

The Absolute Sacrifice as an Attempt to Reach God. Reflections on the Work and Life of Simone Weil

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Abstract

The figure of the philosopher and her writing heritage is the main subject of this paper, which examines the phenomenon of her death. Despite numerous items of literature and research about Weil, no attempt has been made by any researcher to analyse her life and death. Looking at various cultural and philosophical aspects, researchers have sought to highlight her death as a human sacrifice. No researcher so far has ever examined the phenomenon of Weil's death as a supererogative act. The figure of Simone Weil and an analysis of her death highlights the sacrifice aspect of her life.

KEYWORDS: *Simone Weil, sacrifice, eternal life, heresy, responsibility, death, supererogative act*

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: *Simone Weil, ofiara, życie wieczne, herezja, odpowiedzialność, śmierć, supererogacja*

The title of my paper is *The Absolute Sacrifice as an attempt to reach God. Reflections on the work and life of Simone Weil*. My thesis aims to present the death of the French philosopher as a sacrifice and I would like to shed light on the multifaceted nature of her death. Simone Weil is one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century. We can talk about her as an intellectual, an erudite, a philosopher and also as a prophetess. By assigning this epithet to her, I mean a twentieth century prophetess – that is, transparent to what God wants to tell us, which in her case was reflected in the attitude she adopted. Weil, understanding human misfortune, sensed the impending war with all its horrors. In this context her thought may be considered universal, even moralising and a challenge to do good to others, which she repeatedly emphasised in her writings. Reading the writings of Simone Weil and then Levinas and Gierard, we can see many common interpretations that they took from her. One example is Weil's analysis of the parable of the Good Samaritan, that when we pass by the needy indifferently, we are committing sin at this very moment. The misfortune of others should disturb our complacency and force us to do good. Her character still arouses approval and opposition in her readers. When she died she was only 34 years old, and her thoughts were discovered only after her death. We owe this largely to Albert Camus, thanks to whom her efforts, numerous notes and reflections could be published and read. Has she been appreciated? It is difficult to answer this question. Weil herself never sought titles or recognition. Instead, she wanted to experience suffering, unable to remain indifferent to the sufferings experienced by others. However, with some pain, I can say that her place in today's research has been somewhat marginalised despite the legacy she left behind.

Biography

Let us refer first to the biography of our heroine. She gave up her bourgeois life to help those she cherished the most – the weak and the needy. A Christian and heretic, mystic and communist, rebel and saint – such terms can describe this extraordinary woman. Discussion about this French thinker continues, probably without a final conclusion for either critics or supporters. The polemics concern her life and philosophical creation, as well as her understanding of Christianity and alleged conversion. However, probably most disputes revolve around Weil's passing, which remains a mystery to this day. Her death in England in 1943 could be considered suicide, which the Church clearly opposes. However, this was not a nihilistic act of rebellion



against God or one of despair, although apparently we might consider her suicide an anti-Christian deed. Her death was an act of sacrifice performed in the name of solidarity with starving labourers, those living in concentration camps, and also with Jews forced into the ghettos. It was also a death that presents numerous analogies with the sacrifice of Christ, and thus with the figure of a scapegoat. Weil's demise is a symbol of suffering for war crimes, as well as an act of pain and suffering against the world's injustice.

The French philosopher was born in February, 1909 in Paris. She received a solid education at one of the best Paris high schools to follow the path of philosophy with her master Emil Chartier. Originally, she came from an assimilated Jewish family in which a climate of agnosticism prevailed. She only found out about her Jewish origin in 1940, after France's capitulation, when regulations regarding repression against Jews were issued. As a Jew, she 'accepted' Christianity, but without baptism, because she considered herself a disciple of Christ from outside the Church. Her life was a form of martyrdom; she was plagued by constant headaches and health problems, despite which she took on the hardest intellectual and physical work without concern for her own comfort and health (Weil 2004, 695).

The search for Christianity

Simone Weil, throughout her life, was looking for Christianity and answers to questions that bothered her. She had her first contact with Christianity in 1935, when in summer in Portugal she saw a procession of women from fishing villages, praying for their husbands. Then she also said that Christianity in its entire form is a religion of slaves who must do its bidding. Using the term 'slave', she meant the natives in the French colonies, the workers and all who have been conquered and dominated by foreign power. Sensing the mood in Berlin, she was fully aware that Europe was aiming for a moral decline. She became the victim of dominating totalitarianism, for which she paid the highest price of death. Her attitude towards Christianity is considered by some to be heresy when, for example, she made a connection between Christianity and the mythology of ancient Greece. In one of her letters to Prist Perrin, she writes: 'Then I just felt that Plato is a mystic, that the Iliad is bathed in Christian light and that Dionysus and Osiris are in a way Christ himself. And my love has doubled in this way' (Weil 2004). Despite being considered a Christian, Weil was never baptised, but she did take part in some religious practices and made a thorough study of the Holy Scriptures. However, she



criticised the Church, which she believed dealt only in dogmas and not in the Truth which is Christ. A French thinker, she was brought up in a family that belonged to the intelligentsia; she consciously rejected bodily comforts, moving from a bourgeois to a proletariat life; in spite of poor health, she chose to work at a Renault factory, harvested grapes, took part in the civil war in Spain and then joined the Free France Committee. Her study of Christianity certainly contributed to this transition, and in Christian thought she found asceticism in the form of Saint Francis. Weil believed that she should accept poverty on the model of Saint Francis of Assisi; for he did not go begging for his friends but for strangers. She believed that during her thirty years of life she had many comforts and deliberately chose misery; as she mentions in her correspondence with her student, Huguette Baur,

I have never sought misery, although I often had a strong desire for it. I decided that I should not do this. If now I'm being hurt, why should I try to avoid it? I am inclined to have a weakness on the day I feel my full will weight, but I do not think it is necessary. It is better to consider everything that brings fate, happiness or misery; life or death is grace (Weil 1991, 6).

The French thinker was also strongly influenced by the heretical thought of the Cathars, where she was delighted with the ideal of poverty and the practice of asceticism. Barber wrote:

it seems that throughout her life she was looking for a spiritual panacea, for the despair of the condition of the world in which she lived, for she came to the conclusion that neither traditional political institutions nor revolutionary movements provide the right solution. She did not find a solution in the Catholic system because she strongly believed in the human nature of Christ and the Crucifixion, as well as appreciated the world in its various manifestations and the many temporal achievements of mankind (Barber 2000, 165).

The Catherines are perceived as a heretical sect, the beginnings of which should be seen in the twelfth century when the first Cathar communities began their activities in present-day Germany, then to extend their coverage to southern France and central Italy. Cathariism as a religious movement was characterised by a dualistic understanding of the world; probably taken from the Manichaeans. If we trace the sources and foundations of religious knowledge of this movement, we should mention the Vulgate, as well as apocrypha from the Bogomils: Jan's Questions and the Vision of Isaiah. We do not have a clear answer about the use of the Old Testament Scriptures



that the Catherists allegedly rejected (likewise Weil); there are hypotheses that they adhered to some books of the OT. Catherine did not believe in either hell or purgatory; Satan's domain was the world; Satan created the world and imprisoned the spirit in matter. According to the Cathars, the Old Testament Jahwe was identified with Satan. The real God was far removed from this world. It was this God who was to send Christ to teach people how to attain liberation. Christ, according to heresy, was a pure spirit, his body only an illusion. In Cathar thought, one can sense a kind of hatred for life, drawn from Gnosticism or Manicheism. It could be said that the Cathars propagated the disappearance of the human race, because in their learning there was a tendency to take their own lives. They condemned procreation, and they regarded marriage as debauchery. After solemn admission to the sect, the new members could not fall back into a state of sin, because then it would invalidate the choice of the Cathar faith. Some of the Cathars, for this reason, practiced the *endura*¹ as a voluntary renunciation of food and drink; as exposure to starvation. The members of the sect practiced an ascetic life and underwent three long fasts every year; therefore, they enjoyed greater prestige than the duchess of Catholics. Ethics and discipline was required that would lead to the salvation of members of the Cathars' Church. The most characteristic for the Cathars was sexual and nutritional discipline. Sexual discipline was characterised by complete sexual abstinence, which was necessary to remain in a state a chastity. The food discipline forbade the consumption of land animals and animal products; sea food, oil, wine diluted

¹ The perception of *endura* as a ritual suicide that the Cathars practised, raises much controversy among researchers of this heretical movement. As Costas Tsiamis, Eleni Tounta, Effie Poulakou-Rebelakou noticed, the *endura* could be a methodical euthanasia of man within the meaning of the Qatari movement. The difference in today's understanding of the term euthanasia and that of the Middle Ages which was not known at the time; nor was the relationship between man and body and soul. Another significant difference lies in the different perception and understanding of religiosity in the modern world and the Middle Ages. Christian faith guarantees man's salvation after the death of the body, where in the Cathars the human body was doomed to condemnation because of its material nature. In this context, we can compare *endura* to today's form of euthanasia, stressing that in reality it was a form of just death for the Cathars, breaking free from being in the material body as the only way to free the soul. Voluntary death for the Cathars was the "final torture" of their evil and unclean body. As the researchers note, the term *endura* as suicide in this case was used and reproduced by contemporary literature and under Catholic doctrine, thus excluding Qatari interpretations. In addition to the medical dimension, *endura* is a rite that was practiced by crowds of followers and a religious and cultural phenomenon of the Middle Ages. Tsiamis Costas, Tounta Eleni, Poulakou-Rebelakou Effie. 2015. "The "Endura" of The Cathars' Heresy: Medieval Concept of Ritual Euthanasia or Suicide?" *Journal Religion and Health*.



with water, vegetables, fruit, nuts and bread were allowed. The rationale behind this doctrine was the belief that one should not eat anything that came from sexual intercourse. Permitted products – bread, wine, fish – were eaten according to the model of Christ. Eating land animals was treated as a renunciation of faith; which required re-initiation and ordination for a perfect consolamentum rite (Eliade 2008, 166). We do not have a clear answer as to whether Weil committed ritual suicide modelled on the Cathars' rite of the *endura*, but we can certainly see in her writings the clear influence of this heretical movement on her thought. In the Cathars' assumptions, she found the idea of asceticism and poverty, to which she remained faithful all her life. Undoubtedly, her interest in the Cathar movement allowed her to acquire certain normative beliefs that shaped her motivation for sacrifice from life, which was undoubtedly a rational act, not an unintentional impulse dictated by momentary emotions and impulses.

Weil's interest in asceticism was probably also influenced by the *Bhagavadgita*, which she read in 1940, when there were many conflicting political issues in France. It forced Weil to embark on a spiritual quest. While reading one of the Indian texts, she found the story of a Buddhist monk Milarepa, who practiced asceticism but had previously been involved in sorcery. His master subjected him to intolerable trials, one of which was a forced hunger strike. In Weil's thinking there are many elements taken from Buddhist meditation; her life was similarly directed to the "darkened self" so that it would only remain visible. Weil's spiritual aspirations were a quest for spiritual opening to God, rejecting her own self. Her idea of Christianity focused mainly on death on the cross; rejecting the hope of salvation:

and if the Gospel contained no mention of the resurrection of Christ, faith would be easier for me. The cross alone is enough for me. For me, proof and something really wonderful is the perfect beauty of the descriptions of the Passion of the Lord, combined with the stupefying words of Isaiah: 'Tormented, oppressed, he did not open his mouth' and St. Paul 'He did not take the opportunity to be with God equally. He humbled himself and became obedient until death – and death on the cross...' He caused a scandal. That's what makes me believe (Weil 2004, 567).

Weil's religious thought was Gnostic in character, whereby the true God is far away and not responsible for the evil of this world. The whole world where we live is bad and this is the reason why we should withdraw from it. To be able to approach God, choose the cross or self-annihilation. Perhaps



this choice was justified not only by asceticism but also by Pythagorean beliefs; which she valued (Weil 2004, 907). Furthermore, panic-stricken fear of slaughterers could not only be caused by ethical considerations, but a hunch about which Adorno wrote ten years later: Auschwitz begins where people see slaughterhouses and thoughts: they are only animals. So what was asceticism according to Weil? Was it intended to lead to its own spiritual perfection? Can vegetarianism and a life in poverty, which turned into a voluntary hunger strike, be ascetic in its classical understanding? She was a witness to human misery and life in the “dark times” that drove her inner despair. It can be assumed that the choice of asceticism was conditioned on her understanding of religion and God, fascination with the Cathars and the figure of Saint Francis and an attempt to unite with all starving people. The path of asceticism, upon which the thinker embarked, was to be the road leading to the division of man into body and soul. I believe that Weil in ascesis found an attempt to redeem the faults of others, as well as express her act of solidarity; she paid one of the highest prices – her own life. Weil connects the duty with the person of Christ suffering on the cross, and also turns to the sacrifice of his own life as an expression of consistency in fulfilling his duties towards others. In such a situation, death from a sense of duty, sacrifice, takes on an unprecedented fulfilment of duties. For the French philosopher, the category of duty is also harmoniously combined with withdrawal from life. In this understanding of death, we can talk of the hope it brings. Weil’s offering was guided by individual motives, a sense of moral duty and will.

Rejection of salvation

Another point that I would like to touch upon or outline in some way is the question of Weil’s rejection of faith in eternal life, which in a way could have “facilitated” Weil’s acceptance of the victim’s path. In her writings, the French thinker often decisively rejected the possibility of her believing in eternal life, which again in the context of her thoughts on Christianity would put her on the side of heresy. On the basis of the author’s own writings and the comments that I have read, I believe that Simone Weil did not fully accept the idea of salvation from the perspective of Christian thinking. The thinker identified with the Passion and the Cross of Christ, which also referred to her solidarity with people who were suffering and who were in distress. Her writings often feature gnostic interpretations that refer to theodicy, where she emphasised the presence of evil in a world created by a good and merciful God. It is also



worth paying attention to the interpretation of eternal life, referred to by Ireneusz Ziemiński (1999, 44). Referring to the philosopher's words, I think that the rejection of eternal life in the case of Weil could have just decided on the conscious choice of sacrifice as the highest absolute sacrifice. Speaking of the rejection of the Christian concept of salvation by Weil, we must also draw our attention to a special text by Simone Weil – *Letter to Father Perrin-Spiritual Autobiography* – where Weil confides in his spiritual help on his own fears before receiving the sacrament of baptism. Weil in this letter takes a rather clear position on salvation and a supererogative² act, saying:

- ² In the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy we can find the following definitive term for supererogation: “Supererogation is a technical term for a class of activities that go beyond the scope of responsibilities. Generally speaking, supererogative acts are morally good although they are not required. Although widespread discourse in various cultures allows and pays more attention to such acts, the issue itself is not often an ethically analyzed problem in terms of direct and systematic actions. The exception is the Roman Catholic tradition, which introduced the category of supererogation, which was attacked by Lutherans and Calvinists. However, the concept itself appears in ethics only in the 1960s.” Supererogational acts – optional, go beyond the law or professional obligation, including practicing virtues that have a deeper dimension. We expect that people will act in a virtuous way and good, even if their attitude requires self-sacrifice. <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/supererogation/> (Accessed: November 17, 2024). The term “supererogation” describes activities that go beyond the call of duty. Performing acts of supererogation is good but no longer required. Their failure is not badly molar. According to some ethical theories, supererogation is not possible. Most utilitarian “consequentialists” claim that it is our duty to act in the best possible way. Any other action is contrary to duty and is therefore morally wrong. Referring to the definition of Kaniowski, we can see that supererogation is primarily characterised by the voluntary nature of individual sacrifice. Optional activity only occurs when it is allowed; it neither results from obligation nor is prohibited. It is a lawful action and its execution or evasion will not cause any social sanctions or criticism. It is a morally good action that is undertaken to achieve good results. Altruism aimed at the good of others is another condition that causes an optional act, Kaniowski, Andrzej. 1999. *Supererogacja. Zagubiony wymiar etyki*. Warszawa: Oficyna Naukowa. 1. The consequence of undertaking an optional act is the realisation of good in the act of respecting universal values such as love, friendship, happiness. This type of action is directed at the manifestation of the good of others, as indicated by condition 4. On the other hand, condition 3 limits the act to be taken by the axiological requirement, which does not refer only to the results achieved, but rather to the intentions and intentions. In order for a given act to be classified as non-obligatory, the entity must keep the good of others in mind. Even if the achievement of the intended purpose fails, this act still has an axiological dimension that demonstrates the act of being optional. The category of optionality is inseparably connected with sense of duty – only in relation to it can we seek its moral status. The moral factor is also associated with the personal factor, i.e. the subject of the act. Condition 4, which defines optionality, indicates the altruistic intention of the perpetrator, as well as the merit that comes from trying to make a given act. It is necessary that the perpetrator's intention takes into account



For example, I never gave myself permission to think about a future life, but I always believed that the moment of death is the measure and purpose of life. I thought that for those who live as they should, it is a moment in which the pure, naked, sure and immortal truth appears in an infinitely small fraction of time. I thought that the life that leads to it is not determined only by morality common to all, but is based on a specific sequence of actions and events that is strictly personal and binding so that whoever passes by will not achieve the goal. That was my concept of calling. The criterion of deeds imposed by calling in stimuli – by their nature and in a visible way – differ from those that pass from sensitivity or reasoning. Do not follow such a stimulus, when it arose, even if it required impossible things, it seemed to me to be the worst misfortune [...]. It always seemed the most beautiful life in which everything is determined by coercion of circumstances, or by such stimuli that do not leave places to choose³.

Referring to the extent to which multi-pragmatic, multi-cultural and multi-religious knowledge, collected and studied by Weil, weakened her faith, and how much faith distances this knowledge, marking it to Christianity, it was worth noting that Simone Weil always considered herself a Christian, and also that her way of understanding life was Christian, as she repeatedly emphasised in her letters or writings. Reading Weil, we can see many times that the problem she constantly struggled with was sharing social misery. So, she wrote: “misfortune has entered my body and my soul” (Weil 2004, 692). Her syncretic way of understanding the Christian religion puts a special emphasis precisely on the issue of unhappiness and the misery of others with which she tried to identify as well as realistically participate in, for example, by working in a factory or participating in the Spanish civil war. The attitude of the French thinker was hugely impacted by the religions of the Far East, fairy tales, legends, mythology and most thought from ancient Greece, in which she saw the source of Christianity. It was not only the study of philosophical writings and the use of other religious and cultural traditions that shaped Weil’s understanding of Christianity and her refusal to accept the baptism which she considered unnecessary dogma. The most references

the well-being of others. Only in this case can we qualify her as a supererogative act. However, we must distinguish the altruistic intention from the altruistic motive that the individual is guided by. Intention is a component of an optional act, while a motive is a stimulus through which we take action. The motives themselves, however, do not have to deserve praise, despite the fact that they lead to a heroic deed. Optionality cannot be related to the concept of virtue or the specific moral personality of the individual who undertakes the act, Urmson, James O. 1958. *Saints and heroes*. Washington: University of Washington Press.

³ < brak treści przypisu? >



and analogies between different religions, fairy tales or heretical movements, which inspired Weil, may be found in a letter to a monk, where the author repeatedly emphasises her understanding of Christianity, whereby it was impossible for her to reject other traditions only because of accepting other religions or cultural conditions and habits resulting from tradition. We can ask a question: what then weakened Weil's full acceptance of Christianity? We might tell an ambiguous story, but according to common knowledge as well as my interpretation of the works of this thinker, we can determine that Weil was aware of other traditions but rejected some Old Testament dogmas and writings. Did her scientific knowledge weaken her acceptance of faith? I do not think so, and I can even say that in science, as in ancient philosophy, for example, she saw a close relationship with the Christian religion, whose source of birth took place many years before the birth of Christ.

The problem of prayer and how Weil understood it is also important. Let me quote an event described by the French thinker, which majorly influenced how she understood prayer and the sacraments. In her writings, Weil mentions participation in the Holy Week celebrations, where she met an Englishman. He directed her towards some English poetry from the 17th century. Weil especially liked a poem called *Love*. Let me quote a passage about it: "I learned it by heart [...]. I thought he was only reciting it as a beautiful poem, but without my knowledge this recitation took on the value of prayer. It was during one of these recitations that when I wrote to the Father, Christ himself came to me and possessed me" (Weil 2004, 171). Regarding the prayer called Our Father and the very question of prayer, Weil did not pray in the literal sense of the word. As she recalls to Father Perrin, "I have recited *Salve Regina* a few times, but only as a beautiful poem" (Weil 2004).

She wrote about the experience of prayer in the following way:

"If I pray for the truth, any thought that it seems to me true, it comes from God, even if she was wrong, and I have no right to it reject by submission to authority, even if it is accepted by our own will" (Weil 2004, 695).

Referring to the Lord's prayer, we cannot forget about the poem "Love" by Georg Herbert, which also became a form of prayer for Weil and, as the thinker emphasised in one of her letters, became for her a return to Christianity. On the other hand, the Lord's Prayer, Our Father, as Weil recollected, was for her poetry at first, which in time she accepted as prayer and would



recite it daily. At this point, I will underline what is closely related to the recitation of the Lord's Prayer: "Save us from evil." The issue of salvation which Simone Weil often writes has never been an understanding of this concept in the sense of the official teaching of the Church.

Regarding the understanding of salvation in Simone Weil's thinking, I uphold the view of the rejection of salvation within the meaning of the Catholic Church by the French philosopher. Let me quote the following excerpts: "God is omnipotent on earth only in the sense that he saves those who want to be saved through him." Furthermore, "Essential principles for the good of the soul are principles that one can not want to obey, because the very fact of directing to them thoughts are already a violation of them. One can only ask God to remove such thoughts from our hearts. This clearly shows that the only salvation is God's mercy" (Weil 2004, 221). We could search much deeper for such thoughts in Weil's writings, but Weil's view of salvation is best expressed in the following words:

"We live here on earth in something that is a mixture time and eternity. Hell will be the same sometimes.

We do not need to believe in eternal life, because the only proof is not these feelings, eternities that we have here on earth. And 'Of course, those feelings are enough,' they say about full eternal life. But not necessarily for us" (Weil 2004, 221).

Simone Weil denied eternal life after death, at the same time believing that this kind of expectation is a manifestation of egoism and human pride. Faith in God, however, only to guarantee eternal life after death, was almost blasphemy to her. In my opinion, Simone Weil recognised eternal life as only metaphorical, in the spirit of the idea of stopping time. She therefore believed that eternity is available to us only as a specific quality of life on earth. For this reason, Dewi Zephania Phillips – Wittgenstein's student – referred to her, seeing the similarity of Wittgenstein's view with the writings of Simone Weil.

Supererogation

I think that the life of a French thinker who was the path of consistent decisions that were crowned with self-sacrifice. To what extent was it an expression



of rebellion against the current reality? Or was it an expression of pride and selfishness? Or was it to deliberately lead to death like the Cathars? At this point, we could give different interpretations and try to choose arguments in such a way to prove each of these premises. However, I think that Simone Weil's attitude was completely different. I would rather refer to the words of Tertullian, who wrote: "I believe, because it is absurd," and I think that was Simone Weil's attitude. Nietzsche and Camus looked into the eyes of absurdity. The latter wrote: "There is only one truly serious philosophical problem: suicide. To say whether life is or is not worth the trouble of living it is to answer the fundamental question of philosophy." Camus's answer is: No, life does not make sense. Like Nietzsche, he recognises man as a being capable of overcoming nihilism. Simone Weil threw herself into absurdity, torn by a sense of necessity and duty.

Her writings remain a record of the struggle between existence and non-existence, death and life. She wrote that when we pray "Your kingdom come," we wish for the end of the world. In the words: "Thy will be done" we accept God existence again. Creation according to her, is evil, because it could be created, and therefore detached from God. At the same time, it was good because God's beauty was engraved on it. "Contradiction is a lever of transcendence," and Weil's writings are an extraordinary testimony, impossible to include within the popular scheme. And here I would like to refer to the sense of necessity and duty that filled the life of this young woman. From an early age, she communed with the proletariat to share her meals. It was this social sensitivity that pushed Weil to share suffering with others. Her life can be described as a supererogative act, i.e. an optional act, which, if not taken, will not be judged badly; these are generally human activities that go beyond our duty. The misfortune of other people was a moral discomfort for the French thinker, because how could she be indifferent when looking at the workers in the factories? Because of this, we can believe that her death, despite the fact that she did not save any other person than Father Kolbe did, made a special sense, where she devoted her life in an act of solidarity with others. The reality was, according to Simone Weil, built of contradictions, to the extent that contradiction became the criterion of understanding reality, which led to the statement that we are not in the same illusion. But in her hands reality does not transform into a mill that mixes everything and equalises the hierarchy of things. It was too close to the source from which this contradiction could flow: the pain and suffering that she had experienced so many times. Her reflections may remind her readers of Pascal's "Thoughts," thus developing the wisdom of negative theology or the experience of the



mystics she read. In this context, she could be considered a saint were it not for some of her views that contradicted the teachings of the Catholic Church. But she probably would not have cared either way since her focus was on helping others.

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