growth.

## Conclusion

Persons are formed as a result of being active and social. Personal interaction is driven by mutual interest. Persons have the capacity for special interest called empathy. Empathy brings the sociability of persons to a deeper level, as persons are able to understand the experience of another; this is a process similar to imagining when one 'feels' for another. Interested interaction and empathizing suggests a certain degree of sophistication which is explained in various ways.

Kant and Hegel introduce analyses of personhood which promote the development of rationality and self-consciousness, respectively. Both encourage the development of the rational aspect of the self such that there is self-discipline and increased awareness. Kant discusses this increased awareness as rationality, which, in turn, provides the basis for acting morally. For Kant, sociability is reflected in personal development as portrayed in his original predispositions (animality, humanity, and personality). The predisposition of humanity introduces the notion of having value in the opinion of others, which demonstrates progress of the individual following the mechanical self-love of animality. The predisposition of humanity advances further with the capacity for moral feeling, i.e., respect for the moral law, with which comes personality. According to Kant, when an individual, in their freedom to choose, actually chooses to incorporate the moral law into his or her maxim, the result is good character. Achieving personality implies growth towards an increasingly 'rational' self, and therein an increasingly moral self. Following an analysis of this aspect of Kant's philosophy, I

suggest good character, as described in the context of Kant's practical reason, makes the way for both person and community formation.

For Hegel, with increased awareness comes self-awareness, i.e., self-consciousness, and this growth translates into increased recognition of the other. Hegel describes a process of self-othering wherein the individual objectifies his or her self, and then the self-other returns to the self, thus achieving self-consciousness. Self-consciousness can only be reached through this process of objectification and re-union, and similarly, in coming to 'know' any other, it becomes a part of the self to some extent. Both the self-other and the 'other' is digested by the self and thus it is known. According to Hegel, the other is a necessary condition of the possibility of the self, as it is through the other that one finds one's self. One of Hegel's most important philosophical assertions is the social dynamic proposed in his master/slave dialectic. He highlights the importance of recognition of the other and the symbiotic relationship which must exist for the survival of the whole. There is a special dynamic between self-conscious individuals which is necessary in the process of becoming, i.e., necessary for person formation.

Taking from the concepts proposed by Kant and Hegel, John Dewey did extensive analyses of individuals in the community and person formation. Both the development of the rational aspect of the self and the importance of the other in coming to self-consciousness are central to personhood. Taking these concepts into consideration, Dewey introduces the unique connection between self and other as manifested in interest. According to Dewey, interest embodies the essence of human activity. Persons are active

and motivated to make certain choices; intentional choices which are decided upon when one is presented with two or more options. From a solipsistic point of view, these concepts explain individual action, but according to Dewey, action, motive and intention must be combined with interest for an accurate description of the person-in-action. In this paper, I include Macmurray's concept of the person-in-action with Dewey's analysis of the interested, social person in order to enhance the discussion as both promote the concept of person as inter-active, social and interested.

Person is analysed further through Edith Stein's concept of empathy, i.e., a special interest based on our capacity to relate to another. Reflection upon an experience, for example, imagining one's self in a certain situation, evokes a feeling as there is an understanding of what is felt when I do this or I do that. Similarly, a person has the ability to understand an other's experience when they do this or feel that; persons have the capacity to understand an other's feeling which, in turn evokes a feeling of empathy. Interest between people, as described by Dewey, is a crucial aspect of participation in a community of others. Empathy is the capacity for a more intimate level of understanding and relatedness. Interest and empathy work together in personal relations contributing to person formation and the community of the active-persons-in-the-social-world.

What becomes clear through a close reading of these different thinkers is that both interest and empathy, broadly understood, are crucial in the development of personhood. The capacity to put one's self in the place of the other, and to act and interact in a community with others; these capacities allow the individual to evolve into a full-formed, self-conscious person.

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