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Edith Stein's Philosophy of Education in *The Structure of the Human Person*[1]

Abstract: Because the image we have of the human person determines educational practice, Stein's philosophy of education consists in anthropology. Her main work in education theory falls into two parts, philosophical and theological, as both disciplines influence our image of the human person. *The Structure of the Human Person*, the first and philosophical part of this foundational project, constitutes Stein's mature philosophy of the human person – a subject that had occupied her all her life. This article examines the philosophical anthropology of this work, its historical background and its place within Stein's entire work.

Introduction

Every work reflects the one who wrought it, the times it was forged in, and the purpose for which it was conceived. That is why Stein's *The Structure of the Human Person*[2] is a key not only to the entire work the author, but also to the Jewish experience in Germany in the nineteen thirties, and to the philosophy of education as such. It reveals Stein's deep commitment to the human person, constitutes her *Auseinandersetzung* with National Socialism, and argues for the centrality of anthropology in education theory. In the following discussion these three aspects will be examined. First (1) we will look at Stein's education theory in the context of her entire work, assessing the influence that education had on the elaboration of her philosophy and her understanding of the philosophical significance of education. Next (2) we will address the work as part of history: its precedents and antecedents, what occasioned it and what it, in turn, occasioned. Its sources constitute a significant part of its precedents, and the method a significant part of what it handed on. Hence these are examined as aspects of the work's

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[2] *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person* exists in two editions, both from Herder. In the following references are therefore given to sections, facilitating the use of either of the two: *Edith Steins Werke* (ESW), ed. Lucy Gelber and Michael Linssen O.C.D. (Basel – Freiburg – Wien, Herder, 1994), Bd. XVI; *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe* (ESGA), ed. des Internationalen Edith-Stein-Instituts Würzburg/Klaus Mass O.C.D. (Freiburg – Basel – Wien, Herder, 2004) Bd. 14, sub-ed. by Beate Beckmann-Zöller. Both are hereafter referred to as *"Aufbau"*. The theological counterpart of the foundational project is as yet published only in ESW XVII: *Was ist der Mensch?,* 1994.

history. Finally, (3) the work's structure is exhibited, beginning with Stein's justification for understanding education theory as anthropology and ending with her account of the construction of the human person in its essential openness.

"Aufbau" (as in the work's German title: *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person),* means structure, construction, edification, and "build-up". The literal sense of "edification" – the building of an edifice – gives us the active sense of the German word, whereas "structure" gives us the passive. Education, in German, is *Bildung;* close in meaning to the English "building", and, like it, having the same double sense, active and passive: the activity of building, and the finished building resulting from the activity[3]. The human person, therefore, for Stein, is built and builds itself up according to a structure it has, or gets as it builds. As education literally shapes who we are, the structure of the human person is the central question of education theory.

1. Stein's Education Theory

When Stein composed *The Structure of the Human Person* in 1932, at the age of forty, she had spent 9 years teaching German and Latin with the Dominican nuns in Speyer. A lecturing career in philosophy had been denied her, but she had tutored for Husserl as well as privately in Breslau after she graduated in 1917, until she accepted the job as a secondary school teacher. Teaching was part of how Stein envisaged herself: She was a teacher[4].

Her earliest phenomenological works (*On the Problem of Empathy; Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities; An Investigation Concerning the State*[5]), provide the foundation for her later education theory. They do not explicitly touch on the topic, but explore the fundamental structure of the inter-subjectively constituted human person. Education, which so decisively contributes to this constitution, is implicitly given a central place awaiting development. Like any communicative practice, education projects an understanding of shared humanity, which it poses implicitly as goal and standard for the communication. This standard – the structure of the human person, who is communicative and stands in relation to others like it, whom it *re-cognises* – is brought out (*e-ducere, ausbilden*) or built up (*edify, aufbauen*) in education.

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[3] Edith Stein, "Die Idee der Bildung" in *Bildung und Entfaltung der Individualität* (ESGA 16), sub-ed. by Beate Beckman and Maria Amata Neyer, 2001, p. 35 – 49.

[4] The best account of Stein's life, apart from her own – Edith Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdschen Familie*, ESGA 1 (2002); translated as: *Life in a Jewish Family,* by Josephine Koeppel O.C.D., in *Collected Works of Edith Stein I* (CWES), (Washington D.C, ICS Publications, 1986), – is Waltraud Herbstrith: *Edith Stein. A Biography*, translated by Fr. Bernhard Bonowitz, O.C.S.O (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1992).

[5] Edith Stein, *Zum Problem der Einfühlung* (Halle, Buchdrückerei des Waisenhauses, 1917). This work has not yet appeared in either ESW or ESGA. Nor has *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie and der Geisteswissenschaften* und *Eine Untersuchung über den Staat,* which are published together by Max Niemeyer Verlag in Tubingen, 1970. All three works, however, are translated into English and published in CWES: *On the Problem of Empathy*, translated by Waltraut Stein, as vol. III, published in 1989; and *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*, translated by Mary Catherine Baseheart and Marianne Sawicki as vol. VII, published in 2000. *An Investigation Concerning the State* is translated by Marianne Sawicki for CWES and is forthcoming. For a very useful chronology of Stein's works, see Sawicki's Stein-page: mysite.verizon.net/vze3cjre/steinstuff.html.

The inter-subjective setting is explored in *On the Problem of Empathy*, where it is shown how the act of empathy contributes to the constitution of the human person (constituted simultaneously in the self and in the other through recognition). The physical, bodily, psychic and spiritual aspects are all examined as dimensions that the I must attribute to itself (and attribute to a self in the other) in order to make sense of their appearance. Hence, it is shown how (i.e. in what kind of experiences) the human person is constituted. Education, it can be seen on this background, works consciously with the self-identification of the human person in its relations with all things material and spiritual.

The two treatises making up *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities* ("Psychic Causality" and "Individual and Community") investigate the limits of the human person (once again, as they are experienced, i.e. as they are constituted). The first investigates the limits regarding material nature (constituted as obeying the law of causality), and the second investigates the limits regarding the spirit (constituted by obeying the laws of motivation). The human person is experienced as both caused (in the state of tiredness, for example) and motivated (by values): The person becomes familiar with its individuality through its body and through the communities of which it forms part. Energy (*Kraft*) straddles the spheres of nature and spirit, and it is experienced as a property of the psyche which can be spent and loaded up again, precisely by drawing energy from these two realms – nature and spirit. It is above all this phenomenon that makes the I constitute itself as a person existing in relation to nature and in community, i.e. that makes it aware of itself. Energy manifests the individuality of the person, an individuality that is constantly challenged by natural forces from without and spiritual forces from within. Helping the individual to meet these challenges and bring his or her individuality to full bloom is thus assisting in the process of self-identification, the process of the "construction" or "*Aufbau*" of the human person.

In *Individual and Community* Stein also investigates how valuation is community-forming. Whereas the valuing of the same values is not the only way in which community is formed, it is nevertheless an important way. Values are spiritual motivating factors, and when they are shared they bring people together. It is by a person's own self-constitution (self-identification), that the values preferred by this person makes him share a world with others, who also constitute themselves in a like manner. Values, thus, make people share the same "structure"; the same "construction"; the same "*Aufbau*". There is a hierarchy among these values – they are all preferred by some, but not everyone takes account of them all. The superficial person takes account only of the values of the *hedonist*: the values of pleasure and comfort. The less superficial person takes into account also the values of the *hero*: courage, glory and appearance. The values of the *genius* – knowledge, know-how, brilliance – mark a further depth. But with the values of the *saint* – the holy, the true, the good and the beautiful – access to the deeper depths of the person has been achieved[6]. Hence the depth of the persons directly reflects the depth of the spiritual community they share. But sharing values, and hence forming community,

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[6] Stein's value theory, as well as her community theory, owes its content mainly to Scheler. See in particular his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, transl. by Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973). However, Stein's systematisation of Scheler's distinctions gives a coherence to her account which is not found is Scheler's.

is not the only way to live together. Association relies on agreement (not immediately on value response), and the forming of the masses relies on sheer physical and psychic togetherness. These superficial forms of communality are degrees of community, not reaching its full potential of spiritual communion. They are not less important for all that. They, in fact, constitute the "buffer-zones" in which not sharing the same values, and yet maintaining some sort of order, is possible. However, they are essentially fragile, volatile and manipulable – they cannot but reflect the superficiality of the individuals making them up. Education can and must open up the person to his or her own depths, as well as to the deeper values of the community, because the cohesion of society, its basis in community, depends on that.

An Investigation Concerning the State, finally, compares the different kinds of communality in and through which the person is constituted by its various acts of identification with values, and therefore with others. It examines, in particular, the type of association manifesting itself in the State and the State's making, validation and confirmation of Law. Thus the constitution of the State, and of the person as a citizen, reaches the person as free and as decision-making, not immediately as a value-responding member of a community. Hence the State is fragile to the extent that its basis is, i.e. it may disintegrate if the ethical community (or communities) supporting it disintegrate[7]. Stein examines and explains the tension between nation (*Volk*) and state (*Staat*), as a tension inherent in the personal identity of each and every person contributing to the life of the community and/or of the State. Political dramas are therefore personal ones – of how to gain access to the depths, and of how to want to gain access. Stein's engagement with politics therefore leads her back to the role of the educator: only the awakening of the depths of the person can prevent superficiality and its blind exclusion, and only anthropology can teach us about these depths.

These early phenomenological works, however, are not alone in underlying Stein's education theory in *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*. A second phase of Stein's philosophical development plays a major role in relation to the manner in which her insights matured. When Stein received baptism in 1922 she started seeking a deeper understanding of the Catholic tradition, and was advised to study Thomas Aquinas. Accepting this suggestion, she decided to translate *De Veritate* into German, and to comment on it[8]. Question XI is dedicated to "the teacher", and Stein understands it to concern the genesis of knowledge, much as constitution does[9]. She found in Aquinas

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[7] Jürgen Habermas, "The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship", in *The Inclusion of the Other. Studies in Political Theory* (Cambridge, Polity, 2002). Habermas shares Stein's insight that nation and state obey each a different logic, and that the state relies on the nation to be what we have come to take for granted that it is. Today the problems faced by the Nation State are those of immigration and globalisation. The problem Stein observed taking shape was that of the allergy of the German nation towards its internal other: the Jews, who themselves constituted a nation – somewhat despite themselves.

[8] Stein wanted to make accessible the thought of Thomas Aquinas to her contemporaries. This made her recast his questions in treatise form, thinking the objections and their answers into the body of the text. Such reconstruction gave her plenty of scope for rethinking Aquinas' thought and informing her own. The result is a translation and commentary all in one. *Des Hl. Thomas von Aquino Untersuchungen über die Wahrheit (questiones disputatae de veritate)*, translated by Edith Stein, bd. 1-2 (Breslau, Verlag von Otto Borgmeyer/Buchhandlung, 1931).

[9] She sums it up in the following manner: "We are here given a brief sketch of the *genesis* of knowledge. God gives us the 'light' of reason, i.e. the formal power to know, and also with it certain contents, from

someone who understood the human being to be freely training him- or herself in virtue, and this allowed her to integrate his insights with her own empathetically-constitutive phenomenology, much like Aquinas had assimilated Aristotle from his Christian standpoint. What she learned from Aquinas was to realise the scope of her philosophical ambition, and to use the Aristotelian concepts of form and matter, substance and essence anew, in order to address problem-areas such as the relationship between finite and eternal being and the structure of the human person. Stein's engagement with Thomas is very similar to the one she had with Husserl: she understood it to have prevented her from becoming one-sided[10].

The Structure of the Human Person, together with its theological counterpart *What is the Human Being?,* testify to this integration of the old with the new. The old was, on the one hand, the Scholastic tradition that had provided vocabulary, method and material for the new phenomenology. But on the other hand "the old" was this same phenomenology, which had made the first sharp imprint on Stein's mind, now making room for the "new" *philosophia perennis*.

2. History in *The Structure of the Human Person*

The two volumes of education theory were conceived as two parts of a course Stein was to teach at the Marianum at Münster, the teacher-training College where she had found employment after giving up her teaching engagements in Speyer. But due to the Nazi prohibition on Jewish professionals she did not teach the second half: *What is the Human Being?*, the theological part of the foundation for education theory that she had planned, was thus never given as a series of lectures, but was instead written up as a treatise.

The death of her spiritual director (who had insisted she did not follow her desire to enter Carmel immediately after she was baptised), together with her newly gained lack of employment, conspired to open up for her the way into the Cologne Carmel. Her last major works: *Finite and Eternal Being* and *Science of the Cross* were conceived and brought to fruition in Carmel. They continued to deepen her understanding of the human person and to develop, in particular, the value of its individuality. Here she graduated to write for "beginners" as a "beginner"[11] and to follow the *via inventionis* along with all humanity. She grew to conceive herself more and more as one of many, one among many, searching for the meaning of Being.

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which all knowledge – by acquisition of further material by means of the senses – is to be derived. In principle the human being does not need another teacher. It is possible that he, on the grounds of his natural gifts and through the work of reason, progresses and expands his knowledge to the point of full capacity *in via inventionis*. But a threefold support by created teachers is possible. He could be shown truths of a spiritual nature by means of sensible signs, truths deducible from principles and in this process of deduction actualising potential knowledge (in what way is not further stated). He could be stimulated by being provided with images to work as material for the reasoning activity, and he could have the formal power of reason strengthened. The first kind [of teaching] is open to humans and angels, but the second and third kinds only to angels (in what way remains in the dark)". (op. cit. p. 324 –5). All translations from Stein's works are my own.

[10] *Aufbau* II, II, 2.

[11] *Endliches und Ewiges Sein* (ESW II), 3.ed., 1986, p. xii. *Finite and Eternal Being*, (CWES 9), trans. by Kurt F. Reinhardt (2002), p. xxvii.

From her earliest youth Stein had been interested in the dynamics of community. She saw this as the key for understanding inter-subjectivity, and therefore for the understanding of what it was for anything to *be* – given that it was inter-subjectively constituted. The plight of Germany during the Depression gave her the opportunity to test her sociological insights, and also forced her to consider her own identity, as a German Jewess converted to Christianity. The Nazis shared this interest in the social: They were socialists – convinced of the importance of the collective identity for the individual: "The People" was their idol. But they were not only socialists, they were *National* Socialists – wanting to establish a socialist state for the *Nation*, the *German* Nation – which, as it turned out, could not recognise any limits in relation to other peoples or nations. Stein recognised "the People" to be of great importance. When she was deported to Ausschwitz she is known to have taken her sister's hand, saying "come Rosa, we go for our people". Her people, however, were those who "belonged to her", "those who had been given to her" – phrases she often used in her letters reflecting, in fact, phrases used by Jesus. She belonged to the human race. Stein's understanding of the ontological relationship between the person and his people is rooted in her value-theory, which again is rooted in her understanding of self-identification as something essentially mediated by others.

The Structure of the Human Person records her awareness of "the possibility of a meaningful and valuable human community life outside that of the nation" and "the absolute measure of the value of peoples and persons". It is to this meaning of the individual, even when isolated from his community, that education must minister. Education has a direct social impact because it addresses the person him- or herself. The education Stein founds is one that recognises the importance of the nation, but also its relativity to the individual human person and to humanity as such.

She undertook this foundation in relation to the dark times she lived in. In the *Zeitgeist* of 1932 she discerned trends, more or less related to the Nazi ideology, in relation to which she felt she had to situate her anthropology. These trends constitute, together with the Phenomenological and Scholastic traditions, the sources of her work. *German Idealism* was something she was familiar with from her days as a teacher in Speyer, where Goethe and Herder formed part of the curriculum – and indeed part of what she understood to be *her own* German culture. She also was personally acquainted with Heidegger's *Existential Philosophy* from her time in Freiburg, and had engaged with *Sein und Zeit* since its publication in 1926. *Psychanalysis*, in particular in Jung's version of it, played a significant role in her interpretation of the Pseudo Dionysius[12]. Darwin, finally, she read while composing *The Structure of the Human Person,* and assimilated to the point where the only part of it she rejected was the (un-Darwinian) assertion that the species have evolved from one another without any external factors, such as environment or chance mutation, to explain evolution. Stein would likewise have assimilated contemporary notions in physics[13], animal psychology[14], anthropology[15], sociology[16] and theology[17].

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[12] Edith Stein, *Wege der Gotteserkenntnis. Studien zu Dionysius Areopagita und Übersetzung seiner Werke* (ESGA 17), sub-ed. by Beate Beckmann und Viki Rannf (2003).

[13] Her sources for this understanding are not clear. Probably they grew out of popular scientific articles.

[14] E.g. Max Etlinger, *Beiträge zur Lehre von der Tierseele und ihrer Entwicklung* (Münster, 1925).

[15] E.g. Albert Huth, *Pädagogische Anthropologie* (Leipzig, Klinckhardt, 1932)*,* referred to by Stein as exclusively based on natural science and omitting the spiritual dimension of the human being. Groethungsen: *Philosophische Anthropologie*, in Oldenburg: *Handbuch der Philosophie,* Abteilung III

Her personal synthesis of Husserlian and Thomistic elements, into which she integrated these diverse perspectives and from which she criticised them, merits some further commentary. It had fallen into place through dialogue with various contemporary authors, mostly people she knew personally from the Göttingen Circle. The most important of these were Max Scheler, who had provided her with all the materials for her value- and community theory. But there was also Hedwig Conrad-Martius, her interlocutor in all matters ontological, and Dietrich von Hildebrandt, who (even though no personal acquaintance grew up between them) was consistently referred to in relation to ethics. Her synthesis equipped her with a "method", enabling her to meet and assimilate different philosophical currents, without losing her feet and her ability to reach a critical discernment. Considering this method explicitly in *The Structure of the Human Person* she insisted it was phenomenological: "Developed by Husserl in the second volume of his *Logical Investigations*", this method is "in my opinion used by all great philosophers of all times, even if not exclusively and with clear reflective understanding."[18] "The most elementary of principles in phenomenology [is..] to fix on the things themselves. Not to engage in theories [..] but to approach things, without prejudice, in immediate intuition [..] The second principle is: to pay attention to what is *essential*." Taking Aquinas as guide in the choice of problems did not mean adopting his "system", even less expounding his anthropology.[19] The method that Stein handed on was, therefore, one that took into account the necessity for a starting point – insisted on by Descartes. It revisited the problems of the philosophical tradition before him, to find in it insights that could be reached from this starting-point, and to discard others, that could not. Finally, it criticised elements of the tradition after Descartes in the same manner, accepting the elements of Enlightenment, Darwinism, Psychanalysis and Existentialism that could be reached from the starting-point, while discarding those that could not. What

(Mensch und Character), 1931, is referred to by Stein as neglecting the systematic character of anthropology and replacing it with a historical exposition.

[16] She recognises her debt to F. Tönnies as the distinction between *Gesellshaft* and *Gemeinshaft* elaborated by him continued to play an important role for her. Cfr. Ferdinand Tonnies, *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft: Grundbegriffe der reinen Soziologie* (1887). Transl. as: *Community and Society*, by Charles P. Loomis (New York, Harper and Row, 1963).

[17] The Bible is referred to a number of times, especially to exemplify the formation of the State of Israel out of the community of a wandering tribe as pictured in the Old Testament. Augustine is referred to when she defines the Catholic idea of education. Most often, however, Christian doctrine is referred to as such. It is understood as a living body of thought ("truths") based on the revelation of God. An example of such a truth is "the human being is created by God". Another example is "every single human soul is created by God". She also refers to a specific idea of Christian, and in particular of Catholic, education (I. A. II. 2. b). The second volume of her education theory is a commented tapestry of statements from Denziger-Bannwarts: *Enchiridion Symbolorum, definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum,* in the edition of 1928.

[18] *Aufbau*, II, II, 2.

[19] Such a task would be "a great and beautiful one, but would complicate mine, as I cannot simply follow the teaching of St. Thomas, but differ in understanding on several important points." *Aufbau,* II, II, 1. These points concern in particular Thomas' understanding of matter as the principle of individuation and the consequent lack of understanding of personal individuality, and of experience as being valuable as such. It is quite likely that anthropological notions based on St. Thomas became, implicitly or explicitly, part of Stein's brief for founding Catholic education theory. At any rate, Aquinas' value as a *topos* in this regard would have been considerable at the time. It is her experiential starting-point that prevents Stein from simply accepting Thomas' anthropological ontology and leads her to rethink his problems by the means of the new method.

she handed on was thus a method integrating a tradition that would leave out nothing valuable[20]. She wanted to channel the waters of the *philosophia perennis* through the systems of modern philosophy, at the same time irrigating the lands of straying systems and liberating Scholastic thought.

As Stein fled from Germany in 1938 to the Carmelite Convent of Echt in Holland, she brought with her several manuscripts, including *The Structure of the Human Person* and *What is the Human Being?*, these were placed in a backpack by her sisters in religion and hidden in the cellar of the friendly convent of Herkenbosch, thought to be a safe hiding place. In one of the last German air raids in 1944 the convent was completely ruined. The partly loose, partly bound, sheets of Edith Stein's manuscripts were rescued from the ruins and brought by Pater Avertanus, the Belgian provincial of the Carmelites, and Pater Herman van Breda OFM, the later Director of the Husserl Archives, to Louvain, where they were entrusted to Dr. Lucy Gelber for reconstruction[21]. A meticulous reconstruction began, which bore fruit in terms of publication only as late as 1994. The public *Wirkungsgeschichte* of the work thus began only ten years ago. This long incubation time means, on the one hand, that the work has not as yet attracted much specific commentary, and, on the other, that it comes to us fresh and pristine like a "time capsule". The hidden life of her education theory has already borne many fruits, however. Stein's life and death merited her canonisation, and her subsequent elevation to be in Catholic terms co-patron of Europe made her known world-wide as an outstanding person and an exemplary character. Stein was aware of the importance of such models for any educational process, especially that regarding oneself, and she could not have given more leadership in education had her works been published as she herself had hoped for.

3. The Structure of the Human Person

The *Structure of the Human Person* is divided into nine chapters, three of which are concerned with identifying the problem, establishing the method and delimiting the subject (the first two and the last). The remaining six chapters build the philosophical anthropology Stein proposes as a foundation for Catholic education theory.

Chapter I, "The Idea of the Human Being as Foundation for Education as Science and Practice", argues that education is a practice relying in principle on an idea of the goals of education. "Behind all human action stands a *Logos* which guides it"[22]. This *Logos* explains the action and enables the actor to proceed meaningfully. "All education concerned with forming human beings is led by a certain understanding of these, of their status in the world and their tasks in life, as well as by the practical possibilities of treating and forming them. The theory of human formation, which we call education theory, belongs organically within an entire worldview, i.e. in a metaphysics, and the idea

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[20] "Method" could here have been put in quotation marks, to acknowledge Gadamer's hermeneutical insight that truth and method cannot be separated. Cfr. H.G Gadamer,. *Truth and Method*, trans. ed. by Garrett Barden and John Cumming (London, Sheed and Ward, 1975).

[21] Lucy Gelber, "Einleitung" in *Aufbau* (ESW XVI), p. 20. Lucy Gelber was at that time the archivist of the Husserl Archives. Her account of the painstaking reconstruction of the text is to be found the same place.

[22] *Aufbau,* I, A.

of the human being is part of this worldview by which it is immediately concerned."[23] Even if such a metaphysics is not explicit or even conscious, and even if a professed worldview does not always have an impact on practice in the way that it purports to do, it is still at work, however obscurely, in practical education. Few people, especially teachers, would contest that education centrally concerns the formation of human beings. Some politicians and administrators however might view education in other terms, say, in terms of its socio-economic impact on the competitiveness of society, or as a means to realise certain political objectives. In such an understanding of education there also is an implicit worldview, namely that of education being a means to an end, where the latter may or may not differ from the human person itself. As Stein concentrates on the structure of the human person for founding education theory she implicitly affirms that education centrally concerns the formation of human beings for their own sake, as education is how they become who they are. Thereby the idea is implicitly rejected that education should be a form of social engineering essentially unconcerned with the life and nature of the individual persons being educated. Education is, according to Stein, about the human person. Therefore she investigates three different ideas of being human (German Idealism, Depth Psychology and Existentialism) all of which influence the contemporary vision of the human being, and thus have an impact on contemporary education. In German idealism "the human being [..] is free, called to perfection (to 'humanity'), a link in the chain of the entire human race, progressing towards perfection, providing every single one and every single people, because of their individuality, with a specific task in the development of humanity."[24] On the other hand confidence in the goodness of human nature and in reason, inherited from Rousseau, is unrealistic: It does not sufficiently take feelings and drives into account. Even if Romanticism did address this aspect, it did not manage to break through to rectify the idealist bias present in the *Zeitgeist* of Stein's times. It did, however, become a precursor of Depth Psychology, for the development of which Russian novels also played a role. The First World War and the confusion surrounding it ensured that rationalist idealism was definitively conditioned by various alternative images of the human being, but the unity and meaningfulness of the soul became a casualty of the act of dethroning rationality. As a consequence of the inability to identify a significant core of the human being, education no longer was meaningful. Positively, this tendency initiated a greater awareness and appreciation of the urges and drives of the human being, but negatively it had the effect that psychoanalytic explanation replaced mutual understanding, thus distorting the trust that must exist between human beings for education to begin and to succeed. Existentialism, thirdly, operates in the depths, like psychoanalysis, but it does not consider the human being capable of enduring for any length of time the questions raised by its own being. The flight into anguish, when not preoccupied with this or that particular thing, seems to be the most authentic approach the existential I can make to itself. Thus education becomes the senseless task of destroying the various ideals in which the soul takes refuge, in order that it be delivered from its own non-being.

Over and against these three visions of the human being Christian metaphysics as Stein sees it, provides an alternative vision, expressing itself directly in education theory. It has

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[23] Ibid. The ambiguity is deliberate: the human being is immediately concerned by the worldview that includes a view of itself.

[24] *Aufbau*, I, A, I, 1.

a number of elements in common with the trends described. It shares with German idealism the conviction of the goodness of human nature, but its reason for doing so is the belief that the latter is created by God in his own image. Human nature is spiritual in that it loves and knows, and hence is directed towards, a commensurate goal of perfection beyond earthly existence. Thus Christian education shares with depth psychology the understanding that life without depth, i.e. without roots in what is not immediately accessible to reason, is a life misspent. Christian education reckons with the dark sides of human nature, so much so that it considers it a task beyond the resources of the human being to find the way out of their power. But through participation in Christ's filial relationship with God the human being is enabled to play a role in Christ's mystical body, and so to have a source of divine life in his or her own self strengthening, healing and enlightening both will and intelligence for deeds beyond their own intrinsic power. The individual is responsible for not extinguishing this life of grace, to which end the thought of the reward of a life in glory greatly helps. Finally, the call to authentic being, as glimpsed in Heidegger's philosophy, is explained in Christian metaphysics as the movement from fragmentary being to wholeness in Christ. It forcefully expresses the call to inwardness away from the inauthenticity of the ways of the world[25].

> To sum up we can say: seen from the standpoint of Christian anthropology the humanistic ideal is revealed as reflecting the integrity of the human being before the fall, but its origin and its goal is left out of consideration, and the fact of original sin ignored. The vision of depth psychology is that of fallen man, even if conceived in a static and a-historic manner: past and future possibilities, as well as the fact of salvation, go unheeded. Existential philosophy shows us human beings in their finitude and essential nothingness. It concentrates on what the human being is not, and is thus disconnected from what he is positively, as well as from the Absolute, which is figured behind the conditioned.[26]

The Christian educator must understand him- or herself merely as a helper, or an instrument, of the Educator that God is. God alone knows what serves the individual best, and also what he or she needs to learn. The human educator can co-operate with God by adjusting herself or himself to the laws of the human being, and to this particular human being. Education theory serves this end, as do other sciences like psychology, anthropology and sociology; but the educational process itself must happen face to face, as its medium is mutual openness. When closure has occurred, which happens through hurt, then a turning back towards openness, which requires waiting, patience, creativity and faithfulness, must be initiated[27]. What education realises, therefore, is nothing extrinsic to the human being. It is reciprocal communication of grace for the realisation of the common destiny in the unity of the eternal *Logos*. "When the ideas of the human being are oriented towards it, then they constitute sufficient foundation for the science and practice of education"[28].

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[25] By, for example, Augustine in *Confessions* and *City of God.*
[26] *Aufbau*, I, 1.
[27] "Over-activity and passivity are equally great dangers in education. The road between these two pitfalls is the one that the educator must move along, and he is responsible to God that he stray neither to the right nor to the left. Moreover, he can only move forwards while carefully probing. What must strengthen him in this terrible task is the thought of what makes the task so dangerous: that of God's work with which he must co-operate". *Aufbau*, I, 2.
[28] Ibid.

Chapter II, "Anthropology as Foundation for Education", sets out to further investigate the kind of anthropology that must underlie education theory. Anthropology inspired by natural science is useful in order to know the functions and developmental laws of the human body, and to discern among these which are conducive to natural, harmonious development and which may produce harm. Scientific knowledge of different races also may be useful, in so far as individuals exemplify these, and the knowledge of them may further understanding of the individuals[29]. However, natural science is only conducive towards a useful educational anthropology in so far as the openness between subjects remains undisturbed. Scientific explanation cannot replace mutual understanding; if it does, education is denatured and the pupil has reason to close him- or herself off against the teaching proposed; or, which is the same thing, he or she would have reason to believe it was manipulative. As natural science possess no normative standard according to which humanity, individual and race can be brought into unison, it can only serve as a means to establish the anthropology sought for.

The humanities may help us towards understanding the individual. They serve as a "school of understanding", but they only touch upon the efficiency of spiritual power, which is of crucial importance to the educator. The humanities provide *anthropographics,* and hence are anthropology in the same sense as description of animals is zoology. But a general anthropology, which is the science of the human being as spiritual person, is part of a general philosophy of the spiritual, including community, state, language, law and culture in general. Even if the humanities provide material for this, they provide no standard according to which discernment can be made of the importance in education of the supra-individual formations such as state, race and humanity. The educator must know, in his dealings with the spirit of the times, whether there is an objective order into which these fit. This standard must come from ethics, the philosophical discipline dealing with values. It is part of ontology, which makes use of the other sciences as befits its purpose. But this is not all: "A general ontology cannot limit itself to created being, but must take uncreated being into consideration, as well as the relationship between these. Likewise, anthropology would be incomplete, and insufficient as a foundation for education, if it did not consider the relationship between human beings and God."[30] Hence philosophical anthropology is essentially unfinished and can only be finalised by a theological complement. To approach this essentially open human person historical methods are available, but they are at once labour-intensive and inconclusive. Systematic phenomenology is a more direct approach, and it allows us to advance to conclusions.

Chapter III begins the construction of the anthropology proper, as it treats of "The Human Being as Material Thing and as Organism". As we meet the human being, in ourselves and in others, it is a material thing, but it is also alive in soul and spirit. It reflects all levels of being, both the material and the spiritual as a microcosm. As a material thing, natural laws apply to it. It has symmetry in common with other living beings of a higher order, and likewise spontaneous movement. The materiality of the body ensures acoustic givenness: The material thing that the human being is, not only

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[29] "The individual is not isolated, but is a member of supra-personal formations such as a people and a race, and the task of the educator is to form him, not only as individual, but as a member of the whole". *Aufbau*, II, 1.

[30] *Aufbau*, II, 4.

"sounds" when struck from the outside, but "sounds" first and foremost out of its own initiative, as it moves itself first and foremost out of its own initiative.

Chapter IV, "The Human Being as Animal", investigates how the human being shapes itself by its own initiative, internally, into a shape called by Aristotle "life-soul" (**yuxh**). This life-soul makes the organism, from its material, into a living being that moves. The power that the soul exercises over the body expresses itself in sensitivity and free movement, and its spirituality opens it towards both the outside and the inside. "'Having soul' means having a centre in which all registering computes that comes from without, and from which everything appearing in bodily attitude to come from within is brought forth."[31] As in plants, the human soul searches upwards for light. As in animals, it responds to drives or instincts, in a manner, however, less secure than they.[32] The characteristics displaying themselves in the body-build and the character of soul of animals, is that of the species. "There seems to be no individuality there, which as such would have meaning".[33] However, "only a deeper analysis could convincingly establish that this marks an essential difference between animal and human: that in humans individuality gets a new sense, which cannot be found in any subhuman creature."[34] "Thus a difference in the theoretical treatment of humans and animals becomes clear: we do have parallel disciplines in zoology and anthropology, which investigate human and animal nature, human races and animal species in their generality, but we have no parallel to individualising humanities for animals."[35] The importance of the individual in humans is accompanied by other changes in their animality. The register of sounds is expanded into a language, the potencies of the soul are unlimited and therefore it requires choice for any of them to be developed. The human species has specific characteristics, and all human persons are of this species. There is, however, no species of human persons – they are all individuals.

Chapter IV concerns "The Problem of the Origin of the Species" and the relationship between "genus, species and individual". The level of complexity observable in the different species suggests the possibility of order. This gives rise to the question of whether this order can be conceived of as an order of descent, or "whether the species could be thought to have come from one another, and ultimately from one original form."[36] "Herewith the ground of description of facts is left behind; an explanatory hypothesis is proposed which must be supported either by general laws or by experiment and observation."[37] The first possibility of support by general laws is beyond experimental science, and the second possibility of support by experiment can only yield species that seem to constitute an "in between" with regard to other species. That the hypothesis, of Darwinian theory remains a hypothesis does not preclude it from being correct; but whatever its status, the notion of species needs clarification. "So far it has been used in a double sense: as an inner form shaping the animal and as the sum of all

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[31] *Aufbau,* IV, 2.

[32] Stein does not admit of the two distinct levels of soul of the Aristotelian tradition, the vegetative and the animal; to her, rather, living beings are either plants or animals.

[33] *Aufbau,* IV, 3.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] *Aufbau*, V, II, 1.

[37] Ibid.

individuals which exemplify this form."[38] When biologists speak of the "origin" of the species, they seem to imply a change of the form, or an origin of the form. The form, however, is what makes the individual as well as the species identifiable as the same throughout its development. In the most primitive forms of reproduction, i.e. cloning, the individual reproduced differs from its parents only in respect of external factors. If, therefore, a-sexual reproduction could give rise to new species, external factors such as the environment must be able to impact on the essence of the individual, to change its descendants into a new type of individual. "If the creation of new individuals may be derived from a new creative impulse, then it is possible to think that the forms originated in procreation also are carriers of a 'new' form; no necessity persists according to which this qualification should be sought in the procreating individuals. Only when one thinks one can, and must, derive every new form from the old alone, must one ask for the causes of the changes in the procreating individual." Sexual reproduction gives great scope for variation as the gametes of two procreating individuals interact, and thus the formation of new species from old ones is "essentially possible, but not necessary".[39] "It is possible that the plurality of forms relies on a plurality of independent principles. It is also thinkable, however, that there exists a principle regulating the entire domain, in which one transition from part-form to part-form took place within a great developmental order."[40] "Such laws would belong to the factual order of the created world; they would dictate the possibilities existing in principle, which make a world constituted like ours real or thinkable."[41] At the same time, such laws would not explain away the spirituality of the human person.

Chapter VI addresses "The Animal in Humans and the Specifically Human", and hence what exceeds the species in the person. According to the manner in which humans realise their potential, choice and responsibility is added, in contrast with animals. We regard people as being responsible for what has become of them, as the human being "can and must form himself"[42], because he is an "I", i.e. a spiritual pole, characterised by consciousness, openness and freedom. By this "I" he *can* realise himself, and from this "*can* arises the possibility of the *ought*".[43] The "I" must form the *self,* i.e. the entire animal nature belonging to it, as well as intentionality and freedom. To this conscious formation and responsibility there is no parallel in the subhuman animal kingdom. It is the person who, as an I, has a "spiritual sense, which only is accessible in its own awareness of itself"[44]. This I, the person, has a body and a soul, and these are the self that it is responsible for. It carries this responsibility by searching, finding, and not losing itself, i.e. by reaching the depth of soul sufficient for the understanding of its own self and its tasks. It thus must "take itself in hand", experience the *ought,* and look around for others of whom it might think: such an "I" should I be.

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[38] *Aufbau*, V, II, 1.

[39] *Aufbau* V, II, 8.

[40] Ibid.

[41] "But even if it was entirely believed, as only a neutral law can be, a materialistic and monistic worldview would not follow as a superficial popular philosophy would have it, nor would the Biblical creation narrative have been proved wrong." Ibid.

[42] *Aufbau*, VI, II, 1.

[43] Ibid.

[44] *Aufbau*, VI, II, 2.

In Chapter VII, "Soul as Form and Spirit", Stein criticises Thomas' doctrine of the unity of substantial form. She thinks that the "personal-spiritual soul determines *largely* the form of the body, but not alone"[45]. The soul's openness to the spiritual world makes its separability from the body intelligible, as the spiritual soul, "the dominant form, which decides the *telos*, is one and can be seen as the authentically substantial one, even if the concrete substance is not determined exclusively through it."[46] What the entirety has in common is energy, a force that can be replenished from the material world, from others and from values. But even the energy is marked by the source from which it comes, and the soul's access to its depth is required for it to interpret and integrate its energies, and for the will to unite. The will, then, can receive powerful support from the will of God.

Chapter VIII, "The Social Being of the Person", addresses the last and very important aspect of the human being. The point of view on the human being we have adopted so far is in fact an abstraction: the human person is not an isolated individual, but is determined by its social acts, functions and relationships. "Communities grow spontaneously, either from shared life conditions and life in common (school class, village), from genetic descent (family, tribe, people), or – under the influence of free acts – by reason of personal reciprocal positioning and mentality (friendship, marriage), or because of common acceptance of a domain of values (scientific or artistic interest-groups, community of believers). Mostly more, sometimes all, of these community-forming factors are in play at once."[47] From such belonging to various communities, the individuals come to be of various types (Irish, father of a family, middle class). A people is distinct from the individuals constituting it, in that its experience as such is distinct from the experience of the individuals constituting it. Whereas a person is deeply in debt to his people, whose language and culture he has assimilated to constitute his own person, the individual is nevertheless not dependent for her final value and meaning on her people, but on God alone. "The deepest and the most personal of what the human being is, he owes to God alone, and all that he owes to earthly communities, he owes because of God."[48] "There is in every human being a place which is free of earthly bonds, which does not come from other human beings and is not determined by other human beings."[49] Even as a person can be called to put all his powers at the service of his people, he can also be called out on his own. "From the order of salvation it becomes clear that even a completely separate life, cut off from the world, can be fruitful for humanity."[50]

Chapter IX: "Transition from the Philosophical to the Theological View of Human Beings", examines the ways in which philosophical anthropology must be completed by theological anthropology. Because anthropology relies on ethics to furnish it with criteria for judging the relative importance of humanity, people and individual, and furthermore because such criteria are explained and justified in theology in a manner more easily accessible than in philosophy, educational anthropology remains dependent on theological anthropology. Only the latter will render anthropology so complete that it

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[45] *Aufbau* VII, I, 2.

[46] However, this does not mean, as it does in Aquinas, that the substance of the human being is formed in successive stages. Stein thinks the spiritual soul must exist from the earliest moment of the existence of the human being "even if not yet expressing itself in actual, personally spiritual life". *Aufbau*, VII, IV.

[47] *Aufbau* VIII, I, 3.

[48] *Aufbau,* VIII, III, 3.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

gives sufficient reasons for the education (*Aufbau*) of the human person, because only it accounts for and justifies its infinite value in relation to the Absolute.

Conclusion

We have seen that *The Structure of the Human Person* marks a high point from which Stein's entire work can be surveyed. It develops an educational theory at the confluence of metaphysics and phenomenology, underlining at the same time the intersubjective constitution of the human person and her dependence on God alone for her final worth. The work also provides a privileged outlook on the Nazi German ideology of the "people" by someone who not only did, but also was willing to, pay for this outlook with her life, for the sake of her "people". And finally, the work insists that anthropology is the key to education, while at the same time proposing just such an anthropology for discussion. This anthropology, however, cannot be completed without truths revealed about the human person, truths affirming and making intelligible what can be understood only confusedly by natural reason. By knowing the structure of the human person in its essential openness to a theological completion, we know, as much as natural reason allows us to, what the person can do and be supposed to do. The role of the educator is to empower the human being to take charge of his or her own education and build up the human person in him- or herself and, because it cannot be done except in reciprocity, in his or her others. Education is thus, according to Stein, everyone's task, just as, and because, becoming a person also is.