

Reviews & Notices

Sobrak-Seaton, Michaela. *Spirit, Expression and Community in the Philosophy of Edith Stein*. Cham: Springer, 2024. pp. 171. ISBN: 0923-9545. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1008pslxil84br1>

Many insights were already generated by the philosophy of Edith Stein. They were deep thoughts of scholars that attempted to understand the philosophy of the German phenomenologist turned Carmelite Saint from all possible angles. However, Sobrak-Seaton's book, in fact a doctoral thesis, is not merely an additional published material to a growing literature on the philosophy of Stein nor is it merely an expository work on Stein's thinking. The author made her contribution, not merely on the level of insights she offered, but also more importantly on the approach she employed. A clear and organized writer, Sobrak-Seaton highlighted a Steinian category which for her unlocks and is the interpretative key to the whole of Stein's philosophy: SPIRIT as expressive.

She shifted from the traditional (i.e. chronological) approach of most Steinian scholars and sees the starting point from the perspective of the spirit which is manifested in empathy. This is the major contribution of the book. The chapters of the book flow orderly from each other, having the Spirit understood as expressive as the interpretative key.

The author is skillful in breaking down complicated philosophical notions intelligible to beginners in Steinian studies. This is another merit of the book. Those who wish to introduce themselves to the thought of Edith Stein in a simple yet profound manner will not be disappointed.

Of particular importance is how Sobrak-Seaton summarizes her whole book using the category "Philosophy of Spirit." She explains the role and significance of the latter and attempts to connect it to all the major works of Stein which in itself is a feat. Other Steinian scholars would have reservations in using one category to explain Stein's philosophy since the latter is multi-faceted but Sobrak-Seaton goes out of the usual mold. She does not see it as narrowing down Stein's philosophy but a guide and challenge for future studies on Stein. Readers in fact can follow through the chapters how the author weaved her arguments by using this interpretative key.

She proposes to extend her study to Steinian topics which still are under explored: politics, ethics, and *Geisteswissenschaften* (i.e. poetry and music). And if I may add, Metaphysics and Christian Spirituality can also benefit from Edith Stein's Philosophy of Spirit.

For those who do not share the Christian faith but whose thinking is open to the divine, the book of Sobrak-Seaton is replete with insights that prepare someone to receive the faith. Consider the following examples: the openness of the human being to himself and to others, the formation of human communities as reflection of the Trinity, the relationship between man and God, and Stein's Philosophy of Spirit culminating in union of lovers. These are themes heavy with Christian undertones which when thought seriously would hopefully move someone to embrace the Catholic faith. One of the evident pastoral values of philosophy is that it is an avenue of encounter between believers and unbelievers. This book obviously fulfills this point. It is a "space" where believers and unbelievers can dialogue in the spirit and witness of Edith Stein. She too did not give much importance to the faith but because of philosophy and God's grace, she was able to discover that the Truth is a person who is Jesus Christ himself.

Overall, the book of Sobrak-Seaton deepens what has already begun by Steinian scholars. Those who are interested in Edith Stein can heed the author's call to make this world more humane by forming communities in accord with Edith Stein's Philosophy of Spirit.

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Regoli, Roberto. *Beyond the Crises in the Church. The Pontificate of Benedict XVI.* Translated and edited by Daniel Gallagher. Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2024. pp. 350. ISBN: 978-1587310713. (Original Italian edition - *Oltre la crisi della Chiesa: Il Pontificato di Benedetto XVI.* Torino, Lindau, 2016). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.55997/1009pslxi184br2>

From an outsider's point of view, the Church, though of divine origin and existence, may appear to be a greater than life figure, but upon closer examination, through inside knowledge, one may realize that it is still a human institution with human overseers. This truth about the Church is laid bare in Roberto Regoli's book entitled "Beyond the Crises in the Church: The Pontificate of Benedict XVI." First published in Italian in 2016, this work is made available in English in 2024. It is a work borne out of the author's passion and expertise on Church History, Courts and Elites, History of the Clergy, and more specifically on the History of Papacy, the Roman Curia, and pontifical diplomacy from the 19th to the 21st centuries. Currently, he is a professor of contemporary Church history at the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome, from where he took up several degrees, notable of which is his Doctorate in Ecclesiastical History. Concurrently, he heads the Department of Church History, as well as editor of *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*.

Regoli's book, both in Italian (2016) and English (2024) editions, has received several reviews. Andrea Ciampi, in her 2017 review, highlighted how the author treated