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Inquiry into the Meaning of Being

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FOREWORD

A Carmelite nun once suggested that I should be writing a thesis on Edith Stein for my licentiate and master's degree in philosophy. That was the first time I heard of Edith Stein. I followed her suggestion, only to find out how few were the sources on this Catholic woman philosopher in Manila, both in the Dominican-run University of Santo Tomas (UST) and in the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University. Thanks to the UST library for granting my request, thus providing me primary and secondary sources on Stein. To cut a long story short, I was able to defend successfully in 2004 a thesis titled, "Edith Stein on the Problem of Empathy: Towards Being Human." After almost four years of teaching philosophy at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Seminary in my province in Bohol, Philippines, I went back to Manila to pursue my doctorate in philosophy at the Ecclesiastical Faculties of the University of Santo Tomas. Since my last thesis, I was already fascinated by the life and thought of Stein. Such fascination led me to engage further and more deeply into the thought of Edith Stein. Thus, in 2011, I defended my dissertation titled, "Edith Stein on Being Human: Her Contribution to the Dialogue Between Faith and Reason." As far as I know, my dissertation on Edith Stein is the first in my country.

The desire to have access to the original texts of Stein drove me to apply for a scholarship grant in a German speaking country. Fortunately, I was accepted by the Archdiocese of Vienna and in 2012 I left my country to continue my studies. After a year of studying the German language, I was admitted to the Faculty of Catholic Theology of the University of Vienna. This time I would be writing a thesis on Edith Stein in the field of theology. I can recall now the commentary of my former rector of the Central Seminary of the University of Santo Tomas, the Dutch Dominican priest, Prof. Frederick Fermin. He writes: "In last analysis, your study would be a preliminary investigation into the history of Stein's conversion. Empathy led her to an understanding of the human person, and the person revealed itself as having a transcendental (spiritual) dimension that can only be explained in relation to God, who escapes explanation. But then you are already in the field of theology. It seems that the whole laborious process of Stein's philosophizing served to make her receptive to the gift of faith." The present study is an exposition of Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being with an opening chapter about

her life. It is actually a deepening of my previous philosophical dissertation. I also consider this study as a preparation for a future thorough investigation of Stein's theology.

I would like to thank the Archdiocese of Vienna for the scholarship grant. In a special way, I would like to mention my very own Bishop, His Excellency Daniel Patrick Y. Parcon, D.D. of the Diocese of Talibon (Bohol, Philippines), for the graciousness of allowing me to finish my work until the end. I am also grateful to my adviser, Univ.-Prof. MMMag. DDr. Kurt Appel, for guiding me all throughout my writing. This work I humbly dedicate to the Filipinos in Vienna, especially in the Filipino Catholic Chaplaincy of the Archdiocese of Vienna. Their support and encouragement inspired me to keep on going despite the daunting tasks of studies and pastoral ministry. May the life and thought of St. Edith Stein, venerated as St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, the patroness of Europe, be our guide as we journey towards the truth.

INTRODUCTION

The present study is an exposition of Edith Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being. It must be made clear at the outset that the emphasis here is on the inquiry itself and not really on the meaning of being. Thus, our present consideration dwells on two important questions: 1) What is the starting point of Stein's inquiry? 2) What is its endpoint? With these two questions, we retrace the path of her inquiry. Stein's thought shaped the movement of her life; or better yet, was it her life that shaped the movement of her thought? Thus, we open our investigation with Stein's life journey in three phases: her way to phenomenology, her way to the Catholic faith and her way to Christian philosophy.

Edith Stein (1891-1942), in her search for truth, has contributed a great deal to the development of phenomenology.[1] She is considered one of the most brilliant students of Edmund Husserl. The present study, therefore, may also offer a humble contribution to the field of phenomenology. However, Stein is not only a philosopher but also a convert to the Catholic faith and eventually a Carmelite nun. John Paul II has canonized her in 1998. It is said that in Canada and the United States, interest in Stein's personal witness and intellectual achievement is growing.[2] And only recently in an international conference on Edith Stein in Vienna and Heiligenkreuz, John Sullivan, OCD, the editor of the International Carmelites' Studies (ICS) Publication series of *The Collected Works of Edith Stein* reports that there is a "stratospheric" sales of the English translations of Stein's works.[3]

Stein is truly a significant figure in the Catholic Church.[4] During the last World Youth Day in Cologne, Germany, she was one of the co-patrons of the celebration.

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[1] Cf. James Collins "Edith Stein and the Advance of Phenomenology," *Thought*, 17, n. 67 (December, 1942): 65-121. See also Antonio Calcagno's book The Philosophy of Edith Stein (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2007). Calcagno claims that Stein has unique contributions to phenomenology.

[2] Jan H. Nota's introduction to *Edith Stein: A Biography*, 2nd English ed. Waltraud Herbstrith, trans. Bernard Bonowitz (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 14.

[3] See John Sullivan, OCD, "Source of ‚Stratospheric' Stein Sales: ICS Publications' Contributions," in *Edith Steins Herausforderung heutiger Anthropologie: Akten der Internationalen Konferenz 23.-25. Oktober 2015 in Wien und Hieligenkreuz*, ed. Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz/Mette Lebech (Heiligenkreuz im Wienerwald: Be&Be-Verlag, 2017), 440-456.

[4] In his book *Das unterscheidend Christliche: Beiträge zur Bestimmung seiner Einzigkeit*, Karl-Heinz Menke mentions Edith Stein as one of those distinctive Christians whose lives have been configured to Christ. Stein for him is a personification of a true Christian, similarly, a true representative of Christianity. Stein's search for the Absolute is exemplary for Christianity, and I add, for the whole Catholic

Benedict XVI often mentioned her during the said event.[5] John Paul II also includes Stein among the "recent thinkers" who have bravely managed to harmonize philosophy and the Word of God in their research.[6] Undeniably, Stein is also an important figure in the field of philosophy. Her analysis is worth considering. In her great book, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*, she describes modern thought as a dissociation from the problem of being whose focus is the problem of knowledge. Its spirit is then different from both Greek and Medieval thought whose dominant theme is the problem of being. What makes the difference, however, between the Greek and the Medieval is that the former knows no revelation while the latter assumes the problem of being in view of revealed truths.[7]

Stein claims that by centering itself on the problem of knowledge, modern thought cuts itself off from faith and theology. We recall here René Descartes (1596-1650), who is considered as the Father of Modern Philosophy. In his Third Meditation, Descartes inquires whether God exists, and if he does, whether he can be a deceiver. Or else, without this knowledge, certainty of anything else is impossible.[8] Descartes discovers that the idea of God is seen to have more "objective reality" than those which

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world. Her significance is not only for believers but for unbelievers as well, claims Menke. For a futher reading, see Karl-Heinz Menke, *Das unterscheidend Christliche: Beiträge zur Bestimmung seiner Einzigkeit* (Regensburg: Verlag Friedrich Pustet, 2015); or read especially that part on Edith Stein, pp. 226-252.

[5] In that event Pope Benedick XVI met the last nun from Cologne, Sr. Teresa Margaret (Drügemöller), who knew Stein personally. She was with Stein as a novice and during the whole duration of Stein's stay in the monastery (14th October 1933-31st December 1938). That meeting with the Pope was "so intimate and personal." Sr. Teresa who turned 95th on that day, after giving some present to the Pope, took the chance of requesting the Pope to declare Stein as a Doctor of the Church. The Pope's reply was: "Everything should be done through the proper channels, but I will take into consideration your request" (http://www.ocd.pcn.net/ed_GMGen.htm, 8 September 2007).

[6] Pope John Paul II says, "We see the same fruitful relationship between philosophy and the word of God in the courageous research pursuid by more recent thinkers, among whom I gladly mention, in a Western context, figures such as John Henry Newman, Antonio Rosmini, Jacques Maritain, Étienne Gilson and **Edith Stein** and, in an Eastern context, eminent scholars such as Vladimir S. Soloviev, Pavel A. Florensky, Perr Chaadaev and Vladimir N. Lossky" (*Fides et Ratio*, n. 74). Emphasis mine.

[7] Edith Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*, trans. Kurt F. Reinhardt (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002), 4; (German original: ESGA 11/12, *Endliches und ewiges Sein, Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, ed. Andreas Uwe Müller [Freiburg: Herder, 2006], 12-13, henceforth cited as ESGA 11/12). In our exposition, we are only following the English translations of Stein's works. However, the pages of the original German texts are also placed in a bracket, to serve those readers who have accessed to the original German texts of Stein.

[8] Rene Descartes, "Meditations on the First Philosophy," trans. John Cottingham, in *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Vol. II (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 12.

are only representations of "finite substances."[9] He says further that "if the objective reality does not reside in me, either formally or eminently, and hence that I myself cannot be its cause, it will necessarily follow that I am not alone in the world, but that some other thing which is the cause of this idea also exists."[10] Besides the *cogito*, God exists primarily. Does God necessarily exist? In the Fifth Meditation, Descartes answers in the affirmative. A mountain and a valley, he observes, are mutually inseparable. God's existence then is inseparable from him. The necessity of his existence is not an imposition of thought. One cannot freely think of God's non-existence.[11] Descartes continues saying, "Apart from God, there is nothing else of which I am capable of thinking such that existence belongs to its essence."[12] Undeniably for Descartes God is not a fiction of the mind. Thus, being considered as the Father of Modern Philosophy, Descartes' modernity is not really a cutting off from faith and theology. But an interesting criticism of Descartes by Étienne Gilson goes,

> Descartes' statement did not mean at all that it was his intention to do away with God, with religion, or even with theology; but it emphatically meant that, in so far as he himself was concerned, such matters were not fitting objects for philosophical speculation. After all, is not the way to heaven open to the most ignorant as well as to the most learned? Does truth which lead men to salvation lie beyond the reach of our intelligence? Let religion remain to us then what it actually is in itself: a matter of faith, not of intellectual knowledge or of rational demonstration[13]

Gilson claims that this kind of philosophical attitude brings us back to the Greeks who, in approaching the problem of natural theology, use a "purely rational method." The Greek gods do not qualify to be the one and supreme Being or the first principle of Greek philosophers. They arrive at the ultimate only through rational means. Descartes, however, cannot approach such a problem without being confronted with the Christian God. For Gilson, Descartes can only pretend in the course of his inquiry that he is not a Christian and that only reason without the light of faith can explain the first principles and cause.[14] "As an intellectual sport," Gilson comments further, "this is as

[9] Ibid., 28.

[10] Ibid., 29.

[11] Ibid., 46.

[12] Ibid., 47.

[13] Étienne Gilson, *God and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), 75.

[14] Ibid., 78-79.

good as any other one; but it is bound to result in a failure, because when a man both knows and believes that there is but one cause of all that is, the God in whom he believes can hardly be other than the cause which he knows."[15] Stein is right when she opines that modern thought completely separates itself from revealed truth. Revelation is no longer the standard by which modern philosophy tests its findings.[16] Stein maintains,

> It wants to be autonomous discipline in every respect. This ambition has caused modern philosophy to become to a large extent a godless discipline. And it has led, moreover, to the division of philosophy into two separate camps in which two different languages are spoken and in which no attempt is made to arrive at a mutual understanding.[17]

The two contending camps are modern philosophy and Catholic-scholastic philosophy. The latter speaks of *philosophia perennis*. Outsiders, according to Stein, consider this philosophy "as a private affair of theological faculties, seminaries, and colleges of religious orders." To them *philosophia perennis* is abstract and lifeless.[18] But such a reconciliation is not without hope. Stein says,

> …this situation has gradually changed during the past few decades and that this change has come about as the result of sincere efforts on both sides. As far as the Catholic position is concerned, it is well to remember that *Catholic philosophy* (and *Catholic scholarship* generally) was never quite the same as the philosophy of Catholics. Catholic intellectual life had in a large measure become dependent on modern intellectual life and has lost contact with its own great past. In this respect the second half of the nineteenth century witnessed a real renaissance, a rebirth brought about by Catholic scholars delving again into the primary sources of their own intellectual heritage.[19]

For Stein it is truly astonishing that Leo XIII and Pius XI have decreed the revival of the study of the texts of St. Thomas in Catholic institutions of higher learning. The discovery of those "unpublished and entirely unknown manuscripts" in European libraries "reveals a whole forgotten world – a rich and dynamic world – which holds much promise for the future."[20] She is convinced of the relevance of the great Catholic thinkers of the

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[15] Ibid., 79.

[16] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 4-5 (ESGA 11/12, 13).

[17] Ibid., 5 (13).

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Ibid., 5-6 (13-14).

Medieval Ages to our present condition; they have something valuable to tell us. It is an admirable scholarly achievement, but for Stein the task is far from complete.

Yet, one must not forget that there is "another side to this question." Stein points out,

> At about the same time when Christian philosophy awakened from its sleeping beauty sleep, modern philosophy made the discovery that the way it had pursued for about the past three centuries led it into a blind alley. Mired in materialism, it sought at first to regain its freedom of inquiry by a return to Kant. But that was not enough. The several brands of Neo-Kantianism gave way gradually to those trends of thought which turned once more to being and reality [*Seiende*], thus vindicating the long despised term ontology, the science of being. Ontology reappeared first as *Wesensphilosophie* (philosophy of essences) in the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and Max Scheler. This development was seconded by Heidegger's *Existenzphilosophie* (philosophy of existence) and its opposite pole, the ontology of Hedwig Conrad-Martius.[21]

Can "the reborn philosophy" of the Medieval and the newly-born philosophy of the twentieth century come together in the one riverbed (*in einem Strombett*) of *philosophia perennis*? This was Stein's important inquiry. [22] One consideration is the difference in language, so a common one should be sought first in order for them to understand each other, Stein continues.

The scope of the present study will concentrate mostly on Stein's magnum opus, *Finite and Eternal Being.* The subtitle of this work tells us that it is an attempt at an ascent to the meaning of being. I believe that one can also trace some elements of her inquiry into the meaning of being from her first philosophical work and dissertation under Husserl, *On the Problem of Empathy*,[23] which was written prior to her conversion. As I have said, our examination is just limited to Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being in her *Finite and Eternal Being*. However, we cannot help but bring our direction also to *Potency and Act*,[24] which was the second of the three works of Stein dealing with her

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[21] Ibid., 6 (14-15).

[22] Ibid., 6-7 (15). Take note that from time to time I will not necessarily be following the English translation, for I will also try to make my own translation and interpretation of Stein's original German texts.

[23] Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 3rd rev. ed., trans. Waltraut Stein (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1989); (ESGA 5, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* [Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2010]).

[24] Stein, *Potency and Act: Studies Toward a Philosophy of Being*, trans. Walter Redmond (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2009); (ESGA 10, *Potenz und Akt: Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins* [Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2005]). The English translator of this work highlights in a note that there are two phases in the philosophical development of Stein: first the phenomenological studies and then her synthesis of scholasticism and phenomenology. (Stein, *Potency and Act*, vii-viii) Our exposition then will focus on the second phase of Stein's philosophical development.

attempt to reconcile the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl and the Scholasticism of St. Thomas Aquinas. The first of these works was entitled *Was ist Philosophie? Ein Gespräch zwischen Edmund Husserl und Thomas von Aquino* (1928), which later appeared in 1929 as an article in *Husserl-Festschrift* entitled "*Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino: Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*."[25] The third work is her magnum opus, *Finite and Eternal Being*. It is, however, not our intention to cover all the phases of Stein's life. The exposition then of the present study is mostly a consideration of Stein writing as a Christian philosopher.

A recent book in German by Anna Jani entitled *Edith Steins Denkweg von der Phänomenologie zur Seinsphilosophie* will be a good guide to our study. In this work, Jani portrays the philosophical activities of Stein through the individual phases of her life. The book also searches the richness of Stein's achievements tracing the path of her journey from phenomenology to the philosophy of being.[26] Jani examines the structure (*der Aufbau*) of Stein's philosophical system by going back to the different influences of Stein during her time in Göttingen. She then recalls the problem areas of the early phenomenology tackled by Stein especially in the latter's dissertation on the problem of empathy and in her work on the State and Community and later on Stein's work on the introduction to philosophy. The next phase of Stein as tackled by Jani is the transition from the phenomenological questions to the question of being. The next part

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[25] These two versions are included in Stein, ESGA 9, „*Freiheit und Gnade" und weiter Beiträge zu Phänomenologie und Ontologie (1917 bis 1937)* [Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2014], 91-142. It is well known that Husserl's phenomenology has been criticized as „a new scholasticism" despite the fact that he spent no time in studying thoroughly the works of St. Thomas. Husserl rather urges his students to study St. Thomas for it pleases him to know that they have "some sound knowledge" of St. Thomas (see Stein, "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison," in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. Walter Redmond [Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000], 4). The latter is the English translation of the 1929 text of Stein on Husserl and Aquinas. There are two versions of this comparison in the English text written side by side: Version A and Version B. Version A is dialogical while version B is didactic. As a student of Husserl, it is now Stein's task to see clearly how one can relate Husserl's phenomenology to the philosophy of St. Thomas. This is for her important since the philosophy of St. Thomas has for centuries become an object of "scorn and neglect." We are not sure if Stein's assessment of the philosophy of St. Thomas, which for her is an object of "scorn and neglect" for centuries, is exact. But it is interesting to take note that Gilson was accused of using Thomism as a yardstick to measure all other philosophies. He justifies saying that in his seven years of studies in a Frend Catholic college, he never heard anything about St. Thomas, not even once. In studying philosophy at a state-controlled college, again there was no mention of St. Thomas. At the Sorbonne, none of his philosophy professors knew anything about the doctrine of St. Thomas (see Gilson, God and Philosophy, xi-xii).With Gilson's experience, maybe we can surmise that Stein is correct in saying what has been stated above.

[26] Anna Janni, *Edith Steins Denkweg von der Phänomenologie zur Seinsphilosophie* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2015), 14.

of Jani's work deals with the stage of Stein's treatment of the new currents of scholastic philosophy and the revival of phenomenology. During this time, Stein was already writing as a Christian philosopher. Jani has practically covered all the individual phases of Stein's life as a philosopher. The focus of our study here will deal immediately with that part of Stein's life when she was already approaching the phenomenological method with the lenses of the scholastics. Hence, we trace only the path of Stein's inquiry found in her *Finite and Eternal Being*. However, this limitation does not also hinder us to approach the other works of Stein prior to this one. I believe that there are already some traces of Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being in her dissertation on the problem of empathy and on her other pre-conversion writings. In a word, the work of Jani is very valuable to our present study.

A book by Mette Lebech, *On the Problem of Human Dignity: A Hermeneutical and Phenomenological Investigation*, can also be a help to our study. Although the book deals primarily with an investigation on human dignity, it actually follows the schema of the classical phenomenological method which can be found in Husserl's *Ideas* and in Stein's *On the Problem of Empathy*.[27] Lebech's account on the constitution of the human being[28] will perhaps facilitate our understanding of Stein's investigation on the human being. The influence of Stein in this work of Lebech is very obvious. As I said earlier, our study will also dwell on some areas of Stein's investigation on empathy, for I believe that in that work one can already find a seedbed of Stein's future inquiry into the meaning of being.

The papers presented during the inaugural conferences of IASPES (The International Association for the Study of the Philosophy of Edith Stein) are very helpful to our study. The output of the latest international conference on Edith Stein is published in a volume called *Edith Steins Herausforderung heutiger Anthropologie*.[29] The entries in this volume dealing with hermeneutics, epistemology and ontology are of invaluable help to our study. The papers of the 2014 conference in the University of Cologne are published in a volume entitled *"Alles Wesentliche lässt sich nicht schreiben": Leben und*

[27] Mette Lebech, *On the Problem of Human Dignity: A Hermeneutical and Phenomenological Investigation* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2009), 18.

[28] See the larger chapter dealing with the constitution of human dignity (Ibid., 223-289).

[29] Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz and Mette Lebech eds., *Edith Steins Herausforderung heutiger Anthropologie: Akten der Internationalen Konferenz 23.-25. Oktober 2015 in Wien und Heiligenkreuz* (Heiligenkreuz im Wienerwald: Be&Be-Verlag, 2017).

Denken Edith Steins im Spiegel ihres Gesamtwerkes.[30] The contributions on the topic "Sein and Seinserkenntniss" are important readings to reinforce my limited understanding of Stein's texts. A volume entitled *Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being: Edith Stein's Phenomenology and Christian Philosophy*[31] is a collection of the papers presented during the 2011 conference in Maynooth. This volume is divided into two parts: first on phenomenology and second on Christian philosophy. The topics here are very relevant to our present considerations. An enlarged edition of the papers presented by the international scholars of Edith Stein last 2000 in Würzburg appeared recently in a volume entitled *Edith Stein: Themen-Kontexte-Materialien*.[32] The first two parts are papers on early phenomenology and on phenomenology and ontology. These contributions are excellent secondary sources for our present study. I also find this book interesting, since it has included an original material on Stein's writing: *Protokolle der Philosophischen Gesellschaft Göttingen (SS 1933 – SS 1914)*. These are Stein's records of the discussions of the Philosophical Society of Göttingen during the Summer Semester of 1913, Winter Semester of 1913/1914, and Summer Semester of 1914. According to Beate Beckmann-Zöller and Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz, the editors of this publication, this document was "previously undisclosed" (*bisher unveröffentlicht*). This text, therefore, is an excellent primary source of the earlier life and thought of Stein.

With all these latest literatures at our disposal, the present study may now proceed. Aside from the introduction and the conclusion, the main body is divided into two chapters. The first chapter is a biographical sketch dealing with a short overview of Stein's journey from phenomenology to Christian philosophy. The second chapter is the expository part on Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being. In the conclusion, we shall provide also some recommendations for further investigations.

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[30] Andreas Speer und Stephan Regh eds., "Alles Wesentliche lässt sich nicht schreiben": Leben und Denken Edith Steins im Spiegel ihres Gesamtwerkes (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder GmbH, 2016).

[31] Mette Lebech and John Haydn Gurmin eds., Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being: Edith Stein's Phenomenology and Christian Philosophy (Bern: Peter Lang, 2015).

[32] Beate Beckmann-Zöller and Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz eds., Edith Stein: Themen-Kontexte-Materialien (Dresden: Verlag Text & Dialog, 2015).

CHAPTER ONE

From Phenomenology to Christian Philosophy: A Short Look at Edith Stein's Journey[33]

[33] The chapter does not promise to give an exhaustive exposition of Stein's life. For a thorough reading of Stein's autobiography, see Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: Her Unfinished Autobiographical Account*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D., ed. Dr. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C: ICS Publications, 1986); German original: ESGA 1: *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie und weitere autobiographical Beiträge* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2010). Also one can read an excellent bio-historical introduction to Edith Stein, see, for instance, Joyce Avrech Berkman, "Edith Stein: A Life Unveiled and Veiled," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 5-29. Berkman also has an essay challenging the "genre gap" and exploring the "consonance, dissonance and interconnections between Stein's autobiography and her philosophical works (Berkham, "The Blinking Eye/I: Edith Stein as Philosopher and Autobiographer," in *Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being: Edith Stein's Phenomenology and Christian Philosophy*, 21-55). There are enough biographies of Edith Stein, for much has been written about her life and conversion. The first biography was written by Stein's fellow Sister at Carmel, see Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto, O.D.C. *Edith Stein*, trans. Cecily Hastings and Donald Nicholl (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1952). A decade after her execution at Auschwitz in 1942, a book authored by Fr. John Őosterreicher appeared which was about seven Jewish philosophers, including Stein, who found Christ in their lives. In the Foreword to that book, Jacques Maritain writes, "FATHER OESTERREICHER IS HIMSELF AN OUTSTANDING WITNESS TO the great movement he studies here in the persons of seven who represent it most significantly – a movement which stirs the minds of many among the sons of Israel and turns them to the true Messias of their people. While reading his beautiful book I thought, not without emotion, of his own intellectual and spiritual history – also of our first meetings in Europe, of the brave battle he led against anti-Semitism in Austria while the Hitlerite abomination was brewing, of the friendship which has bound us, ever since, through such unexpected events, through struggle and painful experience" (John M. Őosterreicher, *Walls are Crumbling: Seven Jewish Philosophers Discover Christ* [New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1952], vii) [Author's caps]. Father John Österreicher's book is very interesting for he gives a unique description of each of these seven Jewish philosophers: Henri Bergson, *Philosopher of Experience*; Edmund Husserl, *Acolyte of Truth*; Adolf Reinach, *Seeker of the Absolute*; Max Scheler, *Critic of Modern Man*; Paul Landsberg, *Defender of Hope*; Max Picard, *Poet of the Human Face*; and Edith Stein, *Witness of Love*. In that section on Stein, Österreicher writes, "Edith Stein grew up when the twentieth century was young and presumptuous; when it thought that without the burden of belief, without a Master and Judge, without sin and forgiveness, it could run to perfection more swiftly; when it laughed at the assurance of the psalmist that without God as Builder, the builder's toil comes to nothing, that without the Lord as the city's Guardian, our vigil is vain" (Ibid., 333). He continues, "Edith Stein might never have walked further on the road to faith had she not been urged by the secret of the cross" (Ibid., 335). This book is of great help to know more about Stein's life, considering that the author is still close to the time of Stein. Barely three years after the publication of Father Őosterreicher's book, another one entitled *The Scholar and the Cross: The Life and Works of Edith Stein* by Hilda C. Graef was printed. In the Prologue, Graef confesses,"This image of the Woman persecuted by the dragon struck me as I was studying the life that is to be described in these pages; for it is surely a part of the apocalyptic struggle between the Woman and the powers of darkness, which we have been, and still are, witnessing in our age. Edith Stein, philosopher, teacher, and finally Carmelite nun, has both taught and lived the highest ideal of Christian Womanhood. The dragon, this apocalyptic symbol of the totalitarian State, persecuted her as he has always persecuted the Woman, ground her to death in the machine of a modern dictatorship. But the Woman of Apocalypse, though persecuted, did not die; and one of the martyrs of the early Church, St. Ignatius of Antioch, wrote: 'I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread… Then shall I be truly a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world shall not so much as see my body'" (Hilda C. Graef, *The Scholar and the Cross: The Life and Works of Edith Stein* [Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1955], 2). Another biography by Waltraud Herbstrith, published originally in German with the title *Das wahre Gesicht Edith Steins*, was published in 1971; its first English edition appeared in 1985 and its second English edition in 1992. Dr. Erna Stein, Edith's sister, considers it as one of the "finest biographies" of her sister ever writ-

Hedwig Conrad-Martius opines that it is not an easy task to speak about Stein.[34] Hence, for our purposes here, we just limit ourselves to these three important paths in Stein's journey: her way to phenomenology, her way to the Catholic Church, and finally her way to Christian philosophy.

1. Her Way to Phenomenology

In her autobiography, Edith Stein claimed that inside her was a secret world (*eine verborgene Welt*), where things were being pondered upon.[35] She was what one might call a born phenomenologist.[36] She had an "active fantasy" for boldest constructions due to the things she heard, saw, read, or experienced.[37] As a child there was in her an earnest desire for something. She stated that in her dreams she would often see a bright future ahead, a future filled with "happiness and fame," a destiny that was great,

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ten (see Waltraud Herbstrith, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, 5th ed., trans. Father Bernard Bonowitz, O. C. S. O. [San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992], 16). In the introduction to this book, Jan H. Nota, SJ, says, "It is a pleasure for me to write an introduction to the fifth edition of Edith Stein. I met Edith Stein in Echt, Holland, in November 1941, where I came to know her as a person who had continued to be a great philosopher after having become a Carmelite nun. It was in fact philosophy, so much a part of her very being, that provided the basis for our first encounter" (Ibid., 9). This book of Herbstrith is regarded as a "true-to-life portrait" of Stein (Ibid., 16). There is also a short interesting biography of Stein in German capturing some important aspects of her life, see Conrad de Meester, OCD, *Edith Stein: Eine Frau auf der Suche nach der Wahrheit* (Wien: Verlag Christliche Innerlichkeit, 2013). There are many others, both books and journals in German and in English, but we do not intend to mention them all. The above readings already can provide us an extensive biography of Stein.

[34] Hedwig Conrad-Martius, „Meine Freundin Edith Stein," in *Edith Stein: Ein Neus Lebensbild in Zeugnissen und Selbstzeugnissen*, ed. Waltraud Herbstrith (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 1983), 82.

[35] Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family,* 74; ESGA 1, 47. Writing about her life in Hamburg, where she spent life after leaving school at the age of fourteen-and-a half (see note 97 below), Stein recalled, "My existence in Hamburg, now that I look back on it, seems to me to have been like that of a chrysalis in its cocoon. I was restricted to a very tight circle and lived in a world of my own even more exclusively than I had at home." (Ibid., 148) This solitary world became worse during her years of studies. She said, "My studies had removed me into an inaccessible world." (Ibid., 394)

[36] Stein's friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius testifies that Stein "was a born phenomenologist." It was her having a "sober, clear, objective spirit, her unobstructed view, her absolute objectivity" that predestined Stein to become one ("*Edith Stein war geborene Phänomenologin. Ihr nüchterner, klarer, objektiver Geist, ihr unverstellter Blick, ihre absolute Sachlichkeit prädestinierte sie dazu*" (Conrad-Martius, „Meine Freundin Edith Stein," 83). Translations mine.

[37] Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 75 (ESGA 1, 48).

and a life that was beyond the "narrow, bourgeois circumstances" of her birth.[38] This feeling of greatness ahead of her made her pursue school early in life. And in school it was her obsession to be always at the top of the class, though this aim was never realized, recalled Frau Ruben, Stein's godchild.[39] To her the school ranked higher than the ordinary family affairs. In Stein's words, "During our childhood, school played an important role. I almost believe I felt more at home there than in our house."[40]

As a pupil, her favorite subjects were German and History. At the start of each school year, she would voraciously read new literary and historical textbooks.[41] Later on, in her University days in Breslau, she got interested in psychology. Her four semesters in Breslau occupied her mainly with studies in psychology.[42] Accordingly, Stein enrolled in psychology with the hope of investigating the "fundamental relations in human behavior."[43] The soul as the "center of the human personality" was the main problem occupying her mind.[44] However, soon after, psychology became a disappointment, for its approach was only quantitative whose goal was to prove that the soul Stein was investigating did not actually exist. The whole notion of the soul had been reduced to the irrational and the mythological. Hence, in psychology the soul should be regarded only with a "skeptical smile."[45] This paved the way for Stein's serious study of phenomenology. The "independence of the phenomenological method" and the freshness and richness of this sphere of investigation attracted the young seeker in her.[46] "All my

[38] Ibid., 77; 50. Several pages later Stein said, "I took no thought of my future although I continued to live with the conviction that I was destined for something great" (Ibid., 148).

[39] Cited in Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto, O.D.C., *Edith Stein*, 8. The reason, however, for Stein's failure to get first in class was the anti-Semitic attitude of a teacher there (Ibid.).

[40] Stein, *Life*, 65; ESGA 1, 39. It was really strange why she left school at the age of fourteen-and-a half. Regarding this strange move of Stein, Mary Catherine Baseheart says, "Clearly it was not because she lost interest in the things of the mind, for she continued to read and seek for meaning through independent thinking and study. Nor was it because of family pressure" (Mary Catharine, Baseheart, C.S.N., *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1997, 2).

[41] Stein, *Life*, 78 (ESGA 1, 51).

[42] Ibid., 186.

[43] Waltraud Herbstrith, *The Way of the Cross, Edith Stein*, trans. and adapted by Lee Marill (Frankfurt/Main: Gerhard Kaffke, 1974), 14.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 33.

[46] Herbstrith, *The Way of the Cross*, 16.

study of psychology," Stein writes, "had persuaded me that this science was still in its infancy; it still lacked clear basic concepts; furthermore, there was no one who could establish such an essential foundation." In contrast to what she learned from phenomenology, Stein's feeling towards this method was one of tremendous fascination, "because it consisted precisely of such a labor of clarification and because, here one forged one's own mental tools for the task at hand."[47]

Thus Stein moved from Breslau to Göttingen to study with the Master of Phenomenology himself, Edmund Husserl.[48] With her "independent intellect," she "longed for further knowledge."[49] A verse, teasing her of such decision, goes,

Many a maiden dreams of "busserl" [kisses]
Edith, though, of naught but Husserl.
In Göttingen she soon will see
Husserl as real as real can be.[50]

Stein's first encounter with phenomenology was through a reading of the second volume of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*.[51] To the astonishment of her family, her desire to move to Gőttingen increased, where everything one presumably did was "philosophize, day and night, at meals, in the street, everywhere" and where all one

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[47] Stein, *Life*, 222. "Although she was quick to realize that psychology was still a science in search of itself, she recognized and appreciated the brilliant scholars who were contributing to its development," comments Baseheart. (Baseheart, *Person in the World*, 5). Graef describes it lucidly, "The whole intellectual personality of Edith Stein is in this. On the one hand her thirst for clarity and precision; not for her the obscurity so often deliberately cultivated by philosophers, or the slipshod superficialities of a half-baked science; on the other hand the delight to work things out for herself, to take nothing for granted, to get down to principles of thought rather than to experiment with psychological data. Phenomenology, she hoped, would give her what she sought, and so, at Easter 1913, she left her home and her beloved mother to continue her quest for Truth" (Hilda C. Graef, *The Scholar and the Cross: The Life and Works of Edith Stein* [Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1955], 14).

[48] Stein realized during her fourth semester that Breslau could no longer offer her anything and that she had to go somewhere to meet other challenges. (Stein, *Life*, 217)

[49] Herbstrith, *The Way of the Cross*, 16-17.

[50] Stein, *Life*, 220. The German original goes: „Manches Mädchen träumt von Busserl,/Edith aber nur von Husserl./In Göttingen da wird sie sehn/Den Husserl leibhaft vor sich stehn" (ESGA 1, 172).

[51] Ibid., 218. Prior to this, during the summer of 1912 and the winter of 1912-13, while Stein was studying in Stern's seminar about the "problems of the psychology of thought," she came "across references to Edmund Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen.*" (Ibid., 217) At the suggestion of a friend, Dr. Georg Moskiewicz, a medical doctor who was studying philosophy, she read the heavy stuff "which gave her intellectual life a new direction" (See Graef, *The Scholar and the Cross*, 11, see also for more details Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 218-219) Freda Mary Oben mentions that Stein was intending to write a thesis for the Department of Experimental Psychology but was soon dissatisfied with it. The second volume of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* opened her "intellect and soul" to something other than psychology. (Freda Mary Oben, *Edith Stein*, 9)

talked about was 'phenomena'.[52] This was an enticement she could not resist. This time, she was convinced that Husserl was "*the* philosopher" of the age.[53] She quickly recognized him as a philosopher of "more than ordinary power and lucidity," whose "thought…corresponded with reality."[54] Hence she was willing to sit at his foot.[55]

From 1905 to 1914 there was "the short flowering time of the Gőttingen School of Phenomenology."[56] Stein, with much expectation, went there at twenty-one years of age.[57] Finally, she would be meeting the Master, Edmund Husserl, but whoever would go to him must first see Adolf Reinach.[58] Husserl asked Stein how far she had read his works. The whole of volume II of the *Logical Investigations* was her answer.[59] To her surprise, Husserl remarked that it was "a heroic achievement."[60] Her acceptance to the University of Gőttingen followed; and from then on philosophy became a preoccupation.

Happily, she entered this "new world of the mind."[61] With zeal, she plunged into the new studies. In the seminar sessions, she at once volunteered to keep the "complex minutes" with full of energy. Her fellow students were surprised with her readings and her capability for argumentation.[62] She even joined the Gőttingen Philosophical

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[52] Stein, *Life,* 218 (ESGA 1, 171).

[53] Ibid., 219.

[54] Graef, *The Scholar*, 12. In Waltraud Herbstrith's words, "Edith recognized that Husserl was leading the way which she had been seeking. The way to the truth of inmost being and the overcoming of subjectivism." (Waltraud Herbstrith, *The Way of the Cross,* 18)

[55] Graef, *The Scholar*, 12.

[56] Stein, *Life*, 239.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Stein mentioned Reinach as the first among those who had been habilitated in Gőttingen. He was Husserl's "right hand." And above all, according to her, Reinach was the bridge between Husserl and the students for he had the ability to deal with people, a quality Husserl lacked. (Cf. Ibid., 247) For a further account of the encounter between Stein and Reinach, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922*): 9-18. Also for more details on the life of Reinach see John M. Ősterreicher, *Walls Are Crumbling*, 99-133.

[59] Stein, *Life*, 249 (ESGA 1, 200).

[60] Ibid., 250.

[61] Herbstrith, *The Way*, 17.

[62] Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 39. We have seen earlier that in Gőttingen everything one would do was philosophy. Hence, life there was "studious and frugal." Yet, it was also "full of gaiety" (Cf. Bordeaux, *Thoughts on Her Life and Times*, 20). Aside from studying, one could also find there "many events and celebrations" (Cf. Baseheart, *Person*, 5).

Society and was "impudent enough to join in the discussion at once."[63] As Graef puts it, "From the first Edith took her place as an equal among the distinguished philosophers of Gőttingen, and the strange thing was that hardly anyone looked askance at this natural self-assurance."[64]

Engrossed in her new field, Stein studied the *Ideas* which appeared in 1913. In her autobiography, she writes,

> The Logische Untersuchungen had caused a sensation primarily because it appeared to be a radical departure from critical idealism which had a Kantian and neo-Kantian stump. It was considered a "new scholasticism" because it turned attention away from the "subject" and toward "things" themselves. Perception again appeared as reception, deriving its laws from objects not, as criticism has it, from determination which imposes its laws on the objects. All the young phenomenologists were confirmed realists. However, the *Ideas* included some expressions which sounded very much as though their Master wished to return to idealism. Nor could his oral interpretation dispel our misgivings. It was the beginning of that development which led Husserl to see, more and more, in what he called "transcendental Idealism" (which is not to be confused with the transcendental idealism of the Kantian schools) the actual nucleus of his philosophy and to devote all his energies to its establishment. This was a path on which, to his sorrow as well as their own, his earlier Gőttingen students could not follow him.[65]

It was the search for truth that moved her to come to Husserl.[66] And from Husserl's seminars, Stein learned that "in knowledge, however, we possess truth."[67] But before anything can be called 'knowledge' in the narrowest, strictest sense, Husserl demands that it should be evident, that is, that it has "the luminous certainty that what we have acknowledged *is*, that what we have rejected *is not*, a certainty distinguished in

[63] Stein, *Life*, 252. The Gőttingen Philosophical Society is an intimate circle of Husserl's students who gather once a week to discuss a particular question (Ibid). There was a rule in the society that one could join only after staying for several semesters in the University, and after one's introduction to the circle, several months were required before one would dare to open one's mouth (Ibid). Stein was "impudent" enough to break the rule. As we have seen in the introduction of our study, a previously undisclosed material which is Stein's records of the discussions of the Philosophical Society of Göttingen during the Summer Semester of 1913, Winter Semester of 1913/1914, and Summer Semester of 1914. This material only shows how active Stein was during her membership to the said philosophical society. See Beckmann-Zöller and Gerl-Falkovitz eds., *Edith Stein: Themen-Kontexte-Materialien*, 241-248.

[64] Graef, *The Scholar*, 15.

[65] Stein, *Life*, 250.

[66] Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 39. In other words, "Edith's sober mind sought objective truth." (Herbstrith, *The Way*, 19)

[67] Edmund Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, trans. J. N. Findlay (New York: The Humanities Press, 1970), 60; see also Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 39-40.

familiar fashion from blind belief, from vague opining, however firm and decided, if we are not to be shattered on the rocks of extreme skepticism."[68]

Husserl labored much to bring his students towards "rigorous objectivity and thoroughness, to a 'radical intellectual honesty'."[69] He claimed that the practice of philosophy as a "rigorous science" would bring the seeker to the "discovery of truth."[70] This had really influenced the intellectual life of Stein. As a Carmelite nun many years later, she would confess, "Edmund Husserl formed my philosophical thinking."[71]

She had come to Gőttingen for only a Summer and she thought of taking the state boards in Breslau. Yet the closer the semester would end, the more she felt it intolerable to be leaving Gőttingen permanently.[72] As she put it poetically, "The months gone by were not just an episode, after all, but rather the beginning of a new phase of my life."[73] It was final, Stein had to forego her assignment in psychology. All she want-

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[68] Husserl, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I, 60-61.

[69] Stein, *Life*, 259.

[70] Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 40.

[71] Stein, "Sketch of a Foreword to *Finite and Eternal Being*" (Fragment) in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. Walter Redmond (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2000), 81. It was Stein's purpose to come to Gőttingen to devote her time to the study of philosophy. Since she was there only for a Summer, she took the chance of knowing other Germanists and historians aside from those she had known in Breslau. Such a course for instance was "Bőrne, Heine and Young Germany" by Richard Weissenfels, a course under Edward Schrőder (Cf. Stein, *Life*, 262-263). Also, aside from the phenomenologists, she took up a course of philosophy with Leonard Nelson (Ibid., 263). At the Psychological Institute, Stein enrolled in "The Psychophysics of Visual Perception" with Georg Elias Müller. Though Müller was "a rabid opponent of phenomenology since for him nothing existed but empirical science," nevertheless the course still offered something of value for phenomenologists since Husserl himself suggested the need to learn "the methods of the positive sciences" (Ibid., 265). Stein worked also under Max Lehmann, a preoccupation she considered most important besides philosophy. Even while still in Breslau, she had already studied Lehman's work on the "Baron vom Stein." Now in Gőttingen she finally met him. The courses which she attended included the "Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment" and the lectures on "Bismarck." Lehman's "broader European outlook," a legacy from Ranke, delighted her. Through him, Stein took pride in having Ranke as her "scholastic grandfather" (Ibid., 265-266). However, Stein "could not agree with all of Lehmann's concepts" (Ibid., 266). As Herbstrith writes about Stein's disagreement with Lehmann, "Yet justice remained her first concern, and when Lehmann occasionally took gratuitous swipes at Prussia (he himself preferred English imperialism to its German form), it only confirmed her in her devotion to the Prussian system" (Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 42). Stein's reason for enrolling in such a course was to comprehend the "unity of the human person," Herbstrith continues. It was not her intention to give much time to history. And yet, she gave her best in Lehmann's course, with diligence and capability, to the admiration of Lehmann himself who was "pleased to accept" her paper work "as a submission for the state boards" (Stein, *Life*, 267-268). The thought of the said examination was never her concern until Lehmann made the suggestion. She was not even aware of this. In her assessment, the state boards had been reserved for her in the "distant future" and her most immediate intention was only to finish her doctorate.

[72] Ibid., 268.

[73] Ibid.

ed was to immerse herself completely in phenomenology. Her greatest longing during this time was to continue working with Husserl.[74] After reporting to Prof. Stern regarding her progress in Gőttingen and after his approval, she had to make the "biggest step" of her life, that is, to request from Husserl a "doctoral theme."[75]

What would be the theme for her to work on? This was a question which was not difficult for her to answer. Stein learned from Husserl's course on nature and spirit that an intersubjective experience of "an objective outer world" can happen "through a plurality of perceiving individuals who relate in a mutual exchange of information." The "experience of other individuals" then becomes a necessary condition. To such an experience, Husserl provided the name *Einfühlung* (Empathy), applying the work of Theodore Lipps. However, what this experience consisted of, Husserl did not provide the details. Stein had to fill this gap by wishing to make an examination of what empathy might be.[76]

But philosophy is not an easy task. For one to aspire for it, as the philosopher Hegel said, "a long and laborious journey must be undertaken."[77] Stein's philosophical efforts were but a grief when compared to her other studies. Such trouble was so far "the highest mountain peak" she had to conquer on that winter. All her days from here onwards were devoted to her problem of empathy. The more books she read, the more the confusions. She then realized that books were useless unless the matter at hand

[74] Ibid., 268. Before Stein left Breslau for Gőttingen, she asked Prof. Stern to give her a topic for a doctoral dissertation in psychology. This would force her to return to Breslau, for, as has been shown earlier, it was not her intention to spend more than a summer in Gőttingen. Prof. Stern's suggestion, which was "inconceivable" for Stein, was to make "a sequel" to a paper she wrote before regarding "the development of the thought process in children." Unfortunately, she wasn't able to do this assigned work. And as mentioned by her, having visited Klein-Glieneke was the only thing she had done concerning her dissertation in psychology. (Ibid., 221)

[75] Ibid., 268. Making an "independent thesis" required first to be in Husserl's lectures for years. Nevertheless, Stein got the approval of the Master despite the lack of prerequisite years. However, she had to face the "difficulties involved." Husserl needed three years for one to complete such a work. Another problem arose. To focus solely on philosophy was not really advisable, for Husserl recommended his students to go through an extensive "familiarity with the methods of the other disciplines" in order to have a bedrock foundation of philosophy. To follow such a requirement was hard for Stein who was already determined to do an independent work in philosophy regardless of the difficulties that might be involved. Fortunately, Stein convinced the Master to proceed immediately. It was her turn now to choose a topic for that. (Ibid., 268-269)

[76] Ibid., 269.

[77] G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. J. B. Baillie (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1967), 88.

had been clarified by her own effort. This experience had deprived Stein of the "art of sleeping."[78]

It was like climbing up a stair, every step of which was difficult to take. Indeed, one could not imagine the trouble it caused Stein. She was a great mind, but during this time this confident intellect was crumbling. A deep crisis enveloped her being - a "solitary battle," as she called it. She was almost at the point of depression. For the first time, she was confronting something which could not be conquered by "sheer willpower." Inside her, she recalled her mother's maxim: "What one wants to do, one can do," and "As one strives, so will God help." This great mind, as she thought, had to succumbed to a "point where life itself seemed unbearable."[79] It was indeed a kind of a "solitary battle" unsuspected by anyone, for all her other activities went well.[80] For her, she was "a newcomer to phenomenology", even comparing herself as inferior to Hans Lipps. There was in her this feeling of insecurity, realizing that she was doing something beyond her capability.[81] Reinach, however, assured her that one should certainly clarify what is unclear.[82] It was actually the philosopher Reinach who encouraged Stein to pursue her goal.

In her autobiography, Stein narrates that after such a painful difficulty, words then came out easily. Her thoughts became phrases inside her; and on paper they appeared with such firmness and definitiveness, revealing to a reader not a trace of "labor pains" that went along with "this intellectual birth." Meeting Reinach again made her confidence grew, since she got a "very good" approval from him.[83] She worked without inter-

[78] Cf. Stein, *Life*, 276-277.

[79] Cf. Stein, *Life*, 277-278.

[80] Ibid., 278.

[81] Ibid., 279. It must be recalled that Hans Lipps "made a deeper impression" on Stein "than did anyone else." (Ibid., 254) Like her, Hans Lipps came to Gőttingen after having been acquainted with the *Logische Untersuchungen* of Husserl. It also moved him to choose a new path in life. Moreover, Stein observed that Lipps' "insights were true and deep." (Ibid.) There was even a curious revelation by Stein's closest friend Hedwig Conrad-Martius that Stein so loved Lipps that if the latter wanted it, she would have married him. (See Hedwig Conrad-Martius' letter in *Never Forget*, ed. Waltraud Herbstrith, 265-267)

[82] Ibid., 282.

[83] Ibid., 283.

ruption and in just a week she finished the second part of her thesis. With Reinach's satisfaction, Stein was "like one reborn."[84] She then called Reinach "a good angel."

We know that Stein's academic life was interrupted by an inevitable war that took place in 1914. The war broke out in Europe at that time.[85] Stein then became an aide in a huge municipal hospital. Later on she volunteered in the Red Cross' nursing service.[86] She was sent to The Nursing Soldiers in the Lazaretto at Mährisch-Weisskirchen. Hiding her civilian profession, she came there to serve.[87]

After she was relieved of her nursing obligations, she could resume her study.[88] After passing the *Graecum*, she began her doctoral thesis without much ado. But as soon as she had started working another interruption happened. She had to attend to some "human problems" which were "touching" her "to the quick."[89] Despite these personal problems, she was determined to move on. She resolved to set aside everything she acquired from other sources and had to start completely from a rock bottom foundation. The problem of empathy had to be examined objectively using the phenomenological methods.[90]

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[84] Ibid., 284.

[85] According to Stein, it was an inconceivable war considering that life seemed secure before 1914. As she put it, "Our life was built on an indestructible foundation of peace, stability of ownership of property, and on the permanence of circumstances to which we were accustomed" (Ibid.). But the war came and interrupted her scholarly life. Her "private life" was over for a time and all she could do was devote her "energy" to the coming "great happening" (Ibid., 297). Moreover, she says, "Only when the war is over, if I'm alive then, will I be permitted to think of my private affairs once more." Nevertheless, in spite of all these, she still hoped to face the "future with great clarity and determination."

[86] For more details on her nursing stint, please see Ibid., 318-367.

[87] Serving as a nursing aide volunteer revealed an essential character in Stein's personality. Herbstrith observes, "This was characteristic of Edith. Through human love she learned to feel divine love. The revelation of God did not take place directly, instead it became transparent through the 'phenomenon' of a human being emanating God." (Herbstrith, *The Way*, 32) Edith served others for the love of humanity. (See Stein, *Life*, 331). Her love for others was shown in her love for her family and for her people. For further reading see Chapters 5 and 6 of Henry Bordeaux's book, *Edith Stein: Thoughts on Her Life and Times*, trans. Donald and Idella Gallagher (Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959), 45-60.

[88] Stein's nursing assignment ended after she was acquitted of an accusation "before the military court of circumventing censorship" (Stein, *Life*, 364). Had she been found guilty of the crime she would have been put into prison. Fortunately, to the relief of her family, the case was dismissed (Ibid., 365).

[89] Stein mentioned two sad experiences which were again interrupting her studies: the sickness of her friend Toni Meyer and the divorce of her cousin Richard Courant and his wife Nelli. Anyway, she managed to use "every bit of energy to push ahead in the work" which was burdening her soul "so heavily for more than two years." For further details of these two incidents, see *Ibid*., 371-376.

[90] See further, ibid., 376-377.

Contrary to her earlier feelings, her work was now running smoothly. She said, "Page after page was filled. The writing would bring a rosy glow to my face, and an unfamiliar feeling of happiness surged through me."[91] It was what she would call a "new gift" to continue working.[92] And finally, at the end of January 1916, what was before her became "a creation" standing in its "complete whole."[93]

Her dissertation could have been defended had Husserl not been transferred to Freiburg to occupy the chair in philosophy vacated by Heinrich Rickert. Rickert had to go to Heidelberg to become the replacement of the deceased Wilhelm Windelband.[94] This development, as Stein mentioned, had freed the Master from such an "embarrassing position" he held for so many years in the philosophical faculty at Gőttingen. To occupy one of the most respected chairs in philosophy in all of Germany was a good opportunity on Husserl's part. Though it was good for Husserl, it was another blow for Stein. All her plans were cancelled out at a single stroke. It was already impossible that she could get her degree from Gőttingen. She also had to go to Freiburg and finish everything there.[95]

However, before moving to Freiburg, another block to her project came. She had to go home to Breslau to substitute for a teacher who was ill at that time.[96] What about her doctoral work? Anyway, she was assured that her schedule would be easy so as to give her time for research.[97] This had pleased her mother, who was initially not in favor of a teaching career for her. Stein recalled, "After the peculiar zigzag of my life during the past few years, she (mother) now had the impression that I had landed in a safe harbor."[98] Besides, this would bring the younger Stein home again permanently.

To teach and to engage in "serious research" at the same time was for her impossible. Though she enjoyed her teaching career, she had to abandon it without hesi-

[91] Ibid., 377.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Ibid., 386.

[95] Read further Ibid., 386-387.

[96] Ibid., 387.

[97] Ibid., 388.

[98] Ibid., 394.

tation, in order to produce a deserving dissertation. Husserl's verdict then was crucial for her determination of what direction to take in her life.[99] And so her dissertation was finally done. On July 1916, she went to Freiburg to undergo the oral examination.[100]

Husserl was appointed as one of the examiners for he was the only one who could evaluate the thesis.[101] The *examen rigorosum* was set at six o' clock in the evening of the third of August.[102] Soon the examination had ended. The result gave a great pleasure to the Master who was, in Stein's description, "beaming with joy."[103] The Dean's proposal was to give Stein the mark *summa cum laude*.[104]

It was indeed a great success on the part of Edith Stein who was still glowing with happiness at that time.[105] But what would become of her? It was recorded that after passing the examination with the highest honours, she became Husserl's assistant from 1917 to 1919. Could this be a promise of a bright future for Stein? In Graef's words, "Edith entered with high hopes on this work as assistant to one of Germany's most famous philosophers, which seemed to hold out great prospects for her future career."[106] She seemed to be getting all the best things in life at that time. As Hugo Ott puts it, "The best present the brand-new Ph. D. brought back home to her mother in the east, besides her diploma, was Husserl's offer to work with him as private assistant."[107] It was a chance for Stein to "get ahead in academia, surely an aim worth striving for!"[108]

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[99] Ibid.

[100] Ibid., 398.

[101] Ibid., 404.

[102] Ibid., 405.

[103] Ibid., 414.

[104] See further Ibid.

[105] Ibid., see the final page of her abruptly ended manuscript.

[106] Graef, *The Scholar*, 23.

[107] Hugo Ott, "Edith Stein and Freiburg," in *Never Forget*, ed. Waltraud Herbstrith, 136.

[108] Ibid. The job offered was quite an insult for the salary (a hundred Marks a month) was quite modest. Moreover, Stein had "to put" her "teaching career on the shelf." Nonetheless, this never mattered to Stein who said, "Naturally, I could never manage with that, alone, but it would still be a help; my relatives would more likely give their consent. I agreed to everything." (Stein, *Life*, 411) The important thing was, it would open a great break for her philosophical career. For this period in Stein's life as assistant to Husserl, see further MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922*, 99-108. There is an excellent paper published recently to give a clearer view of the historical and the philosophical aspects of the relationship between Husserl and her assistant, Stein. The author's contribution is a reflection of the

But what could have been the future of this woman philosopher? Getting ahead in the academia became a difficulty for her. She was a woman and a Jew. The prospect of a University teaching position was not granted to her. She tried to work towards a habilitation in order to qualify for a faculty position, but she was denied it. Martin Heidegger was her contemporary.[109] He had also been a student of Husserl. But unlike Stein, he became a great academic teacher and philosopher, holding a lofty position as rector of the University of Freiburg. Stein resigned her position with Husserl. She did not get a University professorship. But was it a blessing in disguise? We now proceed to mention here a very important event in the life of Edith Stein: her conversion to Catholicism.

2. Her Way to the Catholic Faith

Earlier, we have seen how school played an important role in the life of the young Edith Stein. But this also had a consequence: she became an atheist in her teens despite her strong religious background. Stein confessed later in life that she had become an atheist at the age of thirteen, which lasted until her twenty-first year.[110] Nicholas Lauer, a colleague of Stein as a high school teacher at St. Magdalena in Speyer, Germany, testified that during the fifteenth year of her life Stein renounced her faith in God

historical facts of Stein's valuable services to Husserl. This period was also an important part of Stein's intimate encounter with phenomenology. The author is basing his research on a broad source, including a previously unpublished letter of Husserl about Stein. The said letter would clarify Husserl's role in the failed attempt of Stein to apply for a habilitation in Göttingen. See Peter Andras Varga, "Edith Stein als Assistentin von Edmund Husserl: Versuch einer Bilanz im Spiegel von Husserls VErhältnis zu seinen Assistenten Mit einem unveröffentlichen Brief Edmund Husserls über Edith Stein im Anhang" (in >> *Alles Wesentliche lässt sich nicht schreiben<< Leben und Denken Edith Steins im Spiegel ihres Gesamtwerkes*, eds. Speer and Regh, 111-133).

[109] Stein first met Heidegger during an evening with the large circle of Husserl. She was already in Freiburg at that time to have an oral examination of her dissertation. We know that Husserl was suddenly transferred from Göttingen to Freiburg to replace Heinrich Rickert as chair of the philosophical department. Since Husserl was Stein's doctoral supervisor, she had to go also to Freiburg to defend her dissertation there. Heidegger, on the other hand, was yet to be habilitated during this time, and Husserl took him over from his predecessor. During this evening with the Husserl's circle, Stein was impressed with Heidegger. She liked him very well. While there was nothing philosophical in the discussion, Heidegger, as she observed, was silent and detached; but as soon as a philosophical question emerged, he was full of life (See Stein, ESGA 1, 317, 339).

[110] Hilda C. Graef, *The Scholar and the Cross*, 9.

and this had caused great pain to her mother who was a devout Jewish.[111] It was the moment when she was without belief in the existence of a personal God.[112] Or should we say, Stein during this time was indifferent to her religion. In her words, "Deliberately and consciously, I gave up praying."[113]

This was unusual for a child who was raised in a very devout Jewish family.[114] Stein was born on the Day of Atonement, a day significant to her mother who always considered it to be her "real birthday." This had contributed a lot to her being especially dear to her mother.[115] Stein was the mother's favorite. However, she was also the source of the mother's worry. "Frau Stein," said Sister Teresia, "had followed her youngest daughter's intellectual development with justifiable pride, but also with a secret anxiety. Edith was clever but not pious. Up till now she had not acknowledged any religious convictions, and she showed little interest in Judaism."[116] There was the fear of

[111] Nikolas Lauer, "Edith Stein: Remembering a Collegue," in *Never Forget: Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein*, ed. Waltraud Herbstrith, O.C.D., trans. Susanne Batzdorff (Washington, D.C: ICS Publications, 1998), 95.

[112] Waltraud Herbstrith, O.C.D., *Edith Stein: A Biography*, 26.

[113] Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 148. However, according to Florent Gaboriau, Stein might not be an atheist but only indifferent. In Gaboriau's words, "As happens with many young people, and by her own observation, Edith was very bored by the service of the Synagogue where her mother took her with her sisters. But it is to go well beyond any evidence to draw from this a fixed attitude that could be called in any strict sense atheism. The lack of a religious appetite extended into her student days, when she was interested into other things, to the point that, later, she thought back on this time in order to locate in that desert the indicators that enabled her to escape from it." (Florent Gaboriau, *The Conversion of Edith Stein*, 56)

[114] As a child, Stein was brought up on a strict observance of the "religion of the Talmud" (See Henry Bordeaux, *Edith Stein: Thoughts on Her Life and Times*, trans. Donald and Idella Gallagher [Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959], 9). As Stein recalls, "Among the most important events of life at home, aside from the family feasts, were the major Jewish High Holy Days: particularly *Pesah* (the Passover holiday) which coincides approximately with Easter; also, the holy day of the New Year and the Day of Atonement (in September or October depending on the correspondence of the Jewish to the Gregorian calendar)" (Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 68). Describing Stein's home where most of her youthful years were spent, Sister Teresia de Spiritu Sancto has this vivid description, "If you knocked at the door and stepped into the large hall, you were at once surrounded by the atmosphere peculiar to years of a consciously cultivated Jewish tradition. Big engravings, illustrating scenes from the history of Israel, beautiful carving on cupboards and chests displaying exclusively biblical motifs, gave one a sense of having been carried back into the Old Testament. The whole house, down to the smallest articles of furniture, bore evidence of a most highly cultured and decorously stable pattern of life. But everything was attuned to a dominantly religious note, so that one might have thought oneself in the house of a devout Rabbi." (Sister Teresia, *Edith Stein*, 3)

[115] Stein, *Life*, 72.

[116] Sister Teresia, *Edith Stein*, 16.

the mother that the more her daughter indulged in her study the more she would be swept by the "liberalist current" and "so away from her religious influence."[117]

But a notable influence came along the way: the encounter with Max Scheler. Stein said of Scheler: "His influence in those years affected me, as it did many others, far beyond the sphere of philosophy."[118] This sphere is the sphere of faith.

It was Max Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Values*[119] which, according to Stein, had "probably affected the entire intellectual world of recent decades even more than Husserl's *Ideas*." Scheler greatly influenced the young phenomenologists of that time, such as Dietrich von Hildebrand and Rudolf Clemens who depended more on him than on Husserl.[120] Moreover, Scheler was one of the reasons for Stein's conversion, as Graef would claim.[121]

Scheler's book, *Phenomenology and Theory of the Feelings of Sympathy*, which was published at that time, was very significant to Stein. This time she was already entertaining the problem of empathy, later to become the doctoral dissertation she would write under Husserl.[122]

As known by many at that time, Scheler's private life was a disaster. According to John M. Oesterreicher, his life was "under a dark shadow: he had entered a civil marriage with a woman, divorced and much older than he, who tried first to dominate then to ruin him."[123] As Stein saw it, "Scheler's personal affairs were in a very bad way."[124] Nevertheless, he never failed to fascinate the young philosopher. As she put it,

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[117] Ibid.

[118] Stein, *Life*, 260.

[119] Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973); German: *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 2014).

[120] Ibid., 258.

[121] Graef, *The Scholar*, 17.

[122] Stein, *Life*, 260.

[123] Őosterreicher, *Walls Are Crumbling,* 141. This chapter on Max Scheler was also published in *The Thomist* two years before the publication of the book. (See John M. Őosterreicher, "Max Scheler and the Faith," in *The Thomist*, Vol. XIII, No. 2 (April, 1950): 135-203)

[124] Stein, *Life*, 258. It must be noted here that after Scheler got a "scandalous suit" from his wife in Munich, he lost his university status as a faculty member; thus, putting an end to "his career as an educator." He sustained his life only through writing. He was married for the second time and had lived a simple life in Berlin and often traveled to give lectures. (Ibid.) The Philosophical Society of Gőttingen

> One's first impression of Scheler was fascination. In no other person have I ever encountered the "phenomenon of genius" as clearly. The light of a more exalted world shone from his large blue eyes. His features were handsome and noble; still, life had left some devastating traces in his face. Betty Heymann said he reminded her of the picture of Dorian Gray: that mysterious portrait on which the dissolute life of the original painted its distorting lines, while the person preserved the handsome features of his youth.[125]

What seemed to be more important in Stein's encounter with Scheler was that it was then that "the 'phenomenon' of the Catholic Church had entered her mind."[126] Recalling about this momentous encounter, she says,

> I do not know in which year Scheler returned to the Catholic Church. It could not have been long before I met him. In any case, he was quite full of Catholic ideas at the time and employed all the brilliance of his spirit and his eloquence to plead them. This was my first encounter with this hitherto totally unknown world. It did not lead me as yet to the Faith. But it did open for me a region of "phenomena" which I could then no longer bypass blindly. With good reasons we were repeatedly enjoined to observe all things without prejudice, to discard all possible "blinders." The barriers of rationalistic prejudices with which I had unwittingly grown up fell, and the world of faith unfolded before me.[127]

This was indeed an eye-opener to the young atheist. The phenomena of faith began to confront her. She would recall that the people she was associating with, whom she respected and admired, were living in such a faith-experience.[128] "At the least," she said, "they deserved my giving it some serious reflection."[129] However, such preoccupation was not yet a priority. "For the time being," she confessed, "I did not em-

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invited him for several weeks every semester to give lectures. However, this was done unobtrusively for Scheler's name was not allowed in the University at that time. The lectures were done in the social rooms of some hotel or café. (Ibid.)

[125] Ibid., 259-260.

[126] Graef, *The Scholar*, 18. "Scheler," says Őesterreicher, "was born a Jew, but he grew up with no religious formation. His first acquaintance with the spiritual world was through the Catholic serving-maids in his home, whose tranquil strength and simplicity seemed uniquely theirs" (Oesterreicher, *Walls Are Crumbling*, 141). A meeting with a priest who taught religion at the Gymnasium brought "Scheler's interest" to the Church, for it was an encounter with "a different world, the world of the absolute," continued Oesterreicher. (Ibid.)

[127] Stein, *Life*, 260. According to Herbstrith, "Scheler demonstrated with irresistible brilliance that religion alone makes the human being human. He placed humility at the foundation of all moral endeavor and argued that the sole purpose of this endeavor was to lead the individual to the loss of self in God – and on to new resurrection. Edith Stein had never heard anyone speak like that before." (Herbstrith, *Edith Stein*, 47)

[128] Stein, *Life*, 260.

[129] Ibid.

bark on a systematic investigation of the questions of faith; I was far too busy with other matters. I was content to accept without resistance the stimuli coming from my surroundings, and so, almost without noticing it, became gradually transformed."[130]

It was not yet her time for conversion. Nevertheless, having been influenced by phenomenology, it was not difficult for her to see clearly without bias the phenomena of faith surrounding her. Florent Gaboriau saw three aspects in Stein's conversion: the conversion of a Jewess, the conversion of a woman, and the conversion of a philosopher.[131] Stein's phenomenology brought her to Christian philosophy. We have shown above that through Max Scheler, Stein came to know the Catholic Church, although at that time only as a phenomenon seen by a phenomenologist. Religion was a phenomenon and, as she observed, many of her contemporaries were living with such a faith experience. But religion was not yet a preoccupation for her; though a notable portion of the last part of her dissertation on empathy spoke of religious consciousness, for a while she never pursued it.

It was when Stein was helping Frau Anna in arranging the literary legacy of her philosopher husband Adolf Reinach that, for the first time, Stein encountered the cross. She was amazed at how powerful the cross of Christ for believers was. Frau Anna was not devastated by the sudden death of her husband. It was said that the couple had become Christians before this tragic incident. Stein acknowledged that such strength showed by Frau Anna could only come from her Christian faith.[132] Stein's study of phenomenology made her see the phenomenon of faith she could no longer deny. Most people in Göttingen at that time were Christians; so were Husserl and Max Scheler. Stein's attraction to Christianity was very strong; since she was a Jew, embracing it would cost her a lot. But the search for the fullness of truth had always been her goal, so it was now a choice between becoming a Lutheran or a Catholic Christian.

On that fateful night in the Summer of 1921, Stein came across the autobiography of Teresa of Avila. After reading it for just a night, she felt so convinced that it is the truth. She then decided to enter the Catholic Church.[133] Is conversion possible

[130] Ibid., 260-261.

[131] See Florent Gaboriau, *The Conversion of Edith Stein,* trans. Ralph McInerny (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2002).

[132] Stein, *Life*, 419-420.

[133] Ibid., 420.

overnight? Stein must have long been searching for the truth. Waltraud Herbstrith made this remark,

> What truth had been revealed to Edith through this book? What had been accomplished in this one night? Since her childhood Edith had sought a clue which might lead her to spiritual enlightenment. She had questioned the sense of human existence. In St. Teresa of Avila she found the teacher who taught her about the inner light of the soul – God himself. Edith saw in this biography her own fate. God is not a God of science but a God of love. Reason advancing slowly and logically could not attain to the divine secrets. St. Teresa was the great mystic who knew God's love by experience, but she was also a psychologist and master of self-recognition. She united in herself mystical devotion and clear realistic pedagogic knowledge.[134]

And so Stein was converted.[135] She bought a missal and a catechism and then asked for baptism. From that time on, Stein's desire to become a Carmelite nun became inseparable from her baptismal commitment.

3. Her Way to Christian Philosophy

After her conversion, Stein had been publicly active. Her professional career from 1931 to 1932 involved a lot of lectures, philosophical seminars, speaking engagements, writings, etc. She spoke of things which were of great interest to the Church; thus her writings had contributed significantly to Catholic thought.[136] She became popular only when she stopped working in the field of philosophy. She found Christ and his Church and this new predicament had drawn practical consequences for her. She taught at the Pedagogic Institute of the Dominican nuns at Speyer.

In a word, Stein actually lived in the Catholic world. She read the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas, and translated into German Aquinas' *Quaestiones disputatae de veri-*

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[134] Herbstrith, *The Way*, 35-36. For the life of St. Teresa of Avila see *The Autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila*, trans. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D. and Otilio Rodriquez, O.C.D. (New York: Book-of-the Month Club, 1995); originally as the *Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*, vol. I (ICS Publications, 1987).

[135] For an analysis of Stein's conversion, see for instance MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1013-1922*, 163-175.

[136] Stein, *Life*, 423. From 1932-1933, Stein has further developed her theory of the human person during these years at Münster. For a detailed discussion of her Münster anthropology, see Beate Beckmann-Zöller, "Edith Stein's Theory of the Person in Her Münster Years (1932-1933)," trans. Amalie Enns, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 47-70.

tate.[137] This achievement brought her back to the world of philosophy, but with a difference. She had to start all over again. She was, as she put it, "a beginner for beginners."[138]

Stein's intellectual formation started with Husserl, using the phenomenological method in many of her treatises published in the *Jahrbuch*. Husserl was her master, but eventually she became also a pupil of Aquinas. In her words, she was "a reverent and willing pupil." But in approaching Aquinas, Stein could no longer ignore her previous philosophical training. Her mind was no longer a *tabula rasa*, she said. We then find in her the meeting of two philosophic worlds: Husserl's and Aquinas'. There was now the demand to give a "dialectic elucidation" for the basic concepts of the two philosophers.[139] Stein had moved from Husserl to Aquinas; better yet, she embraced them both.

Stein's investigation focused on the human person. In it we see an original combination of phenomenology and an endless inquiry on the meaning of being human.[140] Stein's philosophy of the human person (a study from 1916 to 1921) brought her towards an encounter with Christianity, which led her to Thomas Aquinas, John of the Cross and Teresa of Avila.[141] Her life was a mix of philosophy and theology, indeed a harmony of faith and reason.[142]

One can even compare Stein to Heidegger. Both of them come from Husserl's phenomenology. Their lives intersected but in two diverse courses. After studying with

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[137] See Stein, *Des HI. Thomas von Aquino Untersuchungen über die Wahrheit*, in 2 vols. (Louvain: E. Nauwelaerts, 1952).

[138] See Stein's Preface to *Finite and Eternal Being*, xxvii.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Baseheart, *Person in the World*, 30.

[141] Marianne Sawicki, "Personal Connections: The Pre-Baptismal Philosophy of Edith Stein," (Carmelite Monastery, Baltimore, November 13, 1998); [article online]; available from http://www.geocities.com/baltimorecarmel/stein/sawicki.html; 12 September 2007.

[142] See for instance, Thomas S. Hibbs, review on *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922* by Alasdair MacIntyre, *First Things* (New York: May 2006, Iss. 163, 48-50); [review online];availablefromhttp://proquest.umi.com/pqdweb?did=1035942141&Fmt=3&clientId=63427&RQT=309&VName=PQD;14 September 2007. In this review it is said that Stein "has much to say about reason and faith, the nature of conversion, the relation of phenomenology to Thomism, and the understanding of philosophy as a way of life." Stein's "philosophical life" is an exemplary one, not necessarily due to her conclusions but to her questions and "integration of thought and life." MacIntyre's book presents the unity of Stein's thought and life. It also deals with Stein's very life as "an embodiment of a certain form of philosophical life." See primarily Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue 1913-1922*).

Husserl, Heidegger moved on to radically deconstruct "traditional metaphysics" and ended as an alleged supporter of the Third Reich. Stein was a Jew turned atheist. After studying with Husserl and struggling to move beyond the limitations she detected in Husserl's phenomenology, she became a Catholic. She later embraced "traditional metaphysics" and was finally martyred at Auschwitz.[143]

Stein's philosophical life includes her interest in the history of modern Thomism.[144] As Baseheart puts it, her philosophical career spans from Husserl to Thomas. Her philosophy attempts to bring together modern and medieval philosophy, particularly those of St. Thomas and Husserl.[145]

Stein's is one of the "most dramatically compelling conversions" that bring an individual to understand, though retrospectively, what has previously been unclear.[146] Her life gives us an example of how thought and life can be integrated. Her philosophy is not just theoretical but also practical, that is, a way of life. Why do we have to get interested in the philosophy of Stein? MacIntyre has tried to answer this question. He says at the end of his inquiry: "Her questions of course, like all such questions, presuppose positions taken, conclusions at which she had arrived. But the point of those conclusions is to make us aware of the inescapable character of the questions."[147]

Furthermore, her life and thought are a "prelude to Theology," confirming Thomas Aquinas' paradox that gives philosophy integrity on its own while functioning as a handmaid to theology.[148] Stein's life and thought are indeed inseparable. Meghan Sweeney insists that one cannot consider Stein's philosophy without dealing first with her life.[149] This is very basic in the study of her philosophy. It is then no surprise that a

[143] Hibbs, review online. "Heidegger's path," MacIntyre writes, "was thus in an opposite direction to Stein's. While she was moving closer to the Catholic Church, he was moving steadily away from it" (MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue*, 164).

[144] Ibid.

[145] Sister Mary Catherine Baseheart, S.C.N., *The Encounter of Husserl's Phenomenology and the Philosophy of St. Thomas in Selected Writings of Edith Stein* (University of Notre Dame, 1960), 1.

[146] Hibbs, review online.

[147] MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue*, 7.

[148] Hibbs, review online.

[149] Meghan T. Sweeney, *A Performance of Being and the Enacting Texts of Edith Stein* (Georgia: Emory University, 2006), 5.

large part of Stein's literature is about her life. Her philosophy and theology cannot be detached from her personhood.[150]

The question on the structure of the human person has been left unanswered by Stein at the end of her doctoral dissertation on the problem of empathy. All her life she searches for this. The answer she offers is an insightful synthesis of the following: history and mysticism, biblical imagery and the *imago dei*, scriptural exegesis and Christian anthropology, and finally, biblical interpretation and theology.[151]

In the end, Stein's philosophical journey brings her to the Cross of Jesus Christ. "The Crucified One," she declared towards the end of her life before her tragic death under the Nazis, "demands from the artist more than a mere portrayal of the image. He demands that the artist, just as every other person, follow him: that he both make himself and allow himself to be made into an image of the one who carries the cross and is crucified."[152] John Paul II canonized Edith Stein in 1998, a proof that she had in fact

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[150] Ibid., 6. Antonio Calcagno in his book on Edith Stein observes that from the late 1990s to the early 2000s, many books on Stein were published but only few had focused deeply on her philosophy. Instead, most of these books were centered on Stein's life, death and spirituality (Antonio Calcagno, *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* [Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania: Duquesne University Press, 2007], xi). This is due to the fact that Stein's life and thought cannot be separated. Her life and her philosophy are one. Though Calcagno claims that his book is specifically devoted on Stein's philosophy, he still has to deal with Stein's life in the opening chapter entitled "Edith Stein: A Controversial and Paradoxical Life." Even more appealing is the necessary combination of Stein's life and writing. As Sweeney succinctly expresses, "Had Stein lived the life that she had, without having written anything substantial, we probably wouldn't know about her. Conversely, had Stein written what she had with living the life that she did, or died the way she did, her notoriety (if you want to call it that) probably would have been relegated to and severely limited within the realm of German phenomenology, Karol Wojtyla's study of her notwithstanding." (Sweeney, *A Performance of Being*, 6-7). Marian Maskulak also points out that the "thought and approach of Edith Stein contributes to each of these fields: holistic Christian anthropology, holistic spirituality, and holistic formation." (Marian A. Maskulak, *Reclaiming the Soul: Edith Stein and the Unity of the Body-Soul-Spirit at the Center of Holistic Formation* [Canada: University of St. Michael's College, 2005], 12). Maskulak further states that Stein's effort is a "lifelong study of the human being." The "tripartite unity of body-soul-spirit" results from this. (Ibid., 13). Most important in Stein is the discovery that the human person is structurally both spiritual and psychophysical. (Ann W. Astell, "Biblical Images of God and the Reader's 'I' as Imago Dei: The Contribution of Edith Stein," *Interpretation*, 59, Iss. 4 (October, 2005): 382-391, 340;[articleonline];availablefromhttp://proquest.umi/pqdweb?did=912593011&Fmt=3&clientId=63427&RQT=309&VName=PQD; 14 September 2007).

[151] Astell, "Biblical Images," online.

[152] Stein, *The Science of the Cross*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002), 12; ESGA 18: *Kreuzeswissenschaft: Studie über Johannes vom Kreuz* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Verlag Herder, 2003), 8. In reference to St. John of the Cross, Stein further comments: "It is beneficial to honor the Crucified in images and to fashion such as will encourage devotion to him. But better than any image made of wood or stone are living images. To form souls to the image of Christ, to plant the cross in their hearts, this was the great task in the life of the reformer of the order and the director of souls." (Ibid., 276)

carried the cross and was crucified; she thus attained the ultimate prize of her search – the crowning glory of life in heaven.

CHAPTER TWO

Inquiry into the Meaning of Being

We have seen in the previous chapter the movement of Edith Stein's life, that is, from phenomenology to Christian philosophy. Her conversion to Catholicism really played a big role in her later scholarly life, even before becoming a Carmelite nun. Her project from here onwards was to set out an explication of the relationship between the phenomenology of her teacher Edmund Husserl and the scholasticism of St. Thomas Aquinas.153 In her preface to Finite and Eternal Being, she mentions three of her philosophical writings which aim to establish a common ground between these two philosophical worlds. The first of this is an essay she wrote as a contribution to the Husserl-Festschrift entitled "Husserl's Phenomenology and the Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas." The second was a discussion of the concepts of act and potency, which Stein wrote in 1931 as her Habilitationsschrift in order for her to qualify for a professorship at the University of Freiburg. This work could have been thoroughly revised but due to what she calls a "vocational work of a different kind", she deferred the plan. Only when she was already admitted to the Carmelite Order and had finished her novitiate that she was able to touch this project again upon the order of her superiors, but what came out was an entirely new version. The Thomistic doctrine on act and potency was retained in the beginning of this new work. The center of the discussion was already an "inquiry into the meaning of being," which Stein objectively explored to explain comparatively Thomistic and phenomenological thought.154 The present study, as we have men-

[153] More than just a blend of phenomenology and scholasticism, Sarah Borden Sharkey also presents in a paper that Stein's writings are employing more "traditional ideas" with a distinctly "contemporary twist" (Sharkey, "Reconciling Time and Eternity: Edith Stein's Philosophical Project," in *Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being: Edith Stein's Phenomenology and Christian Philosophy*, 7-20.

[154] See Stein's preface to *Finite and Eternal Being*, pp. xxvii-xxviii. She mentions also here that the concepts of act and potency also provided the title of a work prior to *Finite and Eternal Being*, see Stein, *Potency and Act: Studies Toward a Philosophy of Being*, trans. Walter Redmond [Washington D.C., ICS Publications, 2009]; German original: *Potenz und Akt: Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins* [Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder, 2005, ESGA 10]. The first philosophic expression was an imaginary dialogue between Husserl and St. Thomas to clearly set forth the comparison between their philosophy, see "Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison," in *Knowledge and Faith*, trans. Walter Redmond (Washington, D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 2000), 4). There are two versions of this comparison: Version A and Version B. Version A is dialogical while Version B is didactic. See also the German dialogical and didactic versions, "*Was ist Philosophie? Ein Gespräch zwischen Edmund Husserl and Thomas von Aquino*" (1928) and „*Husserls Phänomenologie und die Philosophie des hl. Thomas v. Aquino. Versuch einer Gegenüberstellung*" (1929), respectively, in Stein, *„Freiheit und Gnade" und weitere Beiträge zu Phäno-*

tioned at the outset, is an exposition of this inquiry to which our first consideration may now turn.

1. The Doctrine of Act and Potency

Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being begins with an exposition of Thomas Aquinas' doctrine of *act* and *potency*, which serves as her method. She admits at the outset that this approach is a "bold undertaking," for it is not easy to understand these concepts apart from the whole philosophical system of Aquinas. But Stein is convinced that there is only "*one* Truth" unfolding from a step by step conquest of various "individual truths"; so that from one "particular direction" there opens up "a larger horizon" which reveals "a new depth." The ultimate problems of being begin with a distinction between potency and act. Such a discussion brings us to "the very heart of Thomistic philosophy."[155] The phenomenological method is used as a starting point in order to find a way into "the majestic temple of scholastic thought."[156]

The Thomistic doctrine of act and potency serves as the basis of Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being. She considers it as "the portal of a huge building which ap-

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menologie und Ontologie (1917 bis 1937) [Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 2014, pp. 91-142]. *Potenz und Akt* (Potency and Act) was posthumously published in 1998, but at that time the English translation was still in progress. This work is Stein's attempt to study the foundations of Thomistic philosophy by using the phenomenological method. It is indeed an attempt to bring together the phenomenological method, in which Stein is an expert, and Thomistic philosophy, which Stein embraces as a convert to Catholicism. We have known that Stein failed to get a professorial position at the University of Freiburg. But this work of Stein was not a waste, as we have seen. Later in her life as a Carmelite nun, she was encouraged by her religious superiors to continue her work, revising and expanding it. The result was *Endliches und Ewiges Sein* (*Finite and Eternal Being*), which is our major source in our present attempt to present Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being. To have a glimpse of *Potency and Act*, see also an article written by the English translator of this work of Stein, Walter Redmond's article entitled "A Nothing that Is: Edith Stein on Being Without Essence," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (Winter 2008): 71-86. See also a paper that examines Stein's unique combination of phenomenology and ontology (Gloria Zúñiga Y Postigo, "Phenomenological Ontology: Stein's Third Way," in *Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being*, 139-167).

[155] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 1.

[156] Ibid., 12.

peared to us in its commanding height from afar."[157] At first glance, this doctrine "may well encompass the entire amplitude of that which is."[158]

Stein's task begins with an analysis and an inquiry into the manifold meanings of the terms *act* and *potency*. She follows closely St. Thomas Aquinas' exposition of this doctrine in the *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, where Stein finds a very detailed and comprehensive treatment of the problem. In her findings, the treatise on act and potency was written simultaneously with the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*. The latter contains the treatise on the existence and nature of God. Certain problems which in the *Summa* are treated only in passing are discussed at greater length in the *Quaestiones*. That is why Stein focuses on the *Quaestiones*, although a perusal of the text brings "purely philosophical matters" greatly dealt with by Aquinas.[159]

Stein admits that to disengage philosophy from its theological context is not an easy job. Philosophers or readers with no clear knowledge of the link between theology and philosophy would think that they are treading on a "forbidden ground."[160] Hence, there is a need for an objective analysis of the problem at hand. To do this, Stein turns from the *Quaestiones* to *De ente et essentia*, an early work where the "fully developed doctrine" can nonetheless be found, like "a seed that later on grows into a mighty tree."[161] A careful study on this early work is for Stein a necessity in order for us to penetrate into the original meaning of the *doctrine of act and potency*.

The ontology of Aquinas is outlined into three major gradations: 1) *material or composite substances* (composed of *matter* and *form*); 2) *intelligent* [spiritual] or *simple* substances; 3) and the *first existent*, that is, God. Stein says that Aquinas considers these gradations of the "totality of that which is" as "hierarchically ordered."[162]

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[157] Ibid., 31.

[158] Ibid.

[159] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 31.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid., 32.

[162] Ibid., 32-33. Chapter 2 of *De ente et essentia* begins a treatment on material or composite substances: *In substantiis igitur compositis forma et materia notae sunt, ut in homine anima et corpus...* The discussion on composite substances proceeds until Chapter 3. Chapter 4 deals with simple substances and the first existent: *Nunc restat videre per quem modum sit essential in substantiis separatis, scilicet in anima intellective et in intelligentiis et in causa prima...* (See Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Opusculum *De Ente et Essentia*, edidit Vincentius-Maria Pouliot, O.P., diligent cum cooperation Domini Akio Ku-

The first gradation, which is the lowest realm, comprises the world of matter – both inorganic (lifeless) and organic (including humanity). The second one includes the angels which Aquinas calls intelligences; they are simple and considered *pure forms*. Stein mentions that it was hotly debated during the Middle Ages whether *pure intelligences* have some matter. The highest realm of the hierarchy is the *first existent*, that is, God; and it is widely agreed by medieval writers that this first existent is absolutely simple and pure being. What marks the difference between this first existent (God) and created intelligences (angels), which are not composed of matter and form, is the separation of *form* and *being* [i.e., the act of existing] in created intelligences. Rather, their *form* is identical with their *essence* [*essentia*]. In a created intelligence, there is "form and being" but such "act of existing" only comes from the first existent, who is God, the pure being. The former's act, in other words, is only received from God, and hence it is clear that it is still in potency to receive its act from another. An intelligence, therefore, has both potency and act. This assertion would account for multiplicity in the created intelligences. Moreover, in created intelligences one can speak of differences in accordance with their respective degrees of potency and act. The closer an intelligence to the first existent, the higher its actuality and the lesser its potentiality.[163]

Stein observes that there is a link between St. Thomas' concepts of act and potency and Aristotle's concepts of form, matter, substance, etc. However, a discussion of these other Aristotelian concepts is no longer included in our exposition.[164]

As we have seen above, Stein discovers in St. Thomas' pure intelligences a distinction between "*what* they are (their quiddity)" and "the fact that they *are*." The being of these pure intelligences is designated by St. Thomas as the "*act* of existing." This conforms to the idea of the "*first existent*" which is, together with Aristotle, defined as "*pure being* and *pure act*" by St. Thomas.[165] If something, however, receives being, as has been shown by St. Thomas, that something is in potency to that which it receives. If *potentia* would denote "a possibility or a *being able to*, then *esse in potentia* means possible being, having the possibility of being, or being able to be [*im Vermögen sein; in*

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saka [Kyõto, Japonia: Institutum Sancti Thomae Aquinatis, 1955], Caput II to Caput III, 4ff, pp. 36-58; Caput IV, 18ff, pp. 58-68).

[163] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 32-33. See also, *De Ente et Essentia*, Caput IV, 22-23, pp.64-66.

[164] For Stein's treatment of these Aristotelian concepts see chapter four of *Finite and Eternal Being*, 121-275.

[165] Ibid., 33.

der Möglichkeit sein; Sein-können]. That which can be, however, does not – as has been explained – by itself have the power of giving to itself its being or its act of existence."[166]

However, to say "being able to be" is more than just to say that something is not hindered "from receiving the act of existence." What is implied when we speak of possible being is a being which is understood in a dual sense: (1) a being toward being as "*act*" and (2) "a certain *mode of being*."[167] One cannot simply mean that "being possible" is "not-being." Possible being is already a mode of being; if not, to speak about "*degrees* of *potentiality*" would be without sense.

For Stein, what being means is not "always and everywhere one and the *same*." Act and being are not absolutely identical and convertible, for this would make it impossible to say that "something is more or less in act and thus closer to or farther removed from the first being."[168] So for Stein, it is justified to distinguish between "*gradations of being*" and "calling act and potency *modes of being*." She says further that from what is potential to what is actual being, the transition is not just from "one mode of being to another" but from inferior to superior.[169] Gradations can even be spoken of in reference to possible and real beings. This is the reason why there is sense in saying that this is "a *pure act*" and that this pure act is designated as the "*highest being*."[170]

Stein remarks that these considerations do not exhaust what we mean by act and potency. What has been attained so far is only an understanding of the terms but not a sufficient understanding of the content. In Stein's analogy, a blind man can only know, when told, what colors signify but he cannot have an experiential knowledge of these colors. Are we better then than the blind man? Yes we are, for we can now distinguish possibility from actuality, Stein continues to say.[171] However, we are facing new difficulties. The meaning of act and potency as degrees or modes of being is still insufficient. We are still far from a real understanding of the terms. Hence, Stein in-

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[166] Ibid., 33-34.

[167] Ibid., 34.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Ibid.

[170] Ibid.

[171] Ibid.

quires whether we can find a way toward a closer understanding of the terms act and potency. This leads us to her next concern.

2. The Fact of Our Own Being

To advance farther in her investigation, Stein has to inquire about the knowledge of the nature of our own being. Or how do we know about God? How do we know the *highest being* or God as *actus purus*? It seems the answers are beyond our reach. Earlier we presumed that these terms are understood. But Stein's approach is consoling: it is very human, close to us – believers and unbelievers alike. Following St. Augustine, she writes, "There is, however, something which is not only very close to us but even inescapably near. Whenever the human mind in its quest for truth has sought an indubitably certain point of departure, it always encountered the inescapable *fact of its own being or existence*: 'Of all the things we know, how much do we know with the same certitude as we know that we exist?'"[172]

One can doubt about God's existence, but one cannot doubt about one's existence. The *Cogito, ergo sum* of Descartes establishes this first certitude; no skeptic can counter such an assertion. In Husserl there is this "*life of the ego*" (*Ichleben*). One may not be certain that something exists, but one is certain that one perceives something. For Stein we are here already beyond the "delusions of the senses." To know that we exist is the most intimate of knowledge. "In the 'I live' of St. Augustine as much as in the 'I think' of Descartes, and in Husserl's 'being conscious of' or 'experiencing' – there is implied the same *I am*."[173]

The certainty of one's existence is not first knowledge in a "*temporal* sense," since there is no doubt that the external world exists. Phenomenology is already beyond Descartes; there is no more isolated ego, for the world out there exists though in a bracket (phenomenological reduction). Moreover, this knowledge is not in the manner of a "*first principle*" from which all other truths are deduced. "The certainty of my existence," Stein maintains, "is rather most primordial in the sense that it is the most intimate

[172] Ibid., 35. Also see St. Augustine, *De Trinitate*, X, 3 and XV, 12.

[173] Ibid., 36. From the "simple fact of being," Stein distinguishes an "intellectual movement," which is the awareness of my own being, of the ego, and of being itself. (Ibid., 62)

or immediate knowledge I have: It is a knowledge of that which is inseparable from me, and it is therefore a primordial starting point."[174]

The certainty that I exist comes to us without any reflection, in Stein's words, an "unreflected knowledge," meaning such knowledge as "precedes all reflective and 'retrospective' thinking."[175] Without being naturally concerned with external objects, the intellect in self-knowledge turns upon itself. It contemplates "the simple fact of its own being" and, according to Stein, it asks a threefold-question: "(1) What is that being of which I am conscious? (2) What is that self which is conscious of itself? (3) What is that intellectual movement in which I am and in which I am conscious of both myself and the movement itself?"[176]

When we look at "being as it is in itself," we see two aspects: "that of being and that of not-being." Stein observes,

> The "I am" is unable to endure this dual perspective: that in which I am is subject to change and since being and the intellectual movement ("in which" I am) are not separated, this being is likewise subject to change. The "former" state of being is past and has given way to the "present" state of being. This means that the being of which I am conscious as mine is inseparable from temporality. As actual being – that is, as actually present being – it is without a temporal dimension [*punktuell*]: It is a "now" in between a "no longer" and a "not yet." But by its breaking apart in its flux into being and not-being, the *idea of pure being* is revealed to us. In pure being there is no longer any admixture of not-being, nor any "no longer" and "not yet." In short, pure being is not temporal but *eternal*.[177]

Being human is to realize that one is temporal and what we call pure being is eternal. Hence Stein concludes that the intellect has an encounter within itself with ideas like eternal, temporal, immutable and mutable being (and also not-being); these ideas are not borrowed from the outside of the intellect.[178] This finding confirms the fact that we can legitimately have a philosophy which is based on natural reason and natural knowledge. This is not yet to show whether God exists or not. What comes to mind at this point of Stein's investigation is the term *analogia entis*, which we shall discuss only

[174] Ibid.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid., 37.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

later in our exposition. It is enough to say for the time being that *analogia entis* indicates the "relationship existing between temporal and eternal being."

Furthermore, in thinking about "being and not-being," what becomes apparent is actuality. At this point, what manifests to us as being is what Stein calls "*actually present*."[179] She also calls this being as "*fully alive*," for what is considered here is the being of the "living self." But what is the "actual state" of this being? Stein is certain that this is not a not-being, for "that which once was but no longer is and that which will be but is not yet is not simply not-being." The past and the future epistemologically exist "in memory and expectation."

How about the present moment? Stein observes that it does not exist "by itself in isolation." Like a point in a line, the present moment does not exist apart from the past and the future. The actually present, which is something which rises "out of darkness, passes through a ray of light only to sink back again into darkness." Or in another metaphor used by Stein in describing the actually present: it is like the "crest of a wave which itself is part of a mighty stream." Stein is telling us here of a being which endures even if it is not actual during the whole time it extends as being.[180]

In my present being, there is something which is no longer actual but which shall be in the future. As Stein puts it, "And what I am now actually I was at some time in the past, but not actually."[181] This means that what is contained in "my present being" is "the *possibility or potentiality* [*Möglichkeit*] of future actual being." And what is also presupposed here is that my actual being is a "possibility or potentiality" of "my former being."[182] In a word, my present being is both actual and potential. So from the fact of our own being, we can deduce actuality and potentiality.

Earlier we have seen how Stein discusses the doctrine of act and potency from the writings of St. Thomas. We have seen also how such a discussion has brought us towards some understanding of the term, and yet with its content we have not gone that far. Now, in introducing the fact of our own being, Stein brings us to a better understanding of the doctrine of act and potency. But we are not yet done here. We have to move further.

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[179] Ibid., 38.

[180] Ibid.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

3. Temporality as a Progress of Actuality

Stein reminds us "that the two different modes of being in which I 'still' am what I once was, and in which I am 'already' what I shall be in the future are both parts of my present existence."[183] This we have discussed above. Stein continues saying that "my past and future existence *as such* are completely void [*nichtig*]: I am now, not at any other time past or future."[184] Definitely I exist, but "my existence" is "suspended over a sword's edge."

There is then what Stein calls an "enigmatic nature of *time* and *temporal existence*." Past and future are never static. They do not contain something that is preserved or something that can emerge. In a word, there is nothing in them that can be concealed as "enduring being."[185] "The peculiar nature of enduring being," Stein maintains, "cannot be understood from the point of view of time, but rather conversely, time must be understood from the point of view of non-dimensional actuality."[186]

There is time because there is being, not the other way around. Enduring being only appears to us as "a *continual passing* over the point of contact." This is what Stein calls "the original *existential movement*"- a movement where time is created and it is created as a space.[187] Being, therefore, is becoming, not static; and time is needed for it to be. It can be posited only in actuality or in the present, which now becomes the "space in which the act of positing can be performed."

We can speak of the "present" when "this primordial ontic act occurs." But what we have here is only a "'point', never a breadth," for the present continues to break "in upon nothingness." Actuality then is to advance a farther step. Stein explains that with actuality what is reached is "a new position" and that what has been is not anymore valid.[188] What we call time or its dimension is no other than just a "progress of actuality."

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[183] Ibid., 39.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid., 39-40.

[186] Ibid., 40.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Let us not fail to mention here that these ideas of Stein are borrowed from Hedwig Conrad-Martius. In her notes, Stein mentions that H. Conrad-Martius has confined the meaning of actuality to a

"The firm anchorage of time," Stein continues, "lies in the *passing present*." "Any concrete existential hold" or "any breadth dimension of the present" cannot be furnished by time. The reason is that what is temporally posited is "the existential form of an existent" that is only factual and not essential. It means further that "a definitive positing of being" cannot be arrived at "*in and by itself*" for that which is only a "factually existing being." In a word, "a true possession of existence [*Existenzbesitz*]" cannot be attained here.[189]

What is described here is temporal existence, that is, "a nondimensional actuality continually illuminated by flashes of light." But temporal existence for Stein cannot be considered as pure actuality. She clearly puts it: "In my nondimensional present there is simultaneously actual and potential being. I am not in the same manner and degree everything that I presently am."[190] Being human therefore is temporal, which means it is simultaneously actual and potential or, in a word, it is a progress of actuality. With such finding Stein has to consider a being in which both potentiality and actuality are necessarily seen as one.

4. The Experience of Capability

Stein makes us realize that in our own being, we experience "capability." She writes, "Whatever human beings *do* is a realization of what they are *capable* of doing; and what they are capable of doing is a manifestation of what they *are*."[191] In a later chapter Stein again says, "What human beings are 'capable of doing' as free persons they learn only by doing it or, perhaps, in anticipation, when they meet with a specific *demand*."[192] Hence upon realizing our capabilities, our *essence or nature* reaches the peak of our "*ontological development* [*Seinsentfaltung*]."[193] This is what education is all about, for to be truly human is not an instant event. A series of development is needed, but every person is capable of it. Stein brilliantly puts it,

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non-dimensional being and therefore it is not applicable to what we call eternal being. See endnote 13 of the Chapter II of *Finite and Eternal Being*, 554.

[189] Ibid., 40-41.

[190] Ibid., 41.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Ibid., 376.

[193] Ibid., 41.

> The I is, as it were, the breach between the dark and deep ground and the clear luminosity of conscious life and therewith also between "potentiality" or "pre-actuality" and full and present actuality (i.e., between potency and act). In the experience of its "capability" [*Können*], the I becomes conscious of the "powers" which are "dormant" in the soul and which sustain the ego-life. And the ego-life in turn is the actualization, the actual effectuation of these powers. It is that thereby these powers become visible.[194]

What is the source of this power which is dormant in the soul? Such power, Stein believes, sustains the life of the ego [*Ichleben*]. In later pages Stein mentions about capability [*Können*], obligation [*Sollen*, *the* "Ought"] and the inner life. The experience of human capability or what we can do and what we ought to do and the experience of freedom as it is related to the power that commands us suggest an access to a God dwelling in our soul.

Maybe one will criticize Stein for being theological, but reading her closely convinces us that her arguments are experiential and, hence, philosophical. We have seen earlier that her starting point is the fact of our own being. She argues that the being of the soul is anchored in divine being.[195] The power which is dormant in the soul is already within the disposal of the human person. And yet this power "has a *measure*." It is a "finite quantity." Every time we perform a "free act"[196] that consumes our power, we are naturally exhausted unless there is a sufficient supply of this power coming from its source. Stein gives the example of a physician who is already very tired after a day's work, then still receives a sick call during the night. The physician feels that this is al-

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[194] Ibid., 376.

[195] Ibid., 444.

[196] Stein has defined the person as "a conscious and free I." To be a person or to be this "I" is to be "*free*" because it can determine its own life only by doing "*free acts*." "Free acts," continues Stein, "thus constitute the primary sovereign dominion of the person." (Ibid., 376) Due to his free acts, the person can influence not only his being, but also his environment. He can extend his dominion to others and justifiably claim that it is "mine." Stein further explains, "Whatever the person does freely and consciously is ego-life, but person draw their ego-life out of some greater or lesser depth. The resolve to take a walk, for example, derives from a layer that is much closer to the surface than a decision that concerns the choice of a vocation." (Ibid.) In a word, there are choices which entail deeper reflections. "This depth," Stein maintains, "is the depth of the soul which comes 'alive' and becomes luminous in the ego-life, but before its coming alive it was hidden, and it remains mysterious despite this luminosity." (Ibid.) This human capacity of doing things flows from being free, and for Stein this can only be learned by doing it or maybe by anticipating "a specific *demand*." (Ibid.)

ready beyond his power, but there is a "*demand*": the life of the person is what is at stake here. That is why the physician tells himself that he can still do it because he ought to do it. This strikes Stein as being similar to Immanuel Kant's moral imperative. The emphasis of Stein in this situation is that the "experienced demand" is adequately expressed.

It can happen according to her that we are deceived into thinking that we cannot do a task but if pushed to the limit, we are actually capable of doing it. It can also happen that we are obliged to do it even if it is already beyond our power. For Stein, Kant's categorical imperative means that in the face of a "demand of duty," one's freedom with respect to its own nature is revealed. This does not mean that the "I" is capable of doing something that is beyond its nature. For if this is so, the "I" becomes a "creative power," but this is impossible for there is no creature so endowed. If we are obliged to do a demand which is already beyond our natural power, then this added vigor comes already from an outside source; this would be outside our nature. And where can we seek such additional source of strength? Stein claims that in faith we can find the answer.[197]

It is not the intention of the present study to discuss Stein's understanding of faith. It is enough for now to speak of Stein's claim that God's demand is coupled with a corresponding power to comply with it. This is taught by faith. She says further, "The innermost being of the soul is like a vessel into which flows the spirit of God (i.e., the life of grace) if the soul by virtue of its freedom opens itself to this vital influx."[198] Stein is convinced that God's spirit is "meaning and power." She continues saying that the soul without this God-given capability does not gain new life and is insufficient.

Moreover, it is God who gives a definite direction to the activity of the soul.[199] "Every *meaningful* demand" that obliges us is God's word. For every meaning comes from the Logos; and to receive God's word is at the same time to receive the "divine power to comply with the demand."[200]

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[197] Ibid., 444-445.

[198] Ibid., 445.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid.

Stein's objective is to simply express the difference between God's nature and our own. Let us be reminded that earlier she has already inquired into this problem (see Sec. 2 above). Now it is becoming clear that what is separated in our nature is united in God, Stein says. God's "capability is realized in action." His "entire essence is eternal and immutable in the fullest and highest actualization of his being." God's existence and essence are one. He "*who is*" is the name revealed to us by God in order to describe his very being.[201]

In being divine there is unity, while in being human there is only brokenness and division. There is that "abyss" between the creature and the creator. And yet what is common to both is the possibility of speaking of "*being*". Stein claims that everything, insofar as it is, bears some semblance with the divine being. "But all being," excluding the divine, "also bears some semblance of not-being." And this is what it means to be a creature. Only God, as creator, is "*actus purus*." There is no potentiality in God. While in being human the two modes of being (potential and actual) can be found, in God there is only "*actu esse*."[202]

Moreover, we can speak of "infinite plenitude." God is perfect or pure form for in him there is no need of any formation. We have seen our own nature as being capable or in need of development; it can be influenced by outside factors. With God there is no more possibility of receiving external influences. He is fullness, unlike our finite existence which is indeed very limited. Creaturely fullness indeed cannot achieve ultimate perfection. In addition, "finite actuality," says Stein, is a "creaturely fullness", meaning "limited fullness"; and this fullness of the creature makes the creator as the "'totally other'." Because of such limitation, the creature in order to be full needs the "divine formative power."[203] "By virtue of this fullness," Stein continues, "the creature can plastically mold itself by means of its own formative power, i.e., by means of the formative power of its own form, and the creature remains always open to the extraneous influences exerted by other creatures."[204]

[201] Ibid., 41. Cf. Exodus 3:14.

[202] Ibid., 41-42.

[203] Ibid., 417.

[204] Ibid.

5. Being Human as Transitory

Being human is a process of formation; it is a constant becoming. "The life of the ego," Stein maintains, "thus appears to be nothing but a continuous living-from-the-past-into-the-future whereby the potential is constantly actualized and the actual constantly sinks back into potentiality."[205] Being human is just a transition from one moment to another - a "fleeting moment" indeed. Stein speaks of "*experiential unit*" which means "a structural whole which during a certain period of time grows up organically in the conscious life of the individual self and thereby 'fills' this temporal span."[206] What is being *actual* here is not the "'past unit'" but the present one. And yet this "*actual* unit" is not entirely actual. What is in the "immediate now" is what Stein calls "fully alive."

The "now" is an undivided moment, yet in the next moment it is sinking again into the past.[207] Hence, whatever is filled with a new life is a new now.[208] Stein clarifies further that what "is not fully alive reaches the height of its vitality, and that which is now fully alive becomes a moment later 'life that has been lived' [*gelebtes Leben*]."[209] To be fully alive then is in the present moment, for the past has already been lived; the future is not yet alive. Anything that can "really 'be'" cannot be found in the past or in the future. In other words, actual being cannot be found in the two temporal dimensions of past and future. What we can have here "*are* only lacunae [*Leerstellen*]" – just the extension of time from the past to the future. It is only in the present moment where we can have "*real fullness* or *fulfillment*."[210] Everything that I was continues to be with me and alive with me in the present moment.[211] Stein insists that her "existence is a con-

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[205] Ibid., 44.

[206] Ibid., 43.

[207] Ibid., 43-44.

[208] Ibid., 44.

[209] Ibid.

[210] Ibid., 44-45.

[211] Ibid., 45.

tinuous movement, a fleeting and, in the strictest sense, a *transitory* kind of being and thus the extreme opposite of *eternal* and *immutable being*."[212]

To be human is to continually become and pass away. And yet, according to Stein, in our experience this constant becoming and passing away is constantly pointing further than itself. She says that "it strives toward being (that is, of course, merely a metaphorical manner of speaking), but it touches it only fleetingly from moment to moment."[213] How do we describe our own being? Stein writes, "Our own *being* then – which is this continual becoming and passing away and as such always only on the way to true being – reveals to us the *idea of true being*, i.e., of the perfect and eternally immutable being of the *pure act*."[214]

It is very clear by now that our finite being reveals the idea of a true being, which is eternal and immutable. But we have to go further into Stein's analysis. Earlier we mentioned about the *fact of our own being* as an inescapable starting point of Stein's analysis. Stein writes, "What remains after this phenomenological reduction as the field of investigation is the area of consciousness understood as the *life of the ego* [*Ichleben*]."[215] What is this life of the ego? Husserl, as mentioned by Stein, speaks of pure ego. What is it?

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[212] Ibid.

[213] Ibid., 46.

[214] Ibid.

[215] Ibid., 36. This area of consciousness is very important in the study of what it means to be human. In fact this is what is closest to us. This is the starting point of Stein as she tries to make an attempt at an ascent to the meaning of being; or in a word, an ascent from the finite being of the self to the eternal being of God. Karl Schudt even considers this as Stein's proof for the existence of God from consciousness. (See Schudt, "Edith Stein's Proof for the Existence of God from Consciousness," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. 82, No. 1 [2008], 105-125.). However, strictly speaking, Stein does not call her argument a "*proof*" (*Finite and Eternal Being*, 109). It is good to recall also Teilhard de Chardin's admission that "evolution is an ascent towards consciousness" (Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man*, trans. Bernard Wall [New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1959], 258). Now Stein's reflection is already an ascent from human consciousness to that which is Divine.

6. The Pure Ego

Immediately given to us in consciousness is the *self*, which Husserl calls the *pure ego*. In the pure ego, we cannot find any contents; it is in itself indescribable.[216] And yet the pure ego is alive in these statements: I perceive, I think, I draw conclusions, I experience joy, I desire, etc. In perceiving, thinking, desiring, the pure ego tends toward that which is perceived, thought, and desired. To interpret how pure the ego is, no longer occupies Stein. What is important to her is that in every experience the pure ego is alive and indispensable.

The pure ego and the content of experience are inseparable, and yet the former is not a part of the latter.[217] Stein says, "Rather the converse is true: Every experience is part of the pure ego; the pure ego is alive in every experience; *its life* is that very flux in which ever new structures of experiential units arise."[218] Indeed, the pure ego is not a part of the experiential content, Stein insists. She writes earlier that the ego transcends her experience, like the way the object does although in a different manner. This is the reason why in Husserl both the object and the psychological ego [*das psychische Ich*] are termed *transcendental*.[219]

Take for example the experience of joy. This is Stein's classic and favorite example. Good news can bring joy to me who has heard of it. Presupposed in this experience of joy is the appreciation I feel while listening to it. I am gratified to know that I comprehend the news, but my appreciation and gratification do not belong to the joy unit as such. I may have known the news prior to this joy over its content. I may not have possessed a clear understanding of how gratifying the news is. Or I may not experience joy due to some other matters.[220]

Stein mentions two ways to condition the experience of the content "joy." First is by the object. The joy as experiential content does not contain the object which is the content of the news, that is, the object is not a part of the experiential content. But what

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[216] Husserl speaks of an "essenceless" and "empty Ego." (Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. W.R. Boyce Gibson (London: George Allen & Unwin LTD, 1952), 127.

[217] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 48.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Ibid., 47.

[220] Ibid., 46-47.

is a part of the experiential content is the tendency toward the object. This is called *intentionality* in phenomenology. It is a "constitutive part of joy" to tend toward the object. This particular joy is completed the moment I no longer experience this joy or when I experience joy over a different object. A second way of conditioning the experience of the content "joy" is by the "*ego* [*Ich*]." When I realize that it is a joyful news and yet I am not joyful, my realization and my not experiencing joy both contain the ego. The ego cannot be eliminated from both experiences.[221] In Stein's words, "I can experience nothing without the 'I' [*Ich*] experientially involved."[222]

I may have known the reason why there is no experience of joy or I may not experience joy if there is no specific reason to be joyful. But what convinces Stein is this: The reason for not experiencing joy lies in her even if there is no possibility of tracking it down.

Therefore she concludes "that there are things hidden 'within me' – all kinds of things – which are unknown to me."[223] Hence it is said that the ego is not part of the experiential content. The converse is true for Stein: "All experiential *contents* are part of the pure ego."[224] "The ego is *alive*, and its life is its *being*," she avers. The ego lives in a moment of joy when I experience it right now, in my longing when the joy is no longer there, in my "thoughtful reflection" over my experience of joy.[225] Stein observes, "But while joy fades away, longing dies, and reflection ceases, the ego does not fade or pass away: It is alive in every now."[226]

Does she mean here that the ego possesses "*eternal* life"? Definitely not. There is no need to ask whether it eternally exists or not, but Stein is only trying to show us that the pure ego does not come to be and die away as in the case of those experiential units.[227] The pure ego, however, "is a living ego whose life is filled with changing con-

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[221] Ibid., 46-47.

[222] Ibid., 47.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid., 48.

[225] Notice that in our example, following Stein, the personal pronoun "I" is employed in order to make our exposition also phenomenological.

[226] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 84.

[227] In later pages Stein has additional explanations concerning the being of these experiential units. She says, "The actually-alive being of the ego (revitalized from moment to moment from hidden sources), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the being of the experiential unit arising and growing

tents."[228] It is not a "ready-made vessel" which is filled gradually with different contents, but rather it is "a life that wells up anew at every moment; *in every moment its being is actually present*."[229]

In and by themselves, the experiential contents are not capable of "real being." What does Stein mean? What these experiential contents have touched as real being is "in fact not *their* being." How is the ego related to the "height of being" and to act and potency as "rudimentary stages of being"? Stein clarifies that the ego is in act and not in potency.[230] The ego is always alive. Stein writes, "If the self is not alive, it neither is nor is it an ego. It is nothing. It is empty in itself, and all its fullness derives from it."[231]

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in the life of the ego. This being of the experiential unit is, as we have learned, a becoming and passing away, a rising to the height of living actuality followed immediately by a descending movement" (Ibid., 62). And yet for Stein this description of the experiential unit is not yet complete. There is still a need to distinguish between "becoming and passing away and *what* becomes and passes away." Stein observes that what has become, even if it again sinks back into the past, continues to remain in a certain manner. (Ibid.) See, for instance, Stein's favorite example: "*My* joy – the joy which I experience right now – comes into being and passes away. Joy *as such*, on the other hand, neither comes into being nor does it pass away." (Ibid., 63) Take note of the joy *as such*. We know that there are different kinds of experiencing joy, and different durations of joy experienced by us. But Stein's point here is a consideration of the essence of joy. She explains further saying, "*The essence of joy, however, is one*. It is not mine or yours, not now or later, not of shorter or longer duration. It has no being in space and time. But wherever and whenever joy is experienced, the essence of joy is ***actualized.****"* (Ibid.) The experience of essences – like for example, the experience of the essence of joy – is for Stein not an experience in the strict sense. Rather, for her, the experiential units are preconditioned by these experienced essences. Now she asks what kind of being can be attributed to these essences. Her reply is that their being is not similar to that of experiences, which we have previously seen as becoming and passing away. It is not also similar to the being of the ego, which receives a new life from moment to moment. Stein claims that the being of these essences is what we call "changeless and timeless." Is it then eternal? Is it similar to the being of the first existent? Stein says that Plato's ideas are similar to the divine being as described by Christian philosophers. Aristotle also has no clear distinction between the being of the divine and the being of these changeless and timeless essences. Only Christian thinkers have clear distinctions between the two. (Ibid., 66-67) Stein explains that there is a great difference between the "first being" and "the being of ideal essences." "The first being," she clarifies, "is being in absolute perfection: It is not only changeless being that never becomes or passes away, but it is infinite being, comprising in itself all *plenitude* and *vitality*. The being of ideal essences, on the other hand, is not perfect in this sense. Its preeminence in comparison with the actual experiential units lies in the fact that, raised above the flux of time, it changelessly rests and abides on its ontological summit. But if the individual semantic unit of the ideal essence is taken by itself in its delimited subsistence, it is not living being but appears rigid and dead." (Ibid., 67) This is actually an objection to the Platonic doctrine of ideas. The being of these ideal essences is "*inefficacious*" and hence it is "*non-actual*." The first existent is absolutely efficacious and actual. (Ibid.) However, the being of these ideal essences is not a non-being. It is something. Stein writes, "The very fact that it is something indicates that it *is*. Only what is *nothing* is *not*." Essence is not realized as real, but it only conditions other being to become real. If so, it also possesses being. Stein calls this being of the essence as essential being, as opposed to real being. (Ibid., 68) It is not actually our intention to broaden our understanding of essential being. What we have written here may suffice.

[228] Ibid.

[229] Ibid., 48-49.

[230] Ibid., 49.

[231] Ibid.

The ego endures despite the constant flux of experiences. Stein continues, "The ego, always alive, proceeds from one content to the next, from one experience to another, so that its life is one constant flux."[232] This is called "a *stream of experiences*" by Husserl.[233] For Stein, Husserl is justified in saying this. The ego remains because it cannot be nothing. When it is no longer alive it is already past, and when it is not yet alive it is still something in the future; the ego retains its grip on what it has experienced. It stretches forward and reaches out for the future or for what will arrive. Even that which is not presently within the ego's grip is still within its reach in some way.[234]

When is the time that the ego is really alive? I can recall my past life through memory or recollection, but I cannot make the past present. Stein notices that "what has passed remains past, and I can merely recall *what* was real at that time and, in doing so, I must remain conscious of the fact that I merely repeat or recollect the past intellectually."[235] To illustrate this Stein says, "I do not live in my past joy as I live in my present joy."[236] Moreover, she claims that the "'past ego' is nothing but an image of myself, an image of the manner in which I was once alive, and no mere 'image' of the

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[232] Ibid., 50.

[233] Within the stream of experience a "unitary form of all experiences" can be found, which is that of "*one* pure Ego." (Husserl, *Ideas*, 234) A single experience begins and ends; thus we can speak of duration, like for example, our experience of joy. However, there is no beginning or end for the stream of experience. The Ego can direct its "pure personal glance" to such an experience, grasping it as "really being" or as something that endures in what Husserl calls "phenomenological time." Hence, any experience which is real necessarily endures and lies within a "continuum of durations" which never ends; such a continuum is filled concretely. Necessarily, the temporal extension, which endlessly stretches away on every side, is filled concretely. This is what Husserl calls an "endless '*stream* of *experience*'." (Ibid., 236) We can also see this in Henri Bergson. In speaking of duration, Bergson mentions about the past and the present as forming an "organic whole." He says, "We can thus conceive of succession without distinction, and think of it as a mutual penetration, an interconnexion and organization of elements, each one of which represents the whole, and cannot be distinguished or isolated from it except by abstract thought." (Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson [New York: Harpeer & Row, Publishers, 1960], 100-101.) Bergson cites as an example the notes of a tune. These notes are melting into one another, succeeding one another and yet they are perceivable in one another. Their totality can be compared to those closely connected parts of a living being – distinct and yet permeating one another.

[234] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 50.

[235] Ibid., 51

[236] Ibid.

self can properly be called an ego."[237] She concludes that the ego is "always actual, always actually living present."[238]

However, Stein discovered that the life of the ego [*Ichleben*] consists of a totality: the past, that is, the life lying behind it and the future, that is, the life ahead of it. Though a totality, it can never be "actual as a whole." What we call "present reality" is merely the "now", that which is alive. In other words, the being alive of the ego is not all-embracing. Stein says, "The ego is always alive as long as it is, but its *vitality* is *not that* of the all-embracing being of the *pure act* but rather the *temporal* vitality advancing from one moment to the next."[239]

"*As long as the ego is*." This is the qualifying condition Stein attaches to the statement just quoted. The ego can always recall its former life, that is, the past, but in doing it there are always lacunae that the ego cannot fill. There always remain "empty temporal spans" that the ego encounters. For Stein, the failure is due maybe to "*blanks in the ego's memory*."[240] Or we may say memory gaps. Everything gets blurry as the ego views its past farther and farther away.

Stein, however, claims that the ego is actually a "*preeminent being*." What is this preeminence of the ego's being? Stein speaks here in a dual sense: the ego as "*always alive*" (composed of past and future) and as a "*carrier*" (related to what is carried). Without the ego what is carried has no life. What is revealed here is that this preeminent being is both peculiarly weak and fragile.[241]

No question that the ego is always alive, but those experiential contents which the ego needs for its own life to be sustained cannot be kept alive. These contents should always be there for the ego to have life. For what happens without these experiential contents? We have seen that without these contents, the ego is empty. It is nothing for it is without life. On the other hand, the contents have life only because of the ego, but such life imparted by the ego is only momentary for they eventually fade away. Writing about these contents, Stein says, "They remain *being* of a sort, not as possessing any sovereign ruling power, but merely in that weakened mode which pertains

[237] Ibid., 52

[238] Ibid.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid.

[241] Ibid., 53.

to things that are no longer truly alive."[242] If indeed the ego is nothing without the contents, where does it acquire these contents? Stein answers that the "conscious life of the ego" acquires contents from a "twofold beyond" (transcendence): external and internal worlds. These twofold beyond manifests itself in consciousness (this is called immanence in Husserl's terms).[243]

We have seen earlier that the ego imparts life to the experiential contents. Can we say that the ego is the source of life? This is Stein's final inquiry. She answers, "Since life is the *being* of the ego, this would mean that the ego *imparts to itself* or *posits its own being*."[244] But this would be contrary to her previous discovery of the unique "characteristics of the ego's being": the mysteriousness of its "whence and whither", the gap that cannot be filled by it, the lack of power to keep and uphold in being those experiential contents.

Stein admits, "The ego knows itself as a living, actually present existent and simultaneously as one that emerges from a past and lives into a future; *itself and its being are inescapably there: It is a being thrown into existence* [*ins Dasein geworfen*]."[245] Thus the being of the ego can be seen as extremely different from a being which is "autonomous and intrinsically necessary." Quoting this bold claim of Stein, she writes,

> The being of the ego is alive only from moment to moment. It cannot be quiescent because it is restlessly in flight. It thus never attains true self-possession. And we are therefore forced to conclude that the being of the ego, as a constantly changing living present, is not autonomous but *received* being. It has been placed into existence and is sustained in existence from moment to moment.[246]

It appears now that the project of Stein is to overcome Martin Heidegger's thought especially on being human, though a deeper discussion of this theme no longer concerns us.[247] Instead, we will dwell more on what a received being might be.

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[242] Ibid.

[243] Ibid., 54.

[244] Ibid.

[245] Ibid.

[246] Ibid.

[247] It is not, however, our intention to compare Stein's and Heidegger's thought on being human. It suffices to note here that in Stein's review of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* (*Being and Time*), she admits

7. Received Being as Dependent of Eternal Being

If the "being of the ego" receives life, from whom does it receive life? The answer has two possibilities: either from the transcendental worlds (external or internal) as mentioned above or from the pure being. Stein admits that the being of the ego receives its life or existence from a pure being which directly acts upon it. But she also admits that it receives something from the transcendental worlds. She further asserts that a received being cannot be independent of eternal being. For a received being to be independent of eternal being is unthinkable, for "nothing exists that is truly in full possession of being."[248]

She further explains that fleeting being "is not in possession of an existence whose very nature it *is* to be fleeting: It must receive this existence ever anew as a gift."[249] Now who can give such a gift? Stein declares that it is only the Lord of being

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that in the last ten years of Contemporary Philosophy, there is no other book as strongly as influential as this one. (See Martin Heidegger's Existential Philosophy," trans. Mette Lebech in *Maynooth Philosophical Papers* Issue 4, 2007, 57. German original: 'Martin Heideggers Existentialphilosophie', in Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein*, 'Anhang', 445. The English translation does not contain Stein's commentary on Heidegger's Existence Philosophy. Going back to Stein's preface to *Finite and Eternal Being*, she writes a word on the relationship of this book to Heidegger's *philosophy of existence*. She remembers that it was their common interest in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl that led her to a personal encounter with Heidegger and his thoughts. The sudden change of her course in life has brought an interruption to this contact with Heidegger's thoughts. Shortly after the publication of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit*, she reads it and acknowledges that she was deeply impressed by it, but without having evaluated it objectively due to time considerations. Stein confesses that even though her encounter with this work of Heidegger can date many years back, „certain reminiscences" are to be found in her present study (See *Finite and Eternal Being*, p. xxxi; German original: *Enliches und ewiges Sein*, pp. 6-7; one can also read this book of Heidegger that left a lasting impression on Stein. See Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* [Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006]; English: *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson [USA, UK, Australia: Blackwell Publishing, 2014]). In *Potency and Act* (*Potenz und Ak*t), as we have seen earlier, Stein made an attempt to interpret phenomenologically the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. In her foreword to this book, one can read a note on Heidegger. Stein writes, „The way the author poses questions in this work and some of her attempts to solve them may suggest that it is a critical response to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger. In fact, the personal circumstances of her life in recent years have yet to allow her such an – explicit – concern. She did, however, work through Sein und Zeit (Being and Time) soon after it was published [1927], and the strong impression the book made on her may linger in the present work" (Stein, *Potency and Act*, pp. 3-4]; German original: *Potenz und Akt,* p. 5]).

[248] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 55. Karl Schudt protests why Stein claims it to be unthinkable. This portion, according to him, is no longer elaborated by Stein. Schudt suggests that Stein must have likely drawn this idea from the scholastic notion that an "infinite causal series" is not possible. He comments, "If a chain of ten beings that depend progressively on each other needs a being to get them started, so does a chain of a hundred, a million, or an infinity. Mere multiplication of beings cannot eliminate the need for a cause of being. Multiplication is not explanation, and cannot substitute for a first cause" (Schudt, "Stein's Proof for the Existence of God," 117).

[249] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 106.

who can give it, for he alone beyond doubt possesses being. "And only a *person*," she adds, "can be Lord."[250]

This claim of Stein is not an outright appeal to faith. We have seen from her investigation that from the fact of our own being, a fleeting being is revealed. It is a being which only exists from moment to moment. We cannot conceive it to be unless there exists "another kind of being which, resting firmly in itself, is supremely creative and – as Lord of all being – is being itself."[251] Stein insists that "he who gives being and simultaneously fills this being with meaning must not only be the Lord of being but also the Lord of meaning: All plenitude of meaning [*Sinnesfülle*] is contained in eternal being, and eternal being can draw the meaning with which every being is filled that is *called into existence* from no other source but from itself."[252]

A finite being then cannot sustain its own being; it is limited. But within this limited realm of the finite comes the possibility of making "some valid predications concerning our relationship to pure being."[253] Stein is already speaking here of *analogia entis*. She writes, thus,

> My own being, as I know it and as I know myself in it, is null and void [*nichtig*]; I am not by myself (not a being *a se* and *per se*), and by myself I am nothing; at every moment I find myself face to face with nothingness, and from moment to moment I must be endowed and re-endowed with being. And yet this empty existence that I am is *being*, and at every moment I am in touch with the fullness of being.[254]

Despite these finite limitations, this finite is still a *being*. We can indeed predicate being to both the finite and the eternal. This is the significance of *analogia entis*, which Stein employs in her description of the relation between finite and eternal being. There is indeed a commonality between finite and eternal being as conveyed by the term *being*. Such a predication is analogical. The distance between the finite and the eternal is infinite. Predicating being to both God and creatures does not diminish this infinite distance.

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[250] Ibid.
[251] Ibid., 105.
[252] Ibid., 106.
[253] Ibid., 55.
[254] Ibid.

Analogia entis can be traced back to Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. But in Aristotle, the reference is not on the relationship merely between finite and eternal beings, but among all existents in general. In Aristotle, says Stein, "every existent" can be referred to a first being. St. Thomas comments that this first of Aristotle is neither the final end nor the efficient cause. What is actually common in the mind of Aristotle and St. Thomas is "*ousia*," that is, the actual being which is more independent and primordial than the "variable states or properties." We do not speak here of an end or efficient cause but of a "*subject*" (in Stein, this is called "the *carrier* of being"). She writes, "If thingly being is being in a more primordial and authentic sense than the dependent being of states and properties, it nevertheless refers back to an even more primordial and authentic being, namely, that first being to which all things owe their origin."[255] The possibility of applying the term *being* to God and creatures alike is "a certain analogy of relation or proportion [*Verhältnisgleichheit*] (*analogia proportionalitatis*)." Stein concludes that

> everything finite – in both its *quid* and its being – must be preformed or prefigured [*vorgebildet*] in God, because both the *quid* and the being of finite things derive from him. The ultimate cause, however, of all being and all whatness must be both being and whatness, and both in perfect unity.[256] The ego, says Stein, is said to be closer to pure being, because at a certain moment it is being and at every moment it is sustained in being, though not necessarily immutable for its experiential contents constantly undergo change.[257]

With this analysis, Stein declares that the idea of eternal being can be attained through the ego. The nothing is unacceptable to the ego for its desire is fullness of being. It "desires not only an endless continuation of its own being but a full possession of being as such: It desires a being capable of embracing the totality of the ego's contents in one changeless present instead of its having to witness the continually repeated disappearance of all these contents almost at the very moment they have ascended onto the stage of life."[258]

Stein also adds that with the ego, we can have an "*idea of plenitude* [*Idee der Fülle*]." The ego crosses out from its own being what it knows to be a "privation." The ego experiences within itself varying degrees of approximating itself to that which is

[255] Ibid., 336.

[256] Ibid., 338.

[257] Ibid., 56.

[258] Ibid.

"*fullness of being*." The ego has "degrees of *vitality in the ego's present existence*." It can be a being of greater or lesser "*intensity*" and can arrive "at the idea of *all-embracing* being in its *highest degree of intensity*."[259] Earlier we have seen that Stein speaks of gradations of being, that is, from lower to higher being. So that when we describe the gradation of the actual being of the ego, its distance from the "perfect being of the *pure act*" is infinitely far removed. Compared to pure being, the ego is merely a "feeble image," and yet the gradations of being always remain true.

Real being as act consists both of the "*pure act*" and the "*finite acts*." The former is the eternal being and the latter is the finite being, which is an infinitely feeble image. Nevertheless, these finite acts are in different degrees of imperfection. It is in the pure act or eternal being where the ego finds its own "*measure*." Now the ego learns that the eternal being is the "*source* or the *genuine cause*" of its own being. How? Stein continues, "The nullity and transiency of its own being becomes clearly manifest to the ego once its *thinking* seizes upon its own being and seeks to lay bare its deepest roots."[260]

In delving deeper into its own being, the ego also experiences anxiety [*Angst*]. For Stein this experience is prior to the reflection and retrospection of the ego's own existence. "Experiential anxiety," she declares, "accompanies the unredeemed human being throughout life and in many disguises – as fear of this or that particular thing or being."[261] There is always this existential anxiety of being no more, for to be anxious is to come face to face with nothingness.

However, for Stein, what ordinarily dominates the disposition of human life is not anxiety. Our normal experience is a feeling of security, except for those who are undergoing some pathological problems.[262] Stein is convinced that "normally we go through life almost as securely as if we had a really firm grip on our existence."[263] This "feeling of existential security" is not groundless and irrational for Stein. Her findings are already contrary to that of Heidegger. Stein argues,

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[259] Ibid., 57.

[260] Ibid.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid., 58.

[263] Ibid.

> The undeniable fact that my being is limited in its transience from moment to moment and thus exposed to the possibility of nothingness is counterbalanced by the equally undeniable fact that despite this transience, I *am*, that from moment to moment I am *sustained in my being*, and that in my fleeting being I share in enduring being. In the knowledge that being holds me, I rest securely. This security, however, is not the self-assurance of one who under her own power stands on firm ground, but rather the sweet and blissful security of a child that is lifted up and carried by a strong arm. And, objectively speaking, this kind of security is not less rational. For if a child were living in the constant fear that its mother might let it fall, we should hardly call this a "rational" attitude.[264]

There is indeed a being sustaining our own being. It is our support and ground. "In my own being, then," Stein continues, "I encounter another kind of being that is not mine but that is the support and ground of my own unsupported and groundless being."[265]

So far, this is where Stein's investigation has led us. Can we really know who we are? Can we really penetrate the depths of what it means to be human? Stein admits saying that "my entire conscious life is not equivalent to 'my being'."[266] She submits that her intellect can only know about what is in the present life and about those things in the past which were once present. The knowledge of the intellect for Stein can only have fragments of the past. It can anticipate the future but its particular details are only seen with "some degree of probability."[267] "In its larger expanse," Stein laments, "the future

[264] Ibid. This feeling of existential security is opposed to Heidegger's feeling of Angst. Remember that on July 24, 1929, in his inaugural lecture entitled, "What is Metaphysics?" delivered at Freiburg University, Martin Heidegger posed a very intriguing question: How is it with the nothing? (See Martin Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" trans. David Farrell Krell, in *Pathmarks*, ed. William McNeill [New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998]). The nothing is manifested in anxiety. Heidegger says, "Anxiety robs us of speech. Because beings as a whole slip away, so that precisely the nothing crowds around, all utterance of the 'is' falls silent in the face of the nothing." (Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" 89). Heidegger defines Da-sein as "being held out into the nothing" (Heidegger, "What is Metaphysics?" 91). Dasein transcends "beings as a whole," he asserts. Henceforth, there must be an original manifestation of the nothing in order for Dasein to have "self-hood and freedom." ***Stein criticizes this lecture of Heidegger*** saying: "It is evident that Heidegger's inaugural lecture was intended for a non-professional audience and was meant to be provocative rather than instructive; it therefore lacks the stringency of a scientific treatise. The terms and phrases used sound at times more mythological than philosophical. Heidegger speaks of the nothing [*Nichts*] almost as if he were referring to a person whose long suppressed rights must be vindicated. One is reminded of that 'nothing that once upon a time was everything'" (See Stein's endnote 36 of the Chapter II of *Finite and Eternal Being*, 557). For Stein, "the revelation of the nothingness in our own being marks at the same time our breaking through this finite, empty being of ours to the infinite, pure, and eternal being." (Ibid., 558).

[265] Stein, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 58.

[266] Ibid., 364.

[267] Ibid.

remains indefinite and uncertain – though conceivable in this indefiniteness and uncertainty – while the origin and ultimate end remain completely inaccessible."[268]

How about this present moment? Stein contends that this immediacy of the present life is just "the fleeting fulfillment of a passing moment, instantaneously sinking away and completely disappearing forthwith."[269] What I have is only a surface of who I am. Stein maintains that our conscious life only "resembles the lit surface that covers an obscure depth, a depth which manifests itself in and through the medium of the surface."[270] In the seventh chapter of *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein further comments that this "*inner* life has become conscious being. The I has been awakened, and its vision moves in an outward and inward direction. The I is capable of viewing the multitude of external impressions in the light of its understanding and of responding to them in personal freedom."[271] And because of this "personal freedom," Stein is convinced that people are "spiritual persons, i.e., *carriers* of their own lives in a preeminent sense of a personal 'having-oneself-in-hand'."[272]

We have seen above that the I only discovers so far the surface of who or what it is. However, it cannot settle only at this level. It must penetrate that obscure depth. Stein claims that in withdrawing itself from the surface into the interiority of the soul, it finds certainly not nothing. The ego cannot abide only in this region of the surface "unless it is held fast by something else, unless the interiority of the soul is filled with and moved by something other than the external world." In the beginning, the I submerges into "an unaccustomed emptiness and quite," but the "listening to 'one's own heartbeat,' i.e., to the inward being of the soul, cannot satisfy the vital actual impulses and urges of the ego," Stein continues.[273] In all ages, those masters of the *inner life* already have shown us the way, Stein reminds us. "They were drawn," she says, "into the innermost center of their being by some force stronger than the entire external world, and they

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[268] Ibid.

[269] Ibid.

[270] Ibid. Commenting on this, Hanna-Barbara Gerl-Falkovitz writes that this "depth indicates itself phenomenally as not self-created – all action of consciousness is in fact re-action" (Gerl-Falkovitz, "*Sinnereignis* in the Philosophy of Edith Stein," trans. James Smith and Mette Lebech, in *Intersubjectivity, Humanity, Being*, 383).

[271] Ibid., 370.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Ibid., 443.

thus experienced the breaking through of a new, mighty, superior life – a life supernatural and divine."[274] Hence, the opening statement of the seventh chapter of *Finite and Eternal Being* says it all: "The search for the meaning of being has led us to that being who is the author and archetype of all finite being."[275] And for Stein this author and archetype of our being has been disclosed to us as a person, and even a tri-personal being. "And this consideration," she persists, "may now aid us in our attempt to make the content of revelation fruitful for a deeper knowledge of finite being."[276]

[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid., 355.

[276] Ibid., 355.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the first chapter we made a short look at Edith Stein's life journey. There are three important paths in this journey: her way to phenomenology, her way to the Catholic Church, and finally her way to Christian philosophy. Stein is a very passionate seeker of truth, having learned from her master Edmund Husserl how a philosopher must be rigorous and radically honest. Even as a child Stein has always been a seeker, so that in this sense may be said to have been a born phenomenologist. Her move from Breslau to Göttingen to meet Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, is very crucial, for as a phenomenologist one should see things without any prejudices. Along the way Stein has encountered the phenomenon of faith. Now she can no longer dismiss it, for earlier, despite her Jewish belief she has become an atheist. Finally, Stein has embraced conversion.

After conversion, she has been publicly active. Her professional career from 1931 to 1932 involves a lot of lectures, philosophical seminars, speaking engagements, writings, etc. She speaks of things which are of great interest to the Church; thus her writings have significant contributions to Catholic thought. Not content, she entered the Carmelite Monastery to become a nun, which was then cut short by the Nazis. Indeed, Stein's life's journey brings her to the Cross of Jesus Christ. John Paul II canonized her in 1998, a proof that she had in fact carried the cross and was crucified; she thus attained the ultimate prize of her search – the crowning glory of life in heaven.

The second chapter is the exposition proper of Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being. Her inquiry begins with St. Thomas' doctrine of act and potency. This brings her to the heart of Thomistic philosophy, suggesting that Stein is a Christian philosopher. Stein's task is to analyze and inquire into the manifold meanings of act and potency. She distinguishes between gradations and modes of being, as applicable to act and potency. She claims that from what is potential to what is actual, the transition is not just from one mode of being to another, but from inferior to superior being. This is the reason why one can speak of a pure act, which is designated as the highest being.

Stein remarks that her considerations do not exhaust the meaning of act and potency. Hence, she advances farther to inquire about the knowledge of the nature of our own being. In doing this, she finds out an indubitable point of departure: the

inescapable *fact of our own being*. This is already self-knowledge. And in looking at being as it is in itself, being and non-being are revealed. She then realizes that what we call pure being is eternal. She concludes that ideas like eternal, temporal, immutable and mutable (and also not-being) are encountered by the intellect within itself. Hence a philosophy based on natural reason and natural knowledge can legitimately be confirmed. This is not yet to show whether God exists or not. What comes to mind at this point is the term *analogia entis*.

Meanwhile, the term actuality becomes apparent. What manifests as being is called actually present. This being, for Stein, is fully alive. In my present being or from the fact of our own being, both actuality and potentiality can be found. Stein moves on to say that being human is temporal, which is a progress of actuality. She realizes that in our own being, there is an experience of capability, where our essence can reach its highest ontological development. She finds out that there is a power hidden in our soul. The experience of human capability and freedom as it is related to the power that commands us suggests an access to a God dwelling in our soul. Stein argues that the being of the soul is anchored in divine being. The power which is dormant in the soul is already within the disposal of the human person. And yet this power is finite. We cannot do something beyond our nature. If something is beyond us, then we need an added strength coming from within the self. This additional source of strength is already found in faith, which is a gift from God, though a further discussion of this realm is already beyond the scope of the present study.

God's nature and our own are different. What is separated in us is united in God. God's essence is fully actualized in his being. In him, existence and essence are one. Moreover, God is infinite plenitude; in him is perfection or pure form which needs no more development. Creaturely fullness is limited and cannot attain ultimate perfection. Furthermore, being human is transitory. It is only a transition from one moment to another – a fleeting moment indeed. To be human is to continually become and pass away. And yet, Stein discovers that this experience of constantly becoming and passing away points us further than ourselves. It reveals to us the idea of a true being, which is eternal and immutable.

This realization brings us to the pure ego, which is the self given immediately in consciousness. It is pure because it is empty; it has no contents and is thus

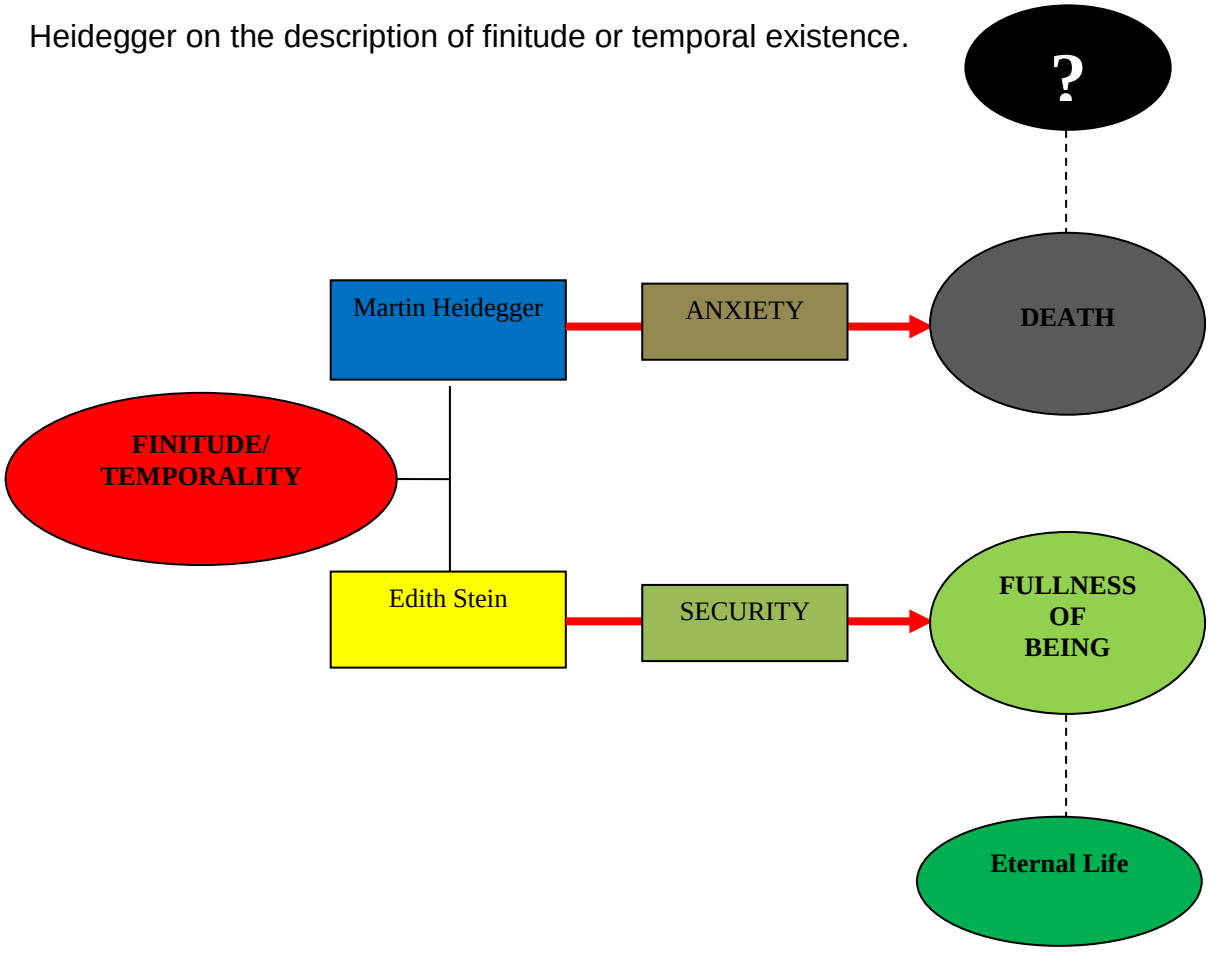
indescribable. In all our experiences, the pure ego is alive and indispensable. Stein discovers that the pure ego and the content of experience are inseparable, and yet the former is not a part of the latter. In other words, pure ego is not a part of the experiential content. Experiential contents are not capable of real being, for what they consider as being is not their being. The ego then is always alive and endures despite the constant flux of experiences. Stein discovers that the life of the ego consists of a totality: the past and the future. Though a totality, it can never be actual as a whole. Present reality is merely the now, which is alive. Hence, Stein concluded that the ego as being alive is not all-embracing. The ego's vision is always blurry as it goes back farther and farther away into the past. Stein maintains that it is a preeminent being, but at the same time peculiarly weak and fragile.

The ego is always alive but those experiential contents which need to be sustained cannot be kept alive. They are needed for the ego to have life. On the other hand, the contents have life only because of the ego, but such life imparted by the ego is only momentary for they eventually fade away. The ego acquired these contents from a twofold beyond (transcendence): external and internal worlds. This twofold beyond manifests itself in consciousness (immanence). Stein further discovers that the ego is not the source of life, even though it imparts life to the contents. This is due to the characteristics of the ego's being: the mysteriousness of its "whence and whither", the gap that cannot be filled, the lack of power to keep and uphold in being those experiential contents. It is living, actually present, emerging from the past into the future. It is being there. Following a Heideggerian term, it is a being thrown into existence. It is the opposite of a being which is autonomous and intrinsically necessary.

Consequently, Stein says that the being of the ego is a received being. It receives life and is dependent on the eternal being. A finite being then cannot sustain its own being; it is limited. But despite these limitations, this finite being is still a being. Here is the significance of *analogia entis*, where being is predicated to both the finite and the eternal. The ego, says Stein, is said to be akin to pure being, because at a certain moment it is being and at every moment it is sustained in being, though not necessarily immutable for its experiential contents constantly undergo change.

With this analysis, Stein declares that the idea of eternal being can be attained through the ego. The nothing is unacceptable, for what the ego desires is fullness of

being. Stein adds that with the ego, we can have an idea of plenitude [*Idee der Fülle*]. Compared to pure being, the ego is merely a "feeble image", and yet the gradations of being (that is, from lower to higher being) always remain true. The ego always experiences the existential anxiety of being no more, for to be anxious is to come face to face with nothingness. However, for Stein, anxiety is not the dominant disposition of human life. What we normally experience is the feeling of security, and this feeling is indeed rational. Undeniably, there is a being sustaining our own being. It is our support and ground. In a figure below,[277] we want to show the contrast between Stein and Heidegger on the description of finitude or temporal existence.



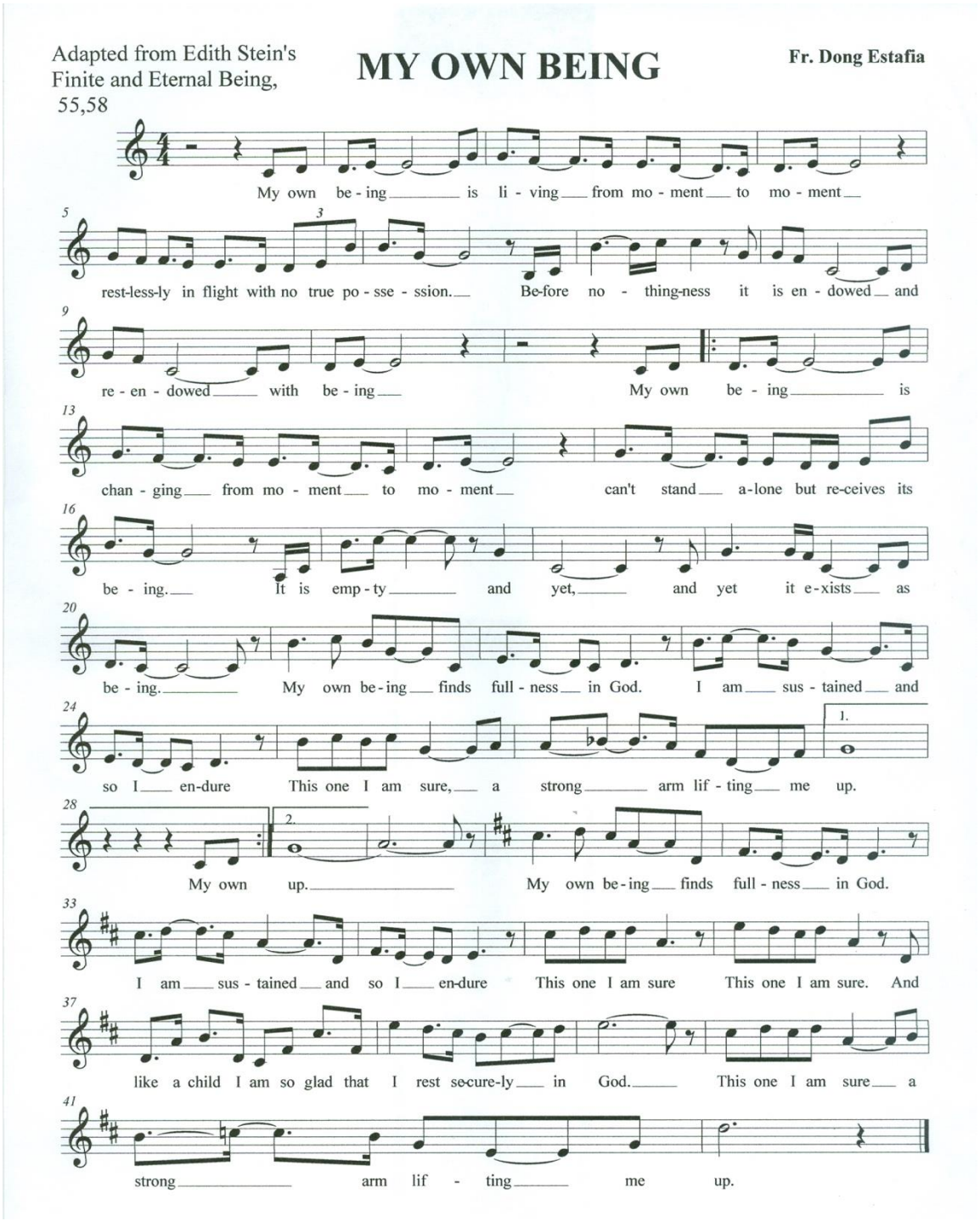
[277] We are not suggesting that the analysis of Heidegger on *Dasein* as a being-towards-death is wrong. (See his analysis in *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson [San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1962], 279-311). We are only pointing out that in Stein we can see a difference of emphasis. Death is not the end, for what we desire is not a termination of our own being but fullness, not nothingness. For Stein, we are assured that there is a strong arm lifting us up. God grounds and supports our being. Fullness of being then is a possibility and, in fact, can be attained in the life to come, that is, eternal life. Reason cannot comprehend this any longer. This may perhaps be the reason why Heidegger never went beyond, for the answer already lies in the realm of religion. Faith has the answer. Stein discusses the phenomenon of death in the appendix of her original German text, see ESGA 11/12, pages 452ff.

This is where our second chapter has brought us. But Stein inquires about whether we can really know who we are, or whether we can penetrate the depths of what it means to be human. Stein proves to us that the intellect can only know about what it is in the present life and about those things in the past which were once present. Human knowledge is fragmentary. The future can only be seen with some degree of probability. The present moment is ephemeral. Stein believes that what we have is only a surface of who we are. So for us to know what it means to be human we have to go beyond the surface. We have to penetrate this obscure depth, as she puts it. How? The inkling, as we have stated above, can be found in the seventh chapter of *Finite and Eternal Being.* Stein realizes that our search for the meaning of being leads us to that being which is the archetype and author of all finite beings. This being has disclosed itself to us as a person, even a tri-personal being. Revelation, therefore, can deepen our understanding of being human.

In a word, we can say that the starting point of Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being is the *fact of our own being*. Its endpoint is a being which discloses itself to be a person and even a tri-personal one - the archetype and author of all finite beings. Indeed, towards the end of *Finite and Eternal Being*, there is already a combination of philosophy and theology. Hence, for a future study of Edith Stein, we recommend the following topics:

1. Elements of Edith Stein's Christian Philosophy
2. The Theology of Edith Stein
3. Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger on the Meaning of Being

We wish to end our study with a song originally composed to synthesize everything we have said above.



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ABSTRACT

English

The study is an exposition of Edith Stein's inquiry into the meaning of being, which is the focus of her masterwork, *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being.* As a background of Stein's life, we have traced her journey from phenomenology to Christian philosophy. Her inquiry into the meaning of being begins with an exposition of the Thomistic doctrine of *act* and *potency*. She further inquires about the nature of our own being. She discovered the *inescapable fact of our own being*. In looking at our own being the idea of a pure being or a true being or eternal being is revealed. God's nature and our own are different. Being human is only a transition from one moment to another. The being of the ego is not all-embracing, but merely a received being, but still it is a being, making sense the term *analogia entis.* However, Stein believes that our conscious life cannot truly know who we are. She realizes that our inquiry into the meaning of being brings us to that being who is the archetype and author of all finite beings. This being has disclosed himself to us as a person, even a tri-personal being. Revelation, therefore, can deepen our understanding of being human.

Keywords: *being human, act and potency, the being of the ego, finite and eternal being.*

Deutsch

Die Studie ist eine Exposition mit Edith Steins Frage nach dem Sein, die im Mittelpunkt ihres Meisterwerkes, *Endliches und ewiges Sein: Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, steht. Als Hintergrund von Steins Leben haben wir ihren Weg von der Phänomenologie zur christlichen Philosophie verfolgt. Ihre Frage nach dem Sein beginnt mit einer Darstellung der thomistischen Akt- und Potenzlehre. Sie fragt weiter nach der Natur unseres eigenen Seins. Sie entdeckte die unentrinnbare Tatsache unseres eigenen Seins. Beim Betrachten unseres eigenen Seins offenbart sich die Idee des reinen Seins oder des wahren Seins oder des ewigen Seins. Gottes Natur und unser eigenes sind anders. Menschsein ist nur ein Übergang von einem Moment zum

anderen. Das Sein des Ich ist nicht allumfassend, sondern nur ein empfangenes Sein, aber dennoch ist es ein Sein, das den Begriff *analogia entis* sinnvoll macht. Stein glaubt jedoch, dass unser bewusstes Leben nicht wirklich wissen kann, wer wir sind. Sie erkennt, dass unsere Frage nach dem Sein uns zu jenem Sein bringt, das der Archetyp und Autor aller endlichen Seins ist. Dieses Sein hat sich uns als Person, selbst als dreipersönliches Sein offenbart. Die Offenbarung kann daher unser Verständnis vom Menschsein vertiefen.

Schlüsselwörter: *Menschlich sein, Akt und Potenz, Wesen des Ichs, endliches und ewiges Sein.*

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Published Articles:

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