

## APPROACHING EDITH STEIN'S PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY

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**Abstract** In the following contribution I would like to present Edith Stein's Philosophical Anthropology in somewhat more detail. I am going to pursue the issue of being human in Stein, to address fundamental issues and key concepts of her oeuvre, to refer to other approaches, to point out to Stein's innovative contribution to Philosophical Anthropology under the horizon of phenomenology and classical metaphysics. As a preliminary remark, I would first like to outline a few lines of Stein's biography. It is of course also possible to skip the first chapter and go straight to the philosophical considerations.

**Keywords:** Edith Stein; Philosophical Anthropology; phenomenology; metaphysics; man as a bodily being

### 1. Introductory Remarks

Edith Stein was born in Breslau on October 12th, 1891. She is one of the outstanding personalities of the 20th century: raised in the Jewish faith, later an agnostic, then a Christian and a nun. By Edith Stein, Teresia Benedicta a Cruce, we encounter both an unusually gifted and a deeply humiliated life which came to its end probably on August 9th, 1942, in the gas chamber of Auschwitz. In quite particular ways she brings together the greatness and the ruin of the past century.

Looking back to her own childhood, Edith Stein describes herself as a lively, cheeky child which sometimes tended to fits of anger. She used to say the prayers she had learned from her mother until she was fifteen. For her, the transition to adulthood was a time of crisis. From then on she wants to make her way without God. And at first she has the impression that this way she does not miss anything. After her graduation from grammar school, with excellent marks, she starts studying in Breslau. Later she changes to Göttingen, as there the famous philosopher Edmund Husserl is teaching. "All the girls dream of a kiss [German: Busserl], but Edith just dreams of Husserl", this is how her friends make fun of her. At last she follows Husserl to Freiburg. After her PhD she becomes his assistant and prepares his manuscripts for printing, among others. It is a struggle for clarity, for insight on the verges of her own reason.

Stein is one of the first women in Germany to be admitted to university studies at all and to be conferred a doctorate. And she is the first assistant at a philosophy faculty in Germany. Several attempts at habilitation fail, which is particularly connected to her Jewish roots and probably also to her being a woman. Stein lodges a complaint to the Prussian Minister of Culture, Konrad Haenisch. She asks for "the issue to be clarified in principle". Haenisch agrees with her legal opinion and issues a circular decree for the Prussian universities. That women in Germany were allowed to habilitate in the next decades is owed to great extent to Stein. In several lectures she discusses what it means to be a woman. Stein argues against the claimed inferiority of women and in favour of the equality of man and woman.

In November, 1917, a philosopher and friend dies in World War I: Adolf Reinach. Edith Stein is deeply shaken when she receives the news. Reinach's widow asks Stein to help her with sorting her husband's texts. Many questions cross her mind: What to say in such a situation? How to give consolation? Which words may be right? Edith Stein does not know but is deeply impressed by Anne Reinach's personality who gains confidence from her Christian faith. She does not encounter a broken woman but somebody who is able to give comfort even to her. Later Edith Stein tells that this was the crucial reason for her conversion. However, for her it is still a long way until this will happen.

In 1921 Edith Stein stays with her friend, the philosopher Hedwig Conrad-Martius. There she reads "The Life of St. Teresa of Avila", which was to become very important for Edith Stein and was probably crucial for her choice of denomination. Eleven years after her baptism she joins the Carmel and becomes a nun. This is no running away from the world, no kneejerk reaction or sheer tactics for survival. "Man is called to live by his innermost and to take over control of himself to a degree which is possible only from there; also, only from there it is possible to deal with the world in the right way; only from there he is able to find his place in the world which is intended for him."<sup>1</sup>

With being clothed at the monastery she adopts the name 'Teresia Benedicta a cruce'. This name is programmatic, as she is really blessed by the Cross. For five years Edith Stein lives at the Carmel in Cologne as Sister Benedicta. On December 31st, 1938, Sister Benedicta must flee to the Netherlands because of her Jewish roots. Even in such a situation and then on her way to the hell of Auschwitz she knows to be held by God. "The world is on fire. This fire may as well reach our house. But high above all flames the Cross is towering. They cannot consume it. It marks the road from earth to Heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Six million Jews were cruelly murdered in the course of Nazi rule. Edith Stein is one of them. It is important that we do not lose track of the victims if today we want to shape the future. Their lives shall be a reminder to us.

It is well known that John Paul II. beatified Edith Stein in Cologne in 1987 and canonised her in Rome in 1998. In 1999 this Pope of Polish origin made her, who

was born in Breslau, a co-patron of Europe (together with St. Catherine of Siena and St. Brigid of Sweden): thus, next to Benedict, Cyril and Methodius it is three women who are attributed particular significance for Europe. All of them may offer a vision to crisis-ridden Europe.

At first sight, Chesterton's Father Brown does not belong there, nevertheless he may be mentioned here, as also in philosophical terms he is an interesting character. Once, the master criminal hiding behind priest clothes states to Father Brown on reason as follows: "Yes, yes, these modern infidels turn to their reason; however who could look at the millions of worlds above us without feeling that there may be many a wonderful universe where reason is completely unreasonable?" Father Brown's answer will not be long in coming. He contradicts very clearly: "Reason is always reasonable, even in the last limbo, in the forlorn borderlands of all things. I am very well aware that many people accuse the Church of humiliating reason, however in truth it is the other way round. The Church, and nothing else on earth, declares that even God is tied to reason." And of course, as you will anticipate, this sneaky cleric succeeds with putting a stop to the criminal's game. And swiftly Father Brown explains how he knew that Flambeau was no real theologian and priest: "They attacked reason. [...] No real theologian would do so."<sup>2</sup>

Stein, on the other hand, represents a way of appreciating human reason which is ready to take entirety into account while certainly being aware of its limits. To have it more pointedly, one might say: faith without reason gets blind (just think of e. g. some Biblicistic currents or of the possibility to be fooled by superficial contemporary ideas), reason without the source of the faith, on the other hand, remains functionalist and empty! What is believed does not become known just because of reason. "It is the crossing of borders what makes humans achieve their best, the crossing of borders by creating and poetizing, by feeling and imagining, by longing and searching, by believing and hoping."<sup>3</sup> Man gains a much wider scope of liberty if he is able to break through the "barriers of rationalist prejudices", Pope John Paul II. said during his sermon on the occasion of beatifying Stein, taking up an idea by Stein.<sup>4</sup>

In recent years a growing research interest in Edith Stein's thought can be stated. Her speculative power, her spiritual depth as well as her unique and detailed analyses are impressive even at the international level and still more than 80 years after her death. Up to now, what has been researched is particularly her mystical deliberations on educational and individual anthropological topics of her oeuvre. There also exist relevant research works on her understanding of the nature and task of woman as well as on her meaning in the European context.<sup>5</sup> More recent works also deal with her social philosophy or discover this disciple of Husserl as a phenomenologist in her own right.

By its 28 volumes, the Edith Stein complete editions include the biographical writings (such as Stein's autobiography *Life in a Jewish Family* as well as

her voluminous correspondence), just like her studies on philosophy, on (phenomenological) anthropology and education, however of course also on spirituality (such as her study on the Science of the Cross), and – not forgetting – her translations (Thomas Aquinas, John Henry Newman, Alexander Koyré).

In the following I would like to deal in more detail with Stein's Philosophical Anthropology.

## **2. Stein's Contribution to Philosophical Anthropology**

### **2.1. Stein's Anthropological Research Programme**

Stein's work covers a wide range of topical issues and gives testimony to her open-mindedness to philosophical problems. It comprises both unique and detailed analyses. The issue of man is crucial for her and runs like a common thread through the network of the complete editions. Her early works are phenomenological fundamental analyses of the mental and psycho-physical constitution of the individual. With turning to Christianity, she attempts to combine phenomenology and scholastic thought by the basic idea of a *philosophia perennis*, in her main work *Finite and Eternal Being* she then attempts to present a phenomenological ontology of the individual. In her later writings, she asks what is capable of giving the human condition an ultimate horizon. In her work, Stein sheds a pluriperspective light on the question of being human.

Philosophical anthropology after Kant experiences two 'pushes' (O. Marquardt). On the one hand by Romanticism which felt challenged by the after-effects of the French revolution, moves topically away from history and towards nature and, among others, discusses in which ways it affects man. The second 'push' must be located at the beginning of the 20th century. Urgent questions had been raised in particular by World War I – Thomas Mann considers it a "world-changing thunderclap" – as well as by a disappointed progress optimism during the late 19th and early 20th century.<sup>6</sup> Anthropological research at the beginning of the past century defines man particularly from the point of view of nature and modern biology and against this backdrop discusses his possibilities of realisation as well as man-animal differences. Considerations which are due to an empirical view at being human become increasingly significant, which is a challenge for a philosophical basic attitude. Stein is familiar with these issues and problems, and she takes them up; her research programme, however, goes far beyond the biological-empirical realm of anthropological asking and researching.

In her Münster lecture on anthropology, she discusses the fact that life develops of its own accord, is not the result of external forces and is therefore always an expression of subjectivity. It is formed from within due to its own dynamics. Stein proceeds in such a way that she first exposes man's naturality. After man's naturality and animality she discusses the human soul as a bodily form and as a spirit. She shows that man cannot only be characterised by awareness of time and reason but is

indeed also a dynamic organism which integrates also the basic structures of other living beings which, however, she provides with a specific modification.<sup>7</sup> Quite similarly to Scheler, Plessner, Conrad-Martius, Hartmann and Whitehead, man is part of a chain of the living, however he transgresses it because of his being gifted with intellect and being an individual. In *The Structure of the Human Person* [Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person] Stein undertakes a phenomenological discussion of material findings, starting with the bodily and the organic, furthermore (and this belongs together) she is about revealing beyond the empirical: “All this, which distinguishingly characterises it [the body], is a bridge for our understanding which goes beyond what is just manifestly given and always perceives more than just some material body.”<sup>8</sup>

What the Münster lecture is about is an analysis of anthropology as the foundation of education. Insofar as by our actions, education, and formation a certain way of understanding man is also realised, philosophical clarification is needed. Among others, Stein discusses how each human may achieve his own completion and how self-education is possible. It is about man’s individual fulfilment within the framework of his own possibilities. What is viewed at is on the one hand a necessary and continuous individual, psychophysical development which depends on internal psychic as well as outer physical conditions, secondly the unfolding of a personal-spiritual structure of man, and finally freedom as a place of education. The view is on becoming rational as a process of growing and maturing which requires education. It is education which indeed allows for taking distance to one’s own (physical and rational) nature. For Stein, education is a comprehensive matter in the context of which both the educator and the educated are completely challenged – these are issues discussed still today, such as when considering that Sloterdijk in his *Rules for the Human Zoo* raised the question if, instead of on education, we should rather count on genetic manipulation e. g. to avoid criminals in society.<sup>9</sup>

## **2.2. The Issue of Man under the Horizon of Phenomenology and Classical Metaphysics**

As a basic science, philosophy is responsible for asking about the essential, that which lies beyond empirical changes. Philosophical anthropology aims at the general. With her Münster lecture on anthropology at the latest Stein’s approach at anthropological issues gains its distinctive, unmistakable shape: she attempts to build a bridge<sup>10</sup> from Husserl, who attempts to give reason to a “new, descriptive method and a thus resulting a priori kind of science”<sup>11</sup>, to Aquinas’s edifice of ideas. Concerning the “choice of problems”, Stein notes, she intends to orient at Thomas, for which she gives the reason that this means “being protected against one-sidedness and, to a certain degree, a guarantee of not missing crucial aspects”<sup>12</sup>. At the same time she emphasizes that she feels obliged to the phenomenological method of approaching things themselves, not via theories and what one believes

to already know. "If we want to know what man is, we must, in the liveliest ways, imagine the situation in which we experience human existence. i. e. by way of what we experience within ourselves and by way of what we experience by our encounters with other humans."<sup>13</sup> This way of proceeding, she says, is different from the empirical approach, as it is about a reflective view at the being. Stein attempts to make obvious a complementarity of philosophia perennis and modern, reason-based thought, as she tries to explicate among others by her self-composed philosophical conversation between Husserl and Thomas. Thomas is less consulted in terms of history or the history of ideas. Rather, she is interested in dealing in his sense with issues the scholastic was not yet confronted with. A look at the literature consulted by Stein illustrates her positioning "against a Thomism of the neo-scholastic kind and in favour of communicating Thomas-like and modern thought which is grounded in a historical-critical kind of Thomas research."<sup>14</sup> Stein also considers if that intended bridge from scholasticism to phenomenology is possible even given the transcendental, consciousness-philosophical orientation of Husserl in his late period, however she does not work this out in detail. Here there may just be the hint that her reception of and appreciation of transcendental approaches happens through the eyes of the phenomenologist and is on the whole rather fragmentary.

### **2.3. Man's Personal Constitution**

As Stein argues, human beings belong to a world of the spirit. This is "no less real and no less recognizable [...] than the natural world"<sup>15</sup>. When on several occasions speaking of personal constitution, Stein means that humans are capable of a conscious and free intellectual life, which makes their particular position. Individuals must shape the nonpareils of their lives: however, while showing consideration for other humans who are always already treated and recognized as individuals.

In her doctoral thesis *On the Problem of Empathy* (1916) the focus is in particular on the individual's psycho-physical and intellectual unity, whereas in her *Introduction to Philosophy* (1921) she works out the pure I as the precondition for the possibility of I-life while at the same time, however, emphasizing that the real subject is with heart and soul connected to the world.<sup>16</sup> The individual, she says, is "the subject of a current life of consciousness' and also 'equipped with lasting qualities'"<sup>17</sup>.

Personhood cannot be calculated or composed of different phenomena, which is something Heidegger rightly points out to<sup>18</sup>, after all, but it opens up being human. "[I]f personality is morally relevant, then this is not because it is a value quality of a value-neutral biological human life but because it is a continuous determination of being human in morally relevant ways."<sup>19</sup>

On several occasions Stein emphasizes the capability of reflecting on, of communicating with each other, and of appreciating values. Being an individual, she says, is in a tensed relationship between self-fulfilment and devotion to and for

others. Human beings assume obligations, make mutual claims. They explain, they ask about meaning, they are capable of justifying their doings. They are capable of defining purposes and of relating to those of others.

With her work *Potency and Act* (1931), also ontological concepts play an important role with clarifying what being an individual means. The intellectual subject, she says, is provided with hypostasis and some “topically defined what” as its individual substance.<sup>20</sup> In this context, she does not reduce individuality to matter. By the idea of an essential form which is capable of updating by different degrees of intensity she rather moves towards Scotus than towards Thomas. Against his backdrop, she is then able to state that e. g. “it definitely makes sense to say that this human is more or less “human” than another one, or that he is becoming more and more “human”.”<sup>21</sup>

By *Finite and Eternal Being* (1935/36) the question about divine persons moves into focus, who are interpreted as prototypes of the human being and individual.

#### **2.4. Man as a Bodily Being**

Several works most of all from the field of the phenomenological tradition criticise the forgottenness of the body, which is lamented in particular since Nietzsche, to do justice to actual conducts of life and to experiencing one’s own body. Contrary to any Cartesian division into two substances, the unity of man, experiencing and feeling one’s own body are emphasized.<sup>22</sup>

Stein must be counted among the pioneers of a phenomenology of the body. She emphasizes that being human realises itself by way of the body. She speaks of a double nature of the body and differentiates between the objectifiable body on the one hand and the body which is subjectively felt and experienced on the other, both of which belong immediately together. “Compared to the objective body, the subjective body is characterised by being the bearer of fields of perception, by being at the zero point of orientation within the spatial world, by itself being versatile and being made of movable organs, by being the field of giving expression to the experiences of the I which belongs to it and by being a tool of its will.”<sup>23</sup> The double nature of the body, Stein states, corresponds to a double nature of the soul, insofar as the latter’s life is an outward shaping of matter and inner movement at the same time.

The human being is “Leib” (“living body”) and has “Körper” (“physical body”). He is able to make this a topic, to talk about it. For Stein, the body is an organ of will and perception, it gives expression to the life of a subject, it is a “site”<sup>24</sup> and medium of expressing what is happening at the spiritual level. The body is a “medium which as such is different from ourselves (those living within this medium), but which does not independently exist by itself and next to our being, such as light and air do, which are also media for us. Instead, as a medium it is an immediate and crucial element of our being ourselves.”<sup>25</sup>



Because of the body, man has access to himself and to others. By way of the body we experience ourselves; also, bodily performances by others allow us to learn about our own body.<sup>26</sup> With Husserl, Stein assumes that the apperception of somebody else's body means co-understanding some other, inner life.<sup>27</sup> Stein emphasizes the body as a medium for understanding the world, thus, however, also for understanding being tied to place and perspective by one's own body.<sup>28</sup> "By [...] my body constituting itself twofold – as a perceiving (bodily perceived) body and an outside body which is outwardly perceived – and by this double givenness being experienced as the same, it is given a position in the outside space, it fills part of this space."<sup>29</sup> Humans are no abstract inwardness but concrete bodily existence.

As body and soul form a unity and the spiritual can be expressed by the body, the phenomenon of the view is possible, and the other may appear by his view. It is not the eyes what is looking at us but the other as an individual,<sup>30</sup> as she explains in *The Structure of the Human Person*, that is starting out from the outside aspect of the body and moving towards the inside of man, whereas previous works, walking in the shoes of transcendental phenomenology, start out from the inside when it comes to discussing what is human. According to Stein, by man's look it becomes obvious that he is capable of saying "I".

Even the look of an animal gives expression to inwardness. By the look of an animal Stein believes to encounter a "silent and imprisoned soul"<sup>31</sup> which is capable of feeling its own look as well as the presence. There is one passage in *Finite and Eternal Being* which reminds the reader to Plessner's considerations on eccentric personality, according to which the animal lives outside its centre, however not as the centre, whereas man shows the nature of being outside himself and is the subject of experience.<sup>32</sup>

Other than the animal, Stein states, man is capable of looking into his own inside, he is provided with self-consciousness. He is capable of taking distance to himself and, not least because of this, of grasping himself as a person.

## **2.5. Against Reductions of Being Human**

Based on her elaborated concept of the body, on the view that consciousness is incorporated, and on her understanding of philosophy which just provides the leading sciences – the bio- resp. the neurosciences – with legitimacy, Stein's considerations may be positioned against reductionist approaches and reductions of being human.

In several cases Stein argues against any possibility of reducing the spiritual to material processes and entities.<sup>33</sup> A materialistic idea of the world, she states, is not able to grasp the entire reality, any observer perspective from the outside is not sufficient for describing the world. Intentionality, a term Stein develops while walking in Husserl's shoes, as well as qualitative experience evade any physical grasp. According to Stein, man is no machine but a living entirety which maintains itself by a variety of natural and social relations. Also, Stein already speaks out against any neuro-determinism



which believes to identify the self with neuronal processes. “[E]ven if the anatomy of the brain was able to define a certain part of the brain the destruction of which would result in a decrease of the “consciousness of the self”, we could not say that this place was where the self is to be located. The self of is no brain cell; it has a spiritual meaning which is only accessible by experiencing oneself.”<sup>34</sup> That conscious experience and bodiliness belong together, as Stein points out to, is still no topic of the currently much debated Human Brain Project. And also given the post-humanist attempts to make use of nature and bodiliness always only as a means and indeed not as a purpose, Stein’s voice might be brought into the philosophical debate.

## 2.6. Freedom and Inter-Subjectivity

In her Freiburg dissertation thesis Stein discusses the topic of empathy. In later studies this term is no longer explored in detail; however it is of significance for her further considerations on empathy. By the term ‘empathy’ she attempts to illustrate by which act the subjectivity of others and experiencing it is experienced. By ‘empathy’ she means a distinct act of experiencing something which is not distinct, i. e. another distinct life by which the experience of others and constituting experiences find expression. It runs analogously to self-perception. Empathy allows for co-experiencing what my counterpart experiences.<sup>35</sup> Stein speaks of not being distinctly provided with the experience of others.<sup>36</sup> The body of the other is provided with “con-originary” “because the body, to which [the act of empathy] is related, is at the same time a perceived body and because it is given as being distinct for the other self, although not distinctly for myself”<sup>37</sup> As far as the perception of my own body is concerned, this is distinctly given for me.

Empathy does not mean to become one with the other.<sup>38</sup> What is guaranteed is the possibility of perceiving empathy, “due to understanding one’s own subjective body as a body and understanding one’s own body as a subjective body, due to the melting into one of outside perception and perception of the subjective body, by way of this body possibly changing its position in space, finally because of the possibility imagining a change of its actual nature while maintaining its type.”<sup>39</sup>

By empathising with the subjective body of the other, she says, quite a certain degree of empathising fulfilment becomes possible.<sup>40</sup> By emphasizing that “a degree of empathizing, e. g. with pain if an animal has been injured”, is possible, however that for us certain attitudes and movements are only given as blanks without any possibility of fulfilment”<sup>41</sup>, Stein basically anticipates Thomas Nagel’s well-known statements in his essay *What is it like to be a bat?*<sup>42</sup> We have no idea of what it is like to be this kind of animal.

Stein works out that the self is inter-subjectively constituted by our relations to others. By what others know about me, i. e. from an external point of view, I am partly able to even constitute some knowledge of myself. That what makes being human, Stein says, becomes understandable when we see ourselves “as we see

somebody else and somebody else sees us".<sup>43</sup> Who we are, she states, is among others also co-influenced by the nature of our social relations. Value judgements about a human, about his attitudes and actions, she says, must be considered in view of an individual action context which again is connected to other humans and their networks of relations.<sup>44</sup>

From here it is furthermore possible to take another basic feature into account which, apart from the distinctness of being, makes the human: freedom.<sup>45</sup>

Man, it says, is not defencelessly exposed to the play of stimulus and response, to some blind causality, but is capable of performing his life and actions because of reasons, he is capable of acting because of motivations. "[T]hese reasons are motivations. They move the will, they do not force it."<sup>46</sup> That humans are capable of giving reasons connects them to other humans.

An awareness of freedom and capability exists where man is able to be himself, to act as himself. Freedom, Stein says, does not only consist of the dimension of being free of but indeed also of being free to, i. e. of being free to do or be something (objects, values etc.). Stein's concept of freedom also includes its opposite, that is a degree of unfreedom. This can be grasped from seemingly paradox statements demanding to have a liberal attitude towards giving up on one's own freedom or to accepted unfreedom. In this sense, Stein points out to an emancipating kind of freedom which finds itself if it is ready to lose itself.

Freedom, this is made clear, is not unconditional: any freedom to move into every direction would indeed not be freedom, as "such an absolute kind of freedom fixes [man] by himself and condemns [him] to immobility"<sup>47</sup>. Given the many utopian ways of overstressing the concept of freedom, in the sense of an absolutely unlimited self-design, as well as given many denials and alleged neuronal humiliations of man, this should be taken into consideration.

## **2.7. Religion-Philosophical Perspectives: From Finite Being to Eternal Being**

An attempt is also made to fathom human being from a religio-philosophical perspective. The search for the meaning of being leads Stein to ask about the originator of all finite being and a connection to the being of man.

Being finite, as Stein says in her religion-philosophical main work *Finite and Eternal Being*, means not having full access to one's own being, needing time to "achieve being". Furthermore it means being "topically limited".<sup>48</sup> Her line of thought is that she reaches back to Thomas's distinction between act and potency, between possibility and reality, as the two ways of being, and that she attempts to combine the idea of God with loving one's self: "The self I am aware of as my own self cannot be separated from timeliness. It is a "current" self – i. e. as being current-real – it is punctual: a "now" between "no longer" and "not yet". However, by splitting into being and non-being because of its flowing nature, the idea of pure being which has nothing of non-being, which does not know any "no longer" and

any “not yet”, which is not timely but eternal, is revealed to us.”<sup>49</sup> According to this, man hovers between non-being, timeliness and eternal being. Starting out from the momentary being hovering above the abyss of nothingness, Stein takes into account a kind of being which exists out of itself, which is eternal.<sup>50</sup> By help of the *analogia entis* she attempts to open it up. This kind of being is one with its own nature, is reality without any addition of potentiality. Starting out from this beginningless and endless primal ground of being, from this originally full being, man, within the field of tension between being and non-being, is capable of interpreting, of grasping his emptiness. Thus, according to Stein man is characterised by demanding overabundance. She writes: “By my own being I encounter another [being] which is not mine but provides support and ground for my unstable and ungrounded being.”<sup>51</sup>

If Heidegger had worked out fear as the basic condition of existence, Stein is not ready to identify this as an essential concept of human life: her existential conditions look like this: instead of thrownness she refers to letting be grounded, instead of fear, which takes man to nothingness, in Stein there is trust that there is meaning, and finally instead of being determined to oneself she emphasizes the need for love.<sup>52</sup> “Also, she does not understand time, as Heidegger does, as running towards death but as a medium of strived for realisation. Time is the bearer of an original movement into being, against nothingness. Timely being means becoming which, however, will never be a being resting in itself. As concerns time, [the] self exists by processual streams. Indeed because of this it inevitably releases out of itself the idea of pure being, which is completely updated, whereas finite being requires time to unfold its possibilities.”<sup>53</sup>

Whereas Thomas, together with Augustine, spoke of a trace of the Trinity in the whole of creation, but of image only with regard to the rational created persons, Stein in Finite and Eternal Being only uses the term image. She attempts to do justice to the Thomasian differentiation between “*imago*” and “*similitudo*” by distinguishing between closer and more distant likeness. Even in non-personal living beings, she wants to identify an imprint of divine being, a distant likeness. The likeness in the rational soul of man is close. The human person is a representation of the absolute. Talk of the “image of God in man” draws attention to the fact that man has absolute value. From here, reification and utilization are mutually exclusive.

Notwithstanding all efforts to make evident what man is, Stein is aware that there remains one last thing which cannot be communicated, one aspect of secrecy which cannot even be grasped by help of the philosophy of religion. The issue of what man is remains an open question.<sup>54</sup>

### **Conclusion and Prospects**

Let me come to my conclusion. The multi-dimensionality of Stein’s contribution to philosophical anthropology and the significance of her considerations for current discourses have been made visible. She fruitfully included older references from the

tradition into her own systematic considerations; she attempted to break up polarities. Her contribution to philosophical anthropology attempts a bridge from Husserl to Thomas and furthermore has also the potential to mediate between the Munich-Göttingen and the Freiburg phenomenology. Stein's "somatic anthropology"<sup>55</sup> is capable of showing ways which are worthwhile given today's widespread forgottenness of the subjective body as well as the trend to a reduction to the leading bio-sciences.

In her writings we encounter the readiness to again and again take up something new and to remain revisable. For Stein it is important to do justice to the things themselves: philosophising does not exhaust itself by this or that school but means going one step beyond, going beyond the field of the expedient. In this sense, let me conclude by quoting Stein: "There is one goal all philosophical individual research attempts to achieve and for the achievement of which they cooperate: the goal of understanding the world."<sup>56</sup>

### **Acknowledgement**

The author is currently Privatdozent for philosophy at the FernUniversität in Hagen and fellow of the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. He lives and works in Zagreb. The work was supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

### **NOTES**

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6. Cf. ALFIERI, F., 2012. Die Rezeption Edith Steins. Internationale Edith-Stein-Bibliographie 1942-2012, Würzburg: Echter. ISBN-13 978-3429035198.
7. Cf. MARQUARD, O., 1991. Philosophie des Menschen und der Geschichte. In: P. KOSLOWSKI (Edit.): Orientierung durch Philosophie. Ein Lehrbuch nach Teilgebieten, Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), pp. 21-32, in part. p. 26 f. ISBN-13 978-3161457159.

8. STEIN, E., 2015. Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie (ESGA 14), neu bearbeitet und eingeleitet von B. Beckmann-Zöller, Freiburg: Herder, p. 39 f., 74 f. ISBN-13 978-3451273841.
9. ESGA 14, p. 37.
10. Cf. SLOTERDIJK, P., 1999. Regeln für den Menschenpark. Ein Antwortschreiben zu Heideggers Brief über den Humanismus, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp. ISBN-13 978-3518065822.
11. "Her position is that of a mediator. Accordingly, she mediates between Husserl and representatives of Munich-Göttingen, even of Freiburg phenomenology (Heidegger) as well as between Husserl's phenomenology and Thomas Aquinas's philosophy, indeed after all she allows for a look at prospects of ontologically rooting phenomenology into philosophia perennis, with the intention to prove, by way of phenomenology, the possibility of the latter as a real possibility." SEPP, H. R., 2014. Einführung. In: E. STEIN. Freiheit und Gnade und weitere Beiträge zu Phänomenologie und Ontologie (ESGA 9), Freiburg: Herder, p. IX-CXXIX, here p. CXVI. ISBN-13 978-3451131011.
12. HUSSERL, E., 21968. Phänomenologische Psychologie. Vorlesungen Sommersemester 1925 (Husserliana IX), Den Haag: Springer, p. 277. ISBN-13 978-90-247-0226-8.
13. ESGA 14, p. 28.
14. ESGA 14, p. 29.
15. SPEER, A.; TOMMASI, F. V., 2013. Vorwort der Bearbeiter. In: STEIN, E.: *Miscellanea thomistica. Übersetzungen – Abbrevationen – Exzerpte aus Werken des Thomas von Aquin und der Forschungsliteratur* (ESGA 27), edited by A. Speer; F. V. Tommasi, Freiburg: Herder 2013, p. XVIII. ISBN-13 978-3451345487.
16. ESGA 5, p. 31.
17. STEIN, E., 22010. Einführung in die Philosophie (ESGA 8), Hinführung, Bearbeitung und Anmerkungen von C. M. Wulf, Freiburg: Herder, p. 113. ISBN-13 978-3451273780.
18. ESGA 8, p. 102.
19. HEIDEGGER, M., 2018. Sein und Zeit (HeiGA 2), Frankfurt a. M.: Vittorio Klostermann, § 10. ISBN-13 978-3465000518.
20. PÖLTNER, G., 1992. Achtung der Würde und Schutz von Interessen. In: J. BONELLI, (Edit.). *Der Mensch als Mitte und Maßstab der Medizin*, Wien: Springer, pp. 3-32, here p. 20. ISBN-13 978-3211824108.
21. Cf. STEIN, E., 2005. Potenz und Akt. Studien zu einer Philosophie des Seins (ESGA 10), eingeführt und bearbeitet von H. R. Sepp, Freiburg: Herder, p. 84 ff. ISBN-13 978-3451273803.
22. STEIN, E., 32016. Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins. Anhang: Martin Heideggers Existenzphilosophie, Die Seelenburg (ESGA 11/12), eingeführt und bearbeitet von A. U. Müller, Freiburg: Herder, p. 204. ISBN-13 9783451273810; cf. NICKL, P., 2017. Aktualität. In: M. KNAUP; H. SEUBERT (Eds.). *Edith Stein-Lexikon*, Freiburg: Herder, pp. 34 – 36, here p. 36. ISBN-13 978-3451345500.

23. Husserl knows a personalistic as well as an objectivistic view at the body. By the former the body is addressed as a medium of action, whereas the latter view focusses on the body as a bodily object. But subjective body and body cannot be torn apart. By help of the term 'Leibkörper (subjective body-body)' Husserl attempts to do justice to this. (HUSSERL, E., 1984. *Die Konstitution der geistigen Welt*, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, p. 34 f., 116. ISBN-13 978-3787306183).
24. STEIN, E., 22010. *Zum Problem der Einfühlung (ESGA 5)*, eingeführt und bearbeitet von M. A. Sondermann, Bearbeitung der 2. Auflage von H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz, Freiburg: Herder, p. 74. ISBN-13 978-3451273759.
25. ESGA 10, p. 230.
26. WELTE, B., 2006. Leiblichkeit als Hinweis auf das Heil in Christus. In: B. WELTE. *Gesammelte Schriften I/3: Leiblichkeit, Endlichkeit und Unendlichkeit*, Freiburg: Herder, pp. 82 – 113, here p. 84. ISBN-13 978-3-451-29203-3.
27. ESGA 8, p. 155.
28. ESGA 5.
29. Like Husserl, she speaks of the body bearing the “zero point of orientation” within itself. (ESGA 5, p. 74; cf. HUSSERL, E., 1991. *Ideen zu einer reinen Phänomenologie und phänomenologischen Philosophie: Zweites Buch: Phänomenologische Untersuchungen zur Konstitution*. In: *Husserliana Vol. 4*, edit. by M. Biemel, Den Haag / Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff; Max Niemeyer Verlag, p. 83, 158. ISBN-13 9789024702183.
30. ESGA 5, p. 59.
31. With Sartre she shares the conviction that one essential aspect of the relations to other humans is being seen by them (SARTRE, J.-P., 132006. *Das Sein und das Nichts Versuch einer phänomenologischen Ontologie*, Reinbek bei Hamburg: ro ro ro, pp. 457 – 538. ISBN-13 3499340135). However, whereas for Sartre being seen is negatively connoted, with competition and power relations, fear and shame being in the fore, (the other's look, regard d'autrui, is e. g. called “a weapon pointed at me” (ibid. p. 476) and one's own look is characterised as follows. “The people I see I make into stiff objects, I am their opposite, by looking at them I measure my power” (ibid. p. 479), Stein is about the look revealing something about man and being a bridge for an encounter.
32. ESGA 14, p. 78.
33. The animal “is by its entirety placed within its environment and deals with it by its entirety, in its own ways. It deals with it from the innermost point of its being, where there happens the turnaround from outer impressions to responding behavior”, (ESGA 11/12, p. 315; in “*Freiheit und Gnade*” [Freedom and Grace] she writes that the animal is “driven around”, that it has no place for itself (STEIN, E., 2014. „*Freiheit und Gnade*“ und weitere Beiträge zu Phänomenologie und Ontologie (1917 bis 1937) (ESGA 9), bearbeitet und eingeführt von B. Beckmann-Zöller / H. R. Sepp, Freiburg: Herder, p. 17. ISBN-13 978-3451131011; see PLESSNER, H., 2009. *Mit anderen Augen. Aspekte einer philosophischen Anthropologie*, Stuttgart: Reclam, p. 9, 11.



ISBN-13 978-3150078860) Furthermore she states: “It is a living central point where everything comes together and where everything starts out from: the play of „being stimulated“ and responding is self-life. [...] this self is at the mercy of the „bustle“ of its own life, it does not back it and is not above it while making its own stand.” ESGA 11/12, p. 315.

34. For her, what is logically untenable is a basic conviction of empirical approaches: “There is no possibility to show that anything could be different from what is taught by experience.” (ESGA 8, p. 74). She argues that this statement is not made with the reservation of new and changing insights. Rather, it is independently, absolutely, true, whereas “any experience may be crossed out by some new experience.” (ibid.)

35. ESGA 14, p. 84.

In the context of her considerations on the topic of subjective body and body, Stein discusses, among others, the materialist position of epiphenomenalism, according to which spiritual-mental processes are mainly caused by physical entities and have no power of their own. In her opinion it is not helpful to simply brand them as a powerless side effect – such as smoke in a chimney: “For, indeed by calling them side effects one really says that they are not the same as physical processes and that they require studies of their own.” ESGA 8, p. 73 f.

36. “Now, empathizing [Einfühlung] as awareness means original experience, a current reality. However, what it makes aware of is no past or future „impression“ but a current, original stirring of somebody else which is not continuously connected to my own experience and cannot be made congruent with it. I empathise with the perceived body as if I was the centre of its life, and in a way I perform a stimulation so as to trigger „in a way“ – „in a way“ perceived from the inside – a movement which might be made congruent with the outwardly perceived movement.” ESGA 8, p. 152.

37. ESGA 5, p. 19.

38. ESGA 5, p. 79.

39. “We can speak of oneness only when one and the same individual emotion is alive in everybody and when „we“ is experienced as its subject. This oneness, however, is no extinction of the individual subjects. “Me” and “you” and “he” will be preserved by “we”, no “I” but a “we” is the subject of feeling oneness. And it is not by feeling oneness by which we learn about others but by empathizing.” ESGA 5, p. 29.

On this see also: HUSSERL, E., 1990. Cartesianische Meditationen. Eine Einleitung in die Phänomenologie, Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, p. 93, 107 f, 120. ISBN-13 978-37873-1241-2; MERLEAU-PONTY, M., 1990. Humanismus und Terror, Frankfurt a. M.: athenäum taschenbuch, p. 152. ISBN-13 978-3445047441.

The possibility of empathising [Einfühlung] with empathy is guaranteed “by understanding one’s own subjective body as a body and by understanding one’s own body as a subjective body, by way of the internally merging of outward perception and the perception of the subjective body, by way of the possible change of position of this body in space, finally by way of imagining the possibility of changing its real nature while maintaining its type” ESGA 5, p. 76.

40. ESGA 5, p. 76.
41. ESGA 5, p. 76.
42. ESGA 5, p. 76 f.
43. See NAGEL, T., 2012. What is it like to be a bat?. In: T. NAGEL. *Mortal questions*, Cambridge / New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN-13 978-1107604711.
44. ESGA 5, p. 106.
45. What Edith Stein wrote on empathy is today discussed e. g. by Italian researcher Vittorio Gallese against the background of mirror neurons; Gallese explicitly refers to Edith Stein. (See GALLESE, V., 2003. *The Roots of Empathy: The Shared Manifold Hypothesis and the Neural Basis of Intersubjectivity*. In: *Psychopathology* 36 (2003), pp. 171-180. ISSN 0254-4962. doi: 10.1159/000072786) At a closer look, he says, his own studies and Edith Stein's considerations are not that far away from each other. (See *ibid.* pp. 175 ff./ on this see also: RIZZOLATTI, G.; SINIGAGLIA, C., 2008. *Empathie und Spiegelneurone. Die biologische Basis des Mitgeföhls*, Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, p. 136. ISBN-13 978-3518260111) Stein would probably be interested in Gallese's research and would agree with him in so far as we need mirror neurons to empathise with other people. At the same time, however, she would also remind to the significance of the body-soul unity (and indeed not of just one organ) as well as to the impossibility of reducing human relations to cerebral performances. In case of a conversation with Gallese, Stein would probably underline the necessity of the body as a whole as a precondition for empathy, to make clear that these cerebral structures are indeed necessary but by far not enough for our empathising encounter with other people. (See ESGA 5, p. 15) Probably she would also ask if the existing data allow at all for such far reaching interpretations. For: "The sheer stringing together of facts", Edith Stein states in her dissertation thesis, "makes reasonable occurrences into blind, causally regulated occurrences, it neglects the spiritual world which is no less real and no less obvious than the natural world" (ESGA 5, p. 131).
46. "Part of personal-intellectual activity", Stein says, "is that it happens consciously, purposefully and freely. The intellectual individual acts freely. [...] Who wants to understand the truth [i. e. who wants to intellectually grasp the essent] and wants to realise the good is tied to a certain way of proceeding. And this law is what we call the law of reason." ESGA 14, p. 119.
47. ESGA 11/12, p. 340.
48. ESGA 9, p. 13.
49. ESGA 11/12, p. 62.
50. ESGA 11/12, p. 42.
51. "For, the undeniable fact that my own being is transient, lasting from one moment to another, and that it is exposed to the possibility of non-being corresponds with the as undeniable fact that, despite this volatility, I am and that my being is maintained from one moment to another, and that by my transient being I grasp a lasting one." ESGA 11/12, p. 59.
52. ESGA 11/12, p. 60.

53. See GERL-FALKOVITZ, H.-B., 2017. Endliches und ewiges Sein. In: M. KNAUP; H. SEUBERT (Eds.). *Edith Stein-Lexikon*, Freiburg: Herder, pp. 96-98, here p. 96 f. ISBN-13 978-3451345500.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 97.
55. Welte has it in similar ways: "The individual is not grasped and not encompassed, it is outside the reach of the definition which is supposed to grasp it." WELTE, B., 1975. Zum Begriff der Person. In: B. WELTE. *Zeit und Geheimnis. Philosophische Abhandlung zur Sache Gottes in der Zeit der Welt*, Freiburg: Herder, pp. 41-52, in part. p. 41. ISBN-13 978-3451171659.
56. BECKMANN-ZÖLLER, B.: Einführung, in: ESGA 14, p. XXXII.
57. ESGA 8, p. 14.

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