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THE HUMAN PERSON IN TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS (EDITH STEIN)

Moderator

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A Long Essay Submitted to the Faculty of Theology in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Bachelor Degree in Religious Studies

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TO

My late sister Grace and My brother Julius

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STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. I testify that to the best of my knowledge this work has not been presented to any other institution for any academic credit. I equally declare and testify that all sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the college supervisor.

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Name of Supervisor:...STEVEN PAYNE.....

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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

al.	*alii-other persons*
cf.	*confer*, compare
chap.	chapter
ed.	edition or edited by
e.g.	*exempli gratia*, for example
ESW	Edith Stein's Work
ICS	Institute of Carmelite Studies
i.e.	*id est*- that is
Ibid.	Ibidem
rev.	revised
S.Th.	*Summa Theologiæ*
trans.	translated by
QDSC	*Quæstiones Disputatæ de Spiritualibus Creaturis*, On Spiritual Creatures.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) has been acclaimed as one of the most significant German women of the twentieth century, Her exploits in phenomenology and her eventual venture into Thomistic thought make the brilliance of her spirit stand out in the world. It is, however, her contribution to the debate about the human person that is of invaluable benefit to humanity in search of its true identity amidst the twists and turns of life in our world today. This work aims at tracing the development of the philosophy of person in Stein from its beginning to its culmination in the last half of her life. Special interest will be given to those issues that motivated her to pose the anthropological question anew.

The development of the history of philosophy runs concurrently with the development of man's search for self-identity, the search to know why he is unique. It was however, with the humanist approach of the Sophists, and then more particularly with Socrates, symbolised by his call on man to know himself,[1] that Western philosophy decisively turned its attention to the human person.

Even though this work is based on my personal study, it treats of topics that contemporary men and women in their everydayness cannot ignore. We live at a time

[1] H. TREDENNICK and R. WATERFIELD, *Memoirs of Socrates*, 185-188.

when the human person and human dignity are under assault from almost every angle. Be it from the desire for scientific and technological advancement or from the political greed to dominate or from sheer hedonistic tendencies or even from untold suffering caused by incurable diseases, humanity is not yet free from one form of enslavement or another. If this study can therefore as much as only re-awaken in readers the desire to pose more questions about themselves, questions concerning their origin, end, dignity and value, it will have more than served the purpose. Such was the desire of Stein, that by bringing people to consciousness about themselves, they could be empowered to seek enlightened solutions to their problems, solutions that are in the service of humanity and promote the nobility of the human person.

The work is divided into three chapters. Chapter one will give a general historical background. We will deal with notion of person, the etymology of the term "person" and person in ancient thought. Chapter two will present Stein's biography. In chapter three, the person in the late Stein will be looked at and some sections will deal with different aspects of her anthropology. Lastly, the general conclusion will follow as a summary of what has been presented throughout the long essay.

CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The history of the study of the human person can roughly be divided into three main trends. Firstly, there is the cosmocentric approach in which human person is seen as realising himself in so far as he keeps to the laws of nature. This was the vision of the ancients and almost all Greek philosophers studied the human person from this point of view. Secondly, there is the theocentric paradigm, which was prevalent in Christian patristic and medieval times; man was understood to behave well and to reach full realization insofar as he was in right relationship with God. Thirdly, there is the anthropocentric trend, which characterizes the modern period. Here man perhaps brings to fulfilment Protagoras' aspirations of making the human person the standard and measure of all.

In trying to trace the development of the conception of person in philosophy, we shall try to follow these main trends and, at the same time, to highlight the differences that remain even among philosophers holding the same vision of human person.

1.2 The Notion Of Person In the History Of Philosophy

1.2.1 The Etymology of "Person"

It is commonly accepted that the word "person" comes from the Latin *persona* that, in turn, is derived from *per* and *sonare*. It initially meant passing the voice through a mask.[2] In Greek theatres, tragic actors used to put a mask on their face as a stereotyped image of the personage they were interpreting or representing. The word therefore meant the mask or the actor.[3] Only later did it come to refer to the role of human person and to his or her dignity in relation with others. It is with the advent of Christian authors from Tertullian onward that "person" was used to define the singularity and nobility of every human being. The concept of person as understood today, with its characteristics of singularity, individuality and concreteness, is also foreign to Greek thought. They had no concept or conceptual expression of personality. What is stressed in Greek ontology is the value of the universal, of the ideal and of the abstract, while the individual is considered, to a certain extent, only as a moment of the universal.[4] In fact in the very first Greek speculation on the principles of the universe, the principle is not strictly speaking thought of in relation to the notion of consciousness

[2] THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiæ*, q.29, a.3.
[3] W. N. CLARKE, *Person and Being*, 25-26.
[4] B. MONDIN, *Philosophical Anthropology*, 243-244.

and personality. "Neither can the *logos* of Heraclitus nor [the real being] of Parmenides be given a personality attribute or a consciousness of the self. Not even Plato's concept of soul as the principle of movement or Aristotle's entelechy are sufficient enough to be termed personal."[5] With theological influences, especially in the Trinitarian and Christological fields, the concept of person reshaped its original meaning of mask and took on a new significance in which it was identified with the Greek notion *hypostasis*. Lavely notes, taken from their etymological point of view, both person and *hypostasis*, foreshadow the ultimacy that personalism would attach to personality, both in value and being.[6]

1.3 Person in Ancient Thought

1.3.1 Early Humanism

The Sophists can be credited with bringing the study of human person more forcefully on to the philosophical scene, arousing interest in man and all that refers to him. Their predecessors, the natural philosophers, were principally interested in the cosmos as a whole. Man was seen only as part of a totality. Little wonder that he was naturalistically described. Copleston, among other authors, has shown clearly enough why, in spite of the philosophical sincerity of these natural philosophers, the hypotheses that they advanced, including the completely exclusive ones like those of Heraclitus and Parmenides, led to scepticism and eventually to a mistrust of cosmologies. Together with this, there was a growing reflection on the phenomena of

[5] C. J. DE VOGEL, *Greek Philosophy: Thales to Plato*, 38.
[6] J. H. LAVELY, "Personalism" in *the Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, 107.

culture and civilization occasioned by the 'culture clash' between the Greeks and other people such as Persians, Babylonians, Egyptians, Thracians, etc. Their clash forced the Greeks to question their whole cultural system including their ethical codes, asking whether Hellenic culture was some sacred ordinance or one that could be modified and developed.[7]

"These two basic points prepared the fertile ground on which the passage from object-oriented to subject-oriented philosophy was cultivated. It differed from the older system in its subject matter, namely, man and his civilization and customs. This turn of events first appears among the Sophists largely because of the bankruptcy of the older Greek philosophy. Werner largely considers their existence a historical necessity even if they came not so much in response to a philosophical need as to a practical one. Since their time, there has been the unrelenting concentration of philosophy upon the problem of man."[8]

Protagoras (481-420 B.C.), pre-eminent among the Sophists, made 'man' and his conscience the primary reality,[9] as Plato's Socrates testifies.[10] Protagoras is reputed to have claimed: "Man is the measure of all things, of those that are that they are, of those that are not that they are not."[11] We shall not, enter into the controversy of what Protagoras meant by 'man' (whether the individual or the species) or by 'things' (whether the perceptible or values).[12] However, it is important to point out that most

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[7] F. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 101-102.
[8] W. JAEGER, *Paidei: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 295-296.
[9] C. J. DE VOGEL. *Greek Philosophy*, 85.
[10] PLATO, *Theaetetus*, 161c.
[11] cf. *Theaetetus*, 151e.
[12] F. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1,108.

interpretations see Protagoras' proclamation as growing seeds of relativism and giving no place to objective, rational, universal truth valid for all, for all times and in all places.[13] What comes out clearly in this controversy, and which we wish to stress, is the turn of events in the history of philosophy. This is demonstrated clearly enough by Protagoras' desire to make human person the point of departure for everything.

The strength of the Sophists lay in the brilliant new system of formal education that they invented. Their weaknesses lay in the intellectual and moral foundation of their teaching. It was certainly with the human person's arrival on the scene that the debate on the truth-value and ethical value of philosophical positions heated up. The very debate of the Greeks on the problems of education, with Socrates and Plato on the one hand and the Sophists on the other, and even the eventual solutions of Aristotle to the problem of *Paidea*, should be attributed to the centre stage the human person was beginning to take for itself in Western thought.[14] The stage was set for a very lively debate especially as Socrates moved to radicalize the Sophists. Socrates (470-399 B.C.), was in his twenties when Western philosophy was moving from the cosmological speculations of the Ionians towards 'man'. He himself must have been acquainted with the natural philosophy of Anaxagoras and Diogenes before he passed over to ethical questions perhaps in the second part of his life.[15] He, by exploring "the moral cosmos in the human souls,"[16] became the first philosopher who focused attention on the soul as the centre of moral and intellectual personality in the human person. Socrates saw

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[13] C. J. DE VOGEL, *Greek Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 89.
[14] W. JAEGER, *The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 47-70, 132-260.
[15] PLATO, *Phaedo*, 96a-99d.
[16] W. JAEGER, *The Ideals of Greek Culture*, 28.

Protagoras' relativism as fundamentally identical with Heracliteism.[17] He turned his own thesis against him[18] and concluded by pointing out the contradiction that the argument of Protagoras' contained.[19] On his part, he was interested in teaching men to know themselves, to discover the privileged place of their souls, and consequently to take care of them.[20] In spite of his "ethical intellectualism"[21] Socrates, like the Sophists, concentrated his attention on the subject, on man himself.[22] But unlike the Sophists, he did not fall into the pit of relativism. He believed in the existence of objective truth above the human mind, seeing teaching not merely as notional instruction but rather as leading a human person to real insight. For him man is man because he has humanity as opposed to and distinguished from animality. There is a glimmer in man of what would later be identified as one of the basic characteristics of person: spirituality.

Plato (427-347 B.C.) fully shares Socrates' metaphysics. For him, the soul and the body are not one being but two distinct substances. Neither the body alone nor the body and soul together are man. If man is something at all then he is the soul. Plato left men a divided reality making it difficult to develop into a full concept of person.[23] He, however, was the first to make an attempt at a complete account of all the problems of man: where he comes from, who he is and what he is, what he can do and the meaning of his existence.

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[17] C. J. DE VOGEL, *Greek Philosophy*, 87.
[18] PLATO, *Theaetetus*, 170e.
[19] Ibid., 171c.
[20] Ibid., *Apology*, 29d-30b.
[21] Aristotle, reacting to Socrates' contention that one acts wrongly out of ignorance, says that such a position contradicts plain phenomena; whereas it is true that nothing is stronger than knowledge (cf. Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, VIII, 2, 1145b23ff).
[22] F.COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1, 134.
[23] PLATO, *Phaedo*, 66b.

After Plato and Aristotle came Hellenism[24] with two main strands. There was the materialist-oriented Epicureanism of Epicurus (341-270 B.C.),[25] and the intellectualist-oriented stoicism of Zeno (333-262 B.C.) and his disciple Crisippus.[26] Both are basically practical philosophies in search of happiness and were up against the teachings of both Plato and Aristotle especially with regard to theoretical knowledge. The materialism of the Epicureans and the intellectualism of the Stoics gave a very erroneous view of human nature and even though they did little to contribute to the advancement of the right understanding of man, they opened up new questions that successive thinkers had to respond to, especially in the early Christian era, if the dignity of man were to be salvaged.

St. Augustine (354-430) stands among them as the first to examine the notion of person in its depth. With him, patristic thinking reached its culminating and conclusive moment in the attempt to construct a Christian vision of the universe on a Platonic foundation. His most important study on person is developed in conjunction with his treatment of the Holy Trinity. The bishop of Hippo shows in *De Trinitate* how the term "person" indicates not the species but the individual in the species.[27] *Persona* or *hypostasis* were seen as expressing that individuality which neither essence nor substance brought out clearly. He then analogously applied these terms to man,[28] but as O'Daly notes, in spite of his Trinitarian and Christological exploits, St. Augustine does

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[24] Hellenism is the period of the spread of Greek culture for political reasons, namely, the desire of Alexander the Great to unite the conquered peoples in his immense empire.
[25] G. IYARZA, History of Ancient Philosophy, 193-199; see also F. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. II, 148-150.
[26] Cf. 203-210.
[27] ST. AUGUSTINE, *Trinity*, VII, 6-11.
[28] ST. AUGUSTINE, *Trinity*, XV, 7, 10-11.

not exactly come up with any distinctive concept of personality that is accurately applicable to humans.[29] St. Augustine sought a synthesis between Christianity and Platonic philosophy, even though he failed to reconcile the unity of man with the duality of the entitative co-principles of the human beings (body and soul).[30] It is true that in him "person" no longer stands for mask, it acquires a more profound meaning and stands for man, the individual of the species. The concepts of nature and substance, which he used, were to remain a permanent mark in the definition of person. Moreover, his contributions on the human spirit are profound and still in valuable in today's daily life.

1.4 The Notion of Person in Medieval Times

The Middle Ages were characterised by three factors. Firstly, there was the rediscovery of the philosophy of Aristotle. Secondly, most of the medieval reflections on man echo Boethius' definition of person as an individual substance of a rational nature. Thirdly, medieval philosophy was developed in a Christian atmosphere and therefore it was bound to have lively relations with theology.[31] If these factors defined the character of the philosophy of the Middle Ages, then they no doubt had telling effects on its anthropologies. During this period, in spite of its scholastic controversies, as Southern affirms, the fundamental characteristic of the products of the schools is a strong sense of the dignity of human person.[32]

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[29] G. O'Daly, "Augustine," in *Routledge History of Philosophy*, Vol. 1: *Aristotle to Augustine*, 409.
[30] J. SARANYANA, *History of Medieval Philosophy*, 44.
[31] G.W.F. HEGEL, *Lectures on Philosophy of Religion*, 79-80.
[32] R.W. SOUTHERN, *Scholastic Humanism and Unification of Europe*, 22.

It would be a serious historical omission to speak of the medieval period without the gigantic figure of St. Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274). Aquinas accepts and amplifies the definition of person offered by the preceding philosophers and especially that of Boethius. The Angelic Doctor sought to put the foundations of person in the philosophy of being, that is, to show that person implies the possession of a proper *actus essendi* (act of being) and not just exterior quantities or a certain degree of physical growth, while explaining why the name "person" is applicable to God. He affirms that *omne individuum rationalis naturae dicitur persona.*[33]

Within the Thomistic classifications of created reality into the corporeal and the incorporeal[34] falls also the uniquely problematic status of man who is neither purely corporeal nor purely spiritual, a status owed to the nature of his soul.[35] However, possession of a soul is not enough to render a being spiritual. Central to Aquinas' metaphysics of man is his understanding of the human soul as rational (*anima rationalis)* and it is this that renders him spiritual. The soul gives man his specific human mode of existence; while the vegetative and the sensitive souls are virtually present, there is but one substantial form, the rational soul.[36] "What gives the human soul its distinctive characteristics is therefore its incorporeality, as the principle of

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[33] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, S.Th., 1. q.29, a.3.

[34] It should be noted that St. Thomas did not sustain the theory of universal hylomorphism, which was maintained by some of his contemporaries. His position was that whereas matter is exclusively corporeal there are beings that are without matter. Apart from God Himself, who is the absolute subsistent, there are also the purely intelligible beings (the pure Spirits) that are without matter.

[35] N. KRETZMANN, "Philosophy of Mind," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 128.

[36] ST. THOMAS. AQUINAS, S.Th. 1q.76, a-3; q.76, a.4; q.77, a.6.

intellective activity, rendering it subsistent and capable of survival even in its separation from the body."[37]

Today, more than ever before, we need an understanding of the human person that is not only unitary, but also thoroughly realistic. There are so many difficulties troubling the human race and the African continent is no exception. The problems of hunger, famine, diseases and especially HIV/AIDS are particularly acute in Africa and they need to be faced with sobriety. These problems cannot be adequately addressed unless man's interiority is grasped. Artificial approaches to the human person, as has been witnessed in the history of philosophy, will only lead us to apparently attractive but dehumanising solutions. This is the problem Stein fought hard to avoid and on which this work intends to shed more light.

1.5 Modern and Contemporary Philosophy

It is the historical merit of the modern times to have striven to announce the uniqueness of man in the cosmos by strongly thematizing his freedom, autonomy, and inalienable rights. Unfortunately, this positive aspect is obscured by its inability to give a strong and lasting foundation to its claim.[38]

In the post-war period, serious questions arose about the human person and his value. It came as a result of the collapse of a system that respects the value of every human individual. Faced with such serious questions, philosophy, more than any other science, has to offer a solution. Furthermore, as Stein would say, because it is concerned

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[37] Cf. S.Th., 1, q.75, a.2, c.

[38] P.HOFFMAN, "Death, Time, Division II of *Being and Time*," in *the Cambridge Companion to Heidegger*, 195.

with ultimate answers, it cannot pass the buck. Philosophy, that science that seeks the truth for its own sake, must lead the way in showing what in good for man. But such a task depends heavily on a very sound vision of which man is, one that has to be translated into a language comprehensible to the contemporary listener. The genocide perpetrators in places like Rwanda and Kosovo, the extreme capitalists in the centre of New York with their communist counterparts deep in the heart of Beijing, even the terrorists, all have to understand the meaning and the full implications of man as an *individual substance of a rational nature.* The incessant search by humanitarians, for instance, for a solution to the problem of HIV/AIDS and other similar problems needs direction. Such endeavours need to be guided by principles that have absolute respect for the dignity of the human person in his totality.

It is hope that our examination of the contribution of Stein will put us on such a terrain, and will by so doing respond to this urgent call on philosophy. The problem of person in the history of philosophy became her problem and she wanted to work for a philosophy of life in what was fast becoming a culture of discriminations and total loss of respect for man's value. Both her life and her writings are geared towards making a double attack on this problem, not just by theorizing but also, and more importantly, by living what she professed.

CHAPTER TWO

Stein's Life and Works

2.1 Introduction

This is the central section of my essay. Stein called on philosophers not just to be speculators but also to live what they preached, and this underlay her philosophical goal. We hope to highlight this by giving a brief account of her life.

In Stein, we find ourselves before a person whose intellectual production is so indispensably linked to her practical life that it would be difficult to comprehend her philosophical experience without due consideration of its underlying life events. It is this fact that puts her in the same group with personages like Søren Kierkegaard and many others, thinkers whose intellectual contribution becomes more evidently significant when their speculative life is seen in relationship to happenings in their life. We shall therefore try to fathom her intellectual itinerary as it is related to her practical life journey.[39]

However, our intention is not to write an exhaustive biography of Edith Stein, but rather to see her life from the perspective of her philosophy of person. For more

[39] M. SAWICKI, *Body, Text and Science: The Literacy of Investigative Practices and Phenomenology of Edith Stein*, 185.

details on her biography, one would have to consult her autobiographical work, *Life in a Jewish Family,* or one of the many biographies now in print.[40]

2.2 Childhood and Pre-University Years

Edith Stein was born on October 12, 1891 at Breslau, Germany (present day Wroclaw, Poland) of Siegfried Stein and Augusta Courant, Jewish parents. She lived during a very remarkable period indeed, one recovering from the effects of idealism and graced by the presence of existentialism and a sprouting personalism on the one hand, and on the other hand, a period brought to its knees by two World Wars. Stein introduces us to the story of her family with an account of the death of her father and immediately lets us know that she was her father's "final legacy" to her mother. This is how 'Frau' Stein became the formative influence in her development, and the primary source of strength and affection. Although, as she tells us, her mother was not her confidante, she had a way of reading her deepest concerns and became, on many occasions, a source of consolation for her during those difficult moments that the family had to endure.[41] She avers that she was able to do this because she could empathise with her, thus rendering her capable of establishing an interpersonal rapport between them.[42]

In her account of the story of the family members, Stein shows deep interest in the persons described, including the smallest details about their attitude and personality. She demonstrates how understanding others as they are can have far reaching effects on their personal growth (as was the case with her sister Rosa),[43] a theme that will recur

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[40] J. SULLIVAN, *Holiness Befits Your House*, 2000.
[41] E. Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family (1891-1916): An Autobiography*, 114.
[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid.

with consistency in her treatment of empathy and of person. Already at an early age Stein was able to intuit that respect for others consisted in understanding them as they are in their value, trying to put oneself in their position. Her philosophy of action depended on this, that is, on her mode of action towards them. In the preface to her autobiography, she notes that empathy was not just her individual attitude but also a common element in Jewish families.[44] So her own interest in empathy had behind it a strong background in the family and in the Jewish community. She grew up, so to speak, in an empathic atmosphere, which was to turn out to be very favourable to her relationship with other people in later years.

In October 1897, the month of her sixth birthday, Stein began the academic zigzag of her life at the *Viktoriaschule* on the Ritterplatz in Breslau.[45] Her childhood school days can be described as splendid from the academic performance point of view, except for ten months in 1906, at the age of fourteen-and-a-half, during which time she abandoned school.[46] Reading Stein's life keenly, one is inclined to attribute this interruption of learning to a combination of several factors. Top among them may be the personal crisis she was undergoing and the school's inability to give answers to her inner questioning.[47] For instance, she candidly says: "... I was fed up with learning. I did not feel close to any of my teachers. I have always had a horror of teenage crisis; I had never had one myself and I always ridiculed those of others."[48]

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[44] Ibid., 24.
[45] Ibid., 77.
[46] Ibid., 138.
[47] Ibid., 139.
[48] Ibid., 145.

As a child, Stein grew up in a Jewish atmosphere, strongly fostered above all by her mother even though, as she says, she did not receive a strictly orthodox Jewish upbringing.[49] Unlike the mother, none of the children was a devout Jew. As Herbstrith rightly notes, throughout her adolescent years, she was basically unaffected by either her mother's piety or her family's religious practices and any experience of God she had came from her mother's love.[50] It is no wonder, then, that on leaving school and while at her sister Else's home, she began to make the internal break with family by consciously abandoning the practice of prayer and taking on her agnostic stance,[51] a state which she describes as her loss of faith.[52] Along with this drifting away from God in her life, it is striking that she also experienced numerous moments of internal suffering, clinging hard to an interior world of spiritual conflicts and crisis.[53] Apart from these inner conflicts, this period is also punctuated by conspicuous instances that reveal a certain insensitivity to the feelings of others, being highly critical and feeling superior and indispensable to them.[54] In light of what Stein will hold later, we can say that there is a relationship between the absence of God in one's life, inner conflicts, and poor interpersonal relations. Likewise, the solutions to these problems are related as is evidenced in her own life. She grew out of her "exalted ethical idealism" lived "without any faith."[55] She came to appreciate the importance of good human relationships, came closer to a personal relation with God, and with it withered away the pride she had

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[49] Ibid., 160.
[50] W. HERBSTRITH, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, 23.
[51] E. STEIN, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 148.
[52] Ibid., 138,148.
[53] Ibid., 63,74, 237.
[54] Ibid., 141-142,198.
[55] Ibid., 195.

previously experienced in her solitude. From then on, person, in both its praxis and theory, took possession of her life that became an endless story of one personal meeting after another.

2.3 The University Years

This period had a very special significance for Stein since it opened up a whole new chapter in her life, albeit gradually. Stein herself calls it the "the new and decisive period in my own life."[56] She began her university education with her career clearly set. In choosing her profession, her preference was, according to her, for what was in the best service and interest of humanity and that for which she had the requisite talent. By therefore choosing teaching as a career, far from acting from financial motives or the desire for a respectable place in society, she was corresponding with an inner law that she believed was imposed on every individual.[57] There already appears a glimmer of what would be the definitive factor in the rest of her life and in her philosophy, namely, the pull toward others and toward a deeper personal relationship as she became more and more socially oriented. She began to shed off the feathers of self-affirmation that had existed in her childhood, and gradually her inner world "grew lighter and clearer."[58] Her orientation towards society was demonstrated by her change of attitude toward the state and her growing conviction about the influence education must provoke in the life

[56] E. STEIN, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 223.
[57] Ibid., 65.
[58] Ibid., 75.

of students.[59] During this period, there emerged in her a deep sense of social responsibility and "an extraordinarily strong social conscience, a feeling for the solidarity not only of all mankind but also of smaller social entities."[60] In the development of her philosophy of person the question of community will become pivotal. Man will be looked at as belonging to a community in which he has to have a good relationship for himself and for the good of others in the community.

April 1911 ushered in a new period in which Stein would make the break with psychology and be captivated by the fascination of phenomenology. She began her university studies at Breslau and was at first principally occupied with the study of German and history. "Edith Stein's friendship with a young Jewish philosophy student to whom she gave private lessons in phenomenology provided another opportunity for discussing her hopes and difficulties. The student, later Professor Gertrud Koebner, has left behind a vivid account of their friendship, which offers a number of insights into Edith Stein's religious development in the years prior to her conversion."[61] After devouring the entire second volume of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen* (*Logical Investigations*) her mind was made up:

> It had been a mistake from the start even to think of getting a doctorate in psychology. All my study of psychology 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. On the other hand, what I had learned about phenomenology so far, fascinated me tremendously 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.[62]

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[59] Ibid., 190-191.
[60] Ibid., 190.
[61] W. HERBSTRITH, *Edith Stein: A Biography*, 33.
[62] E. STEIN, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 222.

This is how she moved from psychology (and from William Stern) to phenomenology (and to Husserl), and with it transferred from Breslau to Göttingen University, in April 1913. Her break with psychology can unmistakably be explained by the aim of her fundamental project. She was disappointed because, courtesy of its materialist approach, psychology was unprepared to touch the very core of the human person, that is, the human person in his spirituality.

Husserl had caused a stir with the publication of his *Logische Untersuchungen* whose revolutionary ideas and approaches to phenomenology were responsible for the exodus of young men to Göttingen. Stein was one such "victim." The Göttingen "school" of phenomenology comprised, among others, Adolph Reinach and Moritz Geiger, who had been the first initiated to be into the secrets of the new science of phenomenology by Husserl himself. At Göttingen a very dramatic time awaited her and she herself described these years as those during which she was "nearing the most important decision"[63] of her life (in reference to her conversion to Christianity); Stein's renewed social consciousness and attraction to others played a fundamental role in the decision. In Göttingen the phenomenology of Husserl with its "radical departure from critical idealism"[64] as well as her meeting with Adolph Reinach, Moritz Geiger and others left an indelible mark on her and considerably weakened her agnostic stance.[65]

In April 1995, Stein had to interrupt her studies again to go for a humanitarian nursing mission in Mahrisch-Weisskirchen, Austria, perhaps in response to what she

[63] Ibid., 239.
[64] Ibid., 250.
[65] Ibid., 183, 260, 335.

described as being in the world to serve humanity.[66] In the lazaretto, she performed her duty with a striking ability. As Koeppel notes, her account of the feelings, emotions, hopes and sufferings of warm, sincere, gifted yet flawed human beings evokes in us a conviction of knowing someone just like the person she describes.[67] Baseheart reads it as "a human-interest narrative," adding that "Stein, with her linguistic facility, was helpful in the communication between nurses and patients and even with the families of the patient."[68] Her service in the lazaretto ended with her leave in September of the same year, after about a year's absence from the university. The field hospital was dissolved, dashing her hopes of ever being recalled to service but at the same time permitting her to give undivided attention to studies again.

Stein embarked on her studies once more, and on August 3, 1916 submitted her dissertation on empathy at the university of Freiburg under the direction of Husserl. She performed splendidly and Husserl took her on as an assistant in October 1916. As an assistant of Husserl, apart from other duties, she was in charge of what she called the "philosophical kindergarten," whose task was to prepare new students for the courses of Husserl and thus giving the master more time to dedicate himself to research and to his seminars.[69] However, she did not last long in her assistant's position for they had to part ways in February 1918, barely two years later.[70]

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[66] Ibid., 320.
[67] J. KOEPPEL, "Translators Afterword," in E.Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 449.
[68] M.C. BASEHEART, *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein*, 9.
[69] E.STEIN, Self-Portrait in Letters, 19.
[70] Ibid., Self-Portrait in Letters, 21-22.

2.4 Stein the Teacher, Nun and Saint

The departure from Husserl marked the beginnings of yet another turbulent period in the life of Stein that would culminate in her entry into the convent. She first sought a university professorship but never made any headway despite Husserl's recommendation.[71] The reasons, according to her, had to do with gender and race. The idea of a woman professor was "still creating many difficulties"[72] and what is more, Jewish professors had a limited representation at the university.[73] Other than these there were also the bad economic times that Germany was experiencing in the Great Depression, and as result, there were insufficient funds to absorb new lecturers.[74] Everything seemed to work against her. Stein continued with her philosophical research and wrote works like *Sentient Causality and Individual and Community* (1922),[75] and *An Investigation concerning the State* (1925).[76] In them she treats of the relationship between the individual and the community, concluding her research with the inextinguishable uniqueness of the human person, who at the same time lives in state of inter-connectedness with the rest of reality. Other than her personal research, she also gave private lessons in phenomenology and kept contact with her phenomenologist friends like the Martiuses.

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[71] M. SAWICKI, *Body, Text and Science*, 171.
[72] W. HERBSTRITH, ed., *Never Forget: Christian and Jewish Perspectives on Edith Stein*, 199-201.
[73] Ibid., 36.
[74] M.SAWICKI, *Body, Text and Science*, 194-196.
[75] See EDITH STEIN, *Philosophy of Psychology and Humanities*, trans. By M.C Baseheart and M. Sawicki.
[76] See EDITH STEIN: *An Investigation Concerning the State*. trans. By M. Sawicki.

On New Year's Day 1922, she was baptised in Bergzabern. With her baptism also came the call to religious life, but this latter had to wait for close to a decade before coming to fruition.[77] The years between her baptism and her entry into the convent were mainly spent as teacher at St. Magdalena's, a Dominican Sisters' training institute for women teachers at Speyer. Stain left teaching at the Dominicans in 1931 due to other professional engagements, mainly as lecturer and writer. As a lecturer, she criss-crossed between France, Austria and Switzerland. It is noteworthy that during this period after her conversion, Stein takes a lot of care with people who didn't share her faith. She, for instance, in a letter to Sr. Adelgundis, advises against being so forthright with questions about the *last things* in Husserl's presence. She writes: "But I believe one must be on one's guard against illusions. It is good to be able to speak to him so freely about the last things. But doing so heightens his responsibility as well as our responsibility for him."[78]

Despite her conversion, she had the capacity to enter into Husserl's point of view and as a result, her attitude towards him is not that of judgement but of responsibility. This is what is fundamental in her treatment of empathy; with the latter, we do not make ourselves the measuring rod for others, but on the contrary, we grow in our responsibility towards them. So the treatment of empathy from a phenomenological point of view 14 years earlier allows her, from a Christian viewpoint, to see God, and not man, as the one to whom human life must measure up.

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[77] M. SAWICKI, *Body, Text and Science*, 192-192.
[78] E. STEIN, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 59-60.

There is definitely a world of difference between her and Protagoras who attempted to make man the standard measure for human action and relationship. She, like Plato,[79] puts God at the centre but, unlike Plato, her God is personal and relational. Stein also lays emphasis on the responsibility each one of us owes the other with regard to the truth.[80] She goes towards striking the balance between holding unto the truth and the prudence with which it should be passed to others.

On October 14, 1933, Stein joined the monastery in Cologne after National Socialism terminated her job at the Catholic Pedagogical Institute of Münster. She became a member of the Discalced Carmelite order with her entry into the novitiate on April 15, 1934, assuming the name sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She made her perpetual vows on April 21, 1938, after which she took up her research work again. She revised her philosophical work *Potenz Und Akt* that was to be enlarged and published posthumously as *Endliches und Ewiges Sein,* (Finite and Eternal Being). The writing in the convent reveals to us a person who had achieved an interior maturity and tranquility. Stein is able to live an inner life, but unlike the childhood interiority, which was full of crises, this convent experience is one of satisfaction or, as she says, of one who has become "the bride of God, God's exclusive property."[81] This experience of inner peace did not distance her from the community, but drew her closer to the participation in communal life for, as she believed, souls that have attained a true surrender to the Lord "can do nothing but radiate to the other heart the divine love that fills them and so

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[79] PLATO, *Laws,* 71c.
[80] E. STEIN, *Self-Portrait in Letters*, 59-60.
[81] E. STEIN, A Chosen Vessel of Divine Wisdom: Sr. Marie-Aimee de Jesus," in *The Hidden Life: Hagiographic Essays, Meditations, Spiritual Texts*, 77.

participate in the perfection of all into unity in God, which was and is Jesus' great desire."[82] In the convent, empathy is, in a way, taken for granted and what is more pronounced in her life is "the unbounded loving surrender to God."[83]

One is moved to conclude that, even though for her empathy was always important for human relationships, she shows in her later years that it is not an end in itself, but rather an ascent to love for others and ultimately to love of God.[84] Implicit in this is the fact that the knowledge of others is not restricted only to the empathic experience, even if the role it plays is certainly basic. In the final analysis, it is only with the unconditional love of God that the value of the other is seen in its full light. Thus, a full experience of personality means looking at "me" and at the "other" from a God's-eye view. This will be the dominant theme of the later works on the human person. Stein realised that empathy alone was not sufficient for an ontological understanding of man. Whereas it can help us understand the life of others and how they manifest themselves, it does not tell use what they are in themselves. However, it respects the definitions of person in that in the empathic act the distinction between the two people involved in it is underscored. If therefore the topic of person was so important to her, as she drew closer to the end of her life, she came to the realization that a full interpretation of the meaning and value of the human person would be a futile attempt without reference to the *First Being,* the origin of human life.[85]

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[82] E. STEIN, "The Prayer of the Church," in *The Hidden Life*, 16.
[83] Ibid., 14.
[84] M. SAWICKI, *Body, Text and Science*, 192.
[85] E. STEIN," The Spirit of St. Elizabeth as It Informed Her Life," in *The Hidden Life*, 28.

On May 1, 1987, John Paul II beatified Edith Stein as martyr in Cologne. On October 11th 1998, at St. Peter's in Rome, she was canonized and later proclaimed co-patron of Europe, bringing to a conclusion a long journey began in Breslau in 1891.[86] We find no better words to sum up the life of Stein than those of the Holy Father contained in his homily on the occasion of her canonization. He says in part:

For a long time Edith Stein was a seeker. Her mind never tired of searching and her heart always yearned for hope. She travelled the arduous path of philosophy with passionate enthusiasm. Eventually she was rewarded: She seized the truth, or better: She was seized by it. Then she discovered that truth had a name: Jesus Christ.[87]

2.5 The Works of Stein

The literary production of Stein runs almost parallel with her life, in both vision and content. Her works reveals a person intent on making a synthesis between theory and practice. It is for this reason that Roman Ingarden, a friend of hers, is quoted as having said of her: "Edith Stein would never have written or said anything which she would not have replicated in her actions."[88] This is what we find in her writings and in her life: the desire to live what she wrote up to the full. Person is a central and linking theme in her works, just as it was in her concrete life, and she tried to bring it to its fullness in what she saw as man's obedience to God.

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[86] M.A. NEYER, Edith Stein: Her Life in Photos and documents, 83.
[87] J. SULLIVAN, *Holiness Befits Your House*, 2000.
[88] Quoted by J.KOEPPEL, "Translator's Afterword," in *Life in Jewish Family*, 453.

2.6 Biographical Works

In 1965, some of her autobiographical work, was published in an abridged edition, namely, *Aus den Leben einer judischen Familie. Das Leben Edith Steins: Kindheit und Jugend* (Life in a Jewish family - The life of Edith Stein: Childhood and youth - ESW, vol. II) written between 1933-1935, with a complete edition issued in 1985. Stein was unable to finish it, perhaps, as indications show, for lack of time. She wrote it during the rise of an anti-Semitic climate and she, an insider of the Jewish community, wished to give a more balanced view of what it meant to be a Jew. She hoped to help even the young people, who, blinded by the radical atmosphere in which they grew, had been denied the opportunity to know the truth about the Jews.[89] The lesson contained in it is not difficult to grasp: Bias cannot in any way contribute to human growth and neither can it nurture human relationship.

During her life, Stein kept in close contact with many of her friends, to whom she wrote frequently. She therefore left behind extensive correspondence containing interesting reading on her life and person. A collection of these letters was published in two volumes in 1976 and in 1977 respectively, as *Selbstbildnis in Briefen: Erste Teil, 1916 bis 1934* and *Selbstbildnis in Briefen: Zweiter Teil 1934 bis 1942* (*Self-Portrait in Letters* - parts one and two- ESW, vols. VIII and IX). They present us with a rich collection of her letters that open up to us her personality and are like a window through which you enter her inner self; they demonstrate her deep sense of intuition, especially

[89] E.STEIN, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 23-25.

in her dealings with friends and her feeling about them.[90] These letters are crucial to understanding the underlying attitude in her life and her personal relationships, which she understood as being inter-personal. This is why, in the words of Leuven, "openness, simplicity, and confidence radiate from Edith Stein's letters, for these qualities undergird her own experience of life, and do so to the ultimate sacrifice of that life."[91]

2.7 Philosophical and Pedagogical Works

Stein was not fortunate enough to see most of her works published during her lifetime, and this was partly due to the Nazi ban on publication by authors of Jewish origin. In 1916, however, she defended her doctoral thesis at Freiburg University, and consequently published it in 1917 as *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (*On the Problem of Empathy).*[92] This work, in which she phenomenologically treated the essence of empathy and the constitution of man, was to function as a kind of basis for her future philosophy. In it, also, she opens the road for what would become one of her favourite topics: the relationship between the individual and community.

Despite its phenomenological basis it is fundamental to understanding Stein's thought on empathy and her later philosophy of man. Baseheart says it sketches out the

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[90] J. KOEPPEL,"Translator's Preface," in *Self-Portrait in Letters*, viii.

[91] R. LEUVEN, "Editor's Preface, "in *Self-Portrait in Letters*, x.

[92] The original title of this work was *Das Einfühlungs problem in seiner historischen Entwicklung und in phänomenologischer Betrachtung* (The Empathy Problem as It Developed Historically and Considered Phenomenologically). The first chapter of the original, which is historical, was omitted from the published work. This explains why the book *Zum problem der Einfühlung* has chapter II as the first chapter.

broad outlines of her philosophy of person, details of which she will fill in in the subsequent investigations.[93]

In 1922 Stein wrote her *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und de Geisteswissenschaften*[94] (*Toward Establishing a Philosophical Basis for Psychology and the Human Sciences*) which appeared in Husserl's *Jährbuch für Philosophie und phänomenoligische Forschung* an essay that contains her treatment of the constitution of person already begun in *Zum problem* and also examines the philosophical foundation of psychology and the sciences of the spirit. In her analysis of empathy, she had come to an important anthropological conclusion: that in the constitution of the human being there is the presence of the corporeality, the psyche and the spirit. In 1925, she published *Eine Untersuchung über den Staat* (*An Investigation Concerning the State*).[95] The work outlines some aspects of Stein's political philosophy and ethics. Her analysis of the state has behind it her fundamental philosophical preoccupation, the relations between people. She makes an important distinction between state as a society and the community. Whereas the former is a conglomeration of individuals put together by personal interests, the latter instead is knit together by the reciprocal recognition of each other's value as a person.

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[93] M.C. BASEHEART, "Foreword to the Third Edition," in E. Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, ix.

[94] In the opinion of Sawicki, Stein wrote this work to complete the program that Husserl had set forth in *Ideen*, that is, establishing a unified methodological foundation for two kinds of Sciences, natural and cultural. In fact Sawicki prefers to refer to it as *Ideen* IV (cf. Sawicki, *Body, Text and Science*, 162-171).

[95] E. STEIN, *An Investigation Concerning the State, trans.* M. Sawicki, 2006.

Stein made no secret about her interest in the affairs of women. She was concerned about their rights, which she saw as part of her larger social responsibility. The collection *Die Frau: Ihre Aufgabe nach Natur und Gnade* (*Woman: Her Role According to Nature and Grace*), with essays written between 1928-1933, contains her main contributions on the topic of woman. It appeared in 1959, treating issues that concern the profession and role of woman, with special emphasis on their education. The education of women was for Stein fundamental to their role and to their respect as persons. The issues treated, so current today, strike one with how she, separated from us by more than fifty years, could be so near to us in thought. With her perceptive vision, she was not just blinded by the immediate life situations but had a holistic vision of life, with the future very much in focus.

2.8 Theological Works

As time passed by Stein became more convinced that the truth she had met in the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila was only then in it the preliminary stage. Therefore, for her, it was only natural that her philosophical research should issue in theology, for she discovered that the truth she had met in St. Teresa was personal and it called for a personal involvement. As a result, the works in these later periods have a strong theological perspective. Among them we have *Erkenntnis und Glaube* (*Knowledge and Faith*), with essays stretching from 1929-1941.[96] They deal with a wide range of topics: knowledge, truth, being, the relationship between actual and ideal

[96] E. STEIN, *Knowledge and Faith*, ix.

being, and "Ways to Know God.[97]" The latter essay gives an analysis of the symbolic theology of Dionysius the Areopagite. The underlying theme in these essays, which Stein also recognizes as the thread that run through Dionysius's writings, is the hierarchy of being. Consequently, every being is seen to issue from God as from the first cause and return to him again.[98] Then, in her master works *Finite and Eternal Being,* "our knowledge is the foundation upon which we base our position and attitude with respect to our activities in the world."[99] Originally written as an appendix to *Finite and Eternal Being, Interior Castle* can analyses St.Teresa of Avila's by the same text as a work that decisively changed the rhythm of Stein's reflection. She steps into the mystical arena but her reflections serve as a confirmation of her completed analysis, that of the description of subjectivity by the phenomenological method and the uncovering of the religious dimension of the human being. Teresa's *Interior Castle* proposes paths that a human being could tread in order to reach the truth, the end to which he aspires. The truth is none other than openness to others, namely, other subjects, the physical world and ultimately the Divinity. Another work that moves in this direction is The *Hidden Life*, a collection of hagiographical essays, meditations and spiritual texts. One gets the impression that the possibility Stein had envisaged in her dissertation about the empathic relationship between man and God comes to fruition here, and this relation is raised to an even higher level in the soul's mystical contemplation of the divine

[97] Ibid., 83.
[98] Ibid., 85-86.
[99] E. STEIN, *Finite and Eternal Being*, 394.

presence. We have an experience of a person capable of entering into conversation with God, a personal God, a "you" for her and she a "you" for Him.

In 1954, *The Science of the Cross: Study of John of the Cross* was published, a work written by Stein in 1942 while at Echt, Holland, to commemorate the fourth century of the birth of St. John of the Cross.[100] In the work, she carries ahead her research on the human person, concentrating on the soul seen in the light of the cross: how the soul receives itself the seed of truth, which takes root, grows and becomes its principle of action. Her phenomenology is revealed in her contention that one learns the science of the cross through personal experience of the cross, which is, by accepting human suffering and baptising it with divine meaning.[101] In this work therefore, her ontology of the soul, which came to light in *Zum problem* comes to its fulfilment.

2.9 A Note on Stein's Works in English

Most but not all the published works of Stein have been translated into English. The Institute of Carmelite Studies (ICS) is presently involved in their translation in the series *The Collected works of Edith Stein.* Through their efforts the English-speaking world is now gaining access to the thought and life of Stein, described as one of those most significance German woman of the twentieth century.

The first to be published in this series was her unfinished autobiographical work, *Life in a Jewish Family* (1986). The *Essays on Woman* (1996 - ICS, vol.2), followed as a translation of *Die Frau*. The third ICS volume was a new edition of her doctoral

[100] E. STEIN, *The Science of the Cross*, ed. L. Gelber and R. Leuven.
[101] K. HANEY, " Edith Stein" in *Encyclopaedia of Phenomenology*, 682.

dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy,* translated by Waltraut Stein. Currently 10 volumes of Stein's writings have been published by ICS, with more to follow.

The printing of these works is now a major boost for English readers who are now getting access to the philosophical works of Stein. The English-speaking world has picked up on the works of Stein, the majority of them now translated, and for the reader who wholly relies on English, most of the writings of Stein are easily accessible.

CHAPTER THREE

PERSON IN THE UNDERSTANDING OF STEIN

3.1 Introduction

The demarcating line in the thought of Stein is not always easy to draw. Occasionally, such a line has to be light enough to allow for easy sharing and free movement of ideas between the two phases. Throughout the later stage, Stein's interest in person is heavily influenced by several factors: there is the desire to construct a Christian philosophical anthropology, then there is her preoccupation with education, the concern for woman and her vocation, and the interest in ethics, among others. The majority of these features will build on what has already been elaborated before and sometimes there is a straight continuity among some of these characteristics.

Given the relatively influential medieval spirit under which she is now operating as a Christian, Stein makes serious attempts to give her whole philosophical construct a

more solid foundation, a foundation she sees in metaphysics as understood by the classics or, more precisely, a Christian metaphysics. At the same time she is at pains not to let go the positive results offered by modern and contemporary periods and as a result, she tries to carefully inculcate in her new building both traditions, profiting from the strong positive contributions each one of them has to offer. She, however, makes good use of the successes of St. Thomas, sifting from them what she considered beneficial to her study, and readily borrowing from other authors where she felt dissatisfied with the results of Aquinas.[102] Apart from other modern and contemporary authors, she saw in the phenomenology of Husserl many common grounds with what the medieval thinkers, especially St Thomas, stood for, particularly in phenomenology's commitment to absolute truth. In this regard, she trustingly held onto the phenomenological method, seeing it as a means towards that to which Aquinas, Husserl and other great philosophers of all times aspired.

3.2 The Ascent to St. Thomas

An attentive reader of some of the late works of Stein will immediately be struck by the fact that when we talk about the passage to St. Thomas Aquinas, such a passage cannot be naively taken; it was a living, interpretative and analytical one. One notes with interest not only the fact that, apart from St. Thomas, Stein makes use of many other thinkers both medieval and ancient but also, and more importantly, that in the

[102] For instance in *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein makes use of the Augustinian understanding of *Imago Dei* in her understanding of the image of God in creation, and on the question of indiviquality she borrows from Scotus' interpretation of the principles of individuation.

development of her thought at this stage she occasionally but decisively veers off from what may strictly be called *Thomistic* principles, in favour of an independent route.

We have seen how given the problematic issue of the Husserlian transcendental turn, together with the importance Stein gave to intersubjectivity, "she was compelled to reinforce her philosophical grounding with a choice in favour of a theocentric foundation, subsequently moving away from the egocentric one. She identified the former position with St. Thomas and the latter with Husserl."[103] When there is a return to Husserl in such cases, it should not be interpreted as if it were abandonment of Aquinas, but it serves to highlight the fact that the passage from Husserl to Aquinas was not a simple rejection of everything Husserlian. There are those aspects of Husserl's thought that Stein always revealed in her philosophical research and continued to influence her considerably, and as McInerny says, "she, [could] not, of course, erase from her mind what she had already learned. It is inevitable that she [would] compare the new and the old, Thomas and Husserl."[104]

When all is said and done, we must also note that the desire of Stein to take on Aquinas was not a mere camouflage for her wish to make a synthesis between several Christian authors of the Middle Ages. There is clearly something in Thomistic thought that attracted her. Her researches had led her to the conclusion that in spite of reason's capacity in the examination of the truth there is a limit to which such an endeavour can be carried. In this case, reason or philosophy needed the precious assistance of faith or

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[103] E. STEIN, " Husserl and Aquinas: A Comparison" in *Knowledge and Faith*, 28-33.
[104] R. McINERNY, "Edith Stein and Thomism," in *Carmelite Studies IV: Edith Stein Symposium*, 80.

theology in this research. It called for acknowledgement of the limitations of reason thereby making an aperture towards other sources of truth, in this case, faith. Stein saw this position best exemplified in Aquinas' philosophy, a position that was worth emulating.[105]

3.3. The Notion of Person and His Constitution

The way in which one has to approach the question of human constitution, as noted above, is essential when it comes to his definition as person. One important guide to such clarity is the important distinction between the psychological and ontological levels. Most of the difficulties connected with the constitution of man can be attributed to the mix-up between *who* man is and *how* he goes around in his daily activities. This problem was specifically made manifest in Stein's phenomenological analysis of the human person.

Perhaps it may as well serve to say that given the starting point of phenomenology and its aims, it was not disposed to give a holistic vision of person. Definitions have sometimes to do with a worldview and when the worldview in question is that of the modern age one would be naïve to underestimate the effects of the Cartesian mind especially on a philosopher like Husserl who had a lot to share with Descartes, if not to learn from him. The present section seeks, firstly to highlight the problem, and then secondly to draw this distinction between the two realms of man,

[105]Ibid.,77-79.

showing why they are not exclusive of each other and how Thomistic thought strikes the balance between them towards a unitary anthropology.

3.3.1 The Psychological Constitution of Person

"The psychological definition of person received its most admired protagonist in the person of Descartes and with it was born the confusion between the metaphysical notion of person as a subject and the psychological one of personality, understood as the perception of one's subjectivity, which could be known through the double reflection of the intellect, namely, through consciousness."[106] The psychological definition of person refers to the same human substance but as one who is conscious of his activities. In fact, the term 'person' has a more ontological connotation but in order to indicate the psychic constitution, it is more exact to use the term 'I' or the 'psychic' subject. What is important to note is that the 'I,' by which the person grasps himself as existent, is inseparable from the affirmation of the existence of the person.

However, the psychological field need not necessarily be exclusive, especially if its dependence on the ontological field is acknowledged. Its description of person, rather than being the ultimate word on the definition of person, is seen as defining only an aspect of him and has to take recourse to metaphysics for a more radical outlook. Unfortunately, as we know, this has not always been the case and on occasion there have been attempts to stop at this partial vision of man. It is in this sense that we

[106] Basti makes a distinction between personality and person indicating that personality refers to all the relational qualities of the person; towards himself, to others and to all things, which manifest and characterize him as an individual in the human community. (cf. G.Basti, *La filosofia dell'uomo,* 343).

understand the concern of John Paul II when he says that the great challenge facing us at the end of the last millennium was:

> To move from *phenomenon to foundation*, a step as necessary as it is urgent. We cannot stop short at experience alone; even if experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises. Therefore, a philosophy that shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of revelation.[107]

"Thus while it must certainly be conceded that contemporary existential and historical considerations of the human person enhance our understanding, nevertheless," Seidl affirms, "such considerations could be assimilated by the classical perspective and find therein a certain needed corrective."[108]

3.4 The Ontological Constitution of Person

What perhaps essentially distinguishes the just presented vision of person from the present one is that whereas the first considers the constitution of man from the point of view of his manifestation, at least in consciousness, "the ontological constitution of person, as outlined in Aquinas, considers him from the standpoint of his holistic or real composition. Man is understood as composed of *matter* and *form*, and all together, they form his substantial unity. For that reason, whereas matter is potency with respect to the substantial form, essence is in potency with respect to the act of being; where matter limits form, it is essence that limits beings."[109] This thinking follows from Aquinas'

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[107] JOHN. PAUL II, *Fides et Ratio*, No.83. This is the kind of foundation you find in St.Thomas Aquinas (cf. nos. 43,78,85-86).
[108] H. SEIDL, "The Concept of Person in St.Thomas Aquinas," 453.
[109] St.Thomas Aquinas, QDSC, q, 1,a.1.

metaphysics of participation where all substantial entities other than God are a real composition of essence and *esse*.[110]

It is, however, necessary to clarify that the substantial form in man subsists by itself and not in virtue of another act of being. In which case, it plays a double role, that of informing matter like the substantial form in other beings, making it a living organic human body; but it is also spirit and therefore, despite informing matter, it transcends it. So, the substantial being of man is perfected and enriched by its accidents insofar as they exist in the substance, as Seidl insists:

> The definition of person cannot encompass personal action because the definition is necessarily aimed at a being's essence...[thus] to replace the primacy of personal being with the primacy of personal actions would result in activist or existentialist view of man.[111]

Therefore, unlike the psychological constitution, the ontological constitution of person speaks strongly in favour of the unity of man without at the same time being simplistic about his composition. There are real elements that are really different In the mind and precisely because of this can we speak of a union. There is a clear distinction between what makes up the substantial unity and what the accidents that belong to such unity are, and the former cannot in any way be reduced to the latter.

3.5 Person and Community

The relationship between person and community follows from the examination of the interplay between communicability and incommunicability. The communal life of a person is also typical of his origin, or more precisely typical of the origin of his act of

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[110] J. F.WIPPEL,"Metaphysics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, 93-99.
[111] H. SEIDL, "The Concept of Person in St.Thomas Aquinas," 459-460.

being. The self-transcendence of the individual in his relationship to the world, to men and to God is very much in accordance with his *positive monadic* being.

What quantitatively differentiates the human person from a simple individual of the material order is his spiritual soul, subsistent in itself. It is, however, the special property of his act of being that properly constitutes the person, and differentiates him from any other element of the universe; a property that implies his proper and personal relationship with God that follows from his act of being. Man is what he is by means of God, sharing for this very reason in this personal identity. It is because man is person and because person transcends himself that he opens himself infinitely in personal relationship both with God and with other created persons. This relation has to be a happy relation of friendship and one that is reciprocal.[112] As spirit, man transcends matter and is capable of transcending himself and his own boundaries toward the world that surrounds him and beyond.[113] The human person can transcend himself and by so doing make of every other person an *alter ego;* this is precisely so because he is person, a subject of intellectual knowledge and of elective love.

His communion with other created persons is one of friendship and personal integration. The personal autonomy of the act of being is the basis of the autonomy of human action as he comes into rapport with others for his own freedom. More radically, it is the gratuitous origin of his being in God that orients him back to God and puts the

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[112] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, S.Th. II-II, q. 23, a.1, ad.1.c.

[113] Mondin sees every single element of man's life as punctuated by this self-transcendence for in all that he "does, think, and desires, in all that he wants and brings to fulfilment, there is always an element of self-transcendence, that always drives him on" (B. Mondin, *Philosophical Anthropology,* 235).

ultimate end of his personal action in God. "It is in this that Aquinas concentrates the full dignity of the human person and it is on it that human relationship is based."[114] If the reciprocal relation between human persons has to be understood in its fullness then it has to be first understood as a participated relationship.

This perfect relationship between persons is made manifest in the divine persons known to us thanks to Christian revelation. The implications of this for the human person are that insofar as he participates in divine personhood, his personhood consists necessarily in its reference to the other. This other is ultimately God but in the created order the immediate other is my neighbour, the other human person. "For the human person to live means to encounter the other not just passively but actively, and it is in this that a community is created to be at the service of the fulfilment of everyone's personhood. The human person is created, as has been demonstrated, for self-outpouring and self-transcendence."[115]

What has been implied in the above discussion is the aspect of receptivity. Every self-communication demands a response from the other, otherwise it would all be meaningless. Every giving requires a taking and vice versa and therefore, even though receptivity follows upon the substantial and self-communicative aspects of being in the ontological order of dependence and intelligibility, it is all the same a primordial

[114] ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, S.Th. III, q.2, a.2, ad.2.

[115] Each of the divine persons is subsistent relation, and in fact, there is an opposition in the relation of paternity to filiation just as in that of aspiration to procession. The persons in themselves exclusively refer to one another. There is distinct in their reciprocal rapport (cf. E. J. Gratsch, *Aquinas' Summa: An Introduction and Interpretation,* 27).

dimension of reality as a whole.[116] In fact, it should be said that without receptivity authentic mutual relationship and therefore authentic love would remain incomplete.[117]

The conclusion that this brings us to is that communion or community is a consequence enshrined in being itself, or as Clarke puts it, "real being tends naturally to spin out a web of relationship with the beings around it.... To be, it turns out, means, *to-be-together.* Being and community are inseparable."[118] When the beings in question are persons, the community becomes a socially conscious community moving the individuals towards the fulfilment of self-communication in human togetherness, and ultimately towards God.[119] Both St. Thomas and Aristotle see society as the flowering of human nature because, as the former puts it, by nature man is a friend to man.[120]

3.6 Stein's Anthropology

3.6.1 Christian Philosophy and the Pedagogical Problem

When Stein had made her decision for Christian philosophy and for St. Thomas, she realized that the problem of the possibility of a Christian philosophy needed to be tackled before embarking on her examination of the human person. In the introductory part of her *Endliches und Ewiges Sein,* Stein dedicates the whole of the fourth section to the question of the possibility of a Christian philosophy, in which she seeks to underline

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[116] W. N. CLARKE, *Person and Being*, 20.

[117] In the opinion of Clarke many Christian philosophers tend to forget that the status of the second and third of the Trinity, as pure subsistent receptivity and gratitude, is of *absolute equal worth* and perfection as the self-giving mode of the Father. Hence receptivity, as participated in by the created world, laced with perfection as it is, must still be a perfection and a necessary attribute of reality as a whole (W. N. Clarke, *Person and Being*, 21).

[118] W. N. CLARKE, *Person and Being*, 22-23.

[119] R. A. O'DONNELL, *Hooked on Philosophy: Thomas Aquinas Made Simple*, 68.

[120] Ibid., 65.

both distinction and the necessary rapport that must exist between reason or philosophy and faith or theology.

The problem of Christian philosophy is certainly a complex one, be it from the point of view of its beginnings and development or from that of its content, as demonstrated by Stein in the above-cited work. In fact, in the dialogue between medieval and modern philosophies, she considers the way of understanding the relations between science and faith, philosophy and theology, a much bigger obstacle than that of the diversity of languages between the two periods.[121] This is perhaps what led Bradley to call Christian philosophy a *notorious term,* owing to the controversy surrounding it especially in contemporary times.[122] What makes a philosophy Christian or what qualifies one a Christian philosopher? Gilson, for instance, has been brave enough to stretch the beginnings of Christian philosophy to as far as St. Paul. Though not a philosopher as such, the apostle had that spirit which, Gilson says: "laid down the principle on which the whole matter rests, and later Christian thinkers will do little more than draw out its consequence."[123] Therefore, in the eyes of Gilson, St. Paul, by the comparison he made between the salvation offered by the gospel and human wisdom[124] lays the framework within which all later Christian philosophers would have to operate.

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[121] A.C. PEGIS, *St. Thomas and Philosophy*, 1-25, 34.
[122] D. BRADLEY, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas Moral Sciences*, 25.
[123] E. GILSON, *The Spirit of Medieval Philosophy*, 20.
[124] 1 Corinthians: 17-3:21.

3.7 Philosophy of Education

The beginnings of the philosophy of person in Stein are propelled by her community-oriented attitude. We have already mentioned how even in the later years at the university, she saw education in this wider perspective of community, and she may be excused for referring to her fellow students as the *idiots,*[125] for the simple fact that they appeared indifferent to social issues. Her attraction to education is underlain firstly by her attraction to the community and the role each one has to play in it even in the formation of others, and secondly, by her conviction that every human being is in need of formation if he is to arrive at his goal of self-realization.

Stein understands education as being geared towards the formation of the person and consequently she has an orientation towards the value of the individual and the formation of human personality. This was demonstrated not only during her teaching years in Speyer and Münster but also in her public lectures and speeches. Education is for her, above all, "the formation of the person, rather than an external possession of learning"[126] or "a mere imparting of ideas, the kind of formation experienced by a person designated for development."[127] It has the role of bringing a person to fulfilment, thus, calling for mutual respect between the persons involved in education.

In a more strict sense, education is defined by man's social character. His full self-manifestation and self-realization depend also on the super-individual context in

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[125] Cf. *Life in a Jewish Family*, 191.
[126] E. STEIN, "Fundamental Principles of Women's Education," in *Essays on Woman*, 130.
[127] E. STEIN, "Problems of Women's Education," in *Essays on Woman*, 172.

which he finds himself. This inter-personal perspective on the growth of the person was particularly revealed in Stein's own life, and she credits others for having brought her to a fulfilment of what she was.[128] In practical life, this is also especially revealed in the teacher-student rapport that she herself lived as educator. Stein gave special attention to the question of the education of children and special education for both male and female sexes in view of the role each one of them has to perform in society.[129]

In conclusion, we see that Stein's philosophy of education is directly related to and deeply rooted in her philosophy of person. She sees every human person as having a unique inner self which education from outside must respect in its movement towards the mature, fully developed person. At the same time the help of others is indispensable for self-formation. One finds more opportunities for personal growth through being with them and full maturity is attained only when man, the finite being, manages to form himself according to God, the infinite being. This theory of education became more explicit in Stein's philosophy of woman in general and in her concerns for her formation in particular.

3.8 Woman as Person

The theme of woman takes a lot of space in Stein's philosophy. It should be seen as a logical consequence of what has been said about person, in his constitution, in his drive towards others and in his need for education. This philosophy of woman is built

[128] E. STEIN, *Life in a Jewish Family*, 183, 234-260.
[129] E. STEIN, "Principles of Women's Education," in *Essays on Woman*, 130-131.

around two key points: first, woman considered from the point of view of her natural vocation or profession in society vis-à-vis that of the man; second, and flowing from the first, the important question of woman's adequate formation in order to take up this task. It is not surprising, therefore, to see that her philosophy of education and her philosophy of woman intertwine to a point that they are sometimes treated simultaneously. Behind the scenes, and largely motivating her in this direction, was the appalling and desperate situation that the German school system was in.

The problems, especially those facing women's education, in a set-up that was male-dominated and male-oriented, called for a total overhaul in order to give way to an educational reform in the ailing school system.[130] What we want to do here is not to make a full analysis of Stein's philosophy of woman, but rather to see how it fits in with her whole philosophy of person since most of the essays on woman are written at a time when Stein was trying hard to mould every aspect of her philosophy by first giving it a stable metaphysical grounding.

Stein faces the problem by asking whether there is something like a natural vocation of women. Certainly, she says, "only the person blinded by the passion of controversy could deny that woman in soul and body is formed for a particular purpose."[131] Of course, it is already presupposed in this that the woman shares a basic human nature with the man, and all that has been said about the human being, as well as the human person, applies to the woman as much as to the man. The study of woman rightfully belongs to the study of who the human being is, and as a result, she held:

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[130] E. STEIN, "Fundamental Principles of Women's Education," in *Essays on Woman*, 130-131.
[131] E. STEIN, "The Ethos of Women's Professions" in *Essays on Woman*, 45.

> The inquiry into the essence of woman has its logical place in a *philosophical anthropology*. Anthropology clarifies the meaning of sexual differences and proves the substances of the species; moreover, it is proper to this work to prove the place of the species in the structure of the individual human being, the relationships of the types to the species and to the individual, and the relationship of types to conditions in which they develop.[132]

Nonetheless, Stein maintained that there is what be could call basically feminine faculties, or in fact, a different type of soul for woman.[133] According to her nature, it is the vocation of woman to be mother, spouse and companion and, the feminine professor would imply, "all vocations depending on sympathetic rapport such as nursing, education, and social work... and the entire range of contemporary social services."[134] This does not in any case hinder woman from practising other professions. "Only subjective delusion", she adds, "could deny that women are capable of practising vocations other than that of spouse and mother."[135] What is underlined is that there is a specific ethos of the women's profession, an "abiding spiritual attitude or the totality of *habitus* which emerges from within as the formative principle in a person's professional life."[136] In woman, this is expressed by her natural desire to embrace that which is living, personal, and whole. Stein makes a distinction between what a woman *is* by nature and what a woman *can* do or *can* become. Still further, as Oben puts it, "a change in sex roles is not necessarily a change in woman's essence."[137] Whereas the

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[132] E. STEIN, "Problems of Women's Education," in *Essays on Woman*, 174.
[133] E. STEIN, "Vocations of Man and Woman," in *Essays on Woman*, 60.
[134] E. STEIN, "The Ethos of Women's Profession," in *Essays on Woman*, 49. Side by side with this natural vocation of woman, Stein also give room to the possibility of considering the ideal of virginity as being natural to the call of woman.
[135] Ibid. Attention should also be given to the capacities of individual women. There are women who are more trained for doing what may commonly be considered masculine duties. They should be given the necessary formation and be helped to realize themselves.
[136] E. STEIN, "The Ethos of Women's Professions", in *Essays on Woman*, 43-44.
[137] F.M. OBEN, *The Life and Thought of St. Edith Stein*, 70.

ability to perform by individual women in what are commonly considered *non-feminine* fields is not hindered by her natural inclination, neither can such individual talents and achievements overthrow her natural vocation.

If therefore Stein should be called a feminist at all, her feminism has to be understood as one that seeks to bring out in woman her very best according to nature. It would be therefore be inaccurate to simply call her a feminist without qualification because we risk losing the full expression of all that her philosophy of woman stands for. Whereas positive feminism may be contained in her philosophy of woman, this latter goes far beyond the limits of feminism to encompass the whole world of the woman, the world given to all women by nature, without excluding individuals with talents beyond those of the ordinary woman. This, as Maas has pointed out, "is what makes Stein's feminism so radically different than the utopian formulations of secular feminism, which concerns itself exclusively with the fortunes and self-actualization of the woman in the here and now."[138]

Stein maintains that she is made in the image of God, who is the standard measure of who the woman is and should become.[139] She thus rounded out her philosophy of woman by moulding it into her conclusion on the human person, as one created in the likeness of the Divine Persons.

What would have remained of Stein's normal life came to an end in 1942 when she was deported to Auschwitz, but not before she felt she had achieved her

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[138] R. MAAS, "A Shelter for Unfolding Souls: Edith Stein on the Vocation of Woman," 166.
[139] E. STEIN,"The Separate Vocations of Man and Woman According to Nature and Grace," in *Essays on Woman*, 59ff.

philosophical ideal. She was convinced that she had succeeded in finding an all-encompassing anthropology capable of carrying man to his highest realization. This realization contained the treatment of man in his totality: In his relationship with himself, with others, with the world and above all with God. No discourse on man can make light of his relationship with God and still claim to be comprehensive. This was the conviction of Stein, one that in the second phase of her life not only came to determine her way of doing philosophy but also influenced every aspect of her thought and life.

CONCLUSION

This paper is the result of a scientific study and personal reflection on the works of Edith Stein. The first chapter was our attempt to present a historical trajectory of the development of the notion of person and unavoidably hinted at some of the main themes in the development of philosophical anthropology. The second chapter concentrated on Stein's understanding of man during that period of her life when she was still considerably influenced by the desire to bring Husserl's mission of philosophical rigor to its grand finale. And the third chapter deals firmly with person in the late Stein.

All in all, one thing is evident: Stein, in her research, shows the desire to move within the strong tradition of Christian scholars. Her philosophy of person may be partially deficient yet a balanced judgement of it cannot be blind to the fact that she was motivated by the desire to live by the principle of a Christian philosophy, which principally meant operating under the umbrella of faith. This is especially the case with her notion of Christian philosophy. Other than this, the influence of her philosophical past, her own road to spiritual mysticism, not forgetting her rich biographical experience, all played a significant role in shaping her thought, her philosophy, but above all, her own personal life.

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