

# From the Husserlian Transcendental Idealism to the Question on Being

## An Original Linkage between Phenomenology and Theology in Edith Stein's Thinking

*Anna Varga-Jani*

**ABSTRACT** It is a well-known fact that Husserl's *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and phenomenological Philosophy I*, published in 1913, was disappointingly received in the phenomenological circle around Husserl, and started a reinterpretation of Husserlian phenomenology. The problem of the constitution was a real dilemma for the studentship of Munich–Göttingen. More of Husserl's students from his Göttingen years reflected in the 1930s on transcendental idealism, which they originated from the *Ideas* and found fulfilled in Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and *Formal and transcendental Logic*. The remarkable similarity between these papers lies in how the question of being is incorporated into the problematic of the method in Husserlian phenomenology. But this parallelism in the problem reveals the origin of the religious phenomenon in Husserlian phenomenology as well. Adolf Reinach's religious terms such as gratitude (*Dankbarkeit*), charity (*Barmherzigkeit*), etc. in his religious Notes, Heidegger's notion of being as finiteness in *Being and Time*, Edith Stein's concept of the finite and eternal being in *Finite and Eternal Being* are fundamental to the problem of constitution in transcendental phenomenology, but these two phenomena of being point at the constitution theologically. In my paper I would like to show the transition from the critique of Husserlian transcendental idealism to the roots of the experience of religious life through the phenomenological problem of being in Edith Stein.

**KEYWORDS** being; Christian philosophy; knowledge; *philosophia perennis*; temporality; transcendentality; truth

✉ Anna Varga-Jani, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, 1053 Budapest, Veres Pálné u. 24, Hungary  
✉ varga-jani.anna@btk.ppke.hu    📞 0000-0002-8266-8009

©  FORUM PHILOSOPHICUM 26 (2021) no. 1, 85–98  
ISSN 1426-1898    E-ISSN 2353-7043

SUBM. 11 December 2020    ACC. 19 March 2021  
DOI:10.35765/forphil.2021.2601.06

KNOWLEDGE, TRUTH, AND BEING—METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMATIZATION  
 The period between the publication of the *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and phenomenological Philosophy I* and that of *Formal and Transcendental Logic*, in 1928 and 1929, was for both Husserl and for his students also a period of identification with the methodology of phenomenology. Regarding the first reflections on the problem of idealism and the new waves of critics of transcendental idealism in the 1930s, two unique, but not completely independent, forms of phenomenology took shape in the manifestation of Husserlian phenomenology and new reflections on it. While Husserl in *Ideas* explains reality as the constitutional form of the intentioned thing, in the 1930s he interprets reality as the manifestation of life-world as a pre-given materiality of our intentions.

Edith Stein was already involved in the debate about the methodology of Husserl's phenomenology as his student, and she exchanged several letters with Roman Ingarden about the importance of transcendental phenomenology in relation to constitution, redaction, and transcendentality.<sup>1</sup> It took a long time for Stein to emerge from her ambiguity towards transcendental phenomenology and deduce an exact role for it in her own thinking, but there is definitely a linearity between the original methodological questions and phenomenological questions on being in her later thinking. In her letters to Ingarden, she approached transcendental phenomenology by analyzing the meaning of constitution, reduction, and idealism. She wrote in a letter to Ingarden in 1917:

By the way, after the walk I had a sudden breakthrough. I think I now have a reasonably clear understanding of "constitution"—but outside the context of idealism. Prerequisites for an intuitive nature to constitute itself are: an absolutely existing physical nature and a subjectivity of a precise structure. So far, I have not gotten around to confessing this heresy to the Master.<sup>2</sup>

From the letter it becomes clear that Stein's approaches revolve around the same methodological problem of phenomenology as Husserl's; that in the reduction there is a distinction between the independently existing world and the intersubjectively constituted world (which had become obvious for him around 1908). Although, Husserl regularly reflected on the critical points of transcendental idealism and clearly indicated the difference

1. See letters: 6, 9, 14, 37, 78, 83, 111 in (Stein 2014a). See also letter 168 in (Stein 1993).

2. See letter 6, February 3. 1917 (Stein 2014a).

between his thinking and that of his students<sup>3</sup>, the main difference between the thinking of Husserl and of his students is characterized by the fact that the connection between the problem of the constitution and of the temporal dimension of the existing thing was completely ignored by Husserl. His characterization of the young phenomenologists, as “orthodox Reinach-students” who remained in the field of a “universal ontology,” and “who can’t distinguish the transcendental phenomenology from the psychical phenomenology,” is relevant within the confines of Husserlian phenomenology, but not in the general interpretation of phenomenological methodology. The complex program of transcendental idealism focused on constitution, reduction, and idealism, raises the fundamental question of being, and this interpretation of the difference between the real existence of the world and the intersubjective world constitution later led Stein to the diverse explication of the role of temporality in phenomenological thinking.

In a short paper on “Knowledge, Truth, Being,” Edith Stein wrote in 1932 that being cannot be defined, “because it is required by every definition, because it is contained in every word and in every sense of a word. It is recorded with everything that is recorded and is preserved in the recording itself. One can only state differences of Being and of being” (Stein 2014b, 169). This paper is clear evidence of Stein’s gradual turn from the phenomenological position to scholastic philosophy, and suggests that this turn also required a methodological change in her thinking. Not only does Stein’s participation in the idealism–realism debate demonstrate her question on the methodology of phenomenology, but also the fact that her interest in phenomenology was inspired methodologically from the very beginning by scholastic philosophy. The early stages of these inquiries appear also in her correspondences with Roman Ingarden about the differences between the phenomenological and scholastic methodology in 1922.<sup>4</sup> The scholastic influence in Edith Stein’s thinking reflects an old expectation of the scholastic view of being, since it would be the failure of the phenomenological method not to deal with the question of being, but to expose the description of the individual things. In this sense, scholasticism means for Edith Stein the “shortcomings” of the phenomenological being-analysis, and by

3. See letter 168 in (Stein 1993).

4. Letter 82, August 1, 1922: “I am in reasonable agreement with you regarding what you write about the shortcomings of the phenomenological method. I notice something similar when I am occasionally with people who have training in Scholasticism. It has the precise, thoroughly formed set of concepts that we are missing. What we are missing, of course, is immediate contact with things, the breath of life for us, because our conceptual apparatus so easily closes us off to the acceptance of something new” (Stein 2014a, 201).

means of the methodological examination of the two, she tries to create a phenomenological description through the scholastic question of being.

The totality of these influences shaped her phenomenological concept in the direction of the possibility of a Christian philosophy, which was encouraged by Erich Przywara, who entrusted Edith Stein with the translation of the letters of John Henry Newman.<sup>5</sup> The first step in the step-by-step project, which was finally completed in the opus *Finite and Eternal Being* and in the mystical writings, was the translation of Thomas Aquinas' *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, committed also on behalf of Przywara. Stein provided the text with notes and studies during its translation, although she was "still not sure what [would] come out of it: a translation (there still is not one) with notes, a treatment of Thomistic epistemology and method in itself or in comparison with that of phenomenology, or something else"<sup>6</sup>. In the introduction to the translation, Stein claimed that it is extremely difficult to approach scholastic philosophy using phenomenology as the point of departure and to synthesize the two forms of knowledge in a common methodology; "let alone get to the critical appreciation of the Thomistic theory of knowledge" (Stein 2008, 3). Her introductory first sentence on the translation *De veritate* shows that from the beginning she was thinking about the possibility of *philosophia perennis*, and that the translation was inspired methodologically by the common problem areas of phenomenology and Thomistic philosophy. The starting point in the methodological question offers her the question of truth, which, even in different ways, occupies the central position in both directions of thought. The main question for Edith Stein is whether we can talk about the same truth here and there, and whether the truth would be phenomenologically understandable from the perspective of Transcendentals in Thomas' sense:

If there is only one core of truth here and there, there must be also a bridge. Certainly, we have to follow the ways of the saint if we want to gain something from him for our problems. But we do not need to lose sight of this goal (Stein 2008, 4).

5. See Letter 89, August 8, 1925: "Father Erich Przywara from Munich visited me. I had been in written contact with him because he edited the Newman translation. He is quite knowledgeable about modern philosophy (he has a paper on philosophy in *Stimmen der Zeit*), and in our exchange of letters it became clear that we agreed on an important task for the present: namely, a discussion between traditional Catholic thought and modern philosophy (and he thinks phenomenology is the most important modern philosophy)" (Stein 2014a, 214).

6. See Stein's comment to the translation of Thomas Aquinas' *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, Letter 89, August 8, 1925 (2014a, 216).

The second part of the introduction to *De veritate* focuses on the mode of cognition that leads to knowledge of truth in both phenomenology and in Thomas' thinking, and proves that phenomenological knowledge consists in the *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, while for Thomas the truth is the one by which knowledge is measured.<sup>7</sup>

If Stein characterizes knowledge in modern philosophy as the “view of the essence,” as such “questions that are central for the modern epistemologist—such as the phenomenological question, ‘What is knowledge according to its nature?’” (Stein 2008, 3), then in her view, knowledge in the phenomenological sense connects with Thomas' view of the transcendentals. She found the common point between scholastic thought and phenomenology in the act of knowledge. In this sense, the transcendental character of being in Thomas' thinking will result in the ontological attitude of Edith Stein in the phenomenological act of knowledge. Her view is clearly articulated in the short remark to the translation, that “[I]f you want to determinate knowledge more precisely, you can only do it by first pursuing being,” (Stein 2008, 5) and in the different approaches of the two to the experience of being. When Thomas wrote in the first *Questio* about the differentiation within the real world, then Stein sees it as a differentiation of knowledge.

This differentiation within the real world corresponds to a differentiation of knowledge. There is no general definition of “knowledge at all” possible. All knowledge is either divine or creature, and both cannot be classified under the same terms (Stein 2008, 41).

According to Stein, the differentiation of knowledge does not reveal an epistemological view of the world, but this primacy of knowledge meant the ontological foundation of understanding. If the object of knowledge in both—the phenomenological and the scholastic—senses is being, then there is another commonality in ontological terms, namely the truth criterion of knowledge itself in both cases.

In the scholastic sense, the knowledge of the truth of being creates the connection with the divine Truth. In the main work, *Finite and Eternal Being*,

7. “There are many truths. But the truth by which everything is measured—and that is the agreement with the divine spirit—is only one. And since the divine spirit gives us knowledge of the first principles, this first truth is what we judge everything about. The truth, understood as the agreement of the human mind with things—the *veritas creata* in contrast with the *veritas aeterna*—seems divers as if there were many ‘mirror images’ and therefore many truth (Augustin). Basically, however, every truth is only true insofar as it corresponds to the one standard, i.e., by agreement with the divine spirit” (Stein 2008, 4).

this theory of truth establishes the possibility for the common “essence” of modern and Christian philosophy. Truth, as one of the transcendental elements, occurs in further analysis in the fifth chapter of the work *Finite and Eternal Being*. Stein’s understanding of truth begins with the mental relationship to the object: knowledge of the object draws its reality character from the object itself.

The threefold level of truth—the truth in things, in knowledge, and the truth of God—is also reflected in Stein’s interpretation of being in *Finite and Eternal Being*, which ascribes different possessions for the different truth criteria.

Truth [*das Wahre*] ... is being in terms of knowledge, the Truth [*die Wahrheit*] is the correspondence of knowledge and being.... Knowledge has its measure of things, but of the divine Spirit.... There are many truths. But the Truth by which is everything measured—and what is the agreement with the divine Spirit—is only one. And since the divine Spirit gives us knowledge of the first principles, this first Truth is what we judge everything about. (Stein 2008, 4)

Stein clearly takes these gradations of truth from Saint Thomas, who stated the same gradation of the knowledge of truth at the beginning of the first *Questio* of *De veritate*.<sup>8</sup> If in the scholastic sense, we can speak of the separate essence and being of finite beings and of the divine being’s inseparable essence and being, then the transition from being to essence is fulfilled in the act of knowledge in the phenomenological sense.<sup>9</sup> Stein presupposes an intention belonging to knowledge, which determines the relationship to the object in its direction. “This *intentio* is, after all, an essential constituent

8. “The first relationship of being to the knowing mind is that being corresponds to the knowing mind: this correspondence is called the agreement of the thing and the knowledge (*adaequatio rei et intellectus*) and in it the idea of the thing is formally determined (*in hoc formalitae ratio veri perficitur*). So this is what the truth adds to what is, namely, the uniformity (*conformitas*) of the thing and the knowing mind; this uniformity is followed, as I said, by the recognition of the matter. So the existence of the thing precedes the realm of the truth (*entitas rei praecedit rationem veritatis*), but cognition (*cogito*) is the effect of truth (*quidam veritatis effectus*). Accordingly, there is a threefold definition of Truth [*Wahrheit*] and truth [*Wahre*]. Firstly, after what precedes the Truth properly, and in which the truth is founded; [...] In the second way, it is defined according to what concludes the idea of the true formaliter (*rationem veri perficit*); [...] And in the third way, truth is defined according to the subsequent impact” (Stein 2008, 9).

9. “One can also grasp the eternal Truth, which is the measure of all truths, as divine truth in itself; then it is agreement between the divine nature and the divine knowledge. But neither of these is really differentiated in God; since person and essence become one, the Truth must be understood both personally and essentially” (Stein 2008, 40).

of the cognitive experience [*Wissenserlebnis*] and partakes of the latter's being" (Stein 2002, 294). The direction of thinking on the object establishes the correspondence of knowledge about the object and the object itself. The correspondence between knowledge and object is not only due to the "logical truth" given in the intentional act but always has its basis in being itself.

On the basis of what it is, it is fit to be grasped by a knowing intellect. And what it is in a certain manner also the basis of my initial presumptive knowledge and my subsequent disappointment. The existent as such—as it is in itself—is the precondition of the possibility of a congruity or non-congruity with the knowing intellect, i.e., of the logical truth or untruth. And the existent itself is—in a transcendental sense—called 'true' inasmuch as it is the foundation of logical truth. (Stein 2002, 296)

The ascertainment of the truth is therefore a mutual relationship between the act of cognition and the object, which can be traced back to a fundamental phenomenological statement. In the phenomenological sense, the intention consists of the noetic and noematic sides, which, on the one hand, explains the conceptual-factual, and on the other hand, the content-formal part of the perception. Stein kept this phenomenological attitude when she wrote about the knowledge of the object, but she supplements it with the recognition of the common share in the divine spirit. In this sense, Stein's intention to perceive consists of two layers: first, the phenomenological intention, which constitutes the shared experience after the coincidence of expectation and experience, but in the second layer, Stein recognizes the independence of the object from the intended object in its wholeness and she ascribes the ontological character to transcendental truth.

Transcendental truth pertains to the existent as such and preeminently to that whose nature it is to manifest or reveal its being. Existents are 'divided' as to form and content into different genera and species, and concomitantly being, as well as being manifest or being ordained to some intellect, particularize themselves. The things of nature and the works of people are ordained to the human intellect in different manners, and, in turn, works are ordained in a different way to the creative, "subsequently operative," and "understanding" intellect. To these different ways of being ordained [*Zuordnungen*] correspond different modes of knowledge and of logical truth. (Stein 2002, 305)<sup>10</sup>

10. Transcendental truth pertains to the existent as such and preeminently to that whose nature it is to manifest or reveal its being. Existents are 'divided' as to form and content into

The intentionality of the knowledge has a prior knowledge of the object, which, according to Stein, can be understood analogously to the knowledge of God in the scholastic sense. This way, the different types of knowledge in phenomenology clear different paths toward the transcendental truth, parallel to the differentiation of knowledge in Thomas.

We have established as the authentic meaning of transcendental truth the “being-manifest,” the being-intelligible, or the being-ordained to a knowing intellect, a being-ordained which pertains to being as such and therewith also to the existent as such. When we have in mind the first existent as he is intelligible to himself, being and truth coincide, and this is why God is called the truth. (Stein 2002, 308)

Stein makes a distinction between the logical, ontological, and transcendental truth and claims that “there is no knowledge without object”—from which it follows that the truth is revealed in any case in the relationship between the object and the knowledge.

The “reality” of the relation thus has a twofold meaning: the relation to the object aids in construing the *quid* of knowledge and is the condition of its actuality; and the potential knowledge of reason (understood as a faculty or power of the soul) is transformed by means of the object into act, i.e., into vital intellectual activity (Stein 2002, 294).

From a purely phenomenological point of view, Stein explains how knowledge is constituted by the act of understanding, and which correspondences between object and knowledge influence the quality of truth: logical truth relates being to thinking, which adapts to it over time. The same applies to the truth of judgment, where there is correspondence between the sense of truth and the facts, while in transcendental or ontological truth there is correspondence between the knowing being and the knowledge: the being always has the correspondence with one way or the other; thinking has a basis in being itself (Stein 2002, 295). The transcendental truth becomes “evident” to the consciousness in that it identifies its being in the association

different genera and species, and concomitantly being, as well as being manifest or being ordained to some intellect, particularize themselves. The things of nature and the works of people are ordained to the human intellect in different manners, and, in turn, works are ordained in a different way to the creative, ‘subsequently operative,’ and ‘understanding’ intellect. To these different ways of being ordained [*Zuordnungen*] correspond different modes of knowledge and of logical truth.



with being. From a phenomenological point of view, the transcendental truth appears in the existential reflection of the being on its own being as an “ordered whole,” where every single being has its place and its regulated relationships to everything else. In this sense, “being revealed” means “being revealed to the spirit” (Stein 2002, 298). Edith Stein introduces the relationship of divine truth with artistic truth, which is realized in the act of creation through the understanding of artistic truth. This way, the artistic truth reveals itself through the knowing spirit, which reflects the eternal being in the work of art while it is being recognized. Both artistic truth and divine truth are realized through the creative act in which being and truth coincide.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TRANSCENDENTALITY IN TEMPORAL CERTAINTY  
 Another form of the transition from transcendental idealism to scholastic thinking appears in Edith Stein’s thinking about the phenomenological problem of temporality. Though the problem of temporality originates basically from the act analysis of the constitution, in *Finite and Eternal Being*, Stein attributes different types of being to the temporal dimension (see Stein 2002, III. Essential and actual Being, 61–121). She makes a distinction between the ideal, real, finite, and eternal types of being, and defines these by their belonging to temporality. The center of the investigation is one’s own being in its actuality and potentiality, which is phenomenologically determined in temporality. The individual being of the experiencing subject is, in relation to the object of experience, an eternal, unchangeable being, what Stein calls “pure I,” which takes part in the act of creation through knowledge. The pure I, in relation to the eternal being of God, is a finite and limited being that plays a time-determined role in the history of creation. In this sense, Edith Stein refers to Hedwig Conrad-Martius’s work, *Die Zeit*, and describes the temporal definiteness of experience from the timeless existence of the ego.

This means that the being of which I am conscious as mine is inseparable from temporality. As actual being—that is, as actually present being—it is without a temporal dimension [*punktuell*]: It is a “now” in between a “no more” and a “not yet.” But by its breaking apart in its flux into being and not-being, the idea of pure being is revealed to us. In pure being there is no longer any admixture of not-being, nor any “no longer” and “not yet.” In short, pure being is not temporal but eternal. (Stein 2002, 37)

What makes the question of finite and eternal being more complicated is the idealistic, transcendental phenomenological form of being ascribed both to the entities of finite and eternal being. The fifth part of the work *Finite and Eternal Being* gets its special importance from Stein's differentiation of the ways of phenomenological and theological knowledge according to their different criteria of truth, and she synthesizes them in the definiteness of the transcendentals. According to Stein's explanation, the question of being and its different forms and genres in beings lead us to the meaning of being. The title, "The Existents as such (The Transcendentals)" expresses the essential definiteness of being according to Aquinas's *De veritate*: "They denote 'what pertains to every existence'" (Stein 2002, §4, 284). The transcendental determinations such as "true," "good," "something," "one," "being," and "what," are what characterize being regardless of its divorce into different forms and ways of being: The being in itself designates its whatness, which expresses the being with regard to what it is. If one calls the being as *unum* (one), then it means that the being is undivided (Stein 2002, 284). The other three transcendental determinations relate what exists to others. If one calls being to something, then it is in opposition to another being, in a purely formal way as "another." When that which is the object of conation, it is called the "good," and when that which is the object of knowledge, it is called the "true" (Stein 2002, 284).

In the following, Stein analyses in detail how the different transcendental elements determine being "as such" and how this certainty—in Thomas' sense—explains the sense of being in a phenomenological understanding. Regarding this, it is remarkable that Stein interprets the Aristotelian / Thomist categories of being in two ways. On the one hand, they are the formal criteria of being, while on the other hand, the categories are filled with being in their manifestation. Stein defines the "*ens ut ens*," as the fundamental transcendental concept, according to which being is viewed as such. The *ens* concerns two meanings, according to which, on the one hand, every existent is independent of the form of existence, and "*ens* as a name designates in the most universal manner that which is, i.e., the quid of any existent, whereas *ens* as a principle, designates the existent as that which is, with the emphasis on being" (Stein 2002, 285). On the other hand, as the name of *res*, *ens* designates "the one meaning of 'that which is' (*ens est habens 'esse' seu id quod est*)" (Stein 2002, 286). While she explains the radical difference between the two conceptions of *ens* by introducing the term *res* in relation to real being, which indicates the objective being, the *res* is the general name for the "what," and this means that every being has a content or fullness, but there is no content in itself, but the form of fullness (Stein

2002, 287). In this sense, the carrier is the fulfilled empty form, which is fulfilled by what is and which is called something.

Fullness, however, can be attributed only to the definitely determined quid of the individual existent, not to the quid that is present in the general expressions “that which it is” (*das was es ist, id, quod est*). For the quid in this generalized expression is merely the empty form of the fullness. Accordingly, the question as to whether *ens* as the name of the existent designates some content is reduced to the question of whether being expresses something that relates to content or something that relates to form. (Stein 2002, 286).

The unity of being, in the sense of the transcendentals that being is one (*unum*), describes itself in the being filled with the what, and it is characterized by the fact that it is determined by that what with which its being is in unity.<sup>11</sup> It follows from the unity of being that it has a formal relationship with its own being, and that this relationship is measured from the outside, by its appearance. That being is uniform and results in its manifestation as something that places being in the opposite of non-being, in the relation of the other. The meaning of being in the transcendental definiteness of being, as something, is realized in the act of creation.

The unfolding of the *ens* in *aliquid, res, and esse* (object, quid, and being) is the most primordial process. The object as such and as existing is one and is on this basis “another” in relation to other objects (Stein 2002, 290).

*Aliquid, bonum, and verum* put being into the relation to another. Finally, being can be seen in its correspondence with another being. In this sense, the transcendentals real, good, and beautiful are ultimately understood in relation to the divine truth, goodness, and beauty as the goal of beings.

Parallel to the previous analysis, Stein examines the human act of experience as the intelligible act of creation of human existence, and she compares this with the divine act of creation in the theological sense of revelation. She asserts that the revealed truth is only gradual in moments of topicality of knowledge which are recognizable in the historical, temporal world. Measured by the realization of being in creation, Stein speaks of the development of the essence of being, which is gradually realized in time.

11. “The being of a rose as such, for example, and the being of the rose’s red colour both belong to the *one* being of this red rose. What we mean becomes even clearer when we deal with something that is composed of independent units” (Stein 2002, 289).

Divine truth is attained by finite beings in the striving of the good, and in the maximum degree of its being. In this sense, the striving of the good is exposed to the temporality in which it achieves its realization.

This latter relationship finds expression in the phrase “a true good.” Only when the knowing of the existent as good is true, is this existent “in truth” a good. This good is then not only congruent with the striving of some creature, but also with the will of the creator and—since in God knowledge and will coincide—simultaneously in accord with this good’s archetype [*Urbild*] in the divine intellect and this good is thus essentially true, i.e., true in the sense of essential truth [*Wesenswahrheit*]. (Stein 2002, §16, 312)

The possibility of a phenomenological understanding of the transcendental elements realizes in the fact that the transcendental elements are the images and traits of the objects of knowledge, and consequently the evidence of belonging to the divine idea of creation.

Temporal actual being is not a perfectly fulfilled actuality (i.e., not pure act), but a beginning and progressive actualization of essential potentialities. To this kind of being there pertains the contrast between independent and dependent being. The beginning of actualization marks a transition from essential potentiality to temporal actuality or an entering into temporal existence. To progressive actualization there pertains a kind of existent that bears within itself non-actualized potentialities. Something that, though it is not yet what it is destined to be, is nonetheless already predetermined evolutionary path [*Werdegang*]. (Stein 2002, §7, 354)

By the explanation of the relationship of finite and eternal being through the temporal opening of reality, which bears the essential features of truth, Stein proves how the image of the Trinity in creation sheds light on the connection between person and hypostasis. According to Stein, the relationship between person and hypostasis realizes through the analysis of the history of philosophy.<sup>12</sup> Analogously to the person who recognizes himself as a person and develops his personality in time, the incarnated Son is developed as the second divine person of the divine hypostasis in the story of creation. In this sense, the philosophical understanding of creation

12. “These concepts were essential not only for an understanding of the tri-personality of God but also for an understanding of the being of people and generally of thingly actuality” (Stein 2002, 355).

is at the same time the gradual understanding of the history of salvation in its factual existence in world experience.<sup>13</sup> Stein thus illuminates the idea that knowledge unfolding in temporality takes place in a phenomenological sense through world experience, while the experienced ego is set in the essential nature of divine truth.

The previous analyses result in the finding that the existential question of Edith Stein's religiosity led through phenomenology to the later question of being, which in its final form illuminates theological questions with natural phenomenology from the perspective of the Christian thinker. At the beginning of *Finite and Eternal Being*, Edith Stein deals with being as such through the problem of finite and eternal being, but the aim of the work extends to the question of the possibility of Christian philosophy, which Stein wants to realize as the *philosophia perennis* of philosophizing. The passage to Christian philosophy in the sense of the *philosophia perennis* is reflected in Stein's short essays of the 1930s, where phenomenology is no longer understood as a pure methodological problem, but rather it manifests in the question of whether Christianity is in dialogue with philosophical thinking. In the main work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Edith Stein completely overcame the previous methodological question of phenomenology by her later studies of being in Thomas' thinking, and by the inclusion of the facts of revelation in phenomenological world experience. In the present paper, I wanted to demonstrate this transition from transcendental phenomenological thinking to the scholastic question of being, which led Edith Stein to the threshold of Christian philosophical thinking. In *Finite and Eternal Being*, the question of being arose phenomenologically from the perspective of the Christian thinker and culminated in the recognition of Christian philosophy through the theological tradition in an act of faith. In this sense, the methodology of Christian Philosophy is based on the tradition of Christianity, the source of which is the twofold practice of knowledge and faith.

13. See the closing words of Edith Stein to her work, *The Meaning and Foundation of Individual Being*, §3: "For humankind is the portal through which the Word of God entered into the created world. Human nature has received the Word, and the Word is linked in a special way with human beings, by virtue of a unity of common descent—not with subhuman nature and not with angels. As the head of humankind, which combines in itself the higher and the lower reaches of being, Christ is the head of creation in its totality" (Stein 2002, 527).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Stein, Edith. 1993. *Self-Portrait In Letters, 1916-1942*. Translated by Josephine Koepfel. Vol. 5. *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*. Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies.
- . 2002. *Finite and Eternal Being. An Attempt at an Ascent To the Meaning of Being*. Translated by Kurt F. Reinhardt. Vol. 9. *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*. Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies.
- . 2008. *Übersetzung: Des Hl. Thomas von Aquino Untersuchung über die Wahrheit. Quaestiones disputatae de veritate 1*. Vol. 23. *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Andreas Speer and Francesco Valerio Tomassi. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.
- . 2014a. *Edith Stein: Letters to Roman Ingarden*. Translated by Hugh Candler Hunt. Vol. 12. *The Collected Works of Edith Stein*. Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies.
- . 2014b. „*Freiheit und Gnade*“ und weitere Beiträge zu *Phänomenologie und Ontologie*. Vol. 9. *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe*, edited by Beate Beckmann-Zöller and Hans Reiner Sepp. Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder.