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## Veritative argument against the life and thought of Edith Stein

This article has attempted to demonstrate the practical verification of the veritative argument in the life of Edith Stein and to indicate the possibility of taking advantage of her conclusions in the construction of the argument, especially in terms of strengthening its motivational merit. That argument serves to justify the credibility of the divine and Christian revelation by demonstrating that the source of all truth is God, who is also the ultimate truth that explains the meaning of human life and all that exists. Edith Stein, while looking for the truth and meaning of life, found God, the highest Truth. Through the encounter with God she discovered her destiny, a life spent in union with Him in eternity. Her path to the truth and God bears the marks of the process of reaching the ultimate truth, the God of revelation, and this process is included in the structure of the veritative argument. In this way, the experience of Edith Stein can be considered as a practical verification of that argument. In addition, in her philosophical and theological inquiry, one can find the mystery of God, personal truth, essential for the recognition of God as the ultimate truth, which is vital in understanding veritative argument. The truth of God in her approach has three dimensions: personal, relational, and explanatory. Such perceived truth serves for better understanding of the meaning of human life, especially in religious dimension, which is also crucial in veritative argument. Edith Stein showed in her anthropology that man has an innate predisposition to seek the truth, and her knowledge had a positive effect on the development of man and his life, which is significant in investigating the sources of the argument. Stages in the process of searching the truth, distinguished by Edith Stein, (the attitude of intellectual openness to reality, good will in the quest to uncover the truth, determination and consistency in seeking, the attitude of „empathy“, humility opening up to the transcendent) converge with internal symptoms:

dependency on effectiveness of the argument, or on its motivational value, enriching and expanding the argument. Similarly, external conditions which had a positive impact on the process (living environment and education, Husserl's phenomenological method, testimony Christians' life in faith) correspond to and reinforce the subject (objective) circumstances of the effectiveness of the argument.

**Key words:** veritative argument, the credibility of the Christian Revelation, the ultimate Truth, the personal Truth, the motives of credibility of Christian Revelation, Edith Stein.

Contemporary fundamental theology is now working out new as well as improved and modified traditional arguments for the credibility of the Christian Revelation. Among them is veritative argument. It is relatively new and requires refinement. The essence of it is based on showing that God is the source of all truth and, as the ultimate truth, God explains human life in a definitive way and points to the deepest religious meaning of all existing things. Motivational value of this argument is built on the basis of speculative demonstration of what the truth itself is and that it is identified with God, the ultimate truth, as well as of indication that God, as a personal truth, is the subject of religious experience involving a man, so that a man can find in God both the answer and the question of the meaning of his existence, as well as his fulfillment in Him. In other words, a man searching for the truth finds it in God. Moreover, he finds God and establish a living relationship with Him. Christian revelation shows such a God and allows a man to meet Him. Verification and validity of this argument built on the truth is confirmed by both existential and life experience of people who found God by seeking the truth. Edith Stein, the saint of the Catholic Church, is undoubtedly such a person. During the beatification ceremony in Cologne May 1, 1987 r. Pope John Paul II uttered words which are significant and meaningful for intuition of veritative argument as they confirm its practical implementation in the life of Edith Stein: "... she found not only philosophical truth, but, above all, personal truth, loving 'you' of God. Edith was looking for the truth and she found God"<sup>1</sup>. Her personal confidence, is engraved on her bust in the Cathedral of Speyer, close to which she worked as a teacher in the Dominican Monastery, where she experienced the first years of the Christian faith. The content of her confidence is also a strong support

<sup>1</sup> J. I. Adamska, *Błogosławiona Edyta Stein*, Kraków 1988, p. 232.

for the legitimacy of argumentative argument, as it says: “Anyone who seeks truth, seeks God, whether or not he realizes it.”

In this paper I make an attempt to analyze the life and thought of Edith Stein in the context of the search for truth, which led her to the meeting with the personal truth, the God of Christian revelation. Taking the case of Edith Stein as an example, I will show practical implementation of veritative argument as a contribution to confirm its value and legitimacy. I will also try to identify possible inspirations for further creative exploration and research in constructing the argument. Thus, I will present: the essence of veritative argument, the way of Edith Stein to the truth and God as a practical realization of the argument, and at the end I will present her reflections and quest that can be used in constructing the argument.

## The essence of veritative argument

The source and the basis for constructing the veritative argument are embedded in the reality of the world and man who is a rational and free human being. Man, by its nature, tends to know the truth. Understanding and explanation of the world and a man in terms of its existence and meaning, is described in terms of truth, the concept developed by man’s intellect. Final and full recognition of the truth is obtained in the perspective of divine revelation.

Man as a rational being seeks to describe the world and understand it. Thereby, he seeks to know the truth. Truth validates and determines the fruitfulness of life, giving meaning to it. By recognizing the signs of truth in something or someone, man is trying to get close to this, and participate in it. Relation between man and the truth is conditioned ontically, which means that it is impossible to talk about a man without thinking about truth, or the other way round<sup>2</sup>. As John Paul II in *Veritatis splendor* aptly put it: “In the depths of his (man) heart there always remains a yearning for absolute truth and a thirst to attain full knowledge of it. This is eloquently proved by man’s tireless search for knowledge in all fields” (VS 1). „Christianity confirmed this pursuit of truth which is typical of human nature, adding that God placed in the human heart a desire to know the objective truth, so that he can discover the ultimate truth about himself (VS 1-3).

In his search and quest for truth, man has developed various concepts of truth. They were built essentially on both philosophical

<sup>2</sup> K. Kaucha, *Argument werytatywny na wiarygodność chrześcijaństwa*, [in:] „Zeszyty Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego”, 2(2005), p. 66.

and religious thought. Based on the thought of Aristotle and Saint Thomas findings, the concept of truth was systematized and put in a metaphysical sense – as a true feature of any existing being. Each entity, as a defined existing content, is identical with each other, which means that it is internally consistent and have sufficient reasons for its existence. In the ontological sense – the truth is the hallmark of entities that perform their essence or comply with the ideal, which expresses consistency of things with the intellect. In the cognitive sense – the truth is regarded as the chief cognitive value, the quality or the subject of cognition, which expresses consistency of the intellect with the matter.<sup>3</sup>

In religious terms, God's revelation is vital for the understanding of the truth. Here, the truth appears to be in the experience of a true relationship with God. In the Old Testament the concept of truth is associated with the term *emeth*, which, referred to God, describes His truthfulness, stability, reliability, and fidelity, which gives us reason to trust Him, confide in Him, and wait for the fulfillment of His promises, which is what God wants us to do. In the New Testament, God revealed himself in Jesus Christ, who describes himself as the truth in a sense of religion and salvation. He is the fullness of the truth about the Triune God and man, who shows man the way to know God, who brightens the meaning of his life, and who proclaims the final completion of the meaning of human existence by the faith in Him and following Him. The truth is identified and unified with Him. Thus, man finds the ultimate truth in Jesus Christ, as Triune God who is the ultimate truth and the source of truth reveals in Christ<sup>4</sup>.

The above-mentioned orientation of man towards truth and his understanding of truth, completed by the message of Revelation can be considered as the source and basis for constructing averitative argument. Man is capable of reading the truth. He find it in the world as well as in himself. His search for the truth is strongly connected with final dimensions. Through the process of giving meaning to everything that exists, including his own existence, she is able to give rational proves that God revealed in Christ is the ultimate truth as well as a Man, a source of the truth. By knowing Him and having a real relationship with Him, man can find the truth and the full meaning of his own existence.

<sup>3</sup> A. B. Stępień, *Prawda*, [in:] *Leksykon filozofii klasycznej*, J. Herbut ed., Lublin 1997, p. 437-439.

<sup>4</sup> K. Kaucha, J. Kędzierski, *Werytatywny argument*, [in:] *Leksykon teologii fundamentalnej*, M. Rusecki ed., Lublin – Kraków 2002, p. 1318-1319.

The aim of the veritative argument is to show that the answer to the question of truth is in revealing God, who is the ultimate truth. In Him alone and in His revelation, which is also His re-presentation, and finally in Jesus Christ, who is “the way, the truth, and the life”, one can experience the fullness of Revelation which lightens the mystery of human existence. Therefore, analyzing the Christian Revelation in terms of the truth contained in it, according to the relevant criteria developed by the concept of truth, the human intellect comes to verify the truth of Revelation, that is, that it is true in itself, and thus it becomes credible. However, seeing the finiteness and insufficiency of purely intellectual inquiry, based on human reason, one has to go further on religious level, which is to the realm of revelation and faith, where one can find the higher level of truth which is in God revealing himself in the person of Jesus Christ. This is the truth which is expanded on the personal dimension, which not only answers the questions of the human intellect, but which can be experienced in a personal relationship through the experience of union with God, the Truth, and the Person.

Carried in such a way, analysis and justifications lead to the conviction that Christian Revelation brings not only the speculative truth but also the truth understood in the personal way, because such truth, which is God himself, through living relation with Him, lightens the mystery of human life. Moreover, it lets us find and experience the meaning of human existence. Without doubt, it happens in relation to faith, but the faith reasonably underpinned by the analysis of Christian Revelation, which is described as the veritative argument.

It needs to be said that the effectiveness and motivational value of the veritative argument depend on subjective conditions (internal, subjective), inscribed in the subject knowing the Revelation, and also on objective conditions, related to the content of Revelation. Subjective conditions focus on the attitude of man to the truth, whether it is open, without any negative experiences in search of the truth, like disappointments, experiences of being deceived. Objective conditions are understood as circumstances which weaken the desire to find the truth. These are such currents of thought as contemporary post-modernism, skepticism, scientism, relativism, subjectivism, pragmatism<sup>5</sup>.

Nowadays, unfortunately, the questions about the meaning, the truth and the desirability are very often underestimated or even skipped in modern educational systems, in favor of practical and utilitarian aspects, in seeking sensations and cheap pleasure, which closes the creative search for understanding the meaning of world and the mystery

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem, p. 1320.

of human being. What favors the veritative argument is a reliable approach to seek truth, as it is in case of classical philosophy, realistically open to transcendence, or similar methods in philosophy. Moreover, it needs to be noticed that man, in spite of indicated historical disorders and unfavorable trends in thinking, does not lose his cognitive efforts in search for truth and meaning. These circumstances undoubtedly speak in favor of the veritative argument and strengthen its motivational value and effectiveness.

### Edith Stein's way to the truth and to God as a practical verification of veritative argument

There is no need to prove that man is a seeker of truth. Truth in intellectual dimension does not fully satisfy him. He aims to participate in the highest and ultimate truth, which is a Person, which is God. The veritative argument shows that revelation of God reveals the truth that meets the human needs. In this way, it makes Christianity a true religion, which originates from God.

Edith Stein was searching for the ultimate truth in her life and she found it in Christianity, in the God of Revelation. Thus, in her life, the veritative argument was verified. Tracing her own path to the truth, which is to God, reveals stages of the process leading to the truth, turning into an encounter with God, the ultimate truth, appropriate for the structure of the veritative argument. It confirms the validity of this method to verify credibility of Revelation in the life experience of a man.

The way of life of Edith Stein, as a way to God, is aptly described by concise titles, placed at her bust in the Cathedral of Speyer: Yudin, Ateistin, Christin, Karmelitin, Martyrin, Heilige (Jew, an atheist, a Christian, Carmelite, martyr, saint). From the faith handed down in her family home, by rejecting the faith in her youthful age, by the search for truth and meaning of life to the Christian faith to dedication to God alone through her religious vows, the sacrifice of life in Auschwitz and to announced a saint of the Catholic Church .

Edith Stein was born on October 12, 1891 in Wroclaw, as the eleventh and the youngest child of Siegfried and Augusta Stein. She was grown up in a family with many children, where, after the early loss of her father, her mother's foresight and enterprise provided material well-being for the family and opportunity of education for children. Her personality was shaped by Jewish culture and traditions of Judaism cultivated in the family. Also, she grew up in contact with multicultural

and multireligious environment of Wrocław, which from an early age allowed her to experience the multidimensional life. Moreover, sudden death of her father, her mother's strong personality, as well as the presence of numerous siblings, formed a special atmosphere of her growth and development. From an early age, she experienced difficult realities of everyday life, which encouraged questions about life, its meaning, awakening reflexivity, making her own judgments. At that time, she was perceived as a person who had healthy distance to the world and who was introvert, reflexive, and persistent, and these are the qualities that undoubtedly serve to discover the meaning of life and the search for truth<sup>6</sup>. Growing up with older siblings who attended schools influenced her personal and intellectual development. Thus, she started school with great enthusiasm, curiosity, and desire for knowledge. She was one of the best students. The school became a special place for her. She confessed: „Outside school I was all quiet and silent (...), I lived isolated in my inner life<sup>7</sup>.” Meanwhile, in the crisis of adolescence, she experienced that school lacked in satisfying her desires concerning life and its meaning. In 1906 she decided to leave school as they did not discuss at all issues bothering her, especially those relating to the perception of the world. She moved to her married sister to Hamburg, where she experienced the life devoid of religious practices. She began to doubt in the sense of ritual prayers and practices, noting that people who leave them are just as well off as those who are religious. Then, she began to give them up and after returning home she participated in the prayers only not to offend her mother. Under the influence of studying sisters, she became again fascinated with studying, especially with academic life and she wanted to continue education<sup>8</sup>.

In 1911 she passed the final examinations in high school and decided to study German philology, history, and psychology at the University of Wrocław. She chose them for their usefulness in her desire to serve other people, through which she could be able to fully understand a man, find answers to questions that she asked from the beginning of her education<sup>9</sup>. Studying German literature, she could analyze the processes occurring in the fate of man – his thinking and searching for the meaning. In this way, she was able to penetrate the mysteries

<sup>6</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny żydowskiej oraz inne zapiski autobiograficzne*, Kraków 2005, p. 31-32.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem p. 65.

<sup>8</sup> F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein. Część 1. Życie*, Poznań 2009, p. 23-26.

<sup>9</sup> E. Stein, *Z własnej głębi. Wybór pism duchowych*, vol. 2, Kraków 1978, p. 331.

of the humanity. Getting to know history during history lectures, she could more fully and creatively live in the present, analyzing social and political processes which took place in the world. Through psychology she wanted to get to know the psyche of man and his personality. Also, she desired to find the answers to questions about truth and the meaning of life, as psychology seemed to have the answers<sup>10</sup>. Undoubtedly, the choice of fields of study aimed for a specific purpose – to get the truth about man and the world. However, expectations of an earnest and eager for knowledge student were not fully realized. Studies of the designated areas gave her considerable insight into understanding of herself and the world, however, they did not lead to the discovery of the complete meaning of life. Further expectations and hopes she placed in philosophy. She came across the works of E. Husserl and became interested in fenomenology<sup>11</sup>. She started studying philosophy at the University of Gottingen, where she became a faithful listener of Husserl's lectures. He was persistent in searching the essence of things in all phenomena, events and studied realities. He taught his students the principle that they could not be prejudiced against anything, even to the old-fashioned concepts of the reality of religion. This reference and orientation led Edith to unconsciously come across the mystery of faith, which she lost by rejecting ritual practices and focusing on studying and her quests, among other things by challenging the value of ritual practices, but also the interest in science and his quest<sup>12</sup>.

In Gottingen, by the fascination with the philosophy of Husserl and his phenomenological method, yet the questions about the meaning of life and objective, truth distinctly resounded in her. According to the method of his master she tried to be open to the whole reality surrounding her, understand the circumstances and conditions that she encountered on her way. First of all, she continued the intellectual quest for the essence of things, that is, the search for truth in the world, in a man, and in the surrounding reality. Although she was not interested in the religious dimension, she could not ignore it as even the churches in Gottingen resembled it. As she later confessed – could three trees on one of the hills not bring associations with three crosses on Golgotha, where Christ showed that the truth requires also

<sup>10</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 227; A. Przybylski, *Działalność edukacyjna i myśl pedagogiczna św. Edyty Stein*, Kraków 2007, p. 71-72; J. Górczyca, *Wielcy ludzie Kościoła. Edyta Stein*, Kraków 2008, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 271-273.

<sup>12</sup> W. Herbstrith, *Edyta Stein. Żydówka i chrześcijanka*, Kraków 2008, p. 47-48.



to sacrifice one's own life<sup>13</sup>. Also, her lively participation in academic life, in the philosophical meetings where she encountered passion and research as well as interesting people. She noticed among them those who, by persistent exploration, inquiry, conscientious, and hard work, had lifetime achievement, and found themselves and their sense of life<sup>14</sup>. Among them, professor A. Reinach was a prominent figure. He supported her in the intellectual endeavor on her doctorate, dedicated to the problem of „empathy” in the process of reaching the essence of things. Her struggles, accompanying by the support of Reinach, showed her that suffering is inseparable on the way to find truth. Since then she appreciated even more the efforts and work of philosophers in their search for truth.

Her aspirations and struggles were further enhanced by the experience of World War I, affecting also her environment. Seeing her colleagues and professors, who sacrificed their lives fighting in the front, she experienced dramatic impermanence of life. Thus, her questions about the meaning of happiness and the truth took on a new dimension.

These experiences probably mobilized her to give become a volunteer in the Red Cross. There, she faced the phenomenon of faith clearly. Accidentally, she found a note from one of the fallen soldiers of his wife's prayer to survive. Then, she confessed: this event „ripped my soul, I realized just now what death means<sup>15</sup>.” Then, she was even more touched by the death of professor Reinach. This event was a turning point in her perception of reality, its meaning and the meaning of human life in the dimension of faith. She discovered that the ultimate meaning of life can be given only by God. First, she was overcome by the overwhelming sense of futility. She was totally surprised and moved by the attitude of Reinach's wife who, despite enormous suffering and grief, could accept this traumatic experience through faith in Christ's resurrection. From the rational point of view, such behaviour was ridiculous. It could be explained only by faith in God. It was also her first encounter with the mystery of the Cross: „For the first time I saw the Church, born from the saving Passion of Christ and His victory over death. This was the moment when my disbelief collapsed, Judaism paled, and Christ shone: Christ in the mystery of the cross<sup>16</sup>.”

<sup>13</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 302-303.

<sup>14</sup> W. Herbstrith, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 37-45.

<sup>15</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 430-431.

<sup>16</sup> Teresa Renata od Ducha Świętego, *Edyta Stein, siostra Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża. Filozof i karmelitanka*, Paryż 1987, p. 12.

After these events Edith more often studied and thought about faith, religion and God. It is proved by the correspondence with her friend, Roman Ingarden. Her way to the truth and God is purified and becomes more and more certain<sup>17</sup>.

Based on a solid foundation and knowledge gained at university in Wroclaw and Gottingen, she could reliably and consistently continue her quest for truth in her mature life devoted to teaching and research work. Even before the graduation of university she was briefly a teacher in the High School and Middle School in Wroclaw and when she completed the doctorate in 1916 she became Husserl's assistant. Then, she had access to the manuscripts of the father of phenomenology and through them to very source of inspirations for the search for objective truth according to his method. Having experienced the phenomenon of religion in the lives of people experiencing genuine faith, she took up studying the philosophy of religion. She was looking for a religion that could fully satisfy her desire for the truth. She read the works of philosophers and christians theologians<sup>18</sup>. At her friends' Conrad-Martius, she came across the inventive and groundbreaking in its investigations work of the „Book of Life” by St. Teresa of Jesus. By reading this book she not only found the truth in the intellectual dimension, but she also found the personal truth, Jesus Christ. This work – as she later recalled – put an end to the search for the true faith. Still, of course, she dwelled on the different dimensions of the world of truth, but she was henceforth internally convinced that it was in God. She found that man as a creature composed of body, soul, and spirit, full of achieved his own understanding by meeting with the grace of God. The truth she tried to acquire with an effort of her own mind, turned out to be a gift from the Creator<sup>19</sup>.

This groundbreaking meeting with God of Christian Revelation led her to the sacrament of baptism in the Catholic Church, which she received on January 1 1992. From that time on she started to think about entering the Carmelite monastery<sup>20</sup>. Meanwhile, she found the place which was conducive to religious life, meditation, concentration, and exploring Christian thought. This place was in the Dominican convent in Speyer, where she taught in the Institute of Teachers'

<sup>17</sup> E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów. Część trzecia. Listy do Romana Ingardena*, Kraków 2003, p. 259-261.

<sup>18</sup> Eadem, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 365, 493-506; F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein. Część I: Życie*, Poznań 2009, p. 43-44.

<sup>19</sup> F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 47-50.

<sup>20</sup> E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów. Część druga 1933-1942*, Kraków 2002, p. 33-35.

Education. Living in the shadow of the monastery and in the devotion to prayer, she experienced that the truth revealed in Jesus Christ penetrates human life, illuminates it, and reveals its meaning. Edith kept conducting her exploration and philosophical research. She began to delve into the works of St. Thomas, which convinced her about the close relationship of spiritual and intellectual effort in the pursuit of truth<sup>21</sup>. She had a desire to introduce scholastic thought of St. Thomas and his passion for discovering truth on the ground of contemporary thought and philosophy. She began to explain his work. In this way, also in her scientific activity, she was trying to work out a dialogue between secular culture and Christian thought. She wanted to oppose the tendencies of the early twentieth century, that Christianity is opposed to the development of modern science, as it arrogates the right to a satisfactory reply to questions about the truth and meaning of human life without reference to the transcendence and spiritual dimension. Meanwhile, Christianity shows that man can not be understood without his spiritual references to God, the ultimate truth about a person. She tried to portray her beliefs in her works, lectures and conferences. She shared her experience of coming to the truth of God willingly in order to move others and inspire their life's quest. For this purpose, in 1931 she left school in Speyer, to fully devote herself to the study of St. Thomas. At the same time she sought to get a place at university. She received a position as professor at the Institute of Scientific Pedagogy in Munster. In her teaching she was trying to introduce innovative teaching methods covering all the needs of students – perhaps to compensate for her disappointment with school – so that the teaching process not only aimed at developing intellectual capacity, but also supported the full development of personality, and the quest of truth and meaning of life<sup>22</sup>.

Analyzing the research and teaching of Edith Stein is easily noticeable that she was permeated by a desire to find the truth. She tried to demonstrate relations of the revealed truths and the achievements of contemporary science. That is why she wanted to establish and maintain the dialogue between revealed science, theology, Thomist philosophy, and phenomenology. On the basis of her exploration and research, one can clearly see that the scientific work aimed at inquiry

<sup>21</sup> Teresa Renata od Ducha Świętego, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 76; F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 67.

<sup>22</sup> E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów. Część pierwsza 1916-1933*, Kraków 2002, p. 236-237; J. Machnac, *ESG – Edyta Stein dzieła wszystkie. Rys historyczno-merytoryczny*, [in:] „Wrocławski Przegląd Teologiczny”, 2(2008), p. 208-223; Teresa Renata od Ducha Świętego, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 94-104.

of truth and understanding of existing world can lead to the truth, which is beyond the scope of the material world and becomes tangible only by faith and spiritual experience.

Edith Stein after joining the Carmel of Cologne in 1933 noticed that not only intellectual inquiry but first and foremost – contemplation of truth becomes her way to knowledge and experience of the truth. Since her experience that God fulfills a man she did not want anything else but to be with Him, persevering in prayer. By striving for union with God, which began in Carmel, it became clear that what science and secular world offer is inadequate. From that moment, she went on the higher than intellectual level of knowing the truth – the mystical trend, yet not irrational. In this trend she discovered that only through the cross of Jesus Christ she can ultimately understand the paradox of human life and only through contemplation a man can unite with God. In the book of St. John of the Cross, she developed a theological anthropology based on the mystery of the cross of Christ. For her, the cross was a place where she reevaluated her life, which gave a new meaning of life, it became a beacon for eternity. In one of her letters she acknowledged that „the cross of Jesus delivered her to life which struck her on her knees and gave her strength to accept new life with gratitude.” She found that through the cross the mystery of man is introduced in the dimension of God’s economy of salvation. Then, man can experience the fullness of knowledge and a personal encounter with the Truth of God. In Carmel, Edith Stein had good conditions to continue the already started way to mystical knowing and experiencing God<sup>23</sup>. But also her life began to be closer and closer to the cross. Because of increasing extermination of Jews in Nazi Germany, she was moved to the Carmel in Echt in the Netherlands. But even there she was not safe from criminal ideology. She was deported to Auschwitz and killed by gas on August 9, 1942.

Edith Stein, a Carmelite Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, found the truth of her life, the ultimate Truth, the Personal God. In Him she found the meaning of her existence and fulfillment of her aspirations, as contemplation and experience of life in God, as the mystery of the cross, with the ultimate hope of union with God in eternity. Her path to God, in its truth, realism, and authenticity, verifiable by critical analysis of its stages, which passed, also confirmed the judgment of

<sup>23</sup> W. Herbstrith, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 105; J. Kiciński, *Prawda i istnienie Boga. Mistyczny wymiar życia duchowego w ujęciu św. Teresy Benedykty od Krzyża*, [in:] *Oblicza prawdy. Edyta Stein – p. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża*, W. Irek ed., *Sympozja i sesje naukowe*, 20(2010), Wrocław, p. 102-114; F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 111-113.

the Church, by announcing her a saint. She was looking for the truth, she found God of Christian revelation. Her life is an example and confirmation that in Christianity there is the truth, which is personal God, who manifests himself just as the ultimate truth, and the source of all truth, and brightens the meaning of human life, especially in its religious dimension, in the meeting and the union with Him in eternity. Therefore, the path to truth and God can be considered as practical implementation and confirmation the veritative argument for the credibility of Christian revelation.

Characterizing Edith Stein's way to the truth and God, one can indicate important for this process circumstances and conditions and also distinguish some of its specific stages or phases corresponding to the structure of the veritative argument and, therefore, from this side to find confirmation of its validity, especially when it comes to its construction.

Among the circumstances and conditions individual circumstances of personal inspiration flowing from the phenomenology of Husserl and testimony Christians' faith should be distinguished.

Every man according to his nature is open and capable of discovering the truth. However, one may be more predisposed to this process, which is also dependent on the good will of man. Moreover, there may be circumstances, or people may occur who can hinder or even prevent this process, or just the opposite – who can encourage, strengthen, and affect its final performance. In the case of Edith Stein, the circumstances perfectly correlated with her personal predisposition and determination.

Edith Stein was a talented person, gifted with many qualities that allowed her to investigate the essence of the world and became closer to the source of the truth. What was inborn was not disturbed or distorted in childhood through education or through external circumstances. One could say that what is most important to the search for truth was she experienced at home, namely the love of truth. Her mother attached great importance to education in truth. She hated mendacity, exaggerated self-importance, and cared about the truthfulness<sup>24</sup>. Edith had a really smart mind, she was characterized by plausibility, rationality, and consistency in thinking. She took care of order and harmony. She was endowed with the ability to empathize, which opened her to the truth, revealing itself not only as an idea, a set of principles, but also expressed in human relations as existential, and further personal, truth. She had a thirst for knowledge and truth, which she sought in

<sup>24</sup> E. Stein, *Dzieje pewnej rodziny...*, p. 42.

philosophy, to eventually discover and open to the Revelation and faith in God. Her predisposition to spiritual life and contemplation are undoubtedly essential to a proper and effective process of reaching the truth, which pertains to formal structure of the veritative argument.

In the quest for truth, it is important to be open, without prior assumptions or philosophical and ideological references. Also, the way of reaching the truth, resulting from the way of philosophizing, is equally important. In this regard, Edith Stein, owes the most to E. Husserl. It should be mentioned here that Edith was brought up in respect for teachers and their authority, which undoubtedly helped her use their knowledge and experience. Husserl consistently instilled in his students the programmatic sentence of his own phenomenological method „to get back into things.” His intention was to draw the philosophy of knowledge only from experience. What is given directly in the knowledge is the subject matter, which more specifically is called *the phenomenon* (what appears to be). Therefore, one can not call into question the obvious truth and just have to accept it as the unquestionable evidence. Overview of the essence of things becomes a source of understanding of its meaning, *logos*. In this way, philosophic cognition, which is *phenomeno-logy*, leads to explore and express the truth in the judgement of substantial truth. This method was supposed to lead from subjective to objective knowledge of the judgements. Thus, the new way to find the deepest sense of reality was reopened<sup>25</sup>. Edith Stein consistently adopted this method of philosophizing, which was addressed to study the phenomenon of religion. Similarly, following her master she opened up to the dimension of transcendence in cognition. What was the purpose of Churches, which was bringing humanity into eternity, Husserl wanted to achieve through philosophy. From liberalism and rationalism he wanted to bring philosophy back to what is important, to the truth. He believed that the subject of every true philosophy must be a matter of the ultimate being, the truth<sup>26</sup>. From her master she took the conviction that the fundamental principle conditioning the existence of the world and man is the principle of non-contradiction. If the world and the man exist, their existence has meaning. But one cannot find it fully in the material world. Hence, the explanation should be placed in reality that goes beyond earthly life

<sup>25</sup> E. Husserl, *Idea fenomenologii*, Wrocław 2008; J. Górczyca, *Wielcy ludzie Kościoła. Edyta Stein*, Kraków 2008, p. 40-41.

<sup>26</sup> S.A. Jaegerschmid, *Rozmowa z Edmundem Husserlem*, „Znak” 212 (1972), p. 163.

and opens the human presence to transcendent reality<sup>27</sup>. These views and E. Husserl's phenomenological method could not fail to affect the way of her investigation of truth, so that she sought it with openness to the transcendent dimension. It must therefore be concluded, that the structure of the veritative argument as well as the way of its conduct, it is extremely important that the way of reaching the truth starts from the formal side and goes through the proper method of searching and analysis, which is not closed to the assumptions but open to every reality.

A breakthrough for Edith Stein, in existential experience referring to the investigation of the truth and God, was a testimony of faith and Christian life of people with whom she used to meet in her daily life. They undoubtedly influenced her choices and decisions in this regard. Observation of their life with accordance to the principles given by Christ led her to the belief that personal encounter with the Truth not only positively affects life but also gives meaning to it. These people were, among others, Max Scheler, Adolf Reinach and his wife Anna, and believing people from the university environment, or those whom she met by chance, who touched her by their testimony of prayer, trust in God, and genuine religiosity. Edith confirmed their role in her discovery of faith and Christianity saying: „That was my first contact with the world, which until now was unknown to me. The new experience has not led me to believe yet, but it opened up a world of phenomena to me, which I could not pass by without noticing. They did not in vain repeat constantly that we should objectively consider all issues and reject all unreasonable dislikes. It was the time when the boundaries of rational prejudices, in which – without knowing it – I grew up, fell. Suddenly I saw the world of faith. People with whom I lived and whom I looked at, belonged to this world<sup>28</sup>.”

On the way to faith and God, with the intellectual effort, existential experience is vital. It lets a man enter the realm of experience and discovering the relational and personal dimension of truth, also in terms of understanding the meaning of life. This experience of Edith Stein, caused by meeting the witnesses of the truth and faith, is vital in the way to gain truth and meet God. Thus, it is clearly visible that this process includes in its structure: the veritative argument, testimony,

<sup>27</sup> J. Stępczyńska, *Edyty Stein rozumienie filozofii chrześcijańskiej jako dziejowego wypełnienia zadań filozofii*, [in:] *W trosce o dobrą filozofię*, M. Pawliszyn, M. Urban eds., Kraków 2007, p. 127-131.

<sup>28</sup> M. M. Baranowska, *Bóg w myśli Schelera*, Kraków 2011, p. 332.

and personal effects, which supports the process of reaching the truth, especially personal truth, and affects people's lives and behaviours.

Analyzing the way of Edith Stein to the truth of God and, with respect to the structure of the veritative argument, one can notice certain regularities. First, it was the search for understanding the existing reality of the world and of man in terms of its meaning. To get some help in attaining it she studied literature, history, and psychology. However, insufficiency of such exploration directed her attention to philosophy. With the use of phenomenological method, she exceeded purely rational approach to understanding and recognition of the truth, and opened up to the prospect of transcendence, which in turn directed her to the phenomenon of religion. Due to studying the phenomenon of religion the world of revelation and truth was revealed to her. This world was experienced as a personal relationship with the truth, that is with personal God. Intellectual framework to know the truth as the ideas or principles was exceeded and she could not only know, but rather experience the truth through contemplation. This enabled her, both with reason and faith, to get to know the ultimate truth, the personal God, the God of Revelation, who is the source of all truth and who gives meaning to everything, including the existence of man and his destiny.

Such presented, the way to truth and God of Edith Stein, coincides with the process of reaching God as the ultimate truth, the source of all truth, and personal God giving sense to everything, including the existence of man. Such a process is crucial for the veritative argument. In its structure, one can distinguish stages of the investigation into the truth, from intellectual through personal aspects, which refer to the meaning of existence, which we find in God of Revelation, to the ultimately satisfying encounter with the truth, that is with God, which can be experienced through Christian revelation in Jesus Christ. The process involves human intellect, but the final encounter with the Truth, happens in the realm of faith, which is a response to an invitation to meet the personal truth, that is personal God, who can be met on the way of religious experience, complemented with contemplation. The whole process, described above, took place in the life of Edith Stein. In her experience of coming to the truth, that is, to God, one can see a practical verification of the veritative argument, also in different parts of its structure.



## The possibility of using the thought of Edith Stein in constructing the veritative argument

In her scientific work, Edith Stein was not trying to prove the reliability of the Christian revelation, or even more so the veritative argument. However, in her philosophical and theological thought, one can find some insights that can serve as a confirmation and enrichment of that which the argument contains. According to it, God who has revealed himself in Jesus Christ, is the ultimate truth, explaining definitively human life and giving the reality the deepest religious sense. In the scientific work of Edith Stein, one can find a confirmation and justification of this thesis. Her vision of God contains a representation of him as the supreme Truth in personalistic terms. In her anthropology, she assigns to a man an innate predisposition enabling one to explore and discover the truth, whose affects one's life.

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theology

In her way to discovering the truth, which in part has previously been indicated, one can find circumstances and conditions, relating to the argument, confirming and enriching its structure as well as strengthening its motivational value.

After her conversion, Edith Stein made God the center of her life. That is why she devoted a lot of her scientific work to the theme of God. Reading her investigations and analyses, one can understand that God is the highest truth, which has a personal, relational and explanatory dimension.

Seeing the rationality and purposefulness of the world created by God led her to believe that God is a person<sup>29</sup>. She understood that even more so from the truth of Incarnation. Here God revealed himself in the human flesh, became one of us. No other religion teaches that God takes on human nature. The truth of Incarnation reveals that Jesus is true God and true man. This fundamental event makes Christianity a religion of personal God<sup>30</sup>. Reflecting on the concept of a person and describing it by the ability to raise awareness of their own identity, she noticed that this feature is represented only by God as being absolute<sup>31</sup>. Noting that God is a person, Edith Stein showed that his desire is to establish a relationship with a man to reveal his work of redemption accomplished in Christ. One of the characteristics of a person is that

<sup>29</sup> E. Stein, *Byt skończony a byt wieczny*, Kraków 1995, p. 353-363.

<sup>30</sup> Eadem, *Z własnej głębi. Wybór pism duchowych*, vol. II, Kraków 1978, p. 65; eadem, *Światłość w ciemności. Wybór pism duchowych. Autobiografia*, vol. I, Kraków 1977, p. 62; eadem, *Studium o Dionizie Areopagicie i przekład jego dzieł*, Kraków 2006, p. 501-502.

<sup>31</sup> F. M. Oben, *Życie i dzieło św. Edyty Stein*, Gdańsk 2006, p. 98-108.

they can not exist only for themselves. God's relations are revealed in the references of the Divine Persons of the Trinity. Moreover, through the creative act of God creates a man and starts a relationship with him. Dialogue between God and a man gives meaning to human life, it leads to the fulfillment of a man, finding themselves in God<sup>32</sup>. It is an affirmation of humanity. In the dialogue with the man God communicates a fundamental truth about a man, that the true and definitive meaning of life is to unite with him. The way leading to it is a life of faith, sacramental life<sup>33</sup>.

Only God, says Edith Stein, may reveal the essence and the ultimate goal of life. One can understand that from the fact that man was created in the image and likeness of God, who manifests himself in the structure of the corporeal and the spiritual man. It is the spirit who awakens in man the desire to continually go beyond themselves in the search for ultimate meaning of life. Man finds it outside of themselves, in his Creator, who is the full and reliable truth, enlightening human life<sup>34</sup>. The study the works of Dionysius the Areopagite confirmed Edith Stein's conviction of God as the supreme wisdom and truth, who, in the Incarnation of Jesus Christ, unveiled the ultimate meaning of human existence<sup>35</sup>.

This briefly presented vision of God by Edith Stein, as the ultimate and the highest truth in its personal, relational and explanatory dimension goes in the line with the representation of God, as the highest truth, whose finding and proving can be described by the veritative argument. Therefore, when Edith deals with the mystery of God, one can see the elements that strengthen the veritative argument, relating to the recognition and understanding of the ultimate truth.

One of the sources of the veritative argument, as it was previously indicated, is a natural human orientation towards the truth and man's ability for the realization of that desire. In the anthropology of Edith Stein we find its full confirmation. She continuously shows a man as seeking the truth, and gifted towards this goal.

Edith Stein repeats a well-known statement that man's direction towards the truth stems from the possession of reason and free will, which form the basis of one's spiritual life. She further notes that their activity, the activity of the spirit, is expressed in the development of science, technology and culture. And this is also an expression of man's

<sup>32</sup> E. Stein, *Byt skończony a byt wieczny*, p. 141.

<sup>33</sup> F. J. S. Fermin, *Edyta Stein ...*, p. 30-32.

<sup>34</sup> T. Trębacz, *Być człowiekiem pełniej w myśli Edyty Stein*, Kraków 2011, p. 30-31.

<sup>35</sup> E. Stein, *Studium o Dionizie Areopagicie ...*, p. 282.

desire for the truth and its manifestation. Nevertheless, even the noblest creations of culture can not fully satisfy human desires for the truth. The Spirit, on the other hand, opens up to a reality, exceeding the empirical world. The Spirit is not only the intellect but also the heart. And therefore it tends towards truth not only grasped intellectually, but also experienced a personal relationship. Finally, this relationship, the relationship with God can happen through the grace of faith<sup>36</sup>.

Regarding the effectiveness of the veritative argument, one can find some inspiration in Edith Stein's thought. As it was indicated earlier, the efficacy of the argument depends on the internal conditions related to the subject, and external, depending on some circumstances. The description of this process showed how these factors stimulated the vital process of Edith Stein in her investigation of the truth and of God. Reading her works, one can bring out the following, further thoughts in this regard.

She notes that if one accepts the basic rules for getting to know the reality: the principle of identity, non-contradiction, sufficient reason, they are then faced with the question about the meaning of the existence of the world. Following that, one can find a rational answer that the world was created by someone who is a Meaning<sup>37</sup>. This human openness to discovery, indicated by the Edith Stein, is an important prerequisite for entering the path of understanding the meaning and truth. This is one of the determinants of the veritative argument. The attitude of openness, avoiding any assumptions or selectivity in the perception of the different dimensions of reality that Husserl's student acquired, resulted mainly from his phenomenological method. It seems that the use of some of its aspects undoubtedly enriched and strengthened the veritative argument in its formal side.

Along with an attitude of openness to knowledge, an indispensable condition for discovering the truth is a good will. Edith Stein clearly emphasizes its necessity, especially when it comes to accepting some rational arguments, which often tend to be inconsistent with the prior knowledge or professed world view. Good will will allow, and it is also a necessary requirement in the search for truth, to constantly confront one's views and judgments with the reality that is being discovered. This is one of the conditions of getting at the truth. It should not be assumed a priori that there is no ultimate truth. In Edith Stein's view, the

<sup>36</sup> E. Stein, *Studium o Dionizie Areopagicie ...*, p. 376; eadem, *O zagadnieniu wczucia*, Kraków 1988, p. 122; eadem, *Byt skończony a byt wieczny*, Kraków 1995, p. 377.

<sup>37</sup> Eadem, *Studium o Dionizie Areopagicie ...*, p. 91-98, 281-283, 486-487.

attitude of good needs to be accompanied by the „clear conscience,” that is an internal honesty<sup>38</sup>. This remark seems to be as an interesting and important point with regards to the conditions that make the veritative argument effective.

The third condition, which can be found out in the thought of Edith Stein, contributing to the process of investigation, is one’s consistency and perseverance in seeking. One can not be put off or stopped in their search for the truth, eg. when noticing the inadequacy of the natural knowledge of reality, and should consequently take further steps in the light of Revelation. It needs to be pointed out that Edith Stein with conviction linked those two orders in the process of reaching a final Truth<sup>39</sup>.

An interesting and undoubtedly original thought of Edith Stein in terms of conditions that accompany one’s search for the truth was the idea of maintaining the attitude of „empathy.” Again, one can relate that to the efficacy of the veritative argument. Edith Stein talked about the topic of „empathy” in her doctoral thesis. The attitude of „empathy” enables one to react to another person’s emotional state or situation, it allows a proper dialogue, in the case of searching for the truth it creates the opportunity of cooperation, it enables people to help one another with their intellectual struggles. Certainly it is mobilizing factor in the process of discovering the truth<sup>40</sup>.

In the discovery of the ultimate truth, in Edith Stein’s view, humility is a crucial factor. She thought that in the modern world, which seeks to glorify empirical science and rationalism in cognition and dismissing the non-material dimension, human reason must take an attitude of humility, to open up to the reality that surpasses it, to the sphere of spirit and transcendence. “A person – says Edith Stein – who is too proud to squeeze through the narrow gate, remains on the outside.” Therefore, it is not possible for them to open up to the ultimate truth<sup>41</sup>. Reason, in order to fully reach the ultimate meaning, must recognize its limitations and inadequacy. When one adopts an attitude of humility they may experience the truth that surpasses it but does not destroy. The truth that invites to a dialogue, because it is a person. In this way,

<sup>38</sup> E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów. Część trzecia. Listy do Romana Ingardena*, Kraków 2003, p. 233-236; 303-306.

<sup>39</sup> J. Stępczyńska, *Edyty Stein rozumienie filozofii chrześcijańskiej ...*, p. 130-131.

<sup>40</sup> A. Przybylski, *Wzucie jako droga poznania prawdy o drugim człowieku*, [in:] *Oblicza prawdy. Edyta Stein – s. Teresa Benedykta od Krzyża*, W. Irek ed., Sympozja i sesje naukowe, 20(2010), Wrocław, p. 65-78.

<sup>41</sup> E. Stein, *Autoportret z listów. Część trzecia. Listy do Romana Ingardena*, p. 300.

the knowledge of reality becomes complementary and fuller<sup>42</sup>. It can be expressed with conviction : it allows one to achieve the ultimate truth.

The conditions for the efficacy of the process of reaching the truth taken from the thought of Edith Stein, are undoubtedly significant for that process, and consequently for the veritative argument. They coincide with the internal, relating to the subject circumstances that the argument deals with, and to some extent they also complement or expand these circumstances. Thus the works of Edith Stein, her analysis that can be linked to the veritative argument, is undoubtedly inspiring and can enrich the argument.

## ARGUMENT WERYTATYWNY NA TLE ŻYCIA I MYŚLI EDYTY STEIN

W artykule podjęta została próba wykazania praktycznej weryfikacji argumentu werytatywnego w życiu Edyty Stein oraz wskazania na możliwość zastosowania jej przemyśleń w konstruowaniu tegoż argumentu, zwłaszcza w aspekcie wzmocnienia jego waloru motywacyjnego. Argument werytatywny służy uzasadnianiu wiarygodności Objawienia Bożego i chrześcijańskiego poprzez wykazywanie, że źródłem wszelkiej prawdy jest Bóg, który jest też ostateczną Prawdą wyjaśniającą sens życia człowieka i wszystkiego co istnieje. Edyta Stein szukając w swym życiu prawdy i sensu życia odnalazła Boga, najwyższą Prawdę. Przez spotkanie z Bogiem odkryła swe przeznaczenie, życie w zjednoczeniu z Nim w wieczności. Jej droga do prawdy i Boga nosi znamiona procesu dochodzenia do ostatecznej Prawdy, Boga Objawienia, a proces ten zawiera się w strukturze argumentu werytatywnego. W ten sposób doświadczenie Edyty Stein może być potraktowane jako praktyczne zweryfikowanie tegoż argumentu. Dodatkowo w jej myśli filozoficzno-teologicznej można odnaleźć dociekania tajemnicy Boga, osobowej Prawdy, istotne dla ujęcia Boga, jako ostatecznej Prawdy, a właśnie argument zmierza do wykazywania, że prawda zawiera się w Bogu Objawienia. Prawda w Bogu w jej ujęciu ma wymiar: osobowy, relacyjny i wyjaśniający. Tak postrzegana prawda służy pełniejszemu odkryciu sensu życia człowieka, przede wszystkim w wymiarze religijnym, co również przynależy do istoty argumentu. Edyta Stein wykazuje w swej antropologii, że człowiek ma wrodzone predyspozycje do poszukiwania prawdy, a jej poznanie wpływa pozytywnie na rozwój człowieka i jego życie. Te stwierdzenia są znaczące dla problematyki źródeł argumentu. Wyróżnione w myśli Edyty Stein uwarunkowania procesu dochodzenia do Prawdy i Boga (postawa otwartości intelektualnej względem zastanej rzeczywistości, dobra wola w dążeniu do odkrycia prawdy, determinacja i konsekwencja poszukującego, postawa „wczucia”, pokora otwierająca na rzeczywistość transcendentną)

<sup>42</sup> E. Stein, *Światłość w ciemności...*, p. 242.

zbiegają się z wewnętrznymi, podmiotowymi uzależnieniami skuteczności czy waloru motywacyjnego argumentu i w jakimś stopniu je ubogacają oraz poszerzają. Podobnie uwarunkowania zewnętrzne, które wpłynęły pozytywnie na ten proces (środowisko życia i wychowanie, metoda fenomenologiczna Husserla, świadectwo życia wiarą spotykanych chrześcijan) korespondują i wzmacniają przedmiotowe (obiektywne) okoliczności skuteczności argumentu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** argument werytatywny, wiarygodność Objawienia chrześcijańskiego, ostateczna Prawda, osobowa Prawda, motywy wiarygodności Objawienia chrześcijańskiego, Edyta Stein.

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