

Eduardo González Di Pierro, *De la persona a la historia. Antropología fenomenológica y filosofía de la historia en Edith Stein*. Morelia: Driada, 2004; 215 pages. ISBN 970-9350471.

Review by Antonio Calcagno, King's University College at UWO.

Eduardo González Di Pierro's work is a welcome addition to the growing body of scholarly literature devoted to the philosophy of Edith Stein. Before arriving at Göttingen to study with Husserl and Reinach in 1913, Stein was enrolled in Psychology and History as well as German Literature at the University of Breslau. Her interest in history continued while at the Universities of Göttingen and Freiburg and it would be an understatement to claim that history played a significant role in Stein's early phenomenological works. But Stein's later works, including *Finite and Eternal Being*, also display an astute awareness of the place and roles of history in discussing various kinds of philosophical problems. Di Pierro's text is the first scholarly study I know that systematically traces the use and development of Stein's views on history. One of the classic critiques levelled against early phenomenologists concerns their seeming lack of historical awareness. However, this is a misreading of the early phenomenological tradition. There is great sensitivity to the role of history in shaping our sense of things, as is evidenced by Stein's work on values and politics, which Di Pierro nicely signals.

Di Pierro's reading of Stein's philosophical appropriation of history results in a very specific thesis: history, for Stein, not only helps us understand the nature of the human person as a unity of body, psyche and spirit but also as a social being who finds herself in the world. Consciousness of history as well as the specific science of history allows us to see the validity of this claim, so says Di Pierro. (25–26) In fact, the author begins in the first chapter by immediately discussing the importance of the question of the constitution of the person for Stein. (31) Here, one sees the influence of Angela Ales Bello, a leading Husserl and Stein scholar, who was Di Pierro's teacher and who has spent her scholarly life analysing and defending the centrality of the primacy of the person for both Husserl and Stein.

Di Pierro demonstrates how the structure of the human person is a central theme in Stein's work, beginning with her work on empathy, to her work on the humanities and psychology, culminating in her Münster lectures, published as *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person (The Structure of the Human Person)*. He highlights the importance of the body, psyche and soul as the key components of Stein's understanding of the person. The discussion of empathy or *Einfühlung* (34–38) is a

classic point of departure for Stein's phenomenology of the person. The distinction between inner and outer experience, one that Husserl makes in the first version of the *Logical Investigations*, is vital for the establishment of the realm of lived experience, consciousness, and the pure I. Stein's discussion of empathy not only leads one to understand analogically the mind or feelings of another person, but this knowledge of others is used to understand oneself: one understands oneself as a modification of the other. It is the knowledge of self and others that allows Stein to give a general eidetic description. It is also within the treatment of empathy that we learn about the nature of our bodies as they manifest themselves to us in consciousness, linguistic expression and emotions. In his treatment of Stein's discussion of psyche, as developed in her *Beiträge*, Di Piero highlights two important facts about her position: Stein posits something like a soul, as does Husserl, that belongs to the psychic realm. Moreover, like the Stein scholar Philibert Secretan, he notes that she has a rich notion of a personality core or personal core (*Persönlichkeitskern*) that centres the life of psyche. (57) Finally, Di Piero notes that, in Stein's later writings, her notion of soul is expanded to include more traditional views of soul as immortal and as a point of encounter with God. (67)

Having established Stein's view of the human person, Di Piero moves in the second chapter to discuss the person's relation to the natural sciences and the *Geisteswissenschaften* or human sciences. This chapter is important as the author examines a rich but largely unstudied text, namely, Stein's *Einführung in die Philosophie* or *Introduction to Philosophy*, where she develops a sustained treatment of the connection between phenomenology and history. In particular, she, following Husserl, maintains that history must ground itself in phenomenology. What this means, practically speaking, is that history must become aware of the methodologies and tools it employs to arrive at its understanding of historical events and personages. This idea will be developed in the third chapter. The second chapter takes the notion of the human person developed in the first chapter and begins to show how it is to serve as the ground for all sciences: one cannot have genuine scientific understanding, if one is not aware of the operator and end of these sciences, namely, the human person. Di Piero moves through Stein's treatment of space and time, which relies heavily on the work of Einstein and Planck (81–82), in order to show how a formal conception of space and time also conditions our understanding of our own bodily space and the environment in which we dwell. There is a marked difference from earlier texts in the way Stein treats phenomenological objects in the *Introduction*. In the texts on empathy and the *Beiträge*, Stein gives traditional eidetic descriptions: one sees

here the influence of both Reinach and Husserl. But by the time Stein writes the *Introduction*, she gives us a formal ontology of various phenomenological objects. One sees here the influence of the Munich school, other phenomenologists and, in particular, the influence of Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Jean Hering and Alexandre Koyré. The *Introduction* was a text that took form in the mid to late 1920s and Stein kept revising it through the 1930s. One could say that the *Introduction* marks a change in Stein's phenomenological method. That being said, the centrality of the person cannot be denied. One sees here Stein's attempt to connect the sciences with phenomenology through formal ontology. Di Piero does a nice job explaining key elements in Stein's formal ontology and how they relate to the person.

The last chapter is where the meat of the book can be found; it is also where we see Di Piero elaborate Stein's theory of history. He identifies five levels that refer to history, as Stein conceives it. First, there is history understood as a successive series or flows of successive events. Second, history is a description of a series of happenings: here we see Rickert's influence; here questions of historiography come to the fore. Third, there is history understood as reflection or philosophy of history as practiced by thinkers like Vico and Saint Augustine. Fourth, there are the larger questions that touch upon the previous three levels, but Di Piero sees this fourth sense of history as a distinct question, namely, What is history? (126–27) Finally, he shows how, in Stein's later works, one can find a theological understanding of history. Obviously, here we are dealing with questions of eschatology and soteriology. (148)

Di Piero certainly succeeds in showing the relationship between history and the human person. This is what the book intends to do. I would also like to note that Di Piero presents a nice synthesis of Stein's views on history. This will be most useful to both phenomenologists and Stein scholars. One thing I would have liked to see, although there are references to it, but not in any developed or sustained way, is a treatment of how Stein stands *vis-à-vis* other philosophers and phenomenologists when it comes to history, such as Heidegger, Husserl or Dilthey. Di Piero notes the sources and influences of these philosophers on Stein, but a broader dialogue with other philosophers of history would have made the text even richer. But perhaps I ask too much as this would require a more lengthy monograph. Finally, given Di Piero's fine analysis, I wonder if Stein's views of history and their connection to the person and phenomenology have not already been taken up by other historical methodologies. In other words, I wonder what Stein's analyses of history offer contemporary historians. All in all, this is a fine book and I highly recommend it to those interested in

the philosophy of history, the connection between history and phenomenology, and those interested in Stein studies.

Diane Enns, *The Violence of Victimhood*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012; 231 pages. ISBN: 978-0271052427.

Review by Michelle Ciurria, York University.

The Violence of Victimhood is both a personal manifesto and a scholarly analysis of the ethics of victimhood, otherness and identity politics in the 20th century. Begun as a response to a student's accusation of racism, Diane Enns' book argues that the "victimized other" has been elevated to sacrosanct status and defined as "the good," giving perceived victims epistemic and moral authority over issues of oppression. This authority, according to Enns, is misplaced, and prevents us from holding victims legitimately responsible for their complicity in systemic oppression and violence. Moreover, the urge to participate in the dichotomous language of victim/perpetrator gives rise to a reluctance to hold anyone responsible for anything, insofar as everyone is, on some level, both a victim and a perpetrator. This ambivalence, in turn, engenders a self-defeating moral relativism which stymies any attempt to formulate a pragmatic political program for resolving conflict in war-torn countries.

Enns' book is divided into seven chapters. In the first chapter, Enns accuses Continental philosophy, and particularly the scholarship of Emmanuel Levinas and Frantz Fanon, of venerating the "victimized other" as purely innocent and impervious to criticism. The unintended consequence of this view, she says, is a radical, perverse moral relativism and political impotence. This is also the chapter in which Enns describes the plight of having to defend her lectures, on two separate occasions, against formal charges of "racial discrimination and harassment" to the faculty dean and her colleagues. One cannot help but empathise as she relates this harrowing experience, which was no doubt an unintended consequence of her earnest disquisitions; but, at the same time, one encounters passages that are liable to cause discomfort in liberal-minded readers. For example, on the moral status of rape victims, she writes, "That victims are not all the same does not mean that someone deserves to be victimized, but it does mean that some victims take risks that increase that possibility." (90) Construed in the wrong light, this could be taken to mean that rape victims are responsible for eliciting male sexual interest and violence; but what