

Inspiration of Baruch Spinoza's Ethics in the works of Edith Stein

Edith Stein followed philosophical thoughts of the previous eras with great interest. She often made references to particular establishments of the thinkers who came before her, quoted their works or criticized them. However, towards some of them, she simply tried to take her own stand on certain problems, and inspired by their works, she made attempts to discuss these problems thoroughly on her own.

Evidence in Source Documents

The basis for this paper is a passage in Edith Stein's autobiographical work, about one of the books she read during holidays.

"I was then finishing my first semester and I as my holiday reading book I chose Spinoza's *Ethics*. From that very moment I have never parted with this small book. When we went to the forest, I used to put it in the pocket of my waterproof coat, and when others remained lying under the trees, I usually looked for a raised hill nearby and climbed high up the tree. I sat there and I became absorbed both with deductions about substance and contemplations about the sky, mountains and forests alternately"¹.

The book accompanied the young student during her holidays after her first semester in 1911. That was the period of reading books acquisitively (not only those of academic sorts) and seeking the Truth; it was the time of huge intellectual possibilities and reflections. Edith was a "seeker" at that time. By means of observation and natural understanding, she tried to understand the human and the world, emotions and insights, and to describe them in a systematic manner. From a very young age, she reached out for various literature, sometimes inappropriate (*nicht gerade*) for less critical, young people. But for her, no literature was forbidden². One might assume that Edith became interested in Spinoza while she was acquiring knowledge of different doctrines from the history of philosophy. The recollection of the book is characterized by great detail of Stein's account of it, and her emotional engagement. As stated by Maria Amata Neyer in the preface to the Polish edition of the work, the descriptions of experience in the autobiography do not systematize chronological facts, but rather their much later interpretations of what occurred and what remained clear and precious within Edith's mind³.

What is characteristic of this precise memory is the following statement: "From that very moment I have never parted with this small book". Is it really possible to find traces of reaching out for the "small book" in Edith Stein's works? If so, it may be significant in understanding the author's legacy. Edith Stein has made it clear that using significant philosophical studies can influence the study of specific problems, even if it concerns refining, or redefining, threads that were previously discussed⁴. Stein writes, that

1 My translation of: E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben einer jüdischen Familie und weitere autobiographische Beiträge*, Freiburg 2002 (ESGA 1), s. 95-96, por. cyt.: „Ich stand damals am Ende meines ersten Semesters und hatte als Ferienlektüre Spinozas *Ethik* mitgenommen. Ich trennte mich niemals von dem kleinen Büchlein. Wenn wir in den Wald hinausgingen, trug ich es in der Tasche meines regendichten Wettercapes; und während die andern sich unter den Bäumen lagerten, suchte ich mir in ihrer Nähe eine Hirschkanzel und kletterte ganz oben hinauf; dort ließ ich mich nieder und vertiefte mich abwechselnd in die Deduktionen über die eine Substanz und in den Ausblick auf Himmel, Berge und Wälder“.

2 Tamże, s. 109.

3 M. Neyer, *Wprowadzenie*, [w:] Stein Edyta, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny żydowskiej oraz inne zapiski autobiograficzne*, przeł. J. Adamska, Kraków 2005, s.17.

4 She makes it clear in the introduction to her published paper *On the Problem of Empathy*, explaining why she did not want to proofread and change her PhD dissertation before publishing it. zob. E. Stein, *O zagadnieniu wczucia*, przeł. D. Gierulanka & J.F. Gierula, Kraków 1988.

while she coming back to certain subjects, she would not be able to restrain herself from using acquired [...] new impulses⁵. In her correspondence with Roman Ingarden, in turn, she discloses: "My works are always and only reflections of things I have dealt with in my life, because I'm constructed in such a way, that I cannot do without reflection"⁶. According to modern theories on intertextuality, each and every text enters a relation (dialogue) with the others – those which were created earlier or later. It somehow continues, imitates, transforms or denies the earlier texts⁷.

There are no places in which the Philosopher would directly refer to Spinoza's works, while creating her views. Although in the first period, before conversion, Stein could quote Spinoza in her work with no hesitation, later this would not be advisable. Spinoza's works were condemned and labelled as heresy, which was aggravated even more by the thinker's arrogant and impassive attitude. Edith herself thought that in academic aims and philosophical thinking there are no sources that could distort the very "essence" of truth, but she would not advise such practices to people who are unformed, still developing their views of the world⁸. Nevertheless, in the works of Edith Stein – Teresia Benedicta of the Cross – there are passages in which Baruch Spinoza's works are mentioned. Along with the previously cited fragment from her autobiography, they are mentioned also in her correspondence. *Ethics* was significant for Edith Stein in the later periods as even after her conversion, in 1926 in Spira, that is 15 years later, she asked the bishop to allow her to keep and use some books. Among only six titles she listed Spinoza's *Opera Omnia*⁹ as well. She justified her request with having a desire to confront Thomas Aquinas' works with modern philosophy. Her correspondence with Ingarden shows her preparations for and later – working on translations of Aquino's *Questiones disputatae de veritate*. The young phenomenologist did not rule out preparing her own treatise on methodology and Thomistic theory of cognition that would include the necessity of explanation of scholastic terms¹⁰. Therefore, one can establish, that Spinoza's *Opera Omnia*, among others in that period, helped her in studying problems presented in Aquino's treatise. It is possible that Spinoza's argumentation in reference to Descartes accompanied Stein when she, along with Hedwig Conrad-Martius, edited a little-known French and German translation of Alexander Koyré's work on the Cartesian idea of God. The strong belief of the mutual or common influence on developing philosophical views accompanied the Philosopher in all her works. There is but one goal of philosophical discourse and all philosophical endeavours: to understand the world. Establishing one's life experience as the starting point in order to understand the world allows to express this basic philosophical problem in such a concise mode. The condition of full understanding and realization of postulates is the unity of philosophy, finding an attitude towards deduction that enables the explanation of everything¹¹. That is why Edith Stein included such titles as Spinoza's *Ethics* into her intellectual reflections on the "heart of the matter".

An important question, which also needs to be asked, is whether rational studies concerning issues included in the first parts of *Ethics* somehow influenced the personal decision to transform the idea of God into deep personal faith¹². Which topics, aspects or terms were inspiring in editing the works and

5 Tamże, s. 13-14.

6 My translation of: E. Stein, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden 1917–1938*, Freiburg 1991, s. 142, por. cyt.: "Meine Arbeiten sind immer nur Niederschläge dessen, was mich im Leben beschäftigt hat, weil ich nun mal so konstruiert bin, dass ich reflektieren muss".

7 *Intertekstualność* [w:] *Słownik terminów literackich*, red. A. Popławska, P. Szelaąg, K. Kotowski, Warszawa, s. 74.

8 She had the same opinion on Goethe's *Faust*, an invaluable piece of literary history which preferred the narcissistic ideal of man. Por. E. Stein, *Twierdza duchowa*, przeł. I. J. Adamska, Poznań 2006, s. 123 n.

9 Edith Stein's letter no. 49 to Ludwig Sebastian of February 21, 1926, [w:] E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis In Briefen. Ersten Teil 1916-1933*, Freiburg 2005 (ESGA 2), s. 77-79. The original is in the Archives of Carmel in Cologne. Other titles included: H. Bergson, D. Hume, I. Kant, J. Locke.

10 Edith Stein's letter to Roman Ingarden: Letters from August 8, 1925, and October 9, 1926, [w:] E. Stein, *Briefe an Roman Ingarden 1917–1938*, Freiburg, 1991, s. 158-159. 171-172. Zob też: F. Férmín, *Edyta Stein. Cz. 2. Pisma*, przeł. M. Drozdowicz, Poznań 2010, s. 40-41.

11 E. Stein, *Einführung...*, s. 29.

12 F. Férmín, dz. cyt., s. 10. 37.

developing the Philosopher's views throughout the years? The area of studies of the "early" works of Edith Stein was completely different from Spinoza's. Until becoming acquainted with Thomism, ontological issues concerning the First Cause were quite distant to her, although in conclusion to her PhD dissertation she does not rule out the thought about the matter of God on the basis of following *hominis religiosi experiences*¹³. Later on, it was these studies that led her to experiencing God as a Person who acted in her own life, and then to determining the Essence of Existence and activities of the Absolute, the Prime Mover. It can be assumed that Spinoza's atheistic assumptions entitled Edith to accept the possibility of impartial reflection on God's existence and work. It was only in *Endliches und ewiges Sein* did she give her full answer to that topic, supported by studies of Aquino, Aristotle and Duns Scotus. Thus, are there coincident judgements in this matter that were initiated by reading Spinoza's assumptions?

The Notion of Substance

A significant problem in question is the matter of substance – which is mentioned by the Philosopher herself in her autobiography in relation to Spinoza. The notion of substance was explored by the author for many years. Clearly she was looking for inspiration to study this problem, as one of the most crucial in philosophy, by analysing the works of other philosophers. Eventually, she presented her position in her own studies on ontology.

According to the sources, Spinoza derived the notion of substance from Aristotelian and scholastic philosophy¹⁴. He proves in *Ethics* that "substance" is equal to "individual being" which is also indivisible, and thus – sole¹⁵; by substance he means "that which is in itself, and is conceived through itself; in other words, that of which a conception can be formed independently of any other conception"¹⁶. The "negative" definition of substance requires from the reader changing one's point of view, rejecting schematic thinking imposed by Aristotelian interpretation and developed by Christian communities. Substance as a term is so general, that if one wants to get to the very essence of it, hidden in the definition, one needs to suspend one's "own cognition of things" and previously shaped ways of thinking¹⁷. What is expressed here is the similarity to phenomenological assumptions of "bracketing" in methodology and academic research.

Stein also uses the Aristotelian definition of substance, however her conclusions on individuality of substance bring her to different assumptions. Foremost, she proves that the Aristotelian notion can be understood in various ways. The first difference concerns the meaning: the basic foundation which is not limited by anything and also the definition of individuality: substance is "this over here" (*dieses Etwas da oder Diesde*)¹⁸. However, the context of introducing more detailed analysis is different. Edith Stein undertakes the task of establishing the definition of substance in order to show the uniqueness of every individual in the human species and the human nature in relation to other created beings. In his conclusion, Spinoza encloses all beings in one substance – God. In relation to the use of such terminology by both Spinoza and Stein, reflections on substance inevitably lead to facing the problem of necessity of that which is infinite as opposed to that which is finite¹⁹, and later on – to equating God with essence and existence.

The analysis of *Ethics* and comments points to an important fact, that Spinoza uses terms derived from Aristotelian tradition, but uses them differently from Saint Thomas. What is crucial in studying the

13 E. Stein, *O zagadnieniu...*, s. 50.

14 "[...]substance is always an individual being" [w:] Arystoteles, *Metafizyka*, przeł. K. Leśniak, Warszawa 1984, s. 1003a

15 J. Żelazna, *Pojęcie substancji w Etyce Spinozy i problem jego interpretacji*, [w:] „Przegląd Filozoficzny – Nowa Seria” 2005, nr 2 (54), s. 106.

16 B. Spinoza, *Etyka w porządku geometrycznym dowiedziona*, przeł. I. Myślicki, Warszawa 2008, pt I, pro. III.

17 J. Żelazna, dz. cyt., s. 112-113.

18 E. Stein, *Endliches und ewiges Sein. Versuch eines Aufstiegs zum Sinn des Seins*, Freiburg 1950, s. 122.

19 J. Żelazna, dz. cyt., s. 108-109.

reason behind this difference is the use of philosophical method. Respecting methodology in order to construct a coherent philosophical system is one of the foundations of academic research. If so, were Spinoza's methodological assumptions inspirational for Stein?

Inspired by Method?

The first significant issue is the method of following scholarly pursuits. In the early works of Edith Stein we find reference to Euclidean way of solving problems²⁰. What follows is the question of the possibility of constructing a coherent philosophical system, which Spinoza had already tried to achieve. He adjudicated philosophical problems on the basis of so-called propositions written in the form of mathematical axioms, generating theorems from them, proving them in a mathematical way and eventually confronting drawn conclusions with known facts. He called this method of philosophizing *more geometrico*, because in its construction it resembled the construction of Euclidean geometry, in which from several axioms one can create a fully developed science. Each proposition is a short sentence in which two (or more) terms are joined by a logical relation and are deprived of any commentary. This way of presentation allows the work to be understood and interpreted in various ways and that is why each and every summary of Spinoza's idea can be suspected of abuse or imprecision²¹.

What could fascinate Edith Stein, a young apprentice of psychology who was reading a philosophical book on her holidays, was the creation and consistent use of a precise research method. After all, the young, ambitious student decides to leave the University of Wrocław and the chair of philosophy led by the prominent William Stern, because it failed to provide her with an appropriate intellectual method²². Benedict Spinoza's way of presenting his disquisitions is clear. His work is divided into parts which refer to particular areas of study. Every thesis proposed is accompanied by proof and a longer explanation. Individual theses arise from each other and form a chain of cause and effect. Even if the recipient does not agree with the assumptions or the way of proving them, it forces him to make an intellectual effort of formulating counterproofs in a methodical way. What is quite crucial in Spinosian methodology is that the thinker, while acquiring knowledge – apart from *a priori* assumptions, induction and deduction – uses the fourth, supreme method, called by Spinoza the intuitive method, which is based on cognition of things by their essence included in their definitions²³. Exploring the intuitive essences of things was also important for Stein.

Methodology used by Spinoza was fundamentally different from the method used by Husserl, which was perfect in the sense that it enabled systematic study of the very foundation of things. The method allowed to "bracket" all prejudice, cultural influences or superstitions, and also allowed to focus on the essence, while seeking the Truth. However, it was a method of description and did not form categorical judgements. What was also significant for the young assistant of the creator of the phenomenological method was the use of this method in studying what was related to the human being, which later on formed the notion of phenomenological personalism²⁴.

The way of proving based on Euclidean Elements did not allow Spinoza to abandon geometrical thinking. While analysing Cartesian disquisitions and trying to keep the process of proof construction intact, the philosopher realized that it was impossible to follow the strict discipline of Euclidean method in relation to the meaning of the notions of Cartesian philosophy, which were established by their creator. A different meaning of "substance", assumed in *Ethics*, is an expression of abandoning the Cartesian

20 E. Stein, *Einführung...*, s. 46.

21 S. Nadler, *Spinoza*, przeł. W. Jeżewski, Warszawa 2002, s. 231.

22 E. Stein, *Aus dem Leben...*, s. 174.

23 L. Kołakowski, *Spinoza i tradycje humanizmu nowożytnego*, [w:] B. Spinoza, dz. cyt., s. XIX.

24 A. Półtawski, *Personalizm fenomenologiczny: Edith Stein i Karol Wojtyła*, [w:] „Kwartalnik Filozoficzny” 1995, z. 1, s. 35.

method²⁵. In her *Einführung in die Philosophie* Edith Stein brings up the issue of adjusting methods to conducted studies in detail. Her lectures provide solutions to methodological problems. Her opinions are an important part of the discussion led with those philosophers who made reference to Euclid and based their views on him, until the time of Nicholai Lobaczewski²⁶.

From Method to the Vision of Man in the World

Studies of the philosophy of nature – which were one of Stein's interests, as far as the problems of use of mathematical methods are concerned – were undertaken in later works as a way of seeking the answer to questions about human nature and human relations with the world of nature.

Perceiving the world as an organized unity is undoubtedly what philosophers have in common in seeking the sense of existence. Spinoza thinks that created things are not separate from the First Cause, they are a part of it. This belief of the nature's unity is developed by Spinoza in proposition XIII of the second part of *Ethics*²⁷. The vision of the world presented therein shows the correlation and merging of various modi in one final substance; it also aims to emphasize the category of unity.

The insight of the world in Edith Stein's work does not only aim at constructing a complete philosophy of nature, as she states in *Einführung in die Philosophie*²⁸ – it primarily serves as an explanation of man's place in the world and his relation to it, it is anthropocentric and – eventually – theocentric. One might say then: personalistic. I am writing here mainly about the idea of micro- and macrocosms, which is to show the relation between the creation and the Creator, and not to conclude about the complete merge with the deity²⁹, as Spinoza claimed.

Human spirituality and performing acts of freedom are largely dependent on "what is animalistic in man" (*das Animalische im Menschen*)³⁰. Both spheres, physical and psychic, formed analogically in the world of animals, are spheres which largely limit the freedom of man. There are also spheres associated with the "animal nature" – as it is called in the works of Aquino – such as the sphere of human emotionality and desire, which are commonly known as instinctive functioning. Are these the vegetative features that by Edith Stein are called "microcosm" in man³¹?

It seems that for her the terms micro- and macrocosm are broader. The man has a small world inside his soul which is called the microcosm, and which should be an image, or reflection, of the macrocosm, that is the outer world³². Microcosm for Edith Stein was also the spiritual depth and the soul itself – the basic power which, in the world of macrocosm, builds harmony, peace and unity³³. The idea of micro- and macrocosm was taken from Saint Thomas to show, more precisely, the holistic dimension of humanity³⁴.

Intuition of "microcosm" cannot be treated as a representation of the whole nature understood in the pantheistic sense. The man is not a part of a cosmic deity³⁵. In her discussion on modernism, Stein explicitly dissociates herself from pantheism which, for many philosophers, was created i.a. on the basis of Spinoza's views. She discusses the problem of immanence and transcendence of God and the pos-

25 J. Żelazna Jolanta, dz. cyt., s. 105.

26 E. Stein, *Einführung...*, s. 46–50.

27 B. Spinoza, dz. cyt., s. 81–91.

28 K. Wolsza, *Filozofia przyrody w ujęciu Edyty Stein*, [w:] *Edyta Stein. Filozof i świadek epoki*, red. J. Piecuch, Opole 1997, s. 123–136.

29 M. Hoffman, *Myśl antropologiczna Edyty Stein*, Poznań 2002, s. 28–29.

30 M. Olejniczak, *Wolność miłości. Ontologia osoby ludzkiej w koncepcjach Edyty Stein i Karola Wojtyły*, Tarnów 2010, s. 39.

31 S. Swieżawski, *Św. Tomasz na nowo odczytany*, Poznań 1995, s. 135. Although St. Thomas postulated such a view of macrocosm in human microcosm, it is worth examining whether the emphasized unity of nature shows Spinosian influences.

32 E. Stein, *Ganzheitliches Leben. Schriften zur Religiösen Bildung*, Freiburg 1990, s. 32.

33 Tamże.

34 S. Swieżawski, dz. cyt., s. 135.

35 M. Hoffman, dz. cyt., s. 28.

sibility of experiencing Him³⁶. Asking about the possibility of grasping the foundation of existence by natural contemplative cognition, she abides by her relativistic concept of God and the created world. She concludes that she "somehow is related to God" and that she has "a trace of God" in herself³⁷. At the same time, man is a separate being, bound to personal dialogue, the aim of which is unity.

The concept of unity – *Einheit* – is a leitmotiv of a kind in all her works: the psychophysical unity, the unity of value, the unity of life and action, the axiomatic unity of mutuality, the unity of three persons in the Holy Trinity, all of which has clear translation into practical conclusions. Taking the notion of unity into more consideration, what is interesting about possible influence on the works of Edith Stein is Johannes Hirschmann's statement. He notices that including the notion of *Einheit* in *Ways to Know God: The Symbolic Theology of Dionysius the Areopagite (Wege der Gottserkenntnis)* by Stein – Saint Teresia Benedicta – can point to the influence of idealists such as Hegel and Spinoza³⁸.

One cannot "Christianise" Spinoza's assumptions, of course, and it is quite difficult to accept the possible reception of Spinoza's views by Stein. One can only look for the common denominator by referring to the Judaic vision of the world. That vision could somehow influence both Spinoza and Stein, who were both Jewish. That vision was also used by Saint Paul in the following passage: "For in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28). Everything is in Him. Not only in the creative, or – in human terms – causal way, but it is in Him in the never ending relation to the communion which is beyond creation. Jewish anthropology sees man as an indivisible whole, which merges spheres of physicality (*basar*), mentality (*nefesh*) and spirituality (*ruah*), which in turn is the human, inner place where God lives³⁹. And this Judaic vision of the world, as well as abandoning the spirit-body dualism by Spinoza, does not seem to lack significance for Stein, when she was forming her holistic idea of man.

Such triunity of a human being is finally accepted by Stein in her anthropological and ontological works, and even in Stein's *Kreuzwissenschaft. Studie über Joannes vom Kreuz*. Triunity in a man is the image of the tri-only God. Following this assumption, Teresia Benedicta always postulated keeping the individuality and relativity, when she tried to explain the ontological relation and mutuality⁴⁰.

One of the propositions of *Ethics* states that the order of ideas matches the order of things. Everything that happens in the human mind has its equivalent in the human body, but also nothing happens in the body that we cannot comprehend by means of the mind. It is of course a postulate of a certain study programme. Spinoza has no basis to think that any man, even uneducated, does not know, speaking in modern terms, neurophysiological bases of his own experience and behaviour. The mind is a complex representation of the body. By knowing our bodies and emotional reactivity, we know ourselves. Emotions (affects) can explain the reason behind certain behaviours, leading further to physical and neurophysiological causes⁴¹. Such suggestions, to certain extent, correspond to the theory of empathy⁴². According to Edith Stein, the human body is a place of receiving sensual messages coming from outside,

36 E. Stein, *Was ist der Mensch? Eine theologische Anthropologie*, Freiburg 1994, s. 217-218. Contributing to this unfinished discussion with modernism, Edith Stein quotes the whole text of Pious IX encyclical *Pascendi dominici gregis* from the year 1907. Tereza Brindusa Palade writes about Spinoza's influence on forming dangerous modernistic views as a matter of current importance, especially in the context of the autonomy of rational cognition and faith. Zob. T.B. Palade, *Why thinking in faith? A reappraisal of Edith Stein's view of reason*, "Forum Philosophicum" 15 (2010), s. 403.

37 E. Stein, *Wiedza Krzyża. Studium o św. Janie od Krzyża*, przeł. I.J. Adamska, Kraków 1999, s. 117; zob. też B. Beckmann, *Wprowadzenie*, [w:] Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża E. Stein, *Drogi poznania Boga. Studium o Dionizym Areopagicie i przekład jego dzieł*, przeł. G. Sowinski, Kraków 2006, s. 42.

38 J. Hirschmann to Edith Stein, letter 689, 30.04.1941, [w:] E. Stein, *Selbstbildnis In Briefen. Zweiter Teil 1933-1942*. Freiburg 2006 (ESGA 3), s. 467. In that part of the correspondence there is another letter which proves that reading Spinoza was also quite popular in Catholic circles: Ida Kroftisch to Edyty Stein, letter 509, 13.05.1937: "I am currently reading Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise from year 1670. It's impressive." (my translation), tamże: s. 246. There is no proof, that Edith Stein had this book when she was in convent. If the study on relation between Stein and Spinoza shall be continued in a more detailed work, archival research on the convent's book collection should be conducted.

39 J. Kuźniar, *Książka o duszy*, Kraków 2004, s. 79.

40 This problem was thoroughly addressed in: R. K. Wilk, *Podstawa jednostkowego bytu człowieka. Studium w oparciu o myśl Edyty Stein*, Kraków 2009.

41 B. Spinoza, dz. cyt., pt. II, prop. VII.

42 Tamże, prop. XXV and the following.

but also inside the body. The body is also a place of expressing various experiences and an instrument of his will. Thus, reactions to received impulses are expressed bodily⁴³.

Ethical postulates

Aspiration towards the integrity of a human being is strongly emphasized among the postulates of ethics. The result of human psychophysical unity is noticing the role of emotions in ethical functioning. When we analyse the ethical issues discussed by Stein and Spinoza, it is worth noting that ethical issues are not basically a separate lecture, but a part of a whole system which encompasses ontological, psychological, theological and sociological issues. The third part of *Ethics* on the origin and nature of affects is a specific study of psychology. Descriptions of human reactions to happiness, embarrassment and sadness as well as observation of human pride and envy reflect the vices of human nature. According to Spinoza, a man can be free only when he is motivated to action by his own rational nature. And because cognition is gradable, freedom can also have different grades. The relativity of choices, the greatness or gravity of everything good and bad done in one's life depends on the grade of one's cognition and understanding. Freedom, therefore, is about aspiring towards taking action and judging specific situations. An properly evaluated situation leads us towards freedom – the agreement between us and the rational nature. However, a badly evaluated situation leads to giving in to one's affects⁴⁴. Such conclusions form a very pessimistic image of human freedom. Spinosian determinism towards freedom as a factor that forms a human being, as postulated by Stein, makes up two arguments raised by philosophers in relation to this ethically crucial issue.

For Spinoza, cognition is the most important human activity, in terms of broadly understood ethics. It is rational thinking that is so characteristic of a human being, so his behaviour should reflect the rationality of his nature. It is an ideal assumption which obliges a man, as a *modus* of God, to aspiration towards perfection and realization of virtue⁴⁵. Observation made on the subject of studying mental states of other people are somehow reflected in Stein's analysis of empathy, but in her whole work, Stein's *opus* is much more optimistic. Empathy enables cognitive activities in order to describe the essence of mental states. Obviously, cognition goes ahead of conscious choice of behaviour and the man is limited in his freedom because of his physiology.

Priority is the issue of freedom, which Spinoza devoted a great part of his work to. The potential of making independent choices is crucial. For Stein, it is the potential of realising our wishes that makes us free. The size of our freedom is shown when we can decide upon our desires by the power of our free choice which comes from the depths of our souls: "I can", which, obviously, comes before being conscious of our wishes. Freedom is also an experience that we can do something or abandon it. Such an experience is always very personal, and is an experience of a specific person – the awareness of freedom, of using it or rejecting it. The feeling of freedom is always knowing that there is something I can⁴⁶. Freedom, in Stein's thought, is seen in its whole as the free gift of oneself in love⁴⁷. That love, however, is not only intellectual love, as Spinoza postulated, but total love. It is far more than psychophysiological impulses, but of course human complexity encompasses this particular sphere as well.

43 E. Stein, *O zagadnieniu...*, s. 81. 144-145. Zob. też: R. K. Wilk, *Człowiek – istota wezwana, Antropologiczno-personalistyczne aspekty filozoficznej twórczości Edyty Stein – św. Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża*, Kraków 2003, s. 27 n.

44 C. Kalita, *Relacje rozumu i wolności w filozofii Kartezjusza, Spinozy i Locke'a*, „Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie Skłodowska. Sectio I Philosophia – Sociologia”, 2005, vol. 30, s. 47.

45 Tamże.

46 E. Stein, *Einführung...*, s. 208.

47 M. Olejniczak, dz. cyt., s. 247.

Edith Stein did not build a uniform system of ethics⁴⁸, although ethical issues were of great importance to her. The unpublished, lost part of her PhD dissertation also included thoughts on these issues. But her whole legacy lets us presume, that the message of her life and works make it possible to reconstruct her postulates of "the ethics of unity"⁴⁹.

The modern philosophical studies on Spinosian works show that *Ethics* of this Jewish philosopher contains valuable philosophical intuitions that were not discussed because of criticism and labelling of Spinoza. Edith Stein, by analysing his work so thoroughly, showed great respect towards those who seek the truth, but also took her own stance in the discussion. In her studies she followed the rules of examining the essence of things and rejecting judgement due to prejudice. Such an open attitude and readiness for scholarly discussions is absolutely necessary in contemporary studies in order to break certain stereotypes in science and culture.

What enabled taking Spinoza's work into the area of research was leaving out prejudice and superstitions – the so called epoché, typical of the phenomenological method. The phenomenologist, even if she doesn't agree with the full philosophical proof, allows others to talk. She makes her own observations of the discussion, and later she confronts them with the results of her own study. It can be clearly seen that issues discussed by Spinoza are also present in Edith Stein's works even if these results do not coincide, even if the so called "influence" of Spinoza is not seen as absorption, paradigm of thoughts, concrete views or founding one's own metaphysics and anthropology. This paper tried to follow the areas described by Spinoza in the works of Edith Stein, but establishing more precise results has to be supported by academic experiments and detailed intertextual analysis, which is beyond this paper.

Edith Stein was not afraid to lead philosophical discussions even if they could shake the foundations of her beliefs. She was looking for a method that could serve as a base for proving the whole truth, whole sense, and eventually she found it in phenomenology. She is also open to those philosophical systems which provide her with appropriate terms to express the truth she could feel in experiencing her own existence. In her work *Endliches und ewiges Sein* she shows great respect to all those seeking to prove truth on the basis of rational speculations⁵⁰. A sharp discussion with Ingarden shows, however, that it is not faithfulness to the method that leads to finding truth, but rather faithfulness to truth that is presented to us, that is "given". The dialogue with the theses presented by Spinoza shows that intuition of seeking truth is worthy even when explaining axioms leads the opposing speakers to different conclusions. Edith Stein showed her respect both to her mother, who remained an obdurate (and one could say, unreconciled with her daughter) Jewish woman, and to her Master – Husserl who was not able to include experiencing God completely in his system of logics. Sister Teresia Benedicta of the Cross hoped to reach out to these two in order to find Truth and Completeness of the new reality of "direct examination". One can assume that she also wanted to reach out to the maker of lenses, whose life metaphorically was based on the power of freedom of his life choices – between the light and darkness.

48 K. Wolsza, *Prawda – dobro – piękno. Od epistemologii do ontologii wartości*, [w:] *Oblicza prawdy. Edyta Stein – s. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża*, red. J. Machnac, Wrocław 2010, s. 55.

49 Jan Paweł II, *List Motu Proprio, ogłaszający św. Brygidę Szwedzką, św. Katarzynę ze Sieny i św. Teresę Benedyktę od Krzyża współpatronkami Europy*, Rzym 1999.

50 E. Stein, *Endliches...*, s. 109-110.

Streszczenie/Zusammenfassung

Inspiracja *Etyką* Barucha Spinozy w twórczości Edyty Stein

Nie ma wątpliwości co do tego, że Edyta Stein prowadziła filozoficzny dialog nie tylko z wielkimi mistrzami i z innymi fenomenologami, ale także z filozofami reprezentującymi różne nurty myślowe. Autorka niniejszego artykułu rozważa problem, czy możliwy był wpływ Spinozy na Stein. W pismach autobiograficznych i w korespondencji Stein wymienia *Etykę* Spinozy. Fakt ten stanowi uzasadnienie dla poszukiwania analogii między twórczością Spinozy i Edyty Stein. W filozofii Edyty Stein jak i Spinozy są podobieństwa, ale także i różnice. Wielce prawdopodobne jest, że Spinoza zainspirował Stein do posługiwania się metodą naukową. Ważnymi problemami podejmowanymi przez Spinozę i Stein były: substancja i badanie ontologiczne, wolność, jedność świata, całościowy charakter struktury psychofizycznej i znaczenie emocji w wychowaniu etycznym.

Słowa kluczowe: Edyta Stein, Baruch Spinoza, substancja, wolność, fenomenologia.

Inspirationen aus Baruch Spinozas *Ethik* im Schaffen von Edith Stein

Es besteht kein Zweifel daran, dass Stein im Dialog philosophiert und das nicht nur mit großen Denkmeistern und mit anderen Phänomenologen. Dieser Dialog wird mit unterschiedlichen Philosophen und verschiedenen Denkrichtungen geführt. Die Autorin des Referats befasst sich mit dem Problem, ob der Einfluss Spinozas auf Stein möglich war. In der Autobiografie und den Korrespondenzen erwähnt Stein *Ethik* von Baruch Spinoza. Dies ist die Grundlage für Versuche einer Analogie in philosophischen Untersuchungen von Spinoza und Edith Stein. In der Philosophie von Edith Stein, als auch in der von Spinoza können Elemente aufgezeichnet werden, die sowohl einigen als auch unterscheiden. Spinoza inspirierte Stein höchstwahrscheinlich dazu, eine wissenschaftliche Methode anzuwenden. Die wichtigsten gemeinsamen Themen waren: die Substanz und ontologische Untersuchung, die Freiheit, die Einheit der Welt sowie die Ganzheit der psycho-physischen Struktur und die Bedeutung von Emotionen in der ethischen Bildung.

Schlüsselwörter: Edith Stein, Baruch Spinoza, Substanz, Freiheit, Phänomenologie.