

Jaana Parviainen

KINAESTHETIC EMPATHY

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses kinaesthetic empathy based on the German philosopher Edith Stein's theory of empathy. Applying Stein's study of empathy, the paper examines empathy as a particular form of the act of knowing. Instead of a mere emotion, empathy entails a re-living or a placing of ourselves 'inside' the another's experience. We may grasp another's living, moving body as another center orientation of the world through our own kinaesthetic sense and body topography. Kinaesthetic empathy seems to have a partial capacity to make sense of others' experiential movements and reciprocally our own bodily movements. It makes it possible to understand the non-verbal kinetic experiences through which we may acquire knowledge of the other's bodily movements on the basis of our own body topography. There is recognition that we can never reach the other's primordial movement experience.

Key words: empathy; kinaesthesia; living body; physical body; Stein, E.

1. INTRODUCTION

David Hume, Adam Smith, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Arthur Schopenhauer gave considerable attention to the role of *sympathy* in ethics. The independent concept *empathy* came into its own in the early decades of the twentieth century through the works of Wilhelm Dilthey, Theodor Lipps, Max Scheler and Edith Stein. Dilthey introduced the term *Einfühlung*, translated as empathy, used with special (but not exclusive) reference to aesthetic experience. Lipps rooted his concept of *Einfühlung* in the phenomenon of "kinaesthetic mimicry," a kind of involuntary physiological imitation of observed movements and resistance (Chismar 2001).¹ Drawing on the works of Scheler, Dilthey, Lipps and

¹ For Theodor Lipps, empathy was thus "a process in which one observes a gesture of another, imitates it, calls out through the imitation a previously experienced feeling, and then projects that feeling onto the other".

Husserl, Edith Stein offered a more detailed phenomenological study of empathy in her doctoral dissertation, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*, 1917 (The Problem of Empathy).

Stein attempted to move away from the predominantly emotional construe of understanding the inner motives for action. Applying Husserl's rigorous phenomenological method, she examined empathy as a particular form of the act of knowing, the placing of oneself in another's locus without the loss of one's own. For Stein, a description of both the psychophysical individual and the spiritual person is necessary in order to show the full implications and applications of the doctrine of empathy.² The present paper, however, focuses on sensual empathy, in particular the understanding of the moving body. In brief, the paper is concerned with "kinaesthetic empathy". The term is not to be found in Stein's research, though she reflected on the meaning of kinaesthesia in an empathic act. Kinaesthetic empathy entails a re-living or an epistemological placing of ourselves "inside" the another's kinaesthetic experience. What does kinaesthetic empathy mean in the understanding of dancing bodies?

2. PHYSICAL BODY, LIVING BODY

Like Husserl, Stein stressed that the physical body (*Körper*) and the living/lived body (*Leib*) are essentially different. The living body is given to me in perception as my own body, "outwardly" and "inwardly". Even if we shut our eyes tightly and stretch out our arms, allowing no limb to contact another so that we can neither touch nor see our physical body, we are not rid of our phenomenal bodies inwardly. We find ourselves to be bound to our bodies perceptually. The sensations of pressure, pain or cold are just as absolutely given as the experiences of judging, willing, imagining. The physical body, again, is given to us merely outwardly. It is a corporeal entity, properly defined as a complex of brain impulses, neural pathways, circulation and muscular fibres.

Discussing the living body given in perception, Stein seeks to demonstrate that the living body is constituted in a two-fold manner. Sensations are given in the living body to the living body. The living body perceives and is perceived by itself. Stein calls this double mode of experiencing the body the phenomenon of "fusion" (Stein 1917/1980, p. 48). When I touch my left hand with the right hand, my right hand feels the cool surface of my left hand, but at the same time my left hand feels the warm surface of the palm of the right hand. I am touching and touched, two-fold yet one. I can transfer my awareness of toucher and touched on the hands. According to Stein, this fusion implies that while I can feel the double givenness of touch, I can also see my hands.³ The living body is a visible entity.

² She looked to empathy to clarify the theoretical foundations of knowing not only within the individual but within human society as a whole (Herbstrith 1985, p. 145; Baseheart 1997, p. 29).

³ As Husserl's assistant (1916–1919) Stein prepared two important works of Husserl, one of which was *Ideen II* (Stein 1993, p. 2). There are similarities between Stein's dissertation on empa-

Stein says: "The hand resting on the table does not lie there like the book beside it. It 'presses' against the table more or less strongly; it lies there limpid or stretched; and I 'see' these sensations of pressure and tension . . ." (Stein 1917/1989, p. 58). The hand described could be my hand, but it could be the other's. Stein considers that the other subject is not only given as a physical body to us, but as a sensitive, living body that touches, sees, hears, moves, feels, wills.

To say that we "see" the sensations of the other does not mean that we empathize the other living body's feelings. Perceiving differs from empathizing, though it is requisite to it (Stein 1917/1980, p. 5). Empathy is based on the assumption that other subjects and their experience are given to us in a special manner. It is a "placing in the other's position". Placing ourselves thus, we "feel" the sensations of the other, though this does not mean that we experience them ourselves, in the original, as it were. Rather, our experience of them is "non-original": we see them in the sense that they are part of the very meaning of what we see, feel—a living human hand. "I" am in experience and only there am I: it is indubitable and impossible to cancel experience itself.

We see the other living body suffering and exerting effects other than a physical thing. Pricking a hand is not the same as pounding a nail into a wall or sticking a needle into a cushion, even though mechanically it is the same procedure, namely, driving in a sharp object. When I see the other's hand jabbed with a needle, the pain is given with it "at once," even when I am not aware of it "in" the other's countenance. I can consider the expression of pain, the quality of it, yet I can never get an "orientation" as to where the pain itself is primordially (i.e., originally) given. The hand senses the pain of the jab, and we see this. We "see" this because we see the hand as sensitive, because we place ourselves into it empathetically and so interpret every physical influence on it as a "stimulus" evoking a sensuous response (Stein 1917/1980, 80). We comprehend effects within the individual himself. When I see a needle stuck into a cushion, I do not imagine that the cushion feels pain, because I consider it as a mere physical thing.

thy (1917) and *Le visible et l'invisible* (1964) by Merleau-Ponty, who also years later had access to the same unpublished manuscript of *Ideen II*. In *Ideen II* Husserl places great emphasis on the fact that tactile sensations of my body are double (Blazer 1991, 272). For Husserl, there is a touched-touching, but not seen-seeing, since the eye cannot be seen by the seer. Merleau-Ponty restores the parallelism between touch and vision, detecting in both of them the same reversibility. However, he wishes to emphasize that neither in touch nor in vision is there a complete reversibility: what touches is never quite what is touched; what sees is never quite what is seen, what sees is never quite what is touched (Dastur 1984, 123). The living body's reversibility of touching and touched, seeing and seen, seeing and touched do not coincide with each other easily; rather they escape each other in what Merleau-Ponty calls a *divergence* or *écart* (Merleau-Ponty 1968, p. 257). "The point" where they interweave Merleau-Ponty calls "chiasm" (*le chiasme*). The living body is the *other* also to itself, since the body-self is never entirely known and perceived by itself (Merleau-Ponty 1962, xii). In addition, the way in which I perceive my body must be different, at least in some cases, from the way in which I perceive other creatures and things.

3. EMPATHY AS A KNOWING ACT

I am aware that I do not experience the "original" feeling, the feeling that the person is experiencing. It is therefore possible to distinguish between the pain the other feels, and the appreciation that the other is feeling pain. The pain felt by the other becomes for me the content of the act, yet it is not originally experienced.

Stein comes to the conclusion that empathy is not seeing and hearing, perception, not the object seen or heard, representation, but an autonomous act, *sui generis*. According to her phenomenological analysis, empathy unfolds as an experience of being led by the other person's experience. This empathic act takes place on three levels (Stein 1917/1980, p. 10). First, the experience emerges to us and in us. It arises in me all at once; I face it as an object such as the sadness I notice in another's face. Second, "in fulfilling explication," I can inquire into the content of the experience, delving into it in an effort to comprehend it from the other's point of view. When I inquire into its implied tendencies, the content having drawn me into it, I cease to face it as an object. Finally, when this clarification is complete, the experience stands once more before me, but now in a clarified or explicated way. Only after successfully executed clarification, I face the content again as an object. Empathy is not one-dimensional, for various degrees of accomplishment are possible. People do not always go through all levels but are often satisfied with one of the lower ones.

Stein says that we are here concerned with an autonomous act which makes it possible for the subjects themselves to recognize each other and communicate, even while keeping their distinct individualities rooted in their separated corporeality, their physical bodies (Bello 1996, p. 368). This is what is fundamentally new as an intentional act in contrast to perception, memory or expectation or the fantasy of our own experiences. Perception, for instance, has its object before it in embodied givenness; empathy does not. Recollecting, the original experience and its memory are joined together by a consciousness of sameness or a continuity of experience (Stein 1917/1980, p. 7). In empathizing, involving the subject of the empathized experience and the subject empathizing, these two subjects are separated and not joined together as in recollection.

We must also keep hold it distinct from the possible affective connotations accompanying it. For instance, I might feel a person's joy and either share her emotion or react to it with a feeling of envy. Stein maintains that empathy involves neither a process of sympathy, imitation, association, nor of mere analogy by inference. When we witness a gesture of greeting, it arouses in us the impulse to imitate it. We may do this "inwardly", if not expressly. The optical image of the other's gestures reproduces the optical image of our own gestures. We do not arrive at the phenomenon of the other's experience, but at the experience of our own which arouses in us the other's gestures as witnessed. This is a phenomenon parallel to a child who seeing another crying cries too without feeling empathy. Association is typically experienced as "something reminding me of something".

For example, the sight of the table corner reminds me I once bumped myself on it (Stein 1917/1980, p. 49). Another's expression reminds me of one of my own, so that I ascribe to his expression its usual meaning for me. This feeling is now experienced not as foreign but as our own. Association does not mediate our understanding of the expression of the other's inner condition. To be sure, association has a role in an empathic act. Association by similarity may turn out to be the comprehension of a single instance of a familiar type.

Stein stressed empathy as an act of knowing within others. I may know of another's grief on the basis of verbal communication. For instance, my friend may tell me that she is sad because her father has recently passed away. When I have reason to believe what she tells me, I can say I know that she is sad. When I know her grief by verbal communication, this is a different way of knowing grief than when I look at her living body level of sensation or feelings of life with her. Stein suggests that I may know of her grief by comprehending it empathically. Knowledge is here characterized by this encounter with the subject created in the encounter. Such knowledge points back to some kind of experienced, seen act. In the former case of knowing, conceptual knowledge reaches its object but has not "embodied" it. I know my friend is sad but am not taken into her inner motives by my "intuiting" act; thus the content of knowledge remains empty to me (Stein 1917/1980, p. 20). Empathic knowledge and conceptual knowledge may be to some extent complementary to each other. By attending to an empathic act we may deepen our understanding of conceptual knowledge. However, I would argue that an empathic act is sometimes a primary means of acquiring knowledge of another's experience. Experiences such as bodily movements are difficult to transform into verbal statements; verbal language does not convey bodily movements sensitively enough.

4. SENSUAL EMPATHY

The first ingredient, the empathic grasping of the other body by its own fields of sensation, Stein calls "sensual empathy". The possibility of sensual empathy is warranted by the interpretation of our own living body as a physical body and our own physical body as a living body. If the proportions of my hand, for example its length, width, span, were given to me as unalterably fixed, the attempt at empathy with any hand having different properties would fail because of the contrast between them. Actual empathy is however quite successful with men's and children's hands, wrinkled and mutilated hands which are very different from mine, for my physical body is not given as a fixed type but as an accidental realization of a type which is variable within definite limits.

To be sure, this is not yet an unequivocal limitation to empathy. The type "human physical body" does not define the range of my empathic objects, or more precisely, of what can be given to me as a living body. Stein meditates that I may consider a dog's paw in comparison with my hand as a sensitive limb

of a living body. I may sense pain when the animal is injured. In the case of animals there are also certain positions and movements which are given to me only as empty presentations without the possibility of fulfillment in empathy. The further I deviate from the type "human being", the smaller the number of possibilities of fulfillment becomes (Stein 1917/1980, p. 59). Nevertheless, this kind of sensual empathy is possible with animals and even plants even though our own and the other bodies are not of similar type (*Körper*). What the limits of this type might be is an open and important question for the study of empathy.

In these examples of sensual empathy, we have so far discussed the first step or level of accomplishment in the process: the emergence of the experience of another. While I live one cogito, another can appear and draw me into it, causing a conflict in my empathic act. The tensions implied in the cogito and not yet entirely consummated can obstruct the transition to a new cogito. For instance, I may feel disgust at a living body and be unable to place myself in his position. Stein calls this *negative empathy*. On the first level there is thus a split between our own actual experience and the empathic experience. All this is just as possible in perception, memory or in theoretical contemplation as in empathy (Stein 1917/1980, p. 16). Negative empathy may hinder access to the second level, since the second step involves delving into the content of the other's experience.

Stein considers a group of phenomena which participate in the structure of the individual in a special way: they appear in the living body and as psychic experiences. She calls them the *phenomena of life*. They include growth, development and ageing, health and sickness, vigor and sluggishness. In considering general feelings as our own experience, we have seen how they "fill" the living body, how they color every act and bodily event, how they are then co-seen at the site of the living body just as the fields of sensation are. Thus by his walk, posture and his every movement, we also see how an individual feels, his vigor, sluggishness, etc. We bring this co-intended foreign experience to fulfillment by carrying it out with him empathically. Nor do we see such vigor and sluggishness in only people and animals, but also in plants. Here too empathic fulfillment is possible (Stein 1917/1980, p. 77). What I comprehend in this case constitutes a considerable modification of my life. It is doubtful whether the plant has sensations; thus our empathy is unjustified if we believe we are inflicting pain on a tree by cutting it down with an axe. A plant is not the center of orientation of the spatial world either, nor voluntarily mobile, even though it is capable of living movement in contrast to the inorganic objects, such as stones. According to Stein, the absence of this constitution does not justify us in distinguishing the phenomena of life in plants from our own. If we did not look at the phenomena of life as essentially psychic, we might find a new communion with plants. We are able to empathize the phenomena of life in plants, in particular their kinaesthesia and living movements: their turning toward light, movements under the wind or withering without water.

Stein reminds us that humans can never voluntarily withdraw from psychic experiences and confine ourselves to mere phenomena of life in the manner of plants. In the higher psychic level, we become conscious of an inclination disappearing when we find it no longer present. One can feel healthy with a painful bodily injury such as a broken arm with complications. On the other hand, one can also feel extremely ill without any physical pain. I may recognize these states in others and bring them to givenness to myself in empathic projection. The attentive observer sees a variety of single traits in the whole disease picture which remain hidden from the fleeting glance. This is what is called the schooled view of the physician. Of course, this empathy mostly ceases at the first introductory level, not proceeding to projection into the ill condition (Stein 1917/1980, p. 79).

5. KINAESTHESIA AND BODY TOPOGRAPHY

Stein reminds us that as long as we regard the constitution of the living body at rest, it is not a peculiarly characterized phenomenon. It is no more diverse than the kaleidoscopic shifting of the surrounding outer world. The moving body, in contrast, appears to us as an entirely different phenomenon. Every step I take discloses a new piece of the world to me, or I see the old one from a new angle. It is not possible to comprehend the movements of other bodies at all as long as we maintain the fiction that their physical bodies are only constituted in outer perception and not as characteristically living bodies (Stein 1917/1980, p. 45). Stein says:

The other's physical body as a mere physical body is spatial like other things and is given at a certain location, at a certain distance from me as the center of spatial orientation, and in certain spatial relationships to the rest of the spatial world. When I now interpret it as a sensing living body and empathically project myself into it, I obtain a new image of the spatial world and a new zero point (*Nullpunkt*) of orientation. This is not that I shift my zero point to this place, for I retain my "primordial" zero and my "primordial" orientation while I am empathically, non-primordially obtaining the other one (Stein 1917/1989, p. 61).

We grasp another's lived body as another center of orientation of the world. When we perceive another, we perceive her as "there" in relation to us "here", and we grasp her as having her own space. Stein calls the living body's zero point of orientation a starting-point in empathizing the other body's movements. Instead of "zero point", I would prefer to use the term "body topography". Topography does not involve the body image alone, but a more dynamic structure of body, a mapping of the structure of possibilities, the qualities, the colors of movements in the body. The "terrain" of the body may be shaped in various manners depending on individual, cultural and social differences. When I learn a new skill such as swimming, I am reviving, and also reshaping, my body to-

pography. Topography implies not merely form or pattern but something much more dynamic: a basic way of doing something, a manner of proceeding, a mode of acting. The topography for bodily action, for example that for doing the crawl stroke, is intermediary between image and rule, thus between the specific and the general (Casey 1996, p. 27). Instead of the body itself, the water I place myself in and the body placed there teaches me more than any set of words I read or hear. Our understanding of a thing is not a conceptual covering up of the real, but a revelation of the given essence of the thing by the moving, sensuous body. Body topography is indeterminate because the body as lived and experienced is itself indeterminate: the body is the "general medium of my existence". Thus its topography has no final or definitive formulation (Casey 1996, p. 29).

To grasp the other as having her own body topography is to grasp her as having a shaped "terrain" defined by her own body techniques. This involves grasping her body as being capable of voluntary movement. We do not experience that the other's movements as merely mechanical, but as alive and spontaneous. If her body were simply a physical thing, devoid of life, then its spatial significance could only ever be that it occupies a "there" in relation to us. However, in empathically experiencing the other as a sentient being capable of voluntary movement, we experience her as having her own "here", in relation to which we stand "there". In an empathic projection, my body is moved not in reality but "as it were" on my body topography to the place of the foreign one. It is moved into it and occupies its position and attitude, now feeling its sensations, though not primordially and not as being its own.

Watching an acrobat balance on a tightrope, I may feel my limbs paralyzed with terror, slightly trembling with cold fear. In Stein's view, I am one with the acrobat and go through his motions inwardly. A distinction arises when I step out of complete empathy and reflect on my real living body on my seat. Then the experiences not emanating from myself appear to belong to the acrobat and to lie in his movements.⁴ I do not actually go through his motions except by proxy on my own body topography. In these non-primordial movements, I feel as if I am being led, accompanied, by his movements. Their primordially is declared in my non-primordial movements which are only there for me in him, again understood as experienced.

Our own body terrain may be dim and obscure, foreign to us, a *terra incognita*, but it can be also highly specified and cultivated. In the latter case, we can distinguish kinetic bodily feelings such as smoothness and clumsiness, swiftness and slowness, brusqueness and gentleness, in a word; we make bodily-felt distinctions (Sheets-Johnstone 1999, p. 57). Making such distinctions is a process of categorizing elements of movement in the world. This requires sensitivity to the different qualities of movements. Inquiring into the content of the other's

⁴ According to Stein, what led Lipps astray was the confusion with self-forgetfulness. Stein comes to the conclusion that empathy is not a feeling of oneness.

experience of movement, delving into it in an effort to comprehend it from the other's point of view, we need *bodily sensitivity* in respect of our own body topography and kinaesthetic sense. The dance training process reconfigures the body: it identifies aspects and parts that were previously unrecognized, and it restructures the entity of dynamic actions. The body topography enables dancers to comprehend new images and to reconsider familiar ones from new perspectives. Dance training which develops sensitivity to recognize one's bodily feelings usually improves the capacity for kinaesthetic empathy. Watching people on the street, sensitive dancers usually register the characteristic postures and gesticulations of passers-by, they sense the slouch, the strain and the looseness of others. They sense what other persons' bodily movements feel like (Foster 1997, 239). Dancers are drawn to consider movement experiences in placing themselves into the other's position. To be sure, not all dance training emphasizes bodily sensitivity in terms of body topography. Dance training which is based predominantly on movement phrases demonstrated in either imitation or identification limits the possibilities of kinaesthetic empathy. When dance students are to execute given movement phrases only in a visually correct manner, they learn the technique but without becoming acquainted with the terrain of their own body.

Kinaesthetic empathy alters the manner of receiving dance from merely seeing movements to feeling movements on the bodily topography. Three-level kinaesthetic empathy as an act of knowing may help dance critics to open up a new horizon in "reading" danceworks. In the dance class, the teacher not only sees students' movements outwardly, their body alignment and the shaping of the movement, but the kinaesthetic motivations of executing the movement. She feels the motion of the living bodies on her own body topography without herself moving. To perceive someone's movement is to perceive more than the bodily expressions of it. As Stein argued, the other subject's kinaesthetic experiences register with us in inner perception. The content of kinaesthetic experience, when submitted to reflection, discloses whether the lived experience has been my own or someone else's. Reflection allows the live experience itself to display its quality when it is lived-through inwardly (Sawicki 1997, p. 100). Watching students' movements, the teacher may feel, for example, their swiftness or slowness or their tensional tightness or looseness on the basis of her own body topography. The particular epistemic sensitivity afforded the dance teacher by body topography allows her to follow students' feelings when they discover their body terrain and reshape their body topography within a framework of new skills and techniques. Certainly, the teacher cannot feel a student's "primordial" movement. The student's movement as seen and felt on the teacher's own body topography becomes for the teacher the content of the act, yet is not originally experienced. After successful clarification of the act, the teacher may evolve proper movement exercise and teaching methods for an individual student's needs. This process of recognition and comprehension is not one-sided, but reciprocal, as we will see in what follows.

6. RECIPROCITY

Stein reminds us that the world image I empathize in the other is not merely a modification of my own image on the basis of the other orientation. For example, a blind person lacks the entire optical givenness of the world. The world is constituted for him only through the remaining senses, and in reality it may be impossible for me empathically to fulfill his world as given in empty presentations. This is by reason of my actual, life-long habits of thinking and perceiving through five senses. Stein says that this empty presentation and lack of intuitive fulfillment are given to me. If I am aware of this absence, empathy, though perhaps not "adequate", is nonetheless possible. This applies also to the person lacking one sense who seeks to empathize with a person in possession of all his senses. In both cases, empathy offers the possibility of enriching their world image through the other's view (Stein 1917/1989, p. 70).

The same world is not merely presented now in one way, now in another, but in both ways at the same time. Not only is it differently presented depending on the momentary standpoint, but also depending on the nature of the observer. This makes the appearance of the world dependent on individual consciousness, but the appearing world—which is the same, however and to whomever it appears—is constituted independent of consciousness. If I were imprisoned within the boundaries of my individuality, I could not go beyond "the world as it appears to me". According to Stein, however, one can cross these boundaries by empathy and obtain entirely different horizons of the same world, which are independent of one's own perception. Thus empathy as the basis of intersubjective experience becomes the condition for possible knowledge of the existing outer world (Stein 1917/1980, p. 72). If there were no possibility of empathy, of transferring the self into the other's orientation, any statements of his regarding his phenomenal world would always inevitably remain unintelligible. Thus empathy, at this fundamental level, makes possible an intersubjective field in which there is no single orientation or body topography. To put this point another way, empathy is a precondition for our experience of inhabiting a common, intersubjective spatial world.

The process of comprehension and recognition does not move unilaterally, that is, from me to the other; rather it is reciprocal (Bello 1996, p. 369). In fact, the constitution of the other as an individual is the condition for establishing my own individuality. If the living body is the other also to itself, as Merleau-Ponty argued, the body-self is never entirely known and perceived by inner perception. It is precisely this sort of constitution of the self which Stein analyses more generally in terms of *reiterated empathy*. In this process, one sees oneself from the perspective of the other, and one's sense of self-identity, even at the most fundamental bodily level, is thus inseparable from recognition by another, and from the ability to grasp that recognition in empathy. Reiterated empathy also makes possible the kind of self-reflection where we imagine ourselves from the

perspective of the other. To imagine oneself is to imagine viewing oneself as another would. It is to imagine oneself in the position of the other, and to grasp empathically how the other would empathize one. In Stein's words: "This reiterated empathy is . . . the condition making possible that mirror-image-like givenness of myself in memory and fancy . . . Probably it also accounts for the interpretation of the mirror image itself . . ." (Stein 1917/1989, p. 63).

We usually consider ourselves in inner perception or by introspection. Inner perception contains within it the possibility of deception. For Stein, reiterated empathy is a complementary mode of seeing ourselves. In reiterated empathy I comprehend acts where my individuality is constituted for the other. This is how I have access to the image the other has of me, more precisely, the appearances in which I present myself to him. Just as a thing is given in as many varieties of appearances as there are perceiving subjects, so I can have just as many interpretations of my living body as I can have in interpreting other subjects. Of course, as soon as the interpretation is empathically fulfilled, the reiterated empathic acts in which I comprehend my experience may prove to be in conflict with my inner perception.

Reiterated empathy offers itself to us as a means of confronting these contradictory perceptual acts. It is possible for another to judge me more accurately than I judge myself and give me clarity about myself. For example, the other may notice that I look around for approval when I show kindness, while I myself think I am acting out of pure generosity. This is how empathy and inner perception work hand in hand to give me myself. When I see my own experiences from the other's point of view, I acquire the image the other has of me. This is not to say, however, that the other socially determines me. On the contrary, the other causes me to consider myself in comparison with what is internally perceived, thus allowing me to attain to an ever-increasing awareness of myself through continuing feedback, which might even function as a corrective of possible deception (Bello 1996, p. 369).

7. CONCLUSION

Stein's discussion of empathy reveals in both method and contents the breadth, depth and precision of her philosophizing. Empathy provides us with a hermeneutic key to how people understand things and each other, an understanding that is at the core of the other's experience. Stein's theory of empathy emerges as a three-level inquiry in which one can delve into the content of the other's experience without losing the distinction between self and other. In the paper one task has been assess what kinaesthetic empathy means when we attempt to understand dancing bodies. Kinaesthetic empathy is re-living and an epistemological placing of us "inside" the other's kinaesthetic experience. It makes it possible to understand the non-verbal kinetic experiences through which we may acquire knowledge of the other's bodily movements on the basis of our own body topography.

The paper seeks to show that a kinaesthetic empathic act is sometimes a primary way to acquire knowledge of another's experience, experiences such as bodily movements which are difficult to transform into verbal language. This empathic projection has a capacity to make sense of others' experiential movements and reciprocally of our own bodily movements. The other moving body causes me to consider my own movements from the other's point of view.

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