

# THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDITH STEIN

## A syllabus

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*Im Anfang war der Sinn*  
Faust<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of our course is to understand several important aspects of the philosophy of Edith Stein, as it is contained in three works: and *A Conversation between Edmund Husserl and Thomas Aquinas*, *Potency and Act* and *Finite and Eternal Being* (FEB), her major work, in my English translation.

Here I mention some available material related to the course, sketch the life of Edith Stein, show how she relates to the history of philosophy, describe two movements in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which Stein played a significant role: the “Catholic renaissance” and Neo-Thomism movement, and finally comment on the second chapter of FEB.

## Discussion texts

\* Material in FEB

### 1) Forward and chapter 1

These “commentaries” are available:

- a) “Edith Stein’s Objective Analysis” (PoznanObjectiveAnalysis/ POLAND)
- b) “ES on philosophical language and translation” (PoznanLatin/ POLAND)
- c) “ES on Christian Philosophy...” (PozanChristianPhilFEBch1/ POLAND)

A full English translation is available (MaynoothSeminarTranslation/ IRELAND)

### 2) Chapter two of FEB: *Act and potency as ways of being*; **a commentary is given below**

\* Some published articles by W. Redmond:

- \* Stein and St. Thomas on analogy
- \* Stein and the ontological argument
- \* Stein on proposition, sentence, judgment, state-of-affairs
- \* Stein on a “Purely formal conclusion: God exists”
- \* (in Spanish) Stein’s concept of her mission in contemporary philosophy (“Edith Stein y la filosofía católica”, *Teología y vida*)
- \* (in Latin) The onset of idealism: “Scepticismus Humeanus atque idealismus transcendentalis: Nova deliberatio” Maule

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<sup>1</sup> “In the beginning was Meaning” (“ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος”), J. W. von Goethe, *Faust*, 1:1178, quoted by Edith Stein in *Finite and Eternal Being*, pp. 100-101. Reference is made to pages in the ESGA edition of *Endliches und ewiges Sein* (Freiburg: Herder, 2006).

### The life of Edith Stein

Edith Stein he was born in 1891 in Wrocław (then Breslau). She was brought up in a religious Jewish home but lost her faith as a teenager. She majored in psychology in the University of Breslau, but soon gave up in frustration at what she saw as a lack of clear basic principles. She then found in Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1900-1901) --and in his intention to "go back to things (*Sachen*)"-- the "clarification of concepts" that she was seeking. She began her doctoral studies under Husserl in 1913 at the University of Göttingen, where she became a member of the circle of "early phenomenologists" with Adolf Reinach, Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Theodor and Hedwig Conrad-Martius.

Stein followed Husserl to Freiburg when he accepted a position in the University there. After receiving her doctorate (1916) she worked for a while as his assistant. In this year she met Martin Heidegger, whose early writings came to influence her thinking.

In the meantime she and other disciples of Husserl had become disappointed by the apparent "transcendental idealism" they found in his work *Ideas* (1913). Husserl, it seemed to her, had not, in fact, "gone back to things", and she later, in 1931, wrote a careful critique of Husserl's position in her post-doctoral dissertation *Potency and Act*.

Stein's search for "things" (*Sachen*) --for "objectivity" (*Sachlichkeit*)-- was allied with her search for the God she had lost. In 1921, while staying with friends at a country house, she was profoundly moved reading the autobiography of St. Teresa of Avila. After she finished the book she said: "this is truth", and decided at once to enter the Catholic church.

She then taught for ten years at a college for young women in Speyer (1922-1932), where she was able to absorb Catholic culture: its liturgical, spiritual and intellectual traditions. She was mentored by the prominent Jesuit philosopher Erich Przywara, who commissioned her to translate St. Thomas's *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* into German (1931-2) as well as the letters and journals of the English convert Cardinal Newman (1928). From 1928 to 1932 she lectured widely, especially on education and women's issues, in Germany, Austria, France, Czechoslovakia, and Switzerland.

In 1932 Stein accepted a teaching position in the German Institute of Scientific Pedagogy in Münster, but after only two semesters she had to leave when a Nazi law excluded Jews from teaching. The following year she entered the monastery of the Discalced Carmelites (the order founded by St. Teresa) in Cologne. There she continued her work in philosophy and wrote her major work, *Finite and Eternal Being* (1935-1937). The printing of this book was stopped after a Nazi law forbade the publication of works by Jews; it appeared posthumously in 1951.

To escape persecution Stein went to live in the Carmelite convent in Echt in the Netherlands. But after the Nazi invasion of that country, she was arrested and taken to the concentration camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau, where on August 9, 1942, she was murdered in a gas chamber. In 1998 she was declared a saint by Karol Wojtyła, Pope John Paul II.

### Stein's philosophizing

\* The following persons were important in Stein's philosophical development:

- her two "masters": Edmund Husserl (founder of phenomenology) and St. Thomas Aquinas (13<sup>th</sup> century)
- other "Scholastics": St. Augustine, John Duns Scotus, Joseph Gredt, Erich Przywara
- other "phenomenologists": Hedwig Conrad-Martius, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger

- non-philosophers: St. Teresa of Avila, St. John of the Cross

### Timeline

**1950**

**Stein**

**Gredt** (work in Latin 1929, in German 1935)

**Przywara** (1932; contact 1925-31)

**Heidegger** (works read by Stein between 1927 and 1930)

**Conrad-Martius** (works: 1923-34)

**Husserl** (*Logische Untersuchungen*, 1900-01, and *Ideas*, 1931)

**PHENOMENOLOGY**

**ANALYTIC**

**NEOTHOMISM**

**1900**

**IDEALISM**

**1800**

**Kant**

**EMPIRICISM**

**RATIONALISM**

**Hume**

**Descartes**

**1600**

**SECOND SCHOLASCISM**

**1300**

**Scotus**

**Aquinas**

**400**

**Augustine**

### Comments

\* Stein's philosophy falls into two phases: first "phenomenology" and then, from 1925, "a Christian philosophy of being". She eschewed philosophy after becoming a Catholic in 1922, but returned to it when asked by her superior to prepare her post-doc dissertation, *Potency and Act*, for publication). She worked in the two "worlds" of phenomenology (Husserl) and of Scholasticism (Aquinas) and used the "tools" she found in both.

\* Stein (as other early members of circle around Husserl) moved away from the "transcendental idealism" stemming from Kant, and found (so she felt) in Husserl's his work *Ideas*.

\* Stein called her way of doing philosophy "*objective analysis*"-- meaning not merely doing its history but solving her own philosophic problems.

\* Stein thought (FEB, p.15) that ontology, after being rejected, reappeared on the scene in three modalities: a philosophy of *essence* (of her master Husserl), a philosophy of *existence* (of her colleague Heidegger) and a philosophy of *being* (of her friend Conrad-Martius). Stein was too modest to mention her own philosophy of being and essence.

\* Stein noticed that two renovations of philosophy occurred around 1900: "Catholic philosophy" (in *Thomism*) and "modern philosophy" (in *phenomenology*).

\* Interestingly, there was a third "philosophic beginning" around 1900 of which Stein was unaware: that of the so-called "analytic" tradition that first appeared in England and the United States, influenced by German logician Gottlob Frege (1879). It began as a reaction against the idealism found in both countries at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (F. H. Bradley in Britain and J. Royce in the USA). The criticism came from G. E. Moore (1903) and B. Russell in England and in the USA by G. Santayana (1923) and the "New Realism". Others took part in the movement such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and the members of the "Lwow-Warsaw School of Logic" (S).

Leśniewski, J. Łukasiewicz, K. Twardowski, A. Tarski...). Analytic philosophy and “continental” phenomenology are often considered the main tendencies in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There has been little intercommunication between them, and both, with this division, are found in Christian philosophy.

\* Stein took part in the international *revival of Catholic culture* in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and within this revival, in the development of *Neo-Thomism*. She was also one of a large number (over three dozen) *intellectual converts* to the Catholic church. (See below.)

\* Many Neo-Thomists stayed within Thomism, often seeing St. Thomas as an alternative to certain modern philosophers, especially Kant. Some moved *toward* modern philosophy, as Joseph Maréchal toward Kant and Karl Rahner toward Heidegger. Others moved *toward* Thomism from elsewhere (Stein from phenomenology, Maritain from scientism).

### **The Catholic renaissance in the first half of the 20th century**

\* Stein was part of the renovation of Catholic culture which began shortly before 1900 and ended abruptly in the 1960s. Great interest has recently arisen in this phenomenon, especially in its “*intellectual converts*”.<sup>2</sup>

\* Pope Leo XIII promoted a powerful revival of Thomism in his encyclical *Aeterni Patris* (1879); his encyclical *Rerum novarum* (1891) proposed a “social doctrine” that is influential to this day.

\* There was a strong interest in spirituality (especially in the Carmelite mystics). Examples are Juan Arintero in Spain, Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange in France, Thomas Merton in the USA, and Edith Stein in Germany in her writings on St. Teresa (for example in an appendix to FEB) and on St. John of the Cross (in her last book, *Science of the Cross*).

\* Many literary people were associated with the renaissance: Léon Bloy, Paul Claudel, and Max Jacob in France, Max Picard in Switzerland, Sigrid Undset in Sweden, Hilda Graef and Gertrud von Le Fort in Germany, Muriel Spark in Scotland, and in USA: Flannery O'Connor, Walter Percy, Caroline Gordon, Allen Tate, Clair Booth Luce; in England Evelyn Waugh, Graham Green, G. K. Chesterton, Ronald Knox.

\* Hilda Graef, who like Stein was a Jewish convert, published *The Scholar and the Cross* on Edith Stein in 1955.

\* There were many converts in the Catholic intellectual revival. Besides Stein (c.<sup>3</sup> 1922) and Graef (c. 1941): Merton (c. 1938), Day (c. 1927), Bloy (c. 1916), Claudel (c. 1886, famously, in Notre Dame Cathedral), Jacob (c. 1909), Picard (c. 1939), Undset (c. 1924), von Le Fort (c. 1926), Spark (c. 1954), Percy (c. 1947), Chesterton (c. 1922), Evelyn Waugh (c. 1930), Graham

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts/ Spiritual Inspiration in an Age of Unbelief* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000, reprinted from Great Britain: Harper Collings, 1999). He also treats in detail Siegfried Sassoon (c. 1957), Maurice Baring (c. 1909), E. I. Watkin (c. 1908), R. H. Benson (c. 1903), artists Eric Gill (c. 1913) and David Jones (c. 1921), author and dramatist Hugh Ross Williamson, (c. 1955), economist E. F. Schumacher “Small is Beautiful” (c. 1956); he mentions many others in passing. Pearce also wrote *Literary Giants/ Literary Catholics* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2005). Other works: Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Converts: British and American Intellectuals Turn to Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1997). Charles P. Conner, *Classic Catholic Converts* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2001); he also covers foundresses St. Elizabeth Ann Seton (1805), Rosde Hawthorne Lathrop (c. 1891), Orestes Brownson (c. 1844), Isaac Hecker (c. 1844) in the USA, Ignatius Spencer in England (c. 1830).

<sup>3</sup> The letter “c” means “converted in the year”.

Greene (c. 1926) and Clair Booth Luce (c. 1946).<sup>4</sup>

\* Joseph Pearce (see footnote), himself a convert (c. 1989) just published a book about two dozen “literary converts” in England, among them apologist G. K. Chesterton (c. 1922), novelists Evelyn Waugh (c. 1930) and Graham Greene (c. 1926), historian Christopher Dawson (c. 1914), theologian Ronald Knox (c. 1917), Douglas Hyde, former editor of *The Daily Worker* of the UK Communist Party (c. 1948). TV personality Bishop Fulton J. Sheen received violinist Fritz Kreisler (c. 1962?) and playwright Clair Booth Luce into the Church. Also the lawyer of the Communist Party Bella Dodd (c. 1952) and journalist Heywood Broun (c. 1939).

\* Other converts: Poets Alfred Noyes (c. 1927), Dame Edith Sitwell (c. 1955), and Roy Campbell (c. 1935). Alfred Tarsky (c. 1923), one of the four greatest logicians in the history of philosophy. Oxford professor R. C. Zaehner (c. 1946). Theologians John Saward (c. 1979), R. J. Neuhaus (c. 1999), Francis Beckwith (c. 2007). Journalist Malcolm Muggeridge (c. 1982). Psychologist Karl Stern (c. 1944). Writer Fulton Oursler (c. 1943).<sup>5</sup> (Cardinal) Avery Dulles (c. 1940s). Even Oscar Wilde was conditionally baptized at the end of his life (c. 1900).<sup>6</sup>

\* The reason for these conversions was a felt need for a deeper culture, meaningful symbolism, valued lore. The most famous spokesman for this movement in England was the Anglican T. S. Eliot.

\* This Catholic boom immediately fizzled out during the great revolt against tradition in the 1960s, especially after the Second Vatican Council (1962-65). Conversions were evenly spaced in the first half of the last century but break off sharply in the 60s. On the other hand there is now a growing interest not only in these thinkers but in the traditions they valued.

### Neo-Thomism

\* Philosophers were a key part of the Catholic renaissance. Converts: Jacques Maritain (c. 1906), existentialist Gabriel Marcel (c. 1929) in France, Frederick Copleston in England who wrote a popular history of philosophy (c. 1925), in the USA Mortimer Adler (c. 1999) and John Oesterreicher (c. 1924) who wrote *Seven Jewish philosophers discover Christ*. Also Josef Pieper and Martin Grabmann in Germany, in Poland Karol Wojtyła and Joseph Przywara, in Canada Charles De Koninck and Bernard Lonergan.

\* Husserl said of Stein: “I do not believe that the church has any Neo-Scholastic of Edith Stein’s caliber”.<sup>7</sup>

\* Stein spoke of the rise of “Catholic philosophy” and of the good results it had already achieved:

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<sup>4</sup> Once, English born-Catholic publisher Frank Sheed and convert Sir Arnold Lunn (c. 1933) were debating in Hunter College (in New York City) about this Catholic Intellectual Revival in England: Sheed claimed that at least 80% was due to converts, but Lunn, who was supposed to defend cradle-Catholics, couldn't come up with a single name. Sheed, *The Church and I* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1974), p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> Writers J. R. R. Tolkien, Lady Antonia Frazer, C. C. Martindale and Carryl Houselander became Catholic when their families converted.

<sup>6</sup> Wilde wrote:

And here I set my face toward Rome,  
For all my pilgrimage is done,  
Although, methinks, yon blood-red sun  
Marshals the way to holy Rome.

<sup>7</sup> T. R. Posselt (ed. S. M. Batzdorff, J. Koepfel, and J. Sullivan) *Edith Stein/ The Life of a Philosopher and Carmelite* (Washington: ICS Publications, 2005), p. 154.

Catholic intellectual life had become largely dependent upon *modern* intellectual life, and had lost its link to its splendid past. The second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a true renaissance in Catholic philosophy when scholars gave it new life by delving into its own best sources.<sup>8</sup>

She speaks in this way of “Neo-Thomism”:

Thomism... is a living structure whose development and growth we can trace. This structure we must make our own, allow it to live within us anew. The great thinkers of the Christian Middle Ages, we know, were struggling with the same issues that are at stake for us and so will have much to say that can help us.<sup>9</sup>

\* After the appearance of *Aeterni Patris*, Thomism was cultivated increasingly by Catholics everywhere (even by non-philosophers, by non-Catholics). A number of “manuals” (textbooks) of Thomistic philosophy were written (often in Latin) for use in Catholic education. In FEB, Stein carefully commented on two manuals by Benedictine Joseph Gredt, one in Latin and one in a German.

\* Maritain and Gilson were perhaps the best known Thomists. But from the time Stein was teaching in Speyer, many variations of Neo-Thomism were developing. Examples are the “transcendental” Thomism of Joseph Maréchal, Karl Rahner and Bernard Lonergan, the “Lublin school” of Wojtyła and others, the “logical Thomism” of the Cracow Circle with Józef Maria Bocheński and J. Salamucha, the Québécois Laval School of Henri Grenier and Charles De Koninck, the “analytical Thomism”: John Haldane and the spouses Elizabeth Anscombe and Peter Geach-- and the “River Forest Thomism” of my own teachers B. Ashley, J.-T. Bonée, J. Kane, R. Nogar, author of important work on the philosophy of evolution..

\* Shortly before entering Carmel Stein attended (and apparently starred in) the *Journée d'Études de la Société Thomiste* in Juvisy, France, with Maritain and other well-known Catholic figures. She commented on the three positions on Christian philosophy found at the meeting:

The expression “Christian philosophy” is hotly contested even in the Catholic camp. In recent years the controversy has been especially lively in France.<sup>10</sup>

\* Indeed, in France a split came about between “traditional” Thomists like Garrigou-Lagrange and the “Nouvelle Théologie” or “Resourcement” of Marie-Dominique Chenu, Henri de Lubac and Jean Daniélou-- “Rome vs Paris” (between Dominicans of the Angelicum in Rome and those of Le Saulchoir in Paris), even “Latin vs French”. With Hans Urs von Balthassar, these “back to the sources” advocates tended to move away from St. Thomas toward the Fathers of the Church.

\* There had already been a tendency to “get back to Thomas” and dismiss his “commentators” (Cajetan, D. Bañez...). The “manuals” were a frequent foil of these critics, and more recently Thomas’s “philosophy” was downplayed in favor of his “theology”.

\* Nevertheless, commentators like F. Suárez, John of St. Thomas, A. Rubio (whom I have studied) and others thinkers in the Aristotelian tradition --indeed Renaissance Scholasticism (the “Second Scholasticism”) in general-- are being positively reassessed today. Perhaps now is the

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<sup>8</sup> FEB, 13-14.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid..

time to do a serious study of the rich “manual” tradition of philosophy and theology (of which Gredt is an example).

\* After the 1960s historical studies on St. Thomas continued, but “Thomism” simply gave out. The nasty disarray into which Thomism has fallen can be seen in *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* by Fergus Kerr.<sup>11</sup> Often the discord parallels the division between “analytic” and “continental” philosophy. But, as with these other traditions, new attitudes are emerging on St. Thomas as well as on “Christian philosophy”.

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER TWO

### ACT AND POTENCY AS WAYS OF BEING

NOTE For the Foreword and first chapter of FEB, see the three summaries listed at the beginning of this syllabus (a complete translation is also available). The following notes on chapter two are important to understand “essential and actual being” in chapter three, which we shall read in more detail.

\* Stein begins chapter two with two distinctions found in St. Thomas Aquinas:

- 1) between *what* a thing is (its content, “essence”) and *that* it is (its being, “existence”)
- 2) between two *ways of being*: being-actually (“being-in-act”) and being-able-to-be (“being-in- potency”)

\* Then she chooses the place from which she can confidently begin her search for truth: *the fact that I am*. She shows how St. Augustine, Descartes and Husserl also identified a solid base upon which to build their philosophy. Augustine, to escape skepticism, chose *the fact that we are alive*, because

in this knowledge we have absolutely no fear that we are deceived by a mere resemblance of truth, since surely even he lives who is deceived.

Descartes wished to begin philosophy anew and needed a first step that he could not doubt. So he doubted everything that he could, but found he could not doubt *the fact that he was doubting*. This is his famous *cogito, sum*: “I think, I am” (as Stein states it). Husserl also wanted a secure point of departure for his phenomenology; this he did by refusing to make judgments about what we take for granted in our “natural way of thinking” (the validity of science, even the existence of the world); still, he could not but judge that he is *aware*, that *he lives and is*. Stein sums all this up:

everywhere --in Augustine’s “living”, in Descartes’ “I think”, in Husserl’s “being-aware” or “experiencing life”-- everywhere there lies an “*I am*”.

So this is her first certainty, and, thinking about it, she says, we come to ask: what is this *am*? What is this *I*? What is my *being*?

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<sup>11</sup> Oxford: Blackwell, 2000.

\* She answers with a notion of time. My I-am is timeful: a “now” always running from a “no longer” to a “not yet”, between a *whence* and a *whither*. This realization immediately gives me, *by contrast*, two opposite ideas: *nonbeing* (since my whence is not any more and my whither still is not) and “pure” *timeless being* (without past or future). These

are ideas that the mind comes upon in itself; it does not borrow them from elsewhere.

And they are the rightful point of departure for a philosophy based on natural knowledge. But she adds in a footnote that there may be other points of departure.

\* The relation of the timeful to the timeless she calls the *analogy of being*, a Scholastic concept (*analogia entis*), ultimately from Aristotle. My being is fleeting, *frail*, even “null”, and this

frailty already lurks in [my] momentary being

as in moves from one nonbeing (my past) and to another (my future). But by contrast we see our frailty as

an “image, a likeness, a copy, an instance [*Abbild*]”, that has a likeness to its archetype, to its original, to its exemplar [*Urbild*], yet a much greater unlikeness.

This image-archetype is the analogical relation.

\* This is indeed a creature-Creator relation, but at this point Stein is not asking about this. She is rather focusing on our being as it

*presents itself* as something that rises up out of darkness and crosses a beam of light only to sink back again into darkness, or as the crest of a wave that itself is part of the flow.

My being is actual but it also spans what it was in possibility and will be in possibility. She stresses:

*we cannot even think* of actual being of the moment as standing all by itself-- just as we cannot think of a point outside the line or the moment outside a length of time.

We get the idea of our ongoing, lasting, being by remembering our past and expecting our future; but my frail *actual* being is *poised on the knife's edge*.

\* Our timefulness, the interplay of the potential and the actual suggests *by contrast* the “purely” actual without the potential. What we can do is part of what we are, of our essence, and as we “do” actually, our being unfolds. Traditionally, God, lacking this interplay, is act without potentiality, and so timeless; he just-is-period, “I-am”, “*zehyeh*” (הָיָה). Stein now gives her characteristic definition of “act” and “potency”: *being in completion* (= actual being) and the *stage previous to being* (= potential being).



\* Stein speaks of “units of experience” lasting over a timespan, of “contents” such as a joy, which, strictly, “are” only in the present but hark back to a past and lean ahead to a future. These units are fleeting, ever reaching a pitch of being for an instant as they become, come to be in time, and then pass away. And the “I” stands behind all these units of experience; my “I” lives in my “I enjoy”, my “I think”, my “want”.... This flow of units is my *living*, my life.

\* The I remains by itself as units of experience come and go; it is what stays *alive* while having different contents. The being of the I is pre-eminent in that it *bears* the stream of its experiences in a single living-process. Experiences that have passed away and those that have yet to be “are” only in a lesser way, as the I holds on to or “calls back” a past experience and stretches forward to meet coming experience. In Stein’s musings on remembering and anticipating we see the famous passage in St. Augustine.<sup>12</sup>

\* When I think back on my life and think ahead to my future, I find two voids, and I wonder:

Did my *I* come out of the nothing? Will it go back into the nothing?

Indeed, my frail being is always under threat-- of falling back into nothingness. The whence and whither of my being is puzzling. Is it from itself? When I think of myself, I *am already*, I feel myself “thrown into existence”. Stein here is recalling the famous phrase of her colleague Martin Heidegger. But she adds something that Heidegger does not: I sense that I am *set* into existence from moment to moment, that I *get* my being as I am.

\* So where do I get my being from? I do not get it from my two “worlds”: my inner world and the outer world of nature that announce themselves in my experience. Again by contrast with my own timeful, changing being, I come to the idea of the fullness of being, of being timelessly, changelessly present. In order to be, I must touch this full being that originates my being. My being, actual as it is, is an infinitely distant “copy”, and image, of pure act, complete being.

\* In her appendix to FEB, Stein will challenge Heidegger; “being-thrown”, she will say, is just “being-created”. Here in this chapter two she also comments on three other well-known ideas of Heidegger: *nothingness*, *anxiety* and *care*. I see the nothingness of my being when I start thinking about its foundation, and this is where I meet anxiety.

Anxiety accompanies unredeemed man throughout life in many disguises (say, fear of this thing or that), but at bottom it is dread of his own nonbeing, and it brings him “face to face with the nothing”.

Normally, of course, I am not overcome with anxiety. For Heidegger the reason is that the “cares” of my life “mask its nothingness”, hide the possibility of its nonbeing, death. Stein criticizes this pessimism; the possibility of me not being is offset by one fact: I *get* being, I am *kept* in being from moment to moment. This is not “self-security” but the safety a child feels in his mother’s arms. My security is based on a being that upholds and grounds my being, a being which itself needs no upholding or grounding. This is the traditional idea of the creator-

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<sup>12</sup> *Confessions*, 11:18.

conserver in “the way of faith”.

\* Stein also speaks of “the way of philosophy” and gives a “mini natural theology”. She summarizes several arguments of God’s existence and gives her own argument from “innerness”: the security that I sense must be grounded immediately in an ultimate unholding and grounding. But she warns:

    this sensing is quite dark and can hardly be called “knowledge”.

Augustine, she says, also set out for God from his own inner being, but he insisted that we cannot grasp “the one who cannot be grasped”. For Stein,

    this dark sensing presents to us him who cannot be grasped as him who is inescapably near, in whom we “live, move, and are”, yet as him who cannot be grasped. Inferential thinking coins sharp concepts, but no more are they able to grasp the one who cannot be grasped; they rather shift him off into the distance proper to anything conceptual.

The way of faith, she says, gives us more:

    the God of personal nearness, loving and merciful, as well as a certainty found in no natural knowledge. But the way of faith, too, is a *dark* way.

And she ends this chapter two with that marvelous passage of Augustine: Moses was given two names of God: one *for us* (one that we can understand): “I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob”, and one *for himself* (one that we cannot understand) ‘I am who am’.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> “Vade,” inquit, “dic filiis Israel, Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Iacob misit me ad vos: hoc mihi nomen est in aeternum.... Quod dixi: ‘Ego sum, qui sum’ verum est, sed non capis: quod autem dixi: ‘Ego sum Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Iacob’ et verum est, et capis. Quod enim ‘Ego sum qui sum’ ad me pertinet, quod autem ‘Deus Abraham et Deus Isaac et Deus Iacob’ ad te pertinet.” (*In Psalmos*, 134:6).