

# Why does John Paul II refer to Edith Stein in *Fides et Ratio*?

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Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, better known by her name in the world as Edith Stein, was beatified on 1 May 1987. The process for her beatification was introduced in the early sixties by the then Archbishop of Cologne, and it proceeded as that of a martyr. She was canonised on 11 October 1998, and was further honoured by Pope John Paul II when she was made Patroness of Europe, along with Catherine of Sienna and Birgitta of Sweden, on 1 October 1999 - in a gesture to complement the existing patronage of Sts Benedict, Cyril and Methodius<sup>1</sup>.

In the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* she is pointed out as one of those thinkers who in recent times illustrates the fruitful relationship between philosophy and the Word of God (74), the others mentioned being John Henry Newman, Antonio Rosmini, Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson<sup>2</sup>. Among these, she is the only martyr.

The association of martyrdom with philosophy is rare, but it is not entirely unprecedented. In fact, both patron saints of Philosophy died as martyrs. St. Justin Martyr (ca. 103-165) was a pagan philosopher who after his conversion to Christianity instituted a school of Christian philosophy in Rome, and who wrote (among other things) two apologies and *the Dialogue with Trypho*. He was

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<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of the process, see Sullivan, John: "The Path to Beatification" in Herbstrith, Waltraud O.C.D.: *Never Forget*, Carmelite Studies 7, ICS Publications, Washington, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Vladimir S. Soloviev, Pavel A. Florensky, Petr Chaadaev and Vladimir Lossky are mentioned from the Eastern context.

beheaded at the request of the Prefect Rusticus of Rome for being a Christian. St. Catherine of Alexandria (+ 307) was known as a Christian philosopher who was imprisoned for objecting to sacrifice to the Emperor. She converted fifty scholars to Christianity while she was awaiting her execution. She was tortured on a wheel and beheaded.

Edith Stein, however, is our contemporary. John Paul II has called her a 'paradigmatic figure'<sup>3</sup> and a 'symbol embodying the deepest tragedy and the deepest hopes of Europe'<sup>4</sup>. There is a special link between John Paul II and Edith Stein. His reasons for pointing her out provide the framework for this study<sup>5</sup>. I suggest that these reasons can be divided into three categories: the personal, the practical and the objective. These will be treated in turn under the following headings: 1. Edith Stein as mirror; 2. Edith Stein as symbol and 3. Edith Stein as philosopher.

## 1. Edith Stein as Mirror

In the *Magna Moralia*, a Greek philosophical work attributed to Aristotle, the mirror is used as an analogue of the friend: friends are alike and have much in common; they 'explain' one another by intimate illustration. Stein and Wojtyła

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<sup>3</sup> Weigel, George: *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, Harper Collins, 1999, p. 540.

<sup>4</sup> Pope John Paul II: Apostolic letter issued *motu proprio* proclaiming Saint Bridget of Sweden, Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Teresa Benedicta of the Cross co-patronesses of Europe, 1 October 1999 (3.).

<sup>5</sup> Other studies have compared their philosophies or their lives, see for example: Kalinowski, Georges: "Edith Stein et Karol Wojtyła sur la personne" in *Revue Philosophique de Louvain*, 82:4 (1984), p. 545-561. Reprinted in *Autour de "Personne et Acte" de Karol Wojtyła: Articles et Conférences sur une rencontre du thomisme avec la phénoménologie*, Presses Universitaires d'Aix en Marseille, Aix en Provence, 1987; Haarlammert, Klaus: "Johannes vom Kreuz stand am Anfang. Zwischen Leben und Wirken Edith Steins und Johannes Paulus II, gibt es zahlreiche und überraschende Verbindungen", in *Edith Stein - Leben im Zeichen des Kreuzes*, Ed. by Klaus Haarlammert, Speyer, Pilger Verlag, 1987, p. 45 - 52; Cecilia, M.: "Edith Stein e il magistero di Giovanni Paolo II nella 'Redemptoris Mater'" in *Revista di Vita Spirituale* 49:2 (1995), p. 62 - 70; Maria Cecilia del Volto Santo: "Edith Stein e il magistero di Giovanni Paolo II nella 'Mulieris dignitatem'" in *Rivista di Vita Spirituale*, 50 (1996), p. 23 -37; Garcia, Laura: "The Primacy of Persons: Edith Stein and Pope John Paul II" in *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*, 1:2 (Summer 1997), p. 90 - 99; Sakowicz, Eugeniusz: "Jan Paweł II o Edycie Stein" in *Szukając prawdy: Edyta Stein w kulturze polskiej*, ed. Anita Czarniecka-Stefanska, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław, 1998, p. 9 - 14.

have much in common: they have places, masters, pursuits and problems in common, but each relates to these in slightly different ways. Because of these slight differences they 'illustrate' one another, in the same way that family members shed a curious light upon one another.

a. Common places

Both Stein and Wojtyla were born in what is today Poland. Stein was born in Breslau (today Wroclaw), in the province of Silesia, 150 miles northwest of Krakow. Stein's family on both sides came from the little town of Lublinitz (Lublinitz), half way between Breslau and Krakow, and about twenty miles west of Chestochowa.

Wadowice, Wojtyla's birthplace, is some twenty miles southwest of Krakow, in the province of Galicia. It is situated only about ten miles southeast of Auschwitz (Oswiecim), which still lies within the boundaries of Upper Silesia. It was in Krakow that Wojtyla would enter the clandestine seminary in the autumn of 1942. It was in Auschwitz that Stein was to die around 9 August 1942: Wojtyla was then twenty-two years of age, and Stein fifty-one. The few days or hours Stein spent in the extermination camp of Auschwitz, Wojtyla is likely to have spent working in the Solvay chemical factory, some thirty miles away.

Breslau was Prussian when Stein was a child, and she identified herself as German, not as Polish. When Lublinitz became Polish after the First World War her mother's family sold their property and some moved to Oppeln (which remained German), only thirty miles west, whereas others went to Berlin to establish themselves there. They were all pro-German and German-speakers. However, to Stein's mother Lublinitz remained 'home', and Stein herself would often visit the place as a child, together with her siblings. As they were allowed to please themselves and were not over-supervised in Lublinitz, the place was like a haven.

Wojtyla is of course Polish and of Polish origin. His parents came from Bielsko-Biala, forty miles southwest of Krakow. His father spoke German and taught it to Karol, but Karol's native language was Polish. The father also introduced him to the Polish romanticism of Sienkiewicz, Mickiewicz, Slowacki and Norwid, all singing the glory of the 'non-country' Poland. Galicia being as close to Silesia as Derry is to Donegal, it may be justified to say that our two personages were from the same country, but of different nationalities.

In Wadowice around 20% of the population was Jewish. Wojtyla remembers the father of his Jewish childhood friend as a Polish patriot, who fought with the Poles in the battle of Vistula which won the Poles their precarious restoration of nationhood after the First World War. Stein's active involvement in the First World War as a nurse at the Russian front testifies to her patriotism also, this time on the side of the Germans<sup>6</sup>. The Jews of Central Europe were very much part of the life of the nations in which they lived, but with the rise of Nazism, and especially with the invasion of Poland, Jews and Poles came to have something in common: they both had their 'living' space converted into National-Socialist *Lebensraum*.

However, Germany meant not only Nazism but also Göttingen: "Dear Göttingen! [Stein exclaims] I do believe only someone who studied there between 1905 and 1914, in the brief flowering time of the Göttingen School of Phenomenology, can appreciate all that the name evokes in us"<sup>7</sup>. Wojtyla, of course, did not study in Göttingen, indeed he was not yet born at the time when its school of phenomenology was flourishing. Yet the life of the Göttingen Circle and its vivid discussions would become familiar to him through his studies of Scheler, who, like Stein and Wojtyla, had come to Göttingen drawn by phenomenology.

*Analecta Husserliana* tried, in 1971, under the leadership of Anna-Teresa Tyminienska, to rekindle the spirit of Husserl's *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und*

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<sup>6</sup>The correspondence with Roman Ingarden is particularly interesting in this regard. Ingarden was a Polish nationalist, and he and Stein often discussed issues relating to nationality and the state. See band XIV of *Edith Steins Werke*.

<sup>7</sup> Stein: *Life in a Jewish Family*, ICS-publications, Washington, Chap. VII, p. 239.

*phaenomenologische Forschung*. Stein and Wojtyla 'met' three times in this new forum, the *Analecta*. The theme of Volume V is phenomenological anthropology. In it are reproduced texts from the Third International Conference of the International Husserl and Phenomenological Research Society (March 1974). Philibert Secretan's paper is called 'Personne, individualité et responsabilité chez Edith Stein', whereas Wojtyla himself addresses 'The Intentional Act and the Human Act'. In Volume VI (covering the *Fourth International Conference* of the said society, held in January 1975), Wojtyla addresses 'Participation or Alienation', whereas Philibert Secretan again talks about Edith Stein: 'The Self and the Other in the Thought of Edith Stein'. The discussion is still about phenomenological anthropology, and the two contributions of Wojtyla lies in direct prolongation of his book *Person and Act*, which was later to be published in English as the first monograph in the series of the *Analecta*. In Volume XI (covering the same society's conference in March 1976) Secretan, for the third time, writes about 'Edith Stein on the "Order and Chain of Being"', and Wojtyla addresses this time the same topic: 'The Degrees of Being from the Point of View of the Phenomenology of Action'. This time the discussion is about metaphysics, but still viewed from the standpoint of anthropology. Even if Wojtyla was only actually present on the last occasion, while Secretan spoke only at the first two, Wojtyla must have been struck at this stage by a similarity of approach between himself and Stein, and above all by their common interest in the human person. It is probably in these meetings of the minds that Wojtyla came to 'know' Stein<sup>8</sup>.

## b. Common masters

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<sup>8</sup> Wojtyla seems to have encouraged Ingarden, whom he knew in Krakow, to give his appreciation of Steins philosophical contribution, resulting in his "Die philosophischen Forschungen Edith Steins" in Waltraud Herbstrith (ed.): *Edith Stein - eine grosse Glaubenszeugin*, Ploger Verlag Anweiler, 1986. This, however, testifies only to the fact that Wojtyla did not know her work at the time, and George Kalinowsky therefore rightly underlines that his position was reached independantly of Stein ("E. Stein et K. Wojtyla sur la personne", p. 545 - 561). The comparison Kalinowski attempts to make regarding the human person suffers, however, by the lack of sources available to him at the time: *Aufbau der menschlichen Person* and *Was ist der Mensch?* were published only later. Wojtyla's philosophical formation is described e.g. in Buttiglione, Rocco: *La pensée de Karol Wojtyla*, Communio, Fayard, 1982.

Both 'came' to Göttingen to work, Stein primarily with Husserl, Wojtyla primarily with Scheler. Wojtyla 'came', even though not in person, after having completed a full education in theology, his primary degree not being in philosophy. He was, so to speak, a 'mature student' at Göttingen. Stein, on the contrary, was attracted by phenomenology from her earliest youth. Theology would be acquired (not without struggle) with the help of Thomas Aquinas, much later on in her career.

Husserl (1859 - 1938) is credited with being the 'Father of phenomenology'. He became known to Stein through Breslau seminars on the psychology of thought. In the course of these, she kept coming across references to Husserl's 1900-01 work, *Logische Untersuchungen* (Logical Investigations), and became convinced that Husserl was, as she later put it, "the philosopher of our age"<sup>9</sup>. In the *Logical Investigations* Husserl rejected what he had come to understand as his own earlier psychologism, and proposed in its stead a new science which was to investigate the phenomena in their very act of appearance, and distill their eidetic structures, without any theoretical prejudgement. This was the science of phenomenology, and pure logic as well as the whole edifice of science was to be founded on it. Its motto was *Zu den Sachen Selbst!* (To the things themselves!) By discarding psychologism, subjective idealism and naturalism, Husserl intended to analyze logical phenomena in their purity. Transforming Brentano's descriptive phenomenology, conscious acts were to be scrutinized according to their intentionality, i.e. in their structure of being a mental act (*intentio*) directed towards something (*intentum*). But intentional acts were also to be investigated according to their varying degrees of fulfilment, the highest degree being certain evidence. From around 1905 Husserl began practising what he called the 'reduction'. It implied a concern to focus on the intentional act in which the object was given, to the point of reducing the intentional object to it. Husserl would from then on talk about "transcendental phenomenology". Already the 1913 work *Ideen zur einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie*, (*Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to Phenomenological Philosophy*) bears the mark of this crucial change. Subsequent works would confirm this direction.

Stein met Husserl for the first time in 1913, and found a man who had come to think that the philosophical programme she had first been attracted by should be taken forward in a somewhat different direction. This direction would disappoint Stein, just as it disappointed Scheler, Conrad Martius, Von Hildebrand and many others of the early phenomenologists, because they felt it departed from experience. Much as they revered the one whom they called 'The Master', they responded to this new direction by endeavouring to develop the philosophical programme in the direction which they thought it should take. For Stein, the disappointment would be the first step in the direction of an intersubjective metaphysics — a path which would later lead her on to Christianity and Christian mysticism.

Max Scheler (1874 - 1928) claimed to have developed the phenomenological method independently of Husserl. Feeling on this account less indebted than did the young phenomenologists, he was even more critical than them of Husserl's transcendental turn. Scheler had never in fact been at any of Husserl's classes, and thus was not, in any strict sense, a pupil of Husserl. However, he had known Husserl since 1901 and had often corresponded with him. When Scheler had his licence to teach withdrawn (as a consequence of the scandals that flourished around his two divorces), Husserl invited him to Göttingen, where he lectured privately with much success. His aim was to construct an ethics on a phenomenological foundation, distinct on the one hand from the dominant Kantian formalism, and, on the other, from consequentialist utilitarianism. Ethics, according to Scheler, does not depend on a single formal principle, such as the categorical imperative, nor on the factual consequences of the act, but rather on the values sought to be realised by the acting person. Values, he believed, are neither abstract principles nor particular material things. They are the importance given to particular things, and therefore detectable in emotions. As such they can be analysed phenomenologically, and they form a hierarchy — the spiritual and the personal ones taking precedence over the sensible and the vital ones.

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<sup>9</sup> Stein, Edith: *Life in a Jewish Family*, Chap. V.5, p. 219.

To Stein, Scheler embodied ‘the phenomenon of genius’<sup>10</sup>. To Wojtyla, on the other hand, Husserl was the unquestioned founder of phenomenology. Stein knew Scheler, and debated with him, but she considered Husserl alone as her teacher. Wojtyla studied Scheler with the intention of developing the foundations of a Christian ethics from the latter's premises, but in the end found his theories wanting. Phenomenology, however, retained Wojtyla’s respect right into his pontificate.

Historically speaking, Phenomenology derived from Scholasticism (through Husserl’s teacher, Brentano (1838 – 1917)), not only its basic concept of intentionality, but also some elements of its analysis pertaining to the concepts of object and subject. This is why neither Stein, as she discovered Thomas Aquinas, nor Wojtyla, when he decided to investigate Scheler, came unprepared to the task.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274) taught at Paris, Orvieto, Rome, Viterbo and Naples, at the time when the idea of the university was still young. He conceived it as his vocation to confront (and to synthesise in writing) Christian thought with the philosophical heritage of Greece and Rome. At the centre of his philosophical system was Being, considered as substance in the wake of Aristotle, but also as participated Idea, as Plato had held. Already the orchestration of this philosophical synthesis, and its blending with the Christian thought of the Church Fathers (and of Augustine in particular), demonstrates the ease with which Thomas conducted his thinking. His success, however, was gradually magnified over the centuries, as his writings became standard study for clerics and philosophers alike. The Reformation condemned the kind of synthesis declaring it offensive to the purity of the Faith, whereas Catholics in reaction clung even tighter to what they considered to be both reasonable and worthy of God. This controversy conditioned the development of Thomism.

Wojtyla knew Aquinas through his seminary formation in Krakow, as well as through Père Garrigou-Lagrange O.P. at the Angelicum in Rome. Thomism became for him a foundation to build on or a startingpoint for personal

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Chap. V.5, p. 218.



reflection<sup>11</sup>, and it was as such that he transmitted it to his students<sup>12</sup>. He studied with them in seminar form the entire *Summa Theologiae*. Stein came to study Aquinas when she, at the request of Father Erich Przywara, in 1925, started to translate *De Veritate* into German. She made the effort to understand Aquinas from her phenomenological point of view, and to translate his terms into its idiom. The result was a fresh understanding of the presuppositions of Thomistic thought, an appreciation which could hardly be gained by anyone whose first formation it was.

St. John of the Cross was the common master in mysticism of Stein and Wojtyla: Wojtyla wrote his first doctorate, and Stein her last book, on the thought of the Carmelite mystic. The tradition of adopting masters in philosophy, mysticism, art or in any other spiritual discipline is in fact not unlike the rabbinic tradition known to Jesus of Nazareth. The Academy, of course, was a Greek invention, and the University a medieval one, but the very idea of a teacher teaching in a tradition recurs in intellectual as well as in practical disciplines and arts. In this sense Jesus of Nazareth is of course *the* common Master of Stein and Wojtyla.

### c. Common pursuits

Stein had gone to Göttingen out of an irresistible drive: “I could not proceed with anything except on the basis of some inner drive. My decisions emerged from a level of depth which I myself was unable to grasp clearly. But once something had emerged into consciousness and taken a definite shape in my mind, then nothing could hold me back.”<sup>13</sup> This drive was on more than one occasion to bring her close to total exhaustion — as she finished her doctorate, and as she decided to give up her academic career in order to teach with the Dominican nuns in Speyer. She first understood this 'drive' as a vocation to philosophy. It led her to phenomenology and, through the parting with Husserl, into the utter uncertainty of

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<sup>11</sup> Weigel: *Witness to Hope*, p. 87.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* p. 95.

<sup>13</sup> Stein: *Life in a Jewish Family*, p. 94.

an academic world closed in the first instance to women, and in the course of time also to Jews. As no satisfactory outcome lay immediately ahead, the pursuit was bound to either broaden out or to dry up. The years of frustration before she accepted the teaching-post in Speyer were probably the most fruitful, for it was during these that she wrote her three phenomenological treatises: *Psychic Causality*, *Individual and Community*, and *On the State*. During this period she also requested to be baptised. The pursuit deepened.

In the outlook of John Paul II, the desire for God commands a double commitment - to the person, and to truth<sup>14</sup>. In reading about the life of Stein while preparing for her canonisation, he must have been touched by the evidence that she was someone dedicated to truth and to individual persons also, and who, through this double commitment, discovered the unity of both in God.

#### d. Common problems

At the centre of the philosophical preoccupations of both Stein and Wojtyla there lies, as has already been said, the human person. Their different orbits around this common theme, however, take them into different regions of the sky. Stein, the phenomenologist, would study psychology, politics, and finally theology because the study of the person could not reach completion without it. Wojtyla, the theologian, would describe the role of the act in the formation of personality in order to construct a Christian ethics.

Their focus on the person would also be for both thinkers the point of intersection between philosophy and theology. Stein experiences the purely philosophical investigation of the person as incomplete and is pushed into theological anthropology when she endeavours to comprehend fully the person. Wojtyla likewise uncovers the openness towards the transcendent of the acting person. To him the acting person is fulfilled only in the act of love, and the commandment of love of neighbour therefore completes philosophical anthropology perfectly 'from above'.

Wojtyla's personal reasons for pointing towards Stein (the places, masters, pursuits and problems they had in common) are all concerned with the similarity between himself and her. This similarity, however, is intelligible and open because it reflects the universality of the experience they shared.

## 2. Edith Stein as Symbol

Wojtyla also has a practical reason to point towards Edith Stein in *Fides et Ratio*. Her symbolic character communicates quite clearly both the harmony of faith and reason reflected in a human life, and the ultimate wisdom of God which is the Cross.

The word 'symbol' comes from the Greek *συμβολον*, which refers to the ancient practice of cutting a token in two, so that the two people in possession of the bits can recognise each other for the purpose of some transaction. In modern language a symbol is a sign which, by synthesizing a complexity of meaning, evokes or represents it, as the cross symbolises Christianity, the queen her country and the child a hope for the future. A symbol can rarely be confined to one particular significance at the exclusion of all others, however. The child, for example, symbolizes not only hope for the future but also vulnerability, and work related to its protection.

The Pope also is a symbol, even a sign of contradiction: a title he chose for one of his books<sup>14</sup>. The symbolic quality of his person renders his actions significant to people around the globe, and makes his task very delicate and demanding.

Edith Stein is symbolic in her roles as reformer, disciple and leader.

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<sup>14</sup> *Canonisation homily*.

<sup>15</sup> *Sign of Contradiction*, St. Paul's Publications, Middlegreen, Slough, 1979

She is reformer in her roles as a professional woman and philosopher. In her day these were still very difficult roles to interpret in an acceptable way, but Stein combined massive intellectual power with sacrificial tenderness, in a manner which seem to have appeared to her own public as beautiful. Indeed her graciousness is still refreshing, being generally agreeable to feminists and conservatives alike<sup>16</sup>: her philosophy of woman is discussed widely.

As a disciple her martyrdom is symbolic. Born on the Feast of Yom Kippur (the Atonement), she came to have a singular understanding of the power of expiation. A premonition of her death made her choose for her name in religion Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, because she accepted the saving power of the death of the Messiah for herself also. She died a Jew, of course, like Christ.

As a leader she was the symbol of the Jews trapped in the heart of Europe: outcast and idolised, accomplished and sacrificed, she reckoned herself a scapegoat, a holocaust for Europe. Because she accepted this destiny for the sake of 'her people' - Jews, Christians, Germans alike - , she makes much sense as a Patroness of Europe.

The symbol Edith Stein has also been 'a sign of contradiction'. Her philosophical achievements were denigrated, but also assimilated by philosophers close to her<sup>17</sup>; her Christian monasticism was resented, as well as admired by her family<sup>18</sup>; and her canonisation was applauded by Jews, but also regretted as an assault against the memory of the Holocaust<sup>19</sup>. Symbols may be helpful to us because they do not restrict our thinking, or even confine it in a particular direction. They glow with meaning and puzzle us, like fire. John Paul II's practical reason for referring to

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<sup>16</sup> McAlister, Linda Lopez: "Essential differences" in *Philosophy Today*, 37 (Spring 1993) p. 70 - 77.

<sup>17</sup> See Sawicki, Marianne: *Body, Text and Science. The Literacy of Investigative Practices and the Phenomenology of Edith Stein*, (Boston, Kluwer, 1997) where a detailed investigation of Stein's works for others under their name is undertaken.

<sup>18</sup> Several of Edith's family-members have collaborated in editions of her philosophy, e.g. the nieces Susanne Batzdorf and Waltraut Stein.

<sup>19</sup> Concerning Stein's relationship with Judaism much has been written by both Jews and Christians. For an introduction to the problem see Herbstrith, Waltraud: *Erinnere dich - vergiss es nicht: Edith Stein - christlich-judische Perspektiven*, Annweiler und Essen, Plöger, 1990; translated by Susanne

Stein is that her symbolic quality makes her visible from afar like a torch, even if a multiplicity of interpretations of her life remain possible.

### 3. Edith Stein as Philosopher

At the centre of Stein's life and symbolic character stands her vocation as a philosopher. Wojtyla's personal and practical reasons for pointing towards her are therefore rooted in this objective reason: she was an outstanding Christian philosopher, indeed among the greatest of the twentieth century.

We are fortunate today to have even more of Stein's philosophical writings than those she herself planned for publication. This is due to the Carmelites, the Stein-Archives and to the Herder-editors of *Edith Steins Werke (ESW)*<sup>20</sup>, which now in addition has planned a critical *Edith Stein Gesamt Ausgabe (ESGA)* in 24 volumes<sup>21</sup>. The translation and publication of the *Collected Works of Edith Stein (CWES)* in English is due to the ICS-publications of Washington DC<sup>22</sup>.

Stein's life and work can be divided into four periods, each marking a definite step in her philosophical development<sup>23</sup>:

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Batzdoff as *Never Forget. Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein*, ICS-publications, Washington, 1998.

<sup>20</sup> *Edith Steins Werke (ESW)*, Herausgegeben von Dr. Lucy Gelber and Michael Linssen O.C.D., Archivum Carmelitanum Edith Stein, in Zusammenarbeit mit der niederlaendischen und der deutschen Ordensprovinz der unbeschuhten Karmeliten, Herder, Freiburg- Basel - Wien, 1962 - .

<sup>21</sup> The *Edith Stein Gesamt Ausgabe (ESGA)*, is edited by the "Edith Stein Institut" in Würzburg under the direction of Michael Linssen O.C.D., in collaboration with Prof. H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz (Dresden) and others. It is planned that 4 volumes will appear every year until the end of 2010, beginning this autumn 2000 with the appearance of three volumes: *Die Frau, Selbstbildniss in Briefe I* and *Selbstbildniss in Briefe II*. The 24 volumes will be published under 5 headings: Biographische Schriften (Bd. 1 - 4); Philosophische Schriften (bd. 5 - 12); Schriften zur Anthropologie und Pädagogik (bd. 13 - 16); Schriften zur Spiritualität (bd. 17 - 19) and Übersetzungen (bd. 20- 24).

<sup>22</sup> *Collected Works of Edith Stein (CWES)*, ICS-publications, Washington D.C., Vol. 1: Life in a Jewish Family; vol. 2: Essays on Woman; vol. 3: On the Problem of Empathy; vol. 4: The Hidden Life; vol. 5: Selfportrait in Letters (to appear: vol. 6.); vol. 7: Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities; vol. 8: Knowledge and Faith.

<sup>23</sup> Sawicki's "Chronology of Writings of Edith Stein (1891 - 1942)", available at the Baltimore Carmels website, is a helpful reconstruction of the chronology of the Works of Edith Stein, in particular as this chronology is not observed by either of the editions of her Collected Works.

1. The phenomenological works of her prime youth comprise *On Empathy* (her doctoral thesis, 1917); *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* (with its two parts: *Sentient Causality*, and *Individual and Community*, 1922) and *On the State* (1925). All of these are phenomenological investigations in dialogue with (as well as in reaction to) Husserl's philosophy. We can broadly characterise this period as phenomenological.

2. After she decided to teach with the Dominican Sisters in Speyer she translated Newman's *Letters and Diary 1801 —1845*, and Aquinas' *De Veritate*. She wrote a famous article on the relationship between Husserl's phenomenology and the philosophy of Aquinas, to commemorate Husserl's seventieth birthday<sup>24</sup>, and she also held the lectures on the vocation of woman which made her famous in Germany. These lectures are collected in one volume under the title *Die Frau*<sup>25</sup>. In this period she absorbs and comes to grips with thomism.

3. When she gave up her teaching in Speyer she did so in order to dedicate herself full-time to academic work. The writings of these years mark Stein's maturity as a philosopher, lecturer and writer, and include her *Introduction to Philosophy* (1931), *Act and Potency* (1931, later expanded into the first part of *Finite and Eternal Being*), and the two essays in anthropology *Aufbau der menschlichen Person* (1932), and *Was ist der Mensch?* (1933), which both result from her lectures in educational theory given at the Münster Marianum. The engagement with the Münster Marianum was interrupted by the Nazi prohibition against Jewish professionals, and this was the event which prompted her to write her unfinished autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family* (1933 - 35), and also procured her with time to do it. This period is dominated by an interest in anthropology.

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<sup>24</sup>"Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino: Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung." in *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und Phänomenologische Forschung*, Ergänzungsband, p. 315 - 338, translated in Baseheart, Mary Catherine: *Person in the World*, Kluwer, Dordrecht, 1997 and, alongside the original dialogue-version rejected by Martin Heidegger, in Stein, Edith: *Knowledge and Faith* (CWES) vol. 8.

<sup>25</sup> CWES, Vol. 2.

4. From her Carmel days come *Finite and Eternal Being* (1935 - 36) and the unfinished *Science of the Cross* (1942). Both were written at the request of her superiors. In addition, she composed a series of minor hagiographical writings for the edification of the sisters<sup>26</sup>. The two major works were both intended for publication, but publication of works by Jews had become practically impossible in the years following 1939. They were published after the war as the first volumes in the series of *Edith Steins Werke*. The composition of the work *Finite and Eternal Being* makes us characterise this period as ontological.

There is a clear development in Stein's thought. In her youthful writings she was concerned with filling the lacunas she saw in Husserl's thinking, while elaborating and expanding on the phenomenological method, which she found to be the only one that could meet her own scientific standards. Around the time of her baptism, in 1922, Christian mysticism became something she felt compelled to explore. In and through this meeting with a new discipline, her thought was first confronted with, and was later to thrive on, Scholasticism together with its inherent Aristotelianism. Whereas she, in the works of her youth, acknowledged the existence of an experience of faith, and treated of it among other conscious experiences, by the time we come to her later writings, it has penetrated her own personality and thought completely. The mature works are no longer so much preoccupied with phenomena as they are centered on being. They do, however, still find their point of departure in conscious experience, and conscious experience is never far away from the ontological analysis.

The theme which underlies this development is the human person. It is Stein's efforts to understand the complexity of inner experience, and its anchorage in personality as well as in bodily expression, which leads her on to see that the person cannot be understood in isolation, either from the physical forces which surround it and by which it lives (the energy-levels of consciousness are causally related to the body), or from the community of which it is part (our habits of thinking are shaped in a community). These factors, which have an impact on consciousness, lead her to presuppose a plurality of persons (in contradistinction to

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<sup>26</sup> *Das Verborgene Leben*, ESW, vol. , *The Hidden Life*, CWES vol. 4.

Husserl's transcendental ego), constitutive of the world in which they live. It also leads her to a more confident approach to reality, which is alive and real with all the power which I lend to the personal perspective of the others.

It is still the individual human person who constitutes the centre and summit of her later philosophy of being, and therefore brings the phenomenological method into her ontology, as its foundation 'in relation to us'. Its foundation in relation to itself, i.e. the foundation it has outside of all reference to any particular human perspective, is Being, which to the believer also is accessible as personal in God.

The development of her thought from phenomenology over thomism to anthropology and ontology is organic: the elements are present throughout, but they are not always in the foreground. To get a clearer grasp of her philosophy, let us take a closer look at each of these elements.

#### a. Phenomenology

Stein understood phenomenology to be a method of investigation and an attitude of dedication to the meticulous and scientific description of the phenomena as they appear<sup>27</sup>. To suspend our judgement of reality (by the *epoché*), and to reduce experience to what is experienced (by the *phenomenological reduction*) form part of the phenomenological discipline required by the fact that the phenomena stand in a (for us) uncertain relationship with what is. These methodological precautions leaves us with the stream of consciousness of which the “pure I” is the underlying unity. Stein endorsed Husserl's descriptive phenomenology of the *Logical Investigations*, as well as the transcendental phenomenology put forward in the *Ideen I*. She maintained, however, that phenomenology was in need of a thorough investigation of just that kind of act in which we appreciate the consciousness of other people: empathy. Without such an investigation it would remain unclear by what means the foreign subject was constituted, and therefore what

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<sup>27</sup> See for example *On Empathy* (CWES Vol. 3), Chapter II, 1. p. 3 - 6 (1 - 4 in the German) and 5. (a), p. 21 - 22 (22 - 23 in the German).



intersubjectivity could possibly mean. Her findings in *On Empathy* was therefore intended as a contribution to the phenomenological enterprise. It was only later, when working as Husserl's assistant, that Stein realised the distance between herself and Husserl. To her, empathy provided a means of obtaining knowledge about the world as another sees it. Empathy yielded within consciousness the very objectivity of the world as constituted between subjects perceiving it. Here was what would provide science with a secure foundation, here was, as she says, true πρώτη φιλοσοφία<sup>28</sup>. For Husserl, empathy, (though he, like Stein, understood it to be the means of constituting the other as other,) could not distract him from the the course towards transcendental solipsism. To him the ego is not constituted in reiterated empathy as a psycho-physical individual person, it is self-constituted. The insertion of the I in the world and the understanding of persons therefore becomes more problematic. This is why Stein's doctoral thesis on empathy simultaneously marks Stein's adherence to, and her departure from Husserl's transcendental phenomenology.

The parting evolved into a crisis when Stein, having obtained her degree, was engaged as Husserl's assistant for thirteen months. During this period she put in order and prepared for publication notes made by Husserl over a number of years - the manuscripts finally published after Husserl's death as *Ideen II* and *III*. She also prepared for publication the *Notes on Time Consciousness*, which were later to be published by Martin Heidegger. It became clearer for Stein during these months that Husserl was not prepared to heed the insights gained from Stein's analysis of empathy and the constitution of the individual person. Stein regarded this as a failure, because it left the idea of constitution, in particular intersubjective constitution, hanging in the air. Unable to convince him about the need to explore inter-subjectivity anew, she asked to be relieved of her duties in order to be able to devote more time to her own work. It is against this background that she used her theory of empathy as a basis for constructing a *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* <sup>29</sup>. In this work she explores how the realms of the soul and of the spirit are constituted and thus intends to contribute to the understanding of the

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<sup>28</sup> *On Empathy* (CWES Vol. 3), Chapter II, 5. (a), p. 21 (22).

<sup>29</sup> CWES, Vol. 7.

foundations of psychology and of the 'sciences of the spirit' (Geisteswissenschaften).

In its first part this work analyses the phenomena of causality within the sentient soul, i.e. how necessitation, contrary to motivation, occurs and is experienced. The purpose is to determine the causal relations between the body and consciousness, and to describe the contours of this necessitation, which is radically different from that of logical necessitation or spiritual motivation. Psychology, she claims, depends on this distinction, and without having a clear understanding of how causation and motivation interact, psychology as a science would be unable to determine its own object precisely.

The second part of *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* investigates the impact of the community on the individual. It seeks to determine the extent to which the individual is influenced by the community, as well as to determine the mechanisms through which the community is constituted by individuals. The work relies on an analysis of common consciousness in which and through which explanations of events and the events themselves make sense. The discipline of history, and the other subjects of the humanities, have their objectivity from and in this common consciousness. The analysis of its nature therefore constitutes the foundation of the humanities.

The two parts taken together seek to determine what constitutes persons: nature - the metabolism of life which penetrates all psychic life; and society - the cultural suppositions which determine the conscious life of the individual.

#### b. Thomism

After her baptism Stein was encouraged by her spiritual director, to take up her academic studies anew through the study of Thomas Aquinas. The meticulous work of translation, commentary and systematisation was not unfamiliar to her. As Husserl's assistant she was accustomed to bring into a coherent whole piles and

piles of stenographed manuscripts, and as a teacher of Latin and German at the Dominicans in Speyer, she had the command of both languages. Above all, translation afforded her a way to become familiar with the thought of Thomas himself<sup>30</sup>.

Stein had as a student of Husserl conceived a distaste for mistaking the history of philosophy for philosophy itself. In consequence of this, her purpose in translating the *De Veritate* was not philological but systematic: she wanted to translate Aquinas, not only into German, but into modern German philosophical idiom and thus to bring Thomas' thought into dialogue with Phenomenology. She did this by succinctly rendering the meaning, and establishing the relevance, of each article in relation to the whole, thus producing a very readable text, one that is closer to Thomas' own work than many modern day translations, which incorporate his students' work in the form of objections. It appears at first glance to be a translation, but in fact the genre is that of a Scholastic commentary, where translation and commentary are marked carefully by signs in the "lay-out" and where the author's interpretation illuminates both the text commented on and the commentators point of view.

The choice of *De Veritate* among all the works of Aquinas was dictated by circumstance and interest alike. However, *De Veritate* is not the work with the most impressive structure among Aquinas' works. It is Saint Thomas' earliest series of publically disputed questions, and it consists of twenty-nine such, stitched loosely together around the theme of truth. The content, however, testifies to the synthesis of Aristotelianism and Christianity which would later be systematically developed in the *Summa Theologiae*, and it exposes Thomas' metaphysics of knowledge as precisely that: a metaphysics of knowledge.

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<sup>30</sup> "The translation of the *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate* constituted for me a necessary way towards penetrating the thought of Saint Thomas". *Des Hl. Thomas von Aquino Untersuchungen über die Wahrheit*, in Deutscher Übertragung von Edith Stein, 1. band, Otto Borgmeyer, Breslau, Vorwort. My translation. A note to the Husserl and Aquinas-article reads "I purposely avoid the term 'Thomism' since I base my comparison not on any traditional scholastic system but on an overview drawn from Thomas' writings." CWES Vol. 8, p. 137 - 8, translation by Walter Redmond.

Stein comments: "The teaching on knowledge (*Erkenntnislehre*) given (..), is rather different from modern epistemology ("*Erkenntnistheorie*"), as it has developed since the Renaissance. It has no claim to be the foundation of all other philosophical disciplines, and does not pretend to be a science without presuppositions: It is part of a great metaphysics. Knowledge is here a real event, which presupposes a threefold world of realities: the uncreated and eternal Spirit of God, the world of things created by Him, and the finite spirits created by Him. This differentiation in the real world prompts a differentiation of knowledge. So that not even a common definition of "knowledge-as-such" is possible."<sup>31</sup>

In the quoted passage Stein looks in vain for a transcendental analysis of knowledge. She finds in its stead knowledge understood in relation to being, the first concept of the mind. In her later article on the relationship between Husserl and Aquinas<sup>32</sup>, she states that even if we could give an account of knowledge as such, it would not be sufficient to account for the limits of human knowledge. This is in fact the point where Husserl and Aquinas part ways: "Phenomenology proceeds as though our reason had no limits in principle. Certainly, it grants that its task is endless and knowledge is an unending process. But it heads straight for its goal: that is, the full truth, which as a regulative idea sets the the course it is to take. From the perspective of this philosophy there is no other way to the goal. St. Thomas' view is also that this is the way of natural reason. Its way is endless, and this implies that it can never reach its goal but only approach it step by step. Another consequence is that all human philosophy is bound to be fragmentary." Thomas, however, "would never admit that this is the only way of knowledge, nor that truth is but an idea that must be actualized in an unending process — and hence never fully. Full Truth *is*; there is a knowledge that embraces truth completely, a knowledge that, rather than unending process, is unending, infinite, fullness at rest. Such is the *divine knowledge*." The sheer temporality of our knowledge proves to us the existence of such Eternal Being, as Stein will show in the beginning of *Finite and Eternal Being*. The distinction between natural and supernatural knowledge is therefore not, as Husserl would have it, an empirical

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid. , p. 32 - Commentary to q. 1. My translation.

<sup>32</sup> *Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison* in CWES 8, p. 1 - 63.

distinction. It is a transcendental one, based on the nature of our knowing as temporal and finite. Faith, the basis of supernatural knowledge, is a way to go further along the naturally desired way of knowledge, by relying in trust upon an infinite Intellect making itself known through Revelation.

### c. Anthropology

It was Stein's phenomenological anthropology, in particular her understanding of the temporality of the ego, which determined her development as a phenomenologist and her acceptance of the philosophy of Saint Thomas. She investigated the phenomenon of empathy, both in its essence and in its power to constitute the psycho-physical individual as well as the person. She founded psychology on the constitution of the psycho-physical individual understood in its causal and motivational structures and she founded the humanities on the constitution of the person caused and motivated by the society of which it is constituted as an individual and as a member. Thus Stein's phenomenology of intersubjectivity is developed into her mature philosophy of person, which, she now contends, cannot be completed without a theological foundation.

Her two most substantial contributions to anthropology, *The Structure of the Human Person* and *What is the Human Being?*, are complementary and both stem from her brief period as a lecturer in 'scientific pedagogics' at Münster. The Marianum had embarked on the considerable adventure of developing a new Catholic education theory and Stein's twinwork attempts to lay the anthropological foundations. In *The Structure of the Human Person* she discussed the ability of various anthropological theories to meet the requirement of providing a foundation for education. The anthropology of German idealism, of depth-psychology and of existentialism, all fall short of justifying the fundamental attitudes to be transmitted by any Catholic education: respect for nature as a given and for its laws of development; mutual trust and attention as a precondition for understanding; and responsibility towards, as well as trust in, God. Having defined the *telos* of Catholic education, she proceeds to develop an anthropology which

takes into account the human being in all its dimensions: as a material thing, an organism, an animal, a soul and a social person. She discusses the origin of the human species in the light of Darwinism, and the influence and claims of race and nationality on the identity of the human person. Finally, she addresses the relationship between philosophical and theological anthropology. She claims that the human finite being cannot be understood in isolation from the Infinite upon which it depends. Moreover, experience does not give us conclusive results as to the origin or goal, either of the individual or of the whole of humanity, but Revelation, however, is "given to humans, so that they may know what they are and what they must do"<sup>33</sup>. And thus, in so far as anthropology is incomplete without knowledge of the beginning and the end of the 'story' about the human person, it must be completed by a theological anthropology. However, had we had other kinds of privileged access to these realities (through communication with a greater spirit, for example), that would perhaps suffice. But given that Revelation precisely is such a public communication, it seems satisfactory to accept it as such, after some personal probing of its genuine character.

*What is a Human Being?* was planned as the continuation of the lecture series, but was never delivered as such. When Stein could no longer teach she worked the prepared material into a scientific study, which, however, has reached us in an unfinished state. Its subtitle: *A Theological Anthropology*, reveals that it was thought to constitute both the prolongation and the foundation of the *Structure of the Human Person*, in accordance with the expectations raised by the last part of this work. It treats of the common nature of human individuals, of the creation of the human being and of the Fall, of the Saviour and the state of the saved. It reaches from the direct creation of the soul by God to the sacraments, and examines the value and dignity of the human person. The questions of origin and end, indispensable for the educator, are thus addressed fully in this work.

#### d. Ontology

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<sup>33</sup> *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, ESW bd. XVI, p. 194.

Stein attributed to the fleeting nature of human experience (its temporality and finitude), the finding that purely philosophical knowledge of the beginning or the end is beyond our reach. Even so, the I of my experience seems pointless if it is confined within the narrow limits of my own experience. In thinking, moreover, the I is brought into contact with what lies beyond the fleeting now, because it implies identification, which, even as it is coming into being and passing away in the stream of consciousness, nevertheless transcends time into the realm of the ideal. Yet thinking is unmistakably a capacity of the human intellect, and in it we have access to what transcends time: the eternal. Stein's great attempt at an ascent to the meaning of Being, *Finite and Eternal Being*, opens with these reflections.

Developed out of her second attempt at Habilitation, (namely *Act and Potency*), the work, which she called 'her spiritual testament', centers on the question of being. "The confrontation of Thomistic and phenomenological thought follows in the objective treatment of this question"<sup>34</sup>. Stein first 'deduces' being from conscious experience, by showing how the latter would be unthinkable without the former: being is first simply understood as what is identifiable by and in thought. She thereafter proceeds through an analysis of the various forms of being (temporal, finite, infinite and eternal, on the one hand; essential, real, actual and potential, on the other), to a specific analysis of substance (form and matter). She then approaches the characteristics of being (*Seiendes*) as such (the transcendentals), before she enters into the domain of the meaning of being (*Sinn des Seins*). This she finds in the mysterious personal individuality of a substantial I.

In the paragraph entitled "On the meaning and possibility of a Christian philosophy" Stein reflects specifically on the relationship between faith and reason. She initially poses the problem in terms of the relationship between medieval and modern philosophy. The medieval philosophers saw in Revelation a measure of all truth, even as they regarded philosophy as an enterprise with its own distinct identity. Maritain, Stein argues, sees this distinctiveness as a distinctiveness of object. This, according to Stein, is incorrect, firstly because the

object of philosophy is not distinct from any of the the other sciences, but in stead founds them as it defines their respective objects. Secondly because philosophy as wisdom is the perfect *opus rationis*, the last rational explanation obtainable of the meaning of being.

Maritain had said that Christian philosophy was a special way of being (Stein says *Zustand*) of philosophy. He held that the spiritual ability to search and hold truth was strengthened through grace, and that philosophy was enriched by the concepts developed within theology (e.g. the concept of the person). Moreover he states that the world itself changes as it is seen through the eyes of faith. This means that the believer, in performing the perfect *opus rationis*, would be irrational if he relied only on natural reason, having at his disposal a superior source of truth. Maritain was ready to admit that moral philosophy could not be conducted as pure philosophy. He did not, however, as Stein does, admit this for the remainder of philosophy. "The fundamental truths of our faith - concerning Creation, the Fall, Redemption and fulfillment, - shed a light after which it is impossible that a pure philosophy, i.e. a philosophy relying exclusively on natural reason, could fulfil its task of accomplishing a *perfectum opus rationis*."<sup>35</sup>

This may imply that philosophy is accomplished through theology, but not that it is accomplished as theology. Christian philosophy is a seeing-together, a *Zusammenschau*, of Reason and Reveleation. But because faith is a 'dark light', even if it is the closest we come to God's vision, every ray of light such philosophy can cast is very precious.

As the Pope points towards Edith Stein in *Fides et Ratio*, he points towards a philosopher who dedicated her life to philosophy, and who centered her contribution on the human person.

## Conclusion

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<sup>34</sup> *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, ESW Vol. II, p. XIII.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* p. 24.



I have tried to show the reasons which the present Pope could have for mentioning Edith Stein in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. They have been divided into three kinds: personal, practical and objective. Among the personal reasons I have mentioned the places, masters, pursuits and problems they have in common. As a practical reason I have alluded to Stein's symbolic character, which makes her appealing to very different people. As the objective reason I have listed her philosophy, and briefly developed its main elements: phenomenology, Thomism, anthropology and ontology. I hope that it has against this background become more clear why *Fides et Ratio* refers explicitly to the work of Edith Stein, and why John Paul II points her out among the thinkers who have conciliated a belief in the Word of God with philosophy and scientific method. I have not seen it as my task to compare the respective philosophies of Karol Wojtyla and Edith Stein, either concerning the relationship between faith and reason or anything else, - this would be a very worthwhile task, but of another order. I have simply sought to shed light on the reasons John Paul II had to point out Edith Stein as a Christian thinker, and hope also to have introduced the interested reader to some of the thoughts of her rich and inspiring work.