



Cuadernos de pensamiento 38

Publicación del Seminario «Ángel González Álvarez»
de la Fundación Universitaria Española
Número monográfico sobre Edith Stein:
Filosofía de la educación
Año 2025

Race and education: A Steinian vision for human development

*Raza y educación. Comprender el desarrollo humano
desde la mirada de Edith Stein*

WILLIAM TULLIUS¹

American Public University System, Charles Town (USA)

ID ORCID 0000-0003-4920-5069

Recibido: 23/02/2024 | Revisado: 29/10/2024
Aceptado: 04/11/2024 | Publicado: 30/12/2025
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51743/cpe.479>

¹ (william.tullius@mycampus.apus.edu) Ph.D. in Philosophy from the New School for Social Research and is currently an Assistant Professor of Philosophy at American Public University System. He has previously occupied visiting positions at the American University in Cairo, Gonzaga University, and the University of Dallas. His main areas of research revolve around the development of a phenomenological and personalist ethical theory through the study of Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler, and Edith Stein. He is the author of *On the Ethical Philosophy of Edith Stein: Outlines of Morality* (Lexington Books, Forthcoming 2024); “Person in Community, Repentance and Historical Meaning: From an Individual to a Social Ethics in Stein’s Early Phenomenological Treatises,” in *The Ethics and Metaphysics of Edith Stein: Applications and Implications*, ed. Anthony Calcagno and Michael F. Andrews (Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature AG, 2022), 73–87; and “Person and Spirit: On the Ethical and Pedagogical Implications of Edith Stein’s Christian Personalism,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 61 (2021): 61–76.

ABSTRACT: Edith Stein published *An Investigation Concerning the State* in 1925, the same in which Hitler's *Mein Kampf* first appeared. Stein's analysis of political theory there demonstrates her awareness of what she would later describe to Pope Pius XI as a growing 'idolization of race' that was beginning to infect German culture. Her analysis of ethnic community in that work very obviously represents an effort to combat the intellectual bases for any form of racism in political and cultural life in her contemporary Germany. Over time, Stein's demonstrated commitment to ethnic and racial diversity in society develops into a general theological and metaphysical vision of diversity as being integral for human development, i.e., for the unfolding of universal humanity across time. In tandem with this further development, Stein's approach to undermining the spiritual bases for racism in society shifts from discussion in light of politics to discussion in light of pedagogy, indicating the important role that education is to play in fulfilling the goal of human development. This paper seeks to bring Stein's philosophy of race and her philosophy of education into focus in order to understand how each works together with the other in Stein's response to racial prejudice.

KEYWORDS: Edith Stein, Education, Ethics, Race, Racism.

RESUMEN: Edith Stein publicó *Una investigación sobre el Estado* en 1925, el mismo año en que apareció por primera vez *Mein Kampf* de Hitler. El análisis de Stein de la teoría política demuestra su percepción de lo que más tarde describiría al Papa Pío XI como una creciente "idolatría de la raza" que estaba empezando a infectar la cultura alemana. Su análisis de la comunidad étnica en esa obra representa, muy obviamente, un esfuerzo por combatir las bases intelectuales de cualquier forma de racismo en la vida política y cultural de su Alemania contemporánea. Con el tiempo, el demostrado compromiso de Stein con la diversidad étnica y racial en la sociedad se desarrolla en una visión teológica y metafísica general de la diversidad como parte integrante del desarrollo humano, es decir, del despliegue de la humanidad universal a través del tiempo. Paralelamente a esta evolución, el planteamiento de Stein para socavar las bases espirituales del racismo en la sociedad pasa de la discusión a la luz de la política a la discusión a la luz de la pedagogía, indicando el importante papel que debe desempeñar la educación en el cumplimiento del objetivo del desarrollo humano. Este artículo trata de poner de relieve la filosofía de Stein sobre la raza y su filosofía de la educación, con el fin de comprender cómo cada una de ellas trabaja juntamente con la otra en la respuesta de Stein a los prejuicios raciales.

KEYWORDS: Edith Stein, educación, ética, racismo, raza.

1. INTRODUCTION

Edith Stein published *An Investigation Concerning the State* in 1925, the same year in which Hitler published *Mein Kampf*, announcing his ethno-nationalist political program and the antisemitic ideology which would serve as its foundation. In her phenomenological analyses of the ontic fabric of the state and of the forms of sociality in which it is founded, Stein also touches upon the relationship of the state to racial and ethnic community, albeit in a radically opposite way from Hitler's. Stein's analysis, already at this early date, thus adumbrates the problem of what, in a 1933 letter to Pope Pius XI (Stein, 2020, 394), she would much more passionately describe as the crisis of the 'idolization of race' then developing in her native Germany, the roots of which were already becoming visible in the early years of the Weimar Republic.

Stein couched this early contribution to the philosophy of race within her political philosophy, the results of which argued in favor of the value of a multi-ethnic polity, a point which was of obvious significance for her as both a Jew and as a German. Later, however, Stein would shift her focus away from political philosophy as the primary theoretical space within which to consider the problems posed by the reality of racism in her contemporary society. In her lectures for the Deutschen Institut für wissenschaftliche Pädagogik, held in Münster during the Winter of 1932/33, Stein would instead address race within the context of a philosophy of education grounded in a philosophical anthropology that would draw upon the results of the phenomenological and metaphysical research that she had carried out throughout her preceding works. The reason for this shift seems to be embedded within the political and ethical analysis which she had earlier carried out in her work on the state, wherein she had demonstrated that perversions of the prevailing morality—of which we might say that racism is a prime example—belong essentially to the sphere of the person and thus cannot be sufficiently addressed by state interventions within the legal sphere alone.

While such political interventions in addressing the moral character of a nation through legal mechanisms may offer a push in the right direction in altering the prevailing morality—e.g., enacting laws that punish hate crimes or that limit free speech by outlawing antisemitic literature—, and thus while

these sorts of legal acts have a legitimate role to play in producing conditions for justice within a given society, genuinely altering a society's typical moral valuations themselves can only be accomplished within the personal sphere, i.e., within a level of the person that is essentially untouched by legal regulation (Stein, 2006, 155). That is to say that racism, as a moral phenomenon, can only be eradicated by way of essentially personal rather than impersonal political/legal acts. Such personal acts can only occur within individual persons, either on their own or solidarily in community with others, while it is personal acts that ultimately constitute the character of the community (Baseheart, 2010, 64). Since racism is understood here as 'sin', in Stein's purely philosophical sense as an act that erodes solidarity and that disturbs the equilibrium of the world (Stein, 2006, 159), racism can be actually eradicated only *via* acts of repentance and of reforming the structures of personal interiority in its proper responsiveness to the order of true values, including especially the absolute value of persons (Tullius, 2019).

Persons possess value not *only* insofar as they are persons, however fundamental the value of being-a-person necessarily is for Stein. Rather, Stein holds that persons *also* bear the values of the communities of which they are a part, including the ethnic/racial communities from out of which they live their lives, in proportion as they participate in those communities, and by which they are uniquely marked. As Stein would ultimately argue in *Finite and Eternal Being*, in the total unfolding of humanity in its historical and teleological tension towards the fulfillment of the 'Kingdom of God', theologically construed, each individual race reveals a human value that is uniquely its own and thus contributes something eminently valuable to the whole. Following Stein's intuitions, I contend that racism necessarily misses and, indeed, positively endeavors to *rob* humanity of that distinct human value born by and disclosed in those races who are the objects of racial prejudices, whoever they might be in any particular time and place. Repentance of racism, as a personal act, must thus endeavor to open the personality and to develop its potentialities for encounter with the whole universe of values, including racial ones.

In Stein's work, reorganizing and developing personal character is a function of repentance (Tullius, 2022, 84–85), but it is also the province of education to facilitate the proper unfolding of personality in the young by opening

up possibilities for the full disclosure of values and for facilitating the development of a moral character. Thus, Stein pays special attention, especially in her 1932 lecture course *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*, to the question of race.

In this paper, I investigate the theme of race in Stein's educational philosophy, paying particular attention to the close ties between human and personal development as the goals of education in Stein's thought, and the moral work of opening the soul through personal formation and repentance. I argue that Stein's philosophy of race and philosophy of education each make important contributions to our understanding of the work still to be done in education in developing a full consciousness of the values of all persons in meeting the problems of racism today. In exploring these themes, I will first situate Stein's thought concerning the phenomenon of race as she proposes it first in *An Investigation Concerning the State* and finally in *Finite and Eternal Being*. From there, I will explore the ways in which Stein reasserts the race theme in the context of her philosophy of education and will conclude with some reflections on how education is to serve as at least part of Stein's answer to racism as a moral problem.

2. RACE, STATE AND VALUE

Preliminarily, a discussion of the phenomenon of racism in light of the work of Edith Stein requires that we first acknowledge a degree of ambiguity in regard to the language of 'race', 'ethnicity', and 'racism' as it pertains to Stein's own philosophical/moral/sociological lexicon. In touching upon the themes of what today we might refer to as the 'philosophy of race', Stein's preferred term by which to designate the theme of her inquiry is not 'race' (*Rasse*), nor does she speak of 'racism' (*Rassismus*) in her philosophical or pedagogical works. She does refer, in her letter to Pope Pius XI, to the 'idolization of race' (*Vergötzung der Rasse*), as already mentioned, as well as 'race-hatred' (*Rassenhaß*); however, her relationship to the idea of 'race' is somewhat complicated, as is her understanding of the distinction of *Rasse* and *Volk*, as we will have occasion to see in the following section. Given that, where Stein's work

deals with the problems of what we might call a ‘philosophy of race’ today, she characteristically prefers to discuss the idea of a ‘*Volk*’, which, in the contexts of Stein’s work, we can translate as a ‘people’ in the specific sense of an ‘ethnic community’. Where we perhaps more loosely speak of ‘race and ethnicity’ in connection with the themes and moral challenges of racism in contemporary discourse, we can understand Stein’s use of the term *Volk* and her critical analysis of the relationship of *Volk* to the state to embrace many of the themes by which contemporary anglophone discourse, at any rate, endeavors to adumbrate the themes of ‘race’ and ‘racial prejudice’. For this reason, except where explicitly stated, I will understand Stein’s discussion of the idea of a *Volk* to involve discussion of ethnic and racialized communities in the contemporary sense, and will translate this term accordingly.

Keeping this in mind, in *An Investigation Concerning the State*, Stein discusses the relationship of the *Volk*—i.e., the ethnic/racial community—to the state, working on the assumption, earlier validated in the second treatise of her *Beiträge zur philosophischen Begründung der Psychologie und der Geisteswissenschaften*, that any supra-personal spiritual formation must be borne in the current of consciousness of the individuals who participate in it and make it up, and particularly in the essential structures of sociality open to the person in her essential relationality. As she had argued earlier, drawing upon Scheler and Tönnies, there are three forms of sociality in which the person may participate—the mass (*Masse*), community (*Gemeinschaft*), including the community of life (*Lebensgemeinschaft*), and association/society (*Gesellschaft*). Community is marked by the essentially personal relationship of its members to one another, i.e., that they approach and recognize each other in their forms of communal interaction as fellow subjects. Association/society, on the other hand, has more the character of a rationalization of communal life through the introduction of forms of ‘mechanization’ of social life. The essential marker of the association is thus a tendency for its members to approach one another less as persons and more as objects of control, manipulation, coaxing, etc. for some extrinsic desired result (Stein, 2000, 130), e.g., where a business association is formed on the basis of contractual agreements and in which each person plays an agreed upon part towards achieving the goal of producing a product to sell. Although associations represent distinct social forms from

communities, Stein holds that they are always founded upon a prior, really existing community in order, first and foremost, to *be* as associations.

Now, in the opening of *An Investigation Concerning the State*, Stein defines the state as a form of association, so that in asking about the relation of the ethnic/racial community to the state, she must not only ask how the idea of a *Volk* stands towards the political structure of the state as an executor of sovereign power in which the individuals subject to its control may or may not participate, but more fundamentally she must ask about the relationship of the *Volk* to the community of life upon which the life of the state is borne and in which its functions are carried out. The question seems to be fundamentally whether we must imagine the community upon which the state is founded to be some ethnic/racial community or whether the community that forms the basis for a state need be racialized for the state to arise in the first place.

Initially, for Stein, it appears evident that the ethnic community and the state community, i.e., the community in which the state-association is founded, are something formally separate from one another. From one direction, it is obvious that a *Volk* does not need to have a state in order to be *as* a *Volk*. She cites the example of the Polish people who were perhaps even more unified and confirmed in their consciousness of being Poles after the dissolution of the Polish state in the 19th century than they were before that point (Stein, 2006, 16–17). Moreover, it is also evident that the particular phenomenon of the ethnic state is not the only possible formation open to a state as such. A multi-ethnic community, as in the Roman Empire, can also be unified into a single political community without any essential contradiction. However, certain considerations do force Stein to concede that it is more difficult, when approaching the relation of state to ethnic community from the other direction, to answer the issue of whether or not the state is separable from *some* ethnic community as its ontic basis—or, to put it more clearly, whether the life community that founds any given state must always already have been an ethnic/racial one (Stein, 2006, 18).

She must consider that there is, on the one hand, the empirical reality of racial/ethnic tensions between groups within multi-ethnic polities as well as, on the other hand, the historical reality that, within such polities, there have typically been specific ethnic communities that have exclusively held the

center of both official and unofficial power. For example, in the context of the Roman Empire, it was originally the Italo-Roman *Volk* who formed the basis of the Roman state and who were at the center of its life in serving its state and other social functions. Likewise, in the early history of the United States of America, those who wielded political, economic, and social power and thus who recognized themselves as ‘Americans’ were exclusively Anglo-Saxon peoples. Only later in the history of these eventually multi-ethnic polities did it happen that non-Italo-Romans or non-Anglo-Saxons could come to occupy state-functions in their respective societies or could see themselves as ‘Romans’ or ‘Americans’ at all.

Now, in the context in which she is writing, i.e., in the aftermath of the collapse of the German Empire after World War I and in the political work of constituting the new Weimar Republic, the question that is tacitly in play in the midst of Stein’s concern for the relationship of the state community to the ethnic community is the question, does Germany require ethnic Germans to serve as the bearers of its state functions in order to *be* Germany at all? If so, then her readers must wonder, as indeed they did wonder at the time, what place might there be for ethnic minorities like the Jews within those parts of the former German Empire that still remained under the political/legal control of the Germans—in other words, what is *their* relation to the German state? For that matter, what is their relation to the *Germans themselves*? For Stein, analysis of the ontic structure of the *state* does not permit any answer to these questions. As she puts it, “the ontic composition of the state leaves open the issue of how the persons [within it] might stand to one another” (Stein, 2006, 19).

However, from analysis of the *spirituality of the person* and its essential interpersonal relationality which she presupposes here, Stein can derive the conclusion that a state can exist only on the basis of an already existing community, and that community ties are essentially necessary for a state to exist (19). Yet, such ties need not be of an ethnic/racial sort. “The civil community requires,” she insists, “no ethnic community in order to be” (20). Yet, for Stein the analysis of this relationship, and the further question of whether in the absence of a multi-ethnic community, the state requires that some single, developed ethnic community serve as its basis—i.e., the question of whether the

specifically *racial/ethnic* identity of the community is ultimately the most foundational of identities to be played out within such a community, and thus whether or not the possible integration of a foreign race, e.g., immigrants/refugees, within that community would represent a threat to the state itself—all of this remains naïve without a more targeted analysis of the essence of ethnic community *as such*.

Now addressing this subject head-on, Stein (2006) holds that any *Volk*, as such, “comprises an open multiplicity of individuals” (21) that is indifferent to the personal particularity of its members. Indeed, the ethnic community as *ethnic* makes no demands at all upon the personality—i.e., that the person should be taken up whole and entire into its life. This is very much in contrast with the family or the religious community, for example, in which every aspect of my life will be dedicated in some sense to my family or my church. Yet, for an ethnic community to *be* as a community at all, there must be, as Sarah Borden (2003) puts it, “a ‘we’ orientation and openness to the group” (61). In such openness, ethnic community must therefore entail a “continual mediation of solidarity among those elements separated in time and space” (Stein, 2006, 22), i.e., a feeling of belonging to and with the community such that “every member of the ethnic community must bear the imprint of his or her membership in it [...] at least in the fact that the member represents the ethnic *type*” (22). For Stein, this means that one’s belonging to an ethnic group may be somewhat fluid rather than static—i.e., in principle, I can leave my people and become enculturated into some other ethnic community at some level sufficient no longer really to possess the claim to belong in any meaningful sense to my previous ethnic community.² This possibility aside, however,

² Stein will expand upon this implication later in her Münster lectures on philosophical anthropology. Her chief example is of the children of immigrants to the United States from, say, Germany, Italy, or Poland, who, extracted from out of their original ethnic communities, become so enculturated into their new community that they are, in a sense, no longer Germans, Italians, or Poles in any meaningful, i.e., cultural, sense (Stein, 2004, 149–150). Here, Stein very obviously departs from the racial ideology of Nazism, so far as it reduces racial or ethnic belonging to a matter of blood and of blood-ties, which obviously are not eradicated in the children of immigrants. This also differs from the attitudes of the American children of emigrants from various parts of the world who today very typically feel quite strongly about their ethnic ancestries, even if they are culturally quite definitely American and have little to no

by bearing the imprint of the community within oneself, Stein argues that the member of this or that racial or ethnic group will form a part of a community that does in some sense possess “one uniform *ethnic character*” (22).

What this ethnic character consists in is captured in the distinctive culture that emerges from out of its shared life. Indeed, it is *essential* for an ethnic community to be culturally creative—as it is the culture, rather than physical morphography, blood ties, etc. that constitutes the unique identity of the *Volk* (Maskulak, 2012, 67). This is, in fact at the heart of its unique value: that the *Volk* is a “‘personality’ with creative distinctiveness” (Stein, 2006, 24). It is for this reason that the ethnic community mirrors back, in Stein’s view, a certain right to sovereignty, or self-regulation, as a condition for the expression of its spiritual creativity. Thus, where a state does not in fact provide conditions for the cultural creativity of an ethnic group to be found within it—or, in other words where there are elements of structural racism in play within the formation of a society—there seems to be a genuine ethical claim that the ethnic community could make for its right to self-rule in some form—i.e., either to constitute its own ethnic-state or to have an equal right to participate in the regulation of the society in which they are minority members. One can feel here, in Stein’s writing, something of her awareness of and sympathy for the nationalist hopes of ethnic groups of Eastern Europe in the aftermath of the Great War who had previously been denied the right to self-rule or of equal participation in the political life of the state under which they were subjects. One can also feel here the extent to which Stein’s work is meant to be read as a defense of her own Jewish people and their right to be a part of the national life of a post-war German Republic, without at the same time being required to sacrifice their right to be culturally creative precisely as *Jews*.³

familiarity with the cultural worlds of the ethnic communities in which they still in some small way may claim membership. We will, however, leave the issue of this difference of attitude between Stein and our contemporary Irish, Italian, Polish-Americans, etc. to the side.

³ As Marian Maskulak (2012, 64–69) has shown, Stein’s work, even in the dispassionate register in which she carries out phenomenological analysis, always seeks to be a voice for social change. Many other phenomenologists, including Husserl, Scheler, and von Hildebrand in particular, have a similar authorial approach to wrestling with social questions, we might add. For Stein, however, this is particularly the case in her discussion of ethnic community in *An Investigation Concerning the State*.

What is existentially (and morally) necessary for the state, then, is to organize itself into a “civic organization that takes their [the ethnic communities within it] intrinsic lawfulness into account” (Stein, 2006, 25). On the other hand, where there is a failure to accommodate an ethnic community within the pattern of the political, economic, and national life, i.e., where race and state are opposed to one another, the existence of each will become imperiled, so that it is always in the interests of the state and of the national community to recognize the full creative value of the various races existing within it and to enshrine such recognition in the form of law as well as in the architecture of the institutions which constitute the structure of the state and of the civil society correlative to it.

Stein’s early commitment to the value of racial diversity for political life would, expanded far beyond the political frame of reference, become an integral part of her later philosophy of human community as such and her reflections on the meaning of human history in the concluding sections of *Finite and Eternal Being*. There, Stein (2002, 510) argues that it is a part of my vocation as an individual person to develop an acute consciousness of the reality that I am a member not only of narrow communities—e.g., a family, a city, a nation, or a church—, but that I am also a member of and bear a responsibility for humanity universally. ‘Humanity’ (*humanitas*) is given as an essential and permanent fact with respect to my essential nature (or my *Wesenswas* in the language of Stein’s late ontology); yet, it takes a heightened moral sense to intuit the depth of our responsibility for humanity, especially where the universal human community is construed to include not only others of my own culture, race, and ethnicity, but most especially the *foreign* other. This is in part because, in spite of the fact of my membership in a larger whole of humanity, I am always already immersed within the narrower range of my smaller communities, including ethnic ones with their possible empirical tensions *vis-à-vis* foreign others (Calcagno, 2015, 211). This, in fact, is quite important, Stein insists, for developing one’s own personality, as can be readily seen in extending the logic of Stein’s discussion (1989, 116) of the role of empathy in constituting individual personality as she had developed it at the end of *On the Problem of Empathy*. For example, to come to acute consciousness that one is German and belongs to the German community, French and belongs to the

French community, or Spanish and belongs to the Spanish community, is quite significant for understanding something of who one is and how one belongs with and to a community of others. Thus, recognizing my immersion within an ethnic community and demarcating something of the narrow context in which I live my life initially appears ambivalent with respect to its potential value. It is positive insofar as it alerts me to who I am in the context of the communities that serve to constitute my identity. Yet, she writes,

to gain an acute awareness of humanity or humankind as of the totality which encompasses and sustains us, it is of signal importance for us to realize experientially that common bond which links us –notwithstanding all the differences– with peoples and individuals of every age and clime, and to be conscious of the fact that by our own contacts with foreign members of the human race our own being is enriched and perfected (Stein, 2002, 510).

That is, I am not fully aware from the very beginning that I recognize myself as a human being above all else. This is something that, as Mette Lebech (2015) writes, “every person must accomplish freely by letting themselves be motivated by the value of being human. That is why there is a need to affirm human *dignity*” (60). Insofar as my awareness of ethnic belonging may be construed in some tension with a particular group of foreign others, my particular *Volk*-consciousness can potentially obscure this recognition of universal human dignity. In this respect, it acquires a negative value.

All of this is particularly important, both for illustrating the moral trouble that racism signifies as well as for signaling the fact that each ethnic community, in its unique cultural creativity, bears a distinctive value that in fact is *necessary* to ‘complete’ humanity as a whole. Thus, to close oneself off to another on account of their race is not only to violate the other’s dignity as a human being, however troubling this is already on its own. It is also a failure to recognize the genuinely positive value that the other bears precisely *because* they belong to this or that ethnic community. Even deeper than this, however, racism has the additional effect of actually closing myself off from encounter with that which is necessary to complete and to perfect *my own humanity* in the discovery of the full richness of human value that can only be discerned in the encounter with the ethnic/racial other, but whom I instead

reject or hate *on account of* their particular ethnic difference and value. Racism, then, represents a state of vice, for Stein, that undercuts the full development of my personality, and thus also the full development of humanity *as a whole* (Maskulak, 2012, 69).

3. RACE AND EDUCATION

As we have seen, Stein's early, political interest in the question of race and of racism in *An Investigation Concerning the State*, which serves as a platform for developing a philosophical account of the value of racial diversity, expands in *Finite and Eternal Being* into a theological vision of the necessity of racial diversity for the full unfolding of humanity. In the interim between these two works, Stein returned to the analysis of race and ethnicity in the context of her lecture course *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person*. Her discussion of these themes in the lecture, I would suggest, serves as something of a bridge, in fact, linking together her position in the earlier work to her position in the later. Here, Stein's argument has National Socialism's antisemitic and racial ideology critically, yet tacitly, in mind. However, it approaches the problem with an eye towards the vice of racism as a special problem for pedagogy. The transition from the early political to the later theological framework is facilitated by her transition to pedagogy precisely because of the way in which she understands pedagogy's function. We must thus begin with a brief word on Stein's philosophy of education and how her conception of the goals of education are especially rooted in her anthropological and ethical thought.

In the opening passages of the lecture course, Stein (2004, 2) argues that all human comportment is guided by a *logos* designating an objective order of beings in which the human being occupies a particular and essential place. The human place in the cosmos of being, on Stein's view, is designated by the fact that the human being is the being that can, and therefore also *ought*, to form itself (79). The task of education (*Erziehungsarbeit*), from the perspective of the educator, is to provide the external impetus for the formation of the human being (2), by means of which the educated person may ultimately fulfill the *ought* of self-formation autonomously. Such formation, however, is not

merely the acquisition of technical abilities requisite for successful movement through the world, e.g., merely providing the sets of skills necessary for the reproduction of the labor force or to provide the means for being a more or less ‘functional’ and ‘contributing’ member of society, but is first and foremost the attunement of the person to the order of the cosmos which, for Stein, is always already an order of values. In other words, the project of education is the formation of *character*, by which she means the personality and its overall quality of openness or lack of openness to the value-universe in its totality (Tullius, 2021, 68). To form one’s character requires properly organizing the whole essential structure of the human being, but especially the soul as the affective center of personal life in attunement to value. This work is necessary for the unfolding of the person in her essential human and individually personal possibilities. Thus, a theory of education requires a philosophical anthropology as its logical foundation, while, for Stein, such an anthropology also necessarily entails an ethics.

With this as her point of departure in the lectures, Stein’s philosophical-anthropological approach to the analysis of race and ethnicity couches her theory of race within her theory of community and the relation of the individual to community-belonging as she had developed it in the *Beiträge*. Her discussion of race also reechoes much of her analysis of the relation of the ethnic community to the state as she had tackled it earlier in *An Investigation Concerning the State*. It is therefore not necessary to recapitulate her analysis in the lecture in detail; however, two new issues do stand out as particularly important for the present context as it pertains to the role of education in addressing the moral and personal/relational problem posed by racism, especially where Stein conceives education as fundamentally, even if not exclusively, a *moral* project of personal formation, as well as of self-formation in proportion as the pupil actively participates in the process of their education and is not only a passive receiver of educational interventions from without on the part of the teacher.

First, Stein makes the key distinction (previously alluded to) between the controversial concept of ‘race’ (*Rasse*), as primarily a concept of ‘blood relationship’, and the concept of *Volk*, or of ethnic/racial *community*. In drawing this distinction, she initially appears to signal that she intends to prescind from

the former concept in her discussion, since discussions of a possible connection of a 'race' to community is apparently fraught depending upon how rigidly or loosely one defines the relationship of 'race' to blood-ties. Quite crucially, however, she contends that, if a 'race' is more than just a blood concept but also and fundamentally includes the sorts of spiritual structures that will appertain to her notion of a *Volk* as well, then at least *potentially* 'race' and *Volk* overlap (Stein, 2004, 144–145). Stein, moreover, seems to favor the latter solution as her analysis goes on, so that, as I have done throughout the preceding discussions, we can validly extend much of her analysis of ethnic community to the concept of race, thus reading Stein's treatment of the value of the ethnic community as an implicit critique of the racial ideology to which German society under National Socialism would capitulate, as well as an implicit critique of the moral attitudes involved in any notion of racial superiority or inferiority appertaining to this or that racial grouping.

Second, as already indicated, Stein defines the *Volk* as a form of spiritual community. What differentiates it from more narrow forms, like a family or a tribe, is the fact that, as she puts it, its communal 'inner life' takes shape in spiritual acts of self-formation, self-preservation, and self-expression that organize the total life of the community through the production of a 'culture' in the strict sense of the word (Stein, 2004, 146–147). Stein defines a culture in this strict sense as, "a creation of the human spirit in which all essential human functions of life (economy, law and state, mores, science, technology, art, religion) have found expression" (147). Inasmuch as a *Volk* is therefore correlative to the spiritual formations that it organizes around and within itself, we can say of essential necessity that a *Volk* only comes into being through the creation of a distinctive culture. Secondly, as a spiritual formation, culture is constituted in respect to an objective universe of values, which it either succeeds or fails to realize adequately. Thus, both the ethnic culture and the *Volk* that produces and bears it within its life are bearers of value, either positive or negative.⁴ At first glance, this might appear to open the possibility that a par-

⁴ Both the culture and the *Volk* that produces it must be seen as value-bearers for reasons that will become clearer later on in Stein's discussion of history, which we will have to touch on below. Essentially, the necessity to claim that both the culture, in independence of the *Volk* in

ticular *Volk* may possess either a superior or an inferior level of values by comparison to some other *Volk*.

However, even while acknowledging, as she had in *An Investigation Concerning the State*, that the empirical character of a given culture may factually deviate from the right order of values, Stein argues in the lecture course that each ethnic community in fact possesses a special vocation that is uniquely its own. This vocation, in keeping with its particular *telos* (151), is to realize unique values that only this particular *Volk* can realize, thereby enriching the world and enriching history. While, perhaps, a *Volk* may fail to realize its vocation, either because it dies off before it has fulfilled its vocation, or because it falls into a certain spiritual decadence—as we might contend occurred to the Roman people in the late Republican and then again in the late Imperial phases of their history—, such a failure need not be construed as an indicator of a fundamental lack of value appertaining to the *Volk* and its culture. Rather, it would signify only that a people has currently failed to live up to the genuine value that is its own and that no other culture in the world or in world history can hope to fulfill.

In this sense, then, as a member of a *Volk*, each individual person has a certain calling to serve some function within the *Volk*, assisting it to unfold in one's own person towards the culture's complete fulfillment by creatively living from out of the framework of its inherited cultural tradition (150). Doing so, however, cannot validly include any form of xenophobia, jingoism, or a sense of the superiority of one's own race. Rather, ethnic pride must be born out of a feeling of the *unique* value which belongs to one's *Volk* that simultaneously recognizes analogously unique values borne by every other *Volk* apart from one's own.

which it is expressed, and the *Volk* itself are each bearers of separate values has to do with the fact that culture has the potential for a temporal/historical endurance that may outstrip the temporal/historical endurance of the *Volk* that originally produced it. Thus, although the ancient Hebrews, Greeks, Romans, Persians, Egyptians, Indians, etc. are no longer with us, the remnants of their spiritual cultures continue to perdure through history in various forms, and we can readily feel their continual value, both in their own right and relatively for us today. On the other hand, insofar as a *Volk* is precisely a community of persons, it bears the individual personal values of its members insofar as they *are* persons. This value of the person is obviously not borne by the culture which the *Volk* has produced. More will have to be said about this below for articulating the role of the project of education in responding to the challenge of racism.

Stein's reason for this is grounded in reflection upon education, recognizing what a genuinely well-rounded education will necessarily teach and the marks that such lessons ought to have on the formation of personal character.

Historical education, Stein argues, teaches us that ethnic communities come and go in the course of history. In their beginning, their existence and development evince a certain unique teleology, as we have already noticed. Partly for this very reason, she insists, when a *Volk* dies off, the meaning of its death is not a mere slipping into nothingness (Stein, 2004, 151). This is because the structure of an ethnic community is always in tension towards the creation of a culture. Although Stein does not go into this in detail, we might validate her point by considering the fact that culture expresses and shapes itself not exclusively in subjectively lived forms of life, e.g., in customs regulating the various moments of life and one's engagement with the world in the moment, but rather tends also to produce cultural artefacts of various sorts. These may include so-called material culture, e.g., pottery, tools, and artistic production, but may also include formations of what Stein in the *Beiträge* (2000) referred to as 'objective spirit' (116), i.e., symbols, values, ideas, etc. A culture that fulfills (or endeavors to fulfill) its teleology will certainly leave a material culture after it, which may be encountered in the future through archaeology, for example, and by means of which the culture is reencountered over and again. But it may also live on in the form of its spiritual productions, and such expressions tend to be particularly important for Stein's discussion of the value of the ethnic community and its culture.

For example, the ancient Greeks or Romans as 'peoples' slipped into the historical past. Yet, they continue to live on, and their cultural value continues to be encountered again and again in the material culture, i.e., the monuments, temples, etc. that they have left behind. Yet, it is especially their spiritual accomplishments, e.g., their ideals, practices, symbols (especially the very practice of philosophy and the potent philosophical symbols that they developed in the pursuit of philosophical inquiry) in their genuinely eternal value and the meaningfulness that have remained as potential acquisitions for all peoples and for all times (Stein, 2004, 151). Indeed, Stein argues that precisely what a well-rounded education accomplishes is to produce this awareness of the past history of humanity and the eternal value of the ethnic communities of the past

and of their cultures (156). Moreover, an education in history further clarifies the fact that no *Volk* erupts onto the historical scene in a vacuum, but that they each universally owe their particular spiritual/cultural accomplishments and value to what they have adapted and borrowed from others, e.g., just as the Romans were able to accomplish what they did only by first borrowing from the Greeks, while the Greeks in turn borrowed from the Egyptians, the Egyptians from the Sumerians, and so on into the distant and forgotten past.

An education in history, then, by its very nature exposes the student to the reality that every culture is what it is and accomplishes what it does only by having first acknowledged the value of some other people. This discovery, if genuinely internalized, may serve as at least a sort of spiritual antidote to the feeling of the superiority of one's own *Volk* because it gives the lie to the notion that the spiritual accomplishments of the *Volk* are radically *its own*. With respect to Stein's German audience, just as she reminds her listeners of the spiritual debt of Western civilization to Greece and to Rome, in the same breath she reminds them as well that German civilization would not and could not be what it is without its debt to the foreign culture of the Irish and English monks, beginning with St. Boniface, who brought Christian civilization to Germany (Stein, 2004, 156), and thus also the whole cultural tradition of the Greek and Roman civilizations, which could not otherwise penetrate the heartlands of the German tribes who had successfully resisted Roman conquest. But this cultural heritage also includes, Stein reminds her audience, the tradition of the Hebrews as the people in whom the whole teleological movement of salvation history had begun (151-152). That German civilization owed a spiritual debt to the Jews, of course, is a fact that—again, if genuinely acknowledged—cannot help but to destabilize the psychological basis of anti-semitic forms of prejudice within the person who acknowledges them, as well as the myth of a Germanic/Aryan racial superiority.

Coming to such awareness through historical education, then, ought to give rise to an attitude of gratitude to one's predecessor cultures. It ought also to generate a sense of renewed responsibility to contribute to the continual spiritual flourishing of one's own culture, as we have already noted. But, in light of the expansive role which education further plays in cultivating not only empathy with the past through the study of history, but also, in the study

of literature, of foreign languages, etc. (Astell, 2013, 3), it ought also to cultivate an awareness and appreciation of the foreign culture's unique value and accomplishments in their own right as well, irrespective of how my own ethnic community may or may not have borrowed from them (Stein, 2004, 154). This is partly because such an expansion of the power for empathy through the cultivation of imagination in history, in literature, cultural studies, etc. teaches us that, across the differences among cultures, there is a commonality of human life in that each and every culture has been shaped by persons who have given themselves in love to one another (154).

Since love is always a response to value, and to the value of the person of the beloved that enables us to recognize the other *as* a person (Calcagno, 2014, 101), encountering the community of others in empathy for the interpersonal love shared among its members by which its cultural, as well as biological, life was/is sustained in time, the value of the community of foreign others is brought to genuine givenness for me. Empathy in this respect, as a vehicle of value-feeling and thus of a fulfilled value-intuition, naturally undermines the subjective conditions of any 'idolization of race' as we find it in Nazism, white supremacy, etc. Nonetheless, it takes participation in the act of love for the other to overcome racism fully since, for Stein, it is not empathy that reveals the person in the fullest sense, but only love (101).

Thus, genuine education in the sense in which Stein pursues it here—i.e., not *only* as the acquisition of mere neutral facts, but as a spiritual path (Astell, 2013, 3) traversed through the formation of the individual personality in response to values given in and with such facts, precisely because, for Stein, we cannot strongly distinguish between mere facts and values (Stein, 2004, 2)—, can and must play an active role in eradicating the subjective conditions for racism and, by extension, in undermining the acceptance of any morally intolerable conditions of racial injustice that may plague a society. This is because, on Stein's view, the genuine and ineluctable value of the persecuted ethnic community is immediately *given* to the value-experience of the genuinely educated, i.e., *spiritually formed*, person.⁵ Thus, an education that is truly aimed

⁵ Of course, there are obviously highly educated people who nonetheless maintain racial and other forms of prejudice. However, for Stein it would seem that the education that such per-

at the right formation of character is an indispensable tool in society's arsenal in fighting against racial prejudice and structural forms of racism alike, which must necessarily accompany any legal/political efforts to push society away from the structures of racism or racial supremacy that may currently be sedimented into it. It seems also that, through the experiences and discoveries wrought by education, conditions are set for the genuine contrition in which the moral turn away from racial prejudice and towards the genuine celebration of the diverse values of the one, continually unfolding human race in all of its ethnic/cultural manifestations.

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, as Stein had argued (2020) to Pope Pius XI, racism is first and foremost a moral and religious offense (394)—a condition of vice that violates the possibility of genuine human community and offends the image of God in humanity. Yet, as we have seen, it is important to note that the answer to racism cannot be found merely in acts of moral conversion and repentance, however important and necessary such acts are in overcoming and healing the divisions in human solidarity caused by racism in all its subjective and objectivated (i.e., structural) forms. Indeed, such personal acts are necessary for the renewal of humanity and the restoration of solidarity in the face of injustice generally (Gubser, 2014, 121).

However, for Stein, education—which is certainly but not exclusively a morally relevant endeavor—has an important role to play as well in undermining the spiritual conditions that stand in the way of contrition by permitting one to recognize the genuine value of each and every people, and most especially of each and every individual person who is both a representative mem-

sons received was either not sufficiently internalized, which is always a possibility in any educational project, or the education may have been approached more as a form of mere information-transfer and not in the manner of a formation of character, as Stein intends it. The form of education, then, i.e., whether it is genuine formation or merely the passing on of information and skills, matters a great deal for how much or how little education may be seen as a solution to the problem of racism.

ber of their Volk and is also infinitely more than such a part of a larger whole. Through education, ultimately, we must recognize that each person possesses an equal share in humanity—or that “humanity coincides with every individual human person,” as Antonio Calcagno (2015, 212) puts Stein’s position.

Likewise, we must appreciate that the person also possesses a unique value as a representative of a racial/ethnic group that adds to the total fabric of humanity. Finally, we must also recognize the radical particularity of the individual as unique and unrepeatable, of the fact that every person already possesses a particular dignity and value precisely where they represent nothing but their own individual being and personality as such.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES

- Astell, A. W. (2013). From Ugly Duckling to Swan: Education as Spiritual Transformation in the Thought of Edith Stein. *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 13(1), 1–16.
<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/506644/pdf>
- Baseheart, M. C., S.C.N. (2010). *Person in the World: Introduction to the Philosophy of Edith Stein*. Kluwer Academic Publishers.
- Borden, S. (2003). *Edith Stein*. Continuum.
- Calcagno, A. (2014). *Lived Experience from the Inside Out: Social and Political Philosophy in Edith Stein*. Duquesne University Press.
- Calcagno, A. (2015). On the Possibility of a Universal Human Community in an Age of the Post-Human: Edith Stein’s Philosophical Defence. *Toronto Journal of Theology*, 31(2), 209–221. <https://doi.org/10.3138/tjt.3383>
- Gubser, M. (2014). *The Far Reaches: Phenomenology, Ethics, and Social Renewal*. Stanford University Press.
- Lebech, M. (2015). *The Philosophy of Edith Stein: From Phenomenology to Metaphysics*. Peter Lang AG.
- Maskulak, M. (2012). Edith Stein: A Proponent of Human Community and a Voice for Social Change. *Logos*, 15(2), 64–83. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/469370/pdf>
- Stein, E. (1989). *On the Problem of Empathy*. (W. Stein, Trans.). ICS Publications.
- Stein, E. (2000). *Philosophy of Psychology and the Humanities*. (M. Sawicki, Ed.; M. C. Baseheart, Trans.). ICS Publications.
- Stein, E. (2002). *Finite and Eternal Being: An Attempt at an Ascent to the Meaning of Being*. (K. F. Reinhardt, Trans.). ICS Publications.

- Stein, E. (2004). *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, Band 14: Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person: Vorlesung zur philosophischen Anthropologie*. (B. Beckmann-Zöller, Ed.). Herder Verlag GmbH.
- Stein, E. (2006). *An Investigation Concerning the State*. (M. Sawicki, Trans.). ICS Publications.
- Stein, E. (2020). *Edith Stein Gesamtausgabe, Band 28: Neu aufgefundene Texte und Übersetzungen VII: Texte zu Philosophie, Politik, Pädagogik; Übersetzung: Bonaventura, Karmel-Geschichte, „Judenfrage“*. *Neu aufgefundene Briefe und Dokumente*. (B. Beckmann-Zöller, U. Dobhan, and H.-B. Gerl-Falkovitz, Ed.). Herder Verlag GmbH.
- Tullius, W. (2019) Edith Stein and the Ethics of Renewal: Contributions to a Steinian Account of the Moral Task. *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 93(4), 675–700.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/acpq2019926186>
- Tullius, W. (2021). Person and Spirit: On the Ethical and Pedagogical Implications of Edith Stein's Christian Personalism. *International Philosophical Quarterly* 61(1), 61–76.
<https://doi.org/10.5840/ipq202131166>
- Tullius, W. (2022). Person in Community, Repentance and Historical Meaning: From an Individual to a Social Ethics in Stein's Early Phenomenological Treatises. In A. Calcagno & M. F. Andrews (Eds.), *The Ethics and Metaphysics of Edith Stein: Applications and Implications* (73–87). Springer Nature AG.