The woman’s soul as “shelter:” Edith Stein on the work of women

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The category of “women’s work” enriches a thorough intellectual history of the idea of work. Contributing this perspective, this chapter explores the writings of philosopher and saint Edith Stein. Her understanding of vocation integrated elements of “[n]ature, freedom, and grace.”[[1]](#footnote-1) This meant that while a person’s work depends on the (sexed) nature of the person, gender roles are not the simple answer to organizing work. Indeed, “vocation is also something personal,” and “the specific nature of the individual must be considered.”[[2]](#footnote-2) Thus, freedom enters the equation, before finally, the grace of God sanctifies and encourages the trials and triumphs of work. This chapter proceeds according to this three-part understanding.

Because, for Stein, nature was a determinant in defining the work of women, Stein on woman’s nature and her corresponding views on girls’ education are examined first. Next, this chapter turns to the category of freedom, which informs Stein’s exploration of women’s vocations and professions, which, according to Stein, are tied to natural tendencies, but preferences, temperament, and choice are also factors. A final, shorter section addresses how Stein saw grace, prayer, and sacraments as fortifying work. The chapter concludes by linking the theme of women’s work to one of Stein’s other intellectual interests – the phenomenology of empathy.

Stein’s work has received a range of scholarly treatments, from her early philosophical formation to her work as an education reformer.[[3]](#footnote-3) She has been studied with reference to ancient philosophy and modern “care ethics.”[[4]](#footnote-4) Scholars disagree about Stein’s feminism.[[5]](#footnote-5) Stein’s legacy, with regard to her writings on women, has been difficult to categorize and, though appreciated by Catholics, has not achieved canonical status among feminists and scholars of women’s history. Nevertheless, her perspective on the work of women remains one of the most articulate twentieth-century investigations on the subject.

Stein was born to a Jewish family in what is now Poland in 1891. Following the First World War, Stein engaged with many women’s issues.[[6]](#footnote-6) As European feminism shifted, Stein remained moderate amid various poles within the movement.[[7]](#footnote-7) She started teaching 1916, during her doctoral studies, which were supervised by Edmund Husserl.[[8]](#footnote-8) After working as Husserl’s assistant, she hoped to obtain a university position, but sexist customs excluded her.[[9]](#footnote-9) In 1921, she converted to Catholicism, and throughout the 1920s, she worked at a girls school, continuing to write.[[10]](#footnote-10) This experience, as well as her activism in wider education groups, spurred her to consider the “philosophical foundations” of the practice and purpose of education.[[11]](#footnote-11) She was masterful, with one student recalling “the magic of her personality.”[[12]](#footnote-12) Stein’s work in education is indispensable background to her considerations on the nature of woman.[[13]](#footnote-13) Later, she became a professor in Münster but was dismissed in 1933 with the establishment of Nazi rule.[[14]](#footnote-14) Throughout the 1930s, she lived in Carmelite monasteries, taking her vows and writing treatises.[[15]](#footnote-15) She was murdered in Auschwitz, following the interment of Jewish-born Catholics in 1942.[[16]](#footnote-16)

Prayerfully prolific, Stein’s writings ranged from “philosophy” to “hagiography.”[[17]](#footnote-17) Her commentary on women’s work primarily relates to her preoccupation with “pedagogy.”[[18]](#footnote-18) She nevertheless draws upon her formation as a phenomenologist, making for a rich portrait of the feminine experience of work and vocation. Readers of Stein can make sense of this portrait by first examining Stein on the nature of woman, before looking to how freedom and grace shape women’s work.

**Nature: Understanding and Molding Nature for Work**

Stein establishes her perspective on women’s work from nature. She addresses women’s bodies, souls, and the education that shapes the best of this nature and ameliorates the worst. Stein is clear, however, that women do not constitute an impersonal monolith. She notes the “diversity of types and individuals” and insists feminine “nature is not uniform.”[[19]](#footnote-19) Sarah Borden explains that according to Stein “our humanity and femininity or masculinity” is complemented by “our individuality.”[[20]](#footnote-20) While, for Stein, woman is an “essentially different” category, the way this manifests relies on “the individual person” and the person’s “self-realization in the unique circumstances of a particular life situation.”[[21]](#footnote-21)

In studying women, Stein positions her philosophical, theological approach as starting “where the work of positive sciences leave off.”[[22]](#footnote-22) She addresses the study of women as a phenomenologist and a Catholic.[[23]](#footnote-23) Mary Baseheart commends “Stein’s phenomenology of woman” as a prime “example” of Stein’s methodological marriage of “Husserlian methodology” with the intricacies of function and “experience.”[[24]](#footnote-24)

Stein highlights the body in her analysis of woman’s nature. Marian Maskulak identifies her approach as “body-soul holism.”[[25]](#footnote-25) For Stein, the features of woman are obvious, and “[o]nly the person blinded by the passion of controversy could deny that woman in soul and body is formed for a particular purpose.”[[26]](#footnote-26) She also contends that the soul of woman is more closely linked to the body.[[27]](#footnote-27) For women, the “soul is present and lives more intensely in all parts of the body,” whereas for men, the body provides an instrumental (and thereby somewhat disconnected) function.[[28]](#footnote-28) Stein sees this body-soul “union” as connected to “motherhood.”[[29]](#footnote-29) Pregnancy “represents such an intimate unity of the physical and spiritual that one is well able to understand that this unity imposes itself on the entire nature of woman.”[[30]](#footnote-30) While the relationship between body and soul is important for Stein, it is not overdetermined. Borden notes that Stein suggests “[f]emale bodies are particularly fit for feminine souls,” while “the body is not the reason for the emphases of the soul.”[[31]](#footnote-31)

From the body, Stein examines the soul, encompassing a generalizable sense of the feminine ethos, personality, and character.[[32]](#footnote-32) Stein is motivated to articulate feminine “singularity” and insists that because woman’s “faculties are different,” they possess “a differing type of soul.”[[33]](#footnote-33) This was especially pertinent for Stein in her day because “radical leaders” who advocated “complete equality of all educational and professional opportunities” negated “the concept of a particular feminine nature.”[[34]](#footnote-34) Simply put, Stein defines woman’s nature by her features that direct her, “physically and spiritually,” towards wifehood and motherhood.[[35]](#footnote-35) From this foundation, an array of feminine qualities emerge. Stein concludes that woman is inclined towards concrete, personal thinking. Woman strives for a holistic development of herself and others, and she is empathetic, sympathetic, and invested in the world of emotions.

Throughout her essays on woman, Stein insists that women are not suited to abstract thought. For women, “*abstraction in every sense* is alien,” and women are driven “intuitively and emotionally to the concrete.”[[36]](#footnote-36) Stein conveys this theme repeatedly, noting that woman’s instinctive interest in and ability to comprehend “the concrete, the individual, and the personal” directs her “line of thought,” in lieu of abstraction.[[37]](#footnote-37) Stein attends especially to “that which is *living, personal, and whole,*” as important cognitive categories of woman.[[38]](#footnote-38) Accordingly, “[l]ifeless matter, the *fact*” captures the attention of woman “insofar as it serves the living and the personal.”[[39]](#footnote-39) Stein links woman’s alignment with “the concrete” and woman’s “intuitive grasp of the concrete and the living” to her maternal and wifely vocations.[[40]](#footnote-40) Innately adept at cultivating “the individual” and “personal,” woman is oriented to “personal” matters, including “those of other persons.”[[41]](#footnote-41)

Woman’s features are juxtaposed with man’s. For Stein, man is less preoccupied with “other beings and their concerns” because he is “consumed by ‘his enterprise’” and “concerns,” which center on ensuring “his family’s livelihood” and “battle for existence.”[[42]](#footnote-42) Complementarily, woman is less disposed to “one-sidedness,” a type of hyperfocus to which man is especially prone.[[43]](#footnote-43) Man and woman support each other in their “mutual duties,” according to Stein.[[44]](#footnote-44) Man protects woman, and woman “protects man from his natural one-sidedness” and from being “totally absorbed in his professional work.”[[45]](#footnote-45) Stein suggests that to best support man, woman must “not lose herself in” marriage; she must maintain an identity defined by her own “gifts and powers.”[[46]](#footnote-46)

Related to this complementarity, Stein repeatedly highlighted woman’s tendency towards a broad “harmonious development of all her faculties.”[[47]](#footnote-47) By this she means that woman is concerned with an effort “to develop herself to a wholeness and to help others to a corresponding development,” and this orientation to equilibrium and balance saves her from man’s “one-sided activation.”[[48]](#footnote-48) For Stein, woman strives “to the totality in herself and in others” and “expresses a unity and wholeness of the total psychosomatic personality.”[[49]](#footnote-49) Haney explains that woman’s position in relation to “the other” in wifehood and motherhood requires “her own integrity.”[[50]](#footnote-50) Woman is “a whole person,” and this informs her ability “to love the whole person of the other.”[[51]](#footnote-51) This “harmonious development” is an important element of the nature of woman, for Stein, because it facilitates her empathetic qualities.[[52]](#footnote-52)

For Stein, woman’s interest in the living and the personal and her interest in broad development are related to woman’s capacities for empathy and sympathy. Woman is able “to interest herself empathetically in areas of knowledge far from her own concerns” when “a personal interest” demands her attention to these new “areas.”[[53]](#footnote-53) Woman’s “maternal gift” means that her “active sympathy” encourages others.[[54]](#footnote-54) Woman is needed wherever “empathy” is needed, and usually this need relates to the encouragement of “the *total person*” and the person’s “gifts.”[[55]](#footnote-55) Stein describes woman as having “to feel her way towards that which wishes to become;” this means that the traits of empathy and sympathy assist woman’s intuitive support of “the dispositions and faculties” of others, even when these qualities are undiscovered or underdeveloped.[[56]](#footnote-56) In this regard, Stein portrays woman as possessing capacities for broad learning and precise discernment.

Empathy was a principal philosophical interest for Stein, apart from her interest in women. Petr Urban summarizes that, for Stein, “[e]mpathy is an other-oriented type of consciousness.”[[57]](#footnote-57) True empathy is a “type of perception.”[[58]](#footnote-58) Far from concluding that empathy is a lesser trait, Stein deems it “a feature of a genuine rationality” because empathy delivers “knowledge of others” that determines our “own individuation” and relation to the other, as Haney notes.[[59]](#footnote-59) When Stein emphasizes the feature of empathy in woman, she is referring to a generative skill of reasoning and sense-making.

Stein also notes that feminine psychology is concerned with “the emotional life” more so than “cognitive and creative action.”[[60]](#footnote-60) Where “[t]he intellect is predominant in masculine nature,” “the emotions” predominate in the feminine.[[61]](#footnote-61) Woman is empathetic and possesses “the gift of adapting herself to the inner life of others, to their goal orientation and working methods.” [[62]](#footnote-62) Therefore, her “emotions” and “[f]eelings” are fundamental to understanding what Stein calls “the existent in its totality and in its peculiarity” and, elsewhere, “concrete being in its unique nature and specific value.”[[63]](#footnote-63) Stein imbues this emotionality with great perceptive and social import. Emotional awareness yields knowledge of the other and communal connection.

Amid her admiration for woman’s nature, Stein unabashedly notes that because woman is holistic in her perspective and safeguarded from “one-sidedness,” woman is “less qualified for outstanding achievements in an objective field, achievements which are always purchased by a one-sided concentration.”[[64]](#footnote-64) Elsewhere, Stein notes that due to “woman’s nature,” very few women accomplish “[e]poch-making achievements.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

Stein includes some analysis of “distorted” or “degenerate” feminine tendencies and woman’s natural “faults and weaknesses.”[[66]](#footnote-66) First, given woman’s holistic perspective, she may strive for development superficially in too many areas, consequently “frittering away” her abilities and “nibbling in all areas.”[[67]](#footnote-67) Woman’s natural preference can become “a perverted desire for totality and inclusiveness,” leading to “fragmentation” and “a mania to know everything and thereby to skim the surface of everything.”[[68]](#footnote-68) Perhaps counterintuitively, her desire for balanced development may lead to chronic shallowness. Additionally, Stein warns that, to the extent woman can develop “one-sidedness,” it manifests in “unilateral emotional development.”[[69]](#footnote-69) Woman can also become unduly focused on and distracted by other people.[[70]](#footnote-70) Further, a woman may use her family in “pursuit of prestige” and “importance.”[[71]](#footnote-71) She cautions against woman’s “servile dependence on man.”[[72]](#footnote-72) Stein also warns that woman is prone to “greed” and “sensuality.”[[73]](#footnote-73)

Stein suggests man can fortify “his wife” against “sensuality” by encouraging her involvement “in his own creative work or in independent activity.”[[74]](#footnote-74) For Stein, man is largely responsible for a host of feminine degeneracies in his wife, from “pathological disturbance” to “excessive dependence on husband and children,” if he attempts “to confine her to a sphere too narrow for her talents.”[[75]](#footnote-75) Stein insists on the importance of “solid objective work,” which provides a “remedy against typical feminine defects.”[[76]](#footnote-76) Woman refines “her own gifts and powers” and pursues “objective work” to calibrate her natural inclinations, not to imitate man’s work.[[77]](#footnote-77)

Stein states that woman’s soul is “a shelter in which other souls may unfold.”[[78]](#footnote-78) The woman’s soul is made for specific purposes: “spiritual companionship and spiritual motherliness,” which are not restricted to “physical spouse and mother relationships.”[[79]](#footnote-79) These purposes shape the soul to seek the personal, aim for holistic development, express empathy, and submit to emotional intuition. Stein also describes what the woman’s soul, at its best, should be. Because woman’s soul serves the flourishing of “other souls,” her soul should be

“*expansive* and open to all human beings; it must be *quiet* so that no small weak flame will be extinguished by stormy winds; *warm* so as not to benumb fragile buds; *clear*, so that no vermin will settle in dark corners and recesses; *self-contained*, so that no invasions from without can imperil the inner life; *empty of itself*, in order that extraneous life may have room in it; finally, *mistress of itself* and also of its body, so that the entire person is readily at the disposal of every call.”[[80]](#footnote-80)

With these exhortations, Stein establishes that nature can be molded. Stein’s philosophy of education suggests that the “soul” resembles “a living formative root,” but like a “plant,” “interior and exterior factors” influence “the soul’s formation.”[[81]](#footnote-81) For Stein, souls and individuals require “instruction and guidance,” though they possess peculiar natures.[[82]](#footnote-82)

Stein addressed girls’ education at a time when secondary education largely endowed young women with “pretty manners” and little knowledge.[[83]](#footnote-83) Few schools prepared women for university, and it was uncommon to attend to a feminine ethos or “individual” personality, both areas Stein champions.[[84]](#footnote-84) For Stein, the education that shapes the nature of a girl and best prepares her for her vocation is a religious education that prioritizes “the imitation of Mary,” who “is the prototype of pure womanhood” and encourages girls to embody the “symbol of the mysterious union which Christ entered into with His Church.”[[85]](#footnote-85) Education ought to refine a girl’s “unique feminine nature,” which relates to her future “by man’s side.”[[86]](#footnote-86) Stein does not neglect alternatives, acknowledging how education prepares woman for various roles, whether she is “employed outside the home” or “a responsible member of the nation” or “in the Lord’s service.”[[87]](#footnote-87)

For Stein, education shapes nature by encouraging in the girl “the development of her humanity, her womanhood, and her individuality.”[[88]](#footnote-88) In order to foster “authentic humanity and womanhood with an unspoiled individuality,” the educator’s tools must be “flexible,” and the system must demonstrate “freedom and versatility.”[[89]](#footnote-89) Determining students’ “individual gifts,” schools provide “vocational guidance and choice.”[[90]](#footnote-90) Stein argues that “the core curriculum” ought to include “religious education” and “training in household skills,” such as domestic accounting, childcare, and “political-social issues.”[[91]](#footnote-91) Stein also highlights adaptability, self-denial, and self-sacrifice as important skills.[[92]](#footnote-92) Even though girls are less inclined to “abstract thought,” girls’ education should provide skills “to think clearly and keenly.”[[93]](#footnote-93) Relatedly, girls must articulate themselves “appropriately.”[[94]](#footnote-94) Therefore, “the teaching of language” is a priority.[[95]](#footnote-95)

Though Stein reiterates that “abstract intellectual activity” is less pertinent, she holds that some “training of the practical intellect” is needed to govern “emotions.”[[96]](#footnote-96) However, “the development of intellect” should not supersede that “of emotion.”[[97]](#footnote-97) Education of the emotions reveals “the feminine genius.”[[98]](#footnote-98) While emotion should be directed by “reason” and “will,” “emotional formation” is paramount “in woman’s formation.”[[99]](#footnote-99) The collaboration between “[i]ntellect and emotion” transforms raw emotion into a perspective based on “values.”[[100]](#footnote-100) Emotional education teaches discernment, for example: “awakening joyful emotion for *authentic* beauty and goodness and disgust for that which is base and vulgar.”[[101]](#footnote-101) Without this training, woman risks sentimentality and unpreparedness for vocation.[[102]](#footnote-102) Because of the importance of “emotional training,” Stein emphasizes “*emotionally formative* subjects,” like “literature, art, history.”[[103]](#footnote-103)

Stein also includes “[m]athematics and the natural sciences” as important, and she highlights “studies in *anthropology* and *theory of pedagogy*” as especially necessary, given woman’s vocation to encourage “*human development.*”[[104]](#footnote-104) For all her designs for educational reform, however, Stein cautions that “institutional education presents serious dangers” because, in missing “the close personal tie,” the child’s “[i]ndividuality” may be threatened.[[105]](#footnote-105) Stein suggests schools are no substitute for learning in proximity to “a mother who embodies authentic womanhood.”[[106]](#footnote-106) Stein argues that girls’ education ought to accommodate the naturally feminine soul and prepare girls for their work as women.

In grappling with woman’s nature, Stein considers women’s qualities from the body to the soul, but she does not see this nature as wholly fixed. This nature is at risk for degenerate permutations, and this suggests to Stein that there are qualities a woman’s soul ought to have. The qualities are both derived from nature and fostered by education to best prepare woman for her vocation and work in the world.

**Freedom: Choosing Natural Vocations and Pursuing Professions**

To the modern reader, the range of “freedom” and choice available to women in Stein’s account may appear limited; nevertheless, Stein insists upon an element of “freedom” in her discussion of vocation.[[107]](#footnote-107) This section presents Stein’s description of the natural vocations of women as well as her analysis of women’s professions.

Women’s work for Stein is bound up with purposeful vocation. She perhaps considers men’s work more instrumental, but her description of women’s work connotes loftier ideals of calling, duty, purpose, and the common life. Stein explains that “vocation is the place where the individual is incorporated into the community.”[[108]](#footnote-108) While based in nature, both the nature of one’s sex and one’s personality, vocation is not “destiny” or externally imposed “fate.”[[109]](#footnote-109) Freedom is found at the intersection of nature, discernment, and education. Overall, however, Stein determines that because of woman’s orientation to the “personal” and holistic, woman’s principal vocations are as “companion” and “mother.”[[110]](#footnote-110) While for most, these manifest in a literal sense, for others, Stein considers, these vocations are expressed spiritually.

Stein defines the work of companionship as participation in everything that one’s spouse faces, as a “support and mainstay.”[[111]](#footnote-111) Woman can contribute to “her husband’s profession” through “direct help,” as in the case of spouses with “related professional training” or a shared “enterprise.”[[112]](#footnote-112) Woman’s work as wife and companion necessitates “*subordination and obedience*,” according to Stein.[[113]](#footnote-113) She notes that man should not abuse this leadership.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Alongside her vocation as “helpmate,” the work of motherhood dominates Stein’s presentation of women’s work.[[115]](#footnote-115) She designates “the procreation and raising of children” as woman’s “primary calling.”[[116]](#footnote-116) She highlights women as “more strongly affected by procreation and the education of posterity” than men.[[117]](#footnote-117) This duty is primarily woman’s responsibility because of “the close bodily tie between child and mother” and woman’s “acute” intuitions; the woman’s “body and soul” are made “to cherish, guard and preserve.”[[118]](#footnote-118) For Stein, “the task of the mother” is “to take into her maternal care everyone” in her home.[[119]](#footnote-119) The care and education entrusted to mothers includes “moral and religious education” of children, not only “care for their bodily development.”[[120]](#footnote-120) Women are called to foster “love for God” in others.[[121]](#footnote-121) Stein details that to achieve this, mothers may share the scriptures “animatedly” and introduce “religious customs.”[[122]](#footnote-122) Much of the mother’s “educational work” entails protecting natural growth from outside incursions.[[123]](#footnote-123) Additionally, Stein deems “the mother the most essential agent of a girl’s formation.”[[124]](#footnote-124) She even states that “the mother who does *not*” exemplify “pure womanhood” neglects her duty to the girls in her purview.[[125]](#footnote-125)

An important aspect of woman’s educative work with both girls and boys is defined by fostering children’s “gifts” and “unique nature,” and Stein reiterates this theme, from suggesting the intuitions for this work lie in woman’s nature to insisting this skill of discernment must be refined through education and self-discipline.[[126]](#footnote-126) To encourage in others “the humanity specific” to them, “woman requires the attitude of selfless service” as well as skills “to detect her child’s individuality.”[[127]](#footnote-127) The self-sacrificing woman cultivates her own “capabilities of care, protecting, and promoting that which is becoming and growing” in order to support “peculiarity to its development.”[[128]](#footnote-128) This careful work of nurturing the “individual destiny” of others requires a natural empathetic intuition, learned tools of shrewd wisdom, and a deep, even “erotic” (though not “sexual”), “ministering love.”[[129]](#footnote-129)

In addition to caring for children, care of the home is part of the woman’s feminine vocation as wife, mother, and “soul of the home,” according to Stein.[[130]](#footnote-130) To foster “the right development” of children, woman ought to work towards “the creation of an ambiance” defined by “order and beauty” and an “atmosphere” that is “pure.”[[131]](#footnote-131) To support her spouse, woman ought establish a “home life so that it does not hinder, but rather furthers, his professional work.”[[132]](#footnote-132) For Stein, this work matters because the “fine home creates an atmosphere in which the soul can freely breathe.”[[133]](#footnote-133) Altogether, this care work fortifies families, and Stein considers women “indispensable” to the projects of family and community life.[[134]](#footnote-134)

The feminine vocation, designed by nature yet expressed freely by individuals, is best exemplified by the Virgin Mary.[[135]](#footnote-135) Stein repeatedly encourages women to “gaze upon” and “look to Mary as ideal” because she “is the prototype of pure womanhood.”[[136]](#footnote-136) In emulating Mary, women learn the “spiritual attitude which corresponds to woman’s natural vocation” as wife and mother, one of “selfless surrender,” which helps them in their “obedience” to and support of husbands and their “care” and “encouragement” of children.[[137]](#footnote-137)

Importantly, Stein finds the naturally feminine vocations of companion and mother open to all women, whether married or single. Stein notes that the emphasis on wifehood and motherhood may make “the unmarried woman” feel like “a failure” and cause “her soul” to be “embittered.”[[138]](#footnote-138) She does not wish this for single women, and she speaks admiringly of the “spiritual maternity” available to all women when they “dedicate” themselves to God (whether or not in a religious order), and in so doing they open their hearts to “all the children of God.”[[139]](#footnote-139) Stein accounts for individual personalities. She notes that some “girls” appear to have “a natural tendency for family life,” demonstrated by a “warm-hearted” nature, a desire for “close relationships,” and “an empathy for the care of children.”[[140]](#footnote-140) Others have lower “sex drives” and demonstrate a preference for “contemplation and solitude,” and these young women are “more readily adaptable to the unmarried state.”[[141]](#footnote-141) The work “of wife and mother” can be fulfilled “in the natural and supernatural sense” (physically and spiritually).[[142]](#footnote-142) All women, in the diversity of their everyday lives—whether wife, professional, or nun—have maternal duties to share “faith and love” with others.[[143]](#footnote-143)

Additionally, Stein thinks women play a role in the community of the nation and the politics of peace.[[144]](#footnote-144) Because women’s maternal vocation involves the effort “to protect life” and maintain “the family,” women are invested in “national life” and “peace and international agreement.”[[145]](#footnote-145) From the home to the church to the nation, this is the work of women, who choose how best to realize this work, according to their individual personalities and talents.

Stein also addresses women’s free choice in the realm of professions. With her insistence on traditional gender roles that define the work of women, we may assume Stein disapproves of women’s professions outside the home. She is, however, adamant that women are suited to professions, and “there is no profession which cannot be practiced by a woman” and “no legal barriers” should impede women’s entrance to professions.[[146]](#footnote-146) Duran suggest that because Stein was herself “a woman intellectual of her time,” she had to reckon with the matter of professional ambition, and Stein considers this as a metaphysician, leading her to articulate women’s professional ambitions with reference to “woman’s ‘natural’ talents.”[[147]](#footnote-147)

Stein concludes that there are “feminine vocations other than the *natural* one,” and “[o]nly subjective delusion could deny that women are capable of practicing vocations other than that of spouse and mother.”[[148]](#footnote-148) Every woman “has her individual specialty and talent,” which affords her the ability to pursue “professional work, be it artistic, scientific, technical, etc.”[[149]](#footnote-149) The debate around women’s professions in Stein’s era comprised of those “who insisted that women were fundamentally just like men and thus should have equal access to education and professional posts” and “those who thought that there were fundamental feminine and masculine natures and thus feminine and masculine professions.”[[150]](#footnote-150) Stein operates somewhere in between, advocating for “equal rights” as well as preserving “intrinsic feminine and masculine natures.”[[151]](#footnote-151)

Stein notes how the “Industrial Revolution revolutionized” women’s work.[[152]](#footnote-152) Presaging later feminist commentaries, she notes how “domestic life” became inadequate “to engage all of woman’s potentialities.”[[153]](#footnote-153) This has two important consequences for women. First, some “passive” women are drawn into “an overly sensual life or empty dreams,” and, second, “active” women seek “professional activity.”[[154]](#footnote-154) The expression of gifts and talents is an important theme for Stein, as reflected in her emphasis on how mothers nurture unique gifts. The same holds true in her discussion of women’s professions. She says, “wherever the circle of domestic duties is too narrow for the wife to attain the full formation of her powers, both nature and reason concur that she reach out beyond the circle.”[[155]](#footnote-155)

Stein values “objective awareness” regarding nature in considering women’s professions.[[156]](#footnote-156) That being said, she does not neglect the outliers. She holds that “individual talent” may mean a woman could “embark” on endeavors “remote from the usual feminine vocations.”[[157]](#footnote-157) Therefore, “every so-called ‘masculine’ occupation may be exercised by many women.”[[158]](#footnote-158) She concludes, however, that on average “the choice of profession will usually resolve itself,” meaning that man’s and woman’s “specific aptitude for certain professions” is drawn from nature such that, largely, men and woman are attracted to different professions.[[159]](#footnote-159)

Stein approaches women’s work outside the home by exploring a meaningful sense of the “ethos” within women’s professions, which is achieved when individuals sense their “*profession* is an authentic vocation.”[[160]](#footnote-160) Concurrently, Stein acknowledges that necessity often draws women to “gainful employment.”[[161]](#footnote-161) A sense of ethos is perhaps best found for women in a “feminine profession,” which Stein defines as a profession which requires duties and skills related to “the feminine nature,” such as roles that require “sympathetic rapport.”[[162]](#footnote-162) For examples from academia, she highlights especially “those branches dealing with the concrete, living personal element, i.e., the arts,” and, elsewhere, she names “the humanities.”[[163]](#footnote-163) She also highlights academic assistance and opportunities to “help and serve.”[[164]](#footnote-164) In these examples, “the same spiritual attitude” that defines “the wife and mother” is useful, making them truly feminine professions.[[165]](#footnote-165)

Stein especially admires women in the medical, social, governmental, religious, and educational professions. She highlights particularly gynecology and pediatrics as important fields for “medical women.”[[166]](#footnote-166) In terms of gynecology, she notes that “women generally prefer treatment by a woman” both due to “modesty” and an appreciation of treatment by a professional, with a “specifically feminine manner of empathy,” who sees the “the concrete and whole person.”[[167]](#footnote-167) This talent of woman to see “the whole being” means that as a doctor, she can serve not only her patient’s “corporal” concern, but also her patient’s “spiritual needs,” achieving “much more.”[[168]](#footnote-168)

According to Stein, in “social professions,” what we now call social work, women act as loving mothers to “a large ‘family’” that is comprised of those in need, from “the poor or sick” to “the inmates of a prison” and “endangered or neglected youth.”[[169]](#footnote-169) For Stein, women are suited to work where “the problem is to save, to heal endangered or demoralized humanity, to steer it into healthy ways.”[[170]](#footnote-170) Relatedly, Stein considers government work to be appropriately feminine because women act “as ‘mothers of the people,’” from the community level to “the Parliament.”[[171]](#footnote-171) Especially where women aim to achieve “justice for humanity,” they are expressing their “feminine singularity” through their professional efforts.[[172]](#footnote-172)

Life in a convent as a nun is another uniquely feminine calling. Stein sees woman as uniquely drawn to “give herself lovingly.”[[173]](#footnote-173) This makes women especially suited to religious orders, though men perform “the actual priestly work.”[[174]](#footnote-174) She notes that in calling only men “to the priesthood,” God reserves “a special privilege of grace” for women.[[175]](#footnote-175)

Lastly, feminine talents make “teacher” a suitable role and “truly feminine vocation.”[[176]](#footnote-176) Stein emphasizes the maternity in the teaching profession. Teachers must possess “a nature which loves consistently” and offer “motherly love to *all*, even to the unlovable, the difficult, the intolerable children.”[[177]](#footnote-177) All of professions that Stein emphasizes as naturally feminine professions exhibit an explicit need for maternal care.

Stein also considers that women may operate in professions that are not overtly feminine, while maintaining a feminine disposition in the daily execution of their work. Professions inhabited by women ought to be practiced in a feminine way.[[178]](#footnote-178) She suggests that if women find opportunities in their work to connect the “abstract” to “the concrete” and the “inanimate” to “the living,” they can express their “feminine virtues.”[[179]](#footnote-179) Even areas where “dull material or abstract thought” reign (like “work in a factory, business office, national or municipal service, legislature, chemical laboratory or mathematical institute”) still entail duties “with other people,” and “the development of the feminine nature can become a blessed counterbalance precisely here where everyone is in danger of becoming mechanized and losing his humanity.”[[180]](#footnote-180) Stein, therefore, views women’s participation in the professions as beneficial “for the entire society,” when a “feminine ethos” is brought into these workplaces.[[181]](#footnote-181)

For Stein, all employment where the “woman’s soul” flourishes can be “an authentic woman’s profession.”[[182]](#footnote-182) Where there “are not specifically feminine activities,” women ought to “preserve true womanliness” at work by “sharing, helping, and promoting” others.[[183]](#footnote-183) For Stein, the objective “of the working woman is to fuse her feminine calling with her vocational calling,” and thereby inflect her vocation with her femininity.[[184]](#footnote-184) A “strong” woman can transform “the *masculine* profession into a *feminine* one.”[[185]](#footnote-185) A woman “in mechanical work” is “sympathetic and charitable to her colleagues,” while “the factory worker or the office employee” attends “ to the spirits” and “trouble-laden hearts” of her colleagues.[[186]](#footnote-186) Stein sees the world as crying out “for maternal sympathy,” and therefore, opportunities for the expression of the feminine ethos are available in every workplace and profession.[[187]](#footnote-187) For Stein, women are needed wherever maternal love is needed, and maternal love is need everywhere.

Amid this portrait that balances her feminist aspirations and her commitment to feminine singularity, it must be noted that Stein was not an unequivocal advocate for women entering the professions. Ever attentive to individual situations and talents, she considers women free to reject the world of work outside the home when it does not suit them. Stein notes that often women feel “overwhelmed by the double burden of family duties and professional life,” and these busy women feel “harassed, nervous, and irritable.”[[188]](#footnote-188) Stein laments circumstances that mean “gainful employment” curtails wives’ ability “to manage their home.”[[189]](#footnote-189) Stein calls readers to “accept as normal” that a “married woman” choose only “domestic life at a time when her household duties exact her total energies.”[[190]](#footnote-190)

Stein concludes that women who are unable to properly discern how to best utilize their talents and “chase after pleasure” in work outside the home are a cause of “[t]he breakdown of family life and the decline of morals” in society.[[191]](#footnote-191) While Stein believes that a woman’s “professional activity counterbalances the risk of submerging herself all too intimately in another’s life,” professional life poses “the opposite danger” and risks “infidelity” to her domestic duties.[[192]](#footnote-192) Stein is cautious that professional life must be delimited “whenever it jeopardizes domestic life.”[[193]](#footnote-193) This “problem of the double vocation” is defined as the risk that a woman’s “work outside of the home” dominates such that it becomes “impossible for her to be the heart of the family and the soul of the home.”[[194]](#footnote-194) For Stein, woman should not forgo “her essential duty.”[[195]](#footnote-195)

The final risk posed by women’s professions is unhappiness within the woman herself. Some women select an appropriate “profession”, but find, following “initial gratification,” they desire “to be elsewhere.”[[196]](#footnote-196) Stein diagnoses that usually this dissatisfaction is a consequence of “having taken pains to fill their post ‘just like a man’” and, without proper modes of expression “in professional life,” the feminine “stifled nature asserts itself” through discontented pining for something else.[[197]](#footnote-197)

For Stein, women could exercise freedom in their work by discerning the vocation that suits their personalities and talents, whether that vocation is in married or unmarried life or in an array of professions. Stein, however, consistently encourages women to operate in their vocations with reference to their feminine nature as well as individuality. This means that the freedom available to women in shaping their work is demarcated, bound to the qualities of the companion and mother. A woman is free to choose her work, but a woman ought to be helpful and maternal, wherever she may find herself at work.

**Grace: Supporting Work with Faith**

The final ingredient in Stein’s account of women’s work is grace.[[198]](#footnote-198) To truly achieve an alignment with “her primary vocation,” woman’s “natural inner formation” must be complemented by “formation through grace.”[[199]](#footnote-199) Stein contends that in opposition to the “sad image” of the overworked woman described above, there are “true heroines” who “perform wonders on the job in families, professions, and the seclusion of the cloister.”[[200]](#footnote-200) These women and their qualities of “unruffled peace and cheerfulness” in the face of stress are fueled by “grace.”[[201]](#footnote-201)

Elsewhere, she notes that when single women find themselves in “a grueling, exhausting struggle” as they work “to earn a living or to lose themselves in work,” they are being called to commit themselves to God.[[202]](#footnote-202) For Stein, “the unmarried woman” is buoyed by noticing “God’s will at work in the force of circumstances” and by striving “to harmonize her own will with the divine;” with this, she receives “guidance in grace.”[[203]](#footnote-203) Stein is not naïve about the demands and strains of women’s work. In circumstances with a difficult husband, “dangerous” children, or “economic need,” women find themselves depleted, but “grace” accessed through “prayer” is the “inexhaustible source of power” that can sustain these women.[[204]](#footnote-204)

For Stein, whether in “the home,” in “public life,” or in the “cloister,” a woman should aim for union with God, which affords women access to their true “vocational ethos” defined by nature.[[205]](#footnote-205) To “fulfill her vocation” whether “in marriage, in a religious order, or in worldly profession,” woman must rely on “the eternal source of power” to accomplish her natural purpose.[[206]](#footnote-206) For Stein, waiting on the unfolding of nature is not enough; education and grace are needed.[[207]](#footnote-207) To achieve this, women “open” themselves “to grace” by surrendering their “will” and “soul” entirely “into God’s hands.”[[208]](#footnote-208) Through prayer and becoming “empty and still,” women can “make room for God’s grace.”[[209]](#footnote-209)

Stein also notes that the sacraments foster women’s relationship with God’s grace, and therefore, sacraments support women in their formation and their work. In terms of “the wife and mother,” she is supported by the “source of grace” that is “*the sacrament of marriage.*”[[210]](#footnote-210) Where married women have marriage, women in religious orders draw on the “grace” found in “the liturgy of *virginal consecration*” to bolster their calling.[[211]](#footnote-211)

According to Stein, grace purifies and emboldens women in their efforts to choose and live well according to their particular and their feminine natures. Grace, found through faithfulness and sacraments, supports women in their various vocations. Stein worries that those without faith are stunted and unable to develop according to their particularity or femininity. Without grace, they and their work suffers.

**Women’s Work and Empathy**

This chapter surveys Stein’s account of women’s work by examining her thought on the roles that nature, freedom, and grace play in the formation of vocation. Stein’s presentation of women’s work may superficially strike readers as “essentialist” in the negative sense often noted by feminists who prefer to set aside notions that biology determines fate (and thereby, daily occupations, duties, and professions). Her discussion, however, is more nuanced than a simple straight line from biology to occupation.

Stein posits a feminine nature that is distinct from the masculine. While she acknowledges the body, she focuses on the character, quality, and ethos of the soul. She also notes the best and worst of these feminine tendencies and does not expect the soul to develop along the same lines in every woman. Therefore, an education suited to the general nature of the feminine soul is required to shape the natural virtues and constrain the natural vices.

The soul thus prepared, woman is ready to work. Stein considers woman’s principal vocation to be wife and mother. Stein believes society requires both physical and spiritual mothers. Additionally, Stein contends that paid employment and all professions should be open to women, but she highlights the medical, social, governmental, religious, and educational fields as especially feminine. Further, woman can practice her profession in a feminine way. Simultaneously, Stein thinks professions pose risks to women’s domestic vocation. However, should women face tensions and strain amidst the “double burden” of home and work, Stein believes they can call upon grace, through prayer and sacraments, to fortify their vocations.

Stein’s presentation of the work of women intersects with another major theme of her writings – empathy. Stein was fascinated by the phenomenology of “an intersubjective relationship.”[[212]](#footnote-212) For Stein, empathy is central to “intersubjectivity and community living.”[[213]](#footnote-213) She also viewed “embodied consciousness and the animated living body” as important features of the phenomenology of empathy.[[214]](#footnote-214) The emphasis she put on the body in her understanding of empathy is relevant to her considerations on gender and women. For Stein, sexed bodies appear to have phenomenological import. Because she deemed women to possess a particular affinity for empathy and because she saw the body as relevant to intersubjectivity, she suggested a “gendered” account of “the empathic structure of consciousness.”[[215]](#footnote-215)

Stein, therefore, endowed women with a “distinctive value” that is integral to accomplishing “the good of ethics.”[[216]](#footnote-216) Laura Judd Beer concludes that Stein represents “a middle path between gender essentialist and existentialist views of gender,” meaning that the development of womanhood and the work of woman in the world cannot be reduced to either “a mere essence or existential actualization.”[[217]](#footnote-217) Stein’s seeming traditionalism regarding gender must be read against her wider thought concerning empathy and the structure of human consciousness. Her considerations on women prove more moderate than first glance suggests. Further, women are not secondary within her schema of a flourishing community; rather, the empathetic work of women shelters the community and ensures the integrity of the common life.

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1. Edith Stein, *Essays on Woman*, ed. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Freda Mary Oben (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1996), 162. It must be noted that the essays collected in this volume were written at different times and addressed topics from “The Ethos of Women’s Professions” and “Women’s Education” to “The Separate Vocations of Man and Woman” and “The Significance of Woman’s Intrinsic Value in National Life.” This chapter follows the norm found in much Stein scholarship that treats this volume as a unified whole, citing the volume, rather than each essay. A more detailed investigation that distinguishes the motivations of each essay and contextualizes each one in time would provide an especially nuanced exposition, but such an extensive account is outside the scope of this chapter. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Alasdair MacIntyre, *Edith Stein: A Philosophical Prologue, 1933-1922* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); Freda M. Oben, “Edith Stein as Educator,” *Thought* 65, no. 2 (1990): 113–26; Lisa M. Dolling, “Edith Stein’s Philosophy of ‘Liberal’ Education,” in *Contemplating Edith Stein*, ed. Joyce Avrech Berkman (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 226–39. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Jane Kelley Rodeheffer, “On Spiritual Maternity: Edith Stein, Aristotle, and the Nature of Woman,” *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 72 (1998): 285–303; Petr Urban, “Care Ethics and the Feminist Personalism of Edith Stein,” *Philosophies* 7, no. 3 (2022): 60. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Linda Lopez McAlister notes, the English translation in 1987 of Stein’s work studying women was published during an “inauspicious” moment when much of the mainstream considered the discussion of “women’s nature” taboo: Linda Lopez McAlister, “Edith Stein: Essential Differences,” *Philosophy Today* 37, no. 1 (1993): 70. Jane Duran notes that Stein’s insistence on the differences between men and women may be less objectionable “in a post-Gilligan era:” Jane Duran, “Edith Stein, Ontology and Belief,” *The Heythrop Journal* 48 (2007): 709. The post-Gilligan moment, however, was insufficient to overcome the stain of what some call Stein’s “gender essentialism,” a category established long after Stein penned her essays: Laura Judd Beer, “Women’s Existence, Woman’s Soul: Essence and Existence in Edith Stein’s Later Feminism,” in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. Antonio Calcagno, vol. 4, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life (Heidelberg: Springer Cham, 2016), 36. Lindblad contests her feminism: Ulrika Lindblad, “Rereading Edith Stein What Happened?,” *Theology* 99, no. 790 (1996): 274. Some highlight her feminism: Rachel Feldhay Brenner, “Edith Stein: A Reading of Her Feminist Thought,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 23, no. 1 (1994): 43; Joyce Avrech Berkman, “Esther and Mary: The Uneasy Jewish/Catholic Dynamic in the Work and Life of Edith Stein,” *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 32, no. 1 (2016): 57; Renée Köhler-Ryan, “‘The Hour of Woman’ and Edith Stein: Catholic New Feminist Responses to Essentialism,” *Religions* 11, no. 6 (2020): 271; Urban, “Care.” [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Sylvie Courtine-Denamy, *Three Women in Dark Times: Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Simone Weil*, trans. Geoffrey M. Goshgarian (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Berkman, “Esther and Mary,” 65–66. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, “Editors’ Introduction to the First Edition,” in *Essays on Woman*, ed. Lucy Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Freda Mary Oben (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1996), 3–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Susanne M. Batzdorff, “Chronology of Saint Edith Stein’s Life,” in *Edith Stein: The Life of a Philosopher and a Carmelite*, ed. Susanne M. Batzdorff, Josephine Koeppel, and John Sullivan (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2005), xvi; Courtine-Denamy, *Dark Times*, 37; Mary Baseheart, “Edith Stein’s Philosophy of Woman and of Women’s Education,” *Hypatia* 4 (1998): 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Batzdorff, “Chronology,” xvi. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Baseheart, “Stein’s Philosophy,” 123; Gelber and Leuven, “Introduction,” 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Quoted in: Teresia Renata Posselt, *Edith Stein: The Life of a Philosopher and a Carmelite*, ed. Susanne M. Batzdorff, Josephine Koeppel, and John Sullivan (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2005), 69. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Gelber and Leuven, “Introduction,” 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Baseheart, “Stein’s Philosophy,” 122; Courtine-Denamy, *Dark Times*, 37. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Batzdorff, “Chronology,” xvii. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Gelber and Leuven, “Introduction,” 3–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Ibid., 3. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Stein, *Woman*, 147, 162. See also: Ibid., 173–74. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Sarah Borden, “Edith Stein’s Understanding of Woman,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* 46, no. 2 (2006): 189. See also: Angela Ales Bello, “From the ‘Neutral’ Human Being to Gender Difference: Phenomenological and Dual Anthropology in Edith Stein,” in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. Antonio Calcagno, vol. 4, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life (Heidelberg: Springer Cham, 2016), 11. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Kathleen Haney, “Genesis and Beyond: Phenomenological Feminism in St. John Paul II and St. Edith Stein,” in *Listening to Edith Stein: Wisdom for a New Century: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Kathleen Haney (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2018), 361. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Stein, *Woman*, 176, 178. All italics throughout the chapter are in the original. [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid., 178, 188. For more on the “theological method,” see: Ibid., 180–88. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Baseheart, “Stein’s Philosophy,” 130. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Marian Maskulak, “Edith Stein: A Proponent of Human Community and a Voice for Social Change,” *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 15, no. 2 (2012): 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Stein, *Woman*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Ibid., 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Ibid., 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Ibid., 95. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
31. Borden, “Edith Stein’s Understanding of Woman,” 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-31)
32. For more on the distinction between “essence” and “nature,” see: Bello, “From the ‘Neutral’ Human Being to Gender Difference: Phenomenological and Dual Anthropology in Edith Stein,” 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)
33. Stein, *Woman*, 45, 254. For a comparison to Aristotle, see: Rodeheffer, “On Spiritual Maternity: Edith Stein, Aristotle, and the Nature of Woman,” 285. [↑](#footnote-ref-33)
34. Stein, *Woman*, 152. [↑](#footnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid., 45, 94. [↑](#footnote-ref-35)
36. Ibid., 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-36)
37. Ibid., 45, 101. See also: Ibid., 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-37)
38. Stein, *Woman*, 45. See also: Ibid., 73–74, 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-38)
39. Stein, *Woman*, 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-39)
40. Ibid., 45, 137, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-40)
41. Ibid., 101, 255. [↑](#footnote-ref-41)
42. Ibid., 46, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-42)
43. Ibid., 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-43)
44. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-44)
45. Ibid., 72, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-45)
46. Ibid., 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-46)
47. Ibid., 45, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-47)
48. Ibid., 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-48)
49. Ibid., 45, 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-49)
50. Kathleen M. Haney, “Edith Stein: Woman and Essence,” in *Feminist Phenomenology*, ed. Linda Fisher and Lester Embree, vol. 40, Contributions to Phenomenology (Dordrecht: Springer, 2000), 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-50)
51. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-51)
52. Stein, *Woman*, 187. [↑](#footnote-ref-52)
53. Ibid., 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-53)
54. Ibid., 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-54)
55. Ibid., 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-55)
56. Ibid., 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-56)
57. Urban, “Care,” 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-57)
58. Ibid., 6. [↑](#footnote-ref-58)
59. Haney, “Edith Stein: Woman and Essence,” 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-59)
60. Stein, *Woman*, 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-60)
61. Ibid., 118. [↑](#footnote-ref-61)
62. Ibid., 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-62)
63. Ibid., 96, 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-63)
64. Ibid., 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-64)
65. Ibid., 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-65)
66. Ibid., 94, 257. [↑](#footnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid., 47. [↑](#footnote-ref-67)
68. Ibid., 96, 257. [↑](#footnote-ref-68)
69. Ibid., 96. [↑](#footnote-ref-69)
70. Ibid., 257. [↑](#footnote-ref-70)
71. Ibid., 256–57. [↑](#footnote-ref-71)
72. Ibid., 190. [↑](#footnote-ref-72)
73. Ibid., 74. [↑](#footnote-ref-73)
74. Ibid., 77. [↑](#footnote-ref-74)
75. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-75)
76. Ibid., 48. See also: Ibid., 257. [↑](#footnote-ref-76)
77. Stein, *Woman*, 48, 109; Haney, “Edith Stein: Woman and Essence,” 234. [↑](#footnote-ref-77)
78. Stein, *Woman*, 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-78)
79. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-79)
80. Ibid., 132–33. [↑](#footnote-ref-80)
81. Ibid., 98. [↑](#footnote-ref-81)
82. Ibid., 98–99. [↑](#footnote-ref-82)
83. Oben, “Educator,” 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-83)
84. Ibid.; Dolling, “Edith Stein’s Philosophy of ‘Liberal’ Education,” 228. [↑](#footnote-ref-84)
85. Stein, *Woman*, 201, 248. See also: Ibid., 138. [↑](#footnote-ref-85)
86. Stein, *Woman*, 196. [↑](#footnote-ref-86)
87. Ibid., 163. For more on the religious element of education, see: Ann W. Astell, “From Ugly Duckling to Swan: Education as Spiritual Transformation in the Thought of Edith Stein,” *Spiritus: A Journal of Christian Spirituality* 13, no. 1 (2013): 1–16. [↑](#footnote-ref-87)
88. Stein, *Woman*, 192. [↑](#footnote-ref-88)
89. Ibid., 140, 202. [↑](#footnote-ref-89)
90. Ibid., 140. [↑](#footnote-ref-90)
91. Ibid., 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-91)
92. Ibid., 119–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid., 218. [↑](#footnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid., 231. [↑](#footnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid., 232. [↑](#footnote-ref-95)
96. Ibid., 136–37. [↑](#footnote-ref-96)
97. Ibid., 137. [↑](#footnote-ref-97)
98. Alexandra Cathey, “The Feminine Genius According to Edith Stein,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 7, no. 2 (2018): 296. [↑](#footnote-ref-98)
99. Stein, *Woman*, 97, 102. See also: Ibid., 106. [↑](#footnote-ref-99)
100. Stein, *Woman*, 103–4. [↑](#footnote-ref-100)
101. Ibid., 103. [↑](#footnote-ref-101)
102. Ibid., 104. [↑](#footnote-ref-102)
103. Ibid., 106, 136. [↑](#footnote-ref-103)
104. Ibid., 219–20. [↑](#footnote-ref-104)
105. Ibid., 225. [↑](#footnote-ref-105)
106. Ibid., 221, 225. See Stein’s extensive description of the mother-daughter bond, as the child matures: Ibid., 222. [↑](#footnote-ref-106)
107. Stein, *Woman*, 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-107)
108. Ibid., 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-108)
109. Mette Lebech, “Women in Society: The Critical Potential of Stein’s Feminism for Our Understanding of the State,” in *Edith Stein: Women, Social-Political Philosophy, Theology, Metaphysics and Public History*, ed. Antonio Calcagno, vol. 4, Boston Studies in Philosophy, Religion and Public Life (Heidelberg: Springer Cham, 2016), 27. [↑](#footnote-ref-109)
110. Urban, “Care,” 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-110)
111. Stein, *Woman*, 46, 256. [↑](#footnote-ref-111)
112. Ibid., 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-112)
113. Ibid., 46. See also: Ibid., 132. [↑](#footnote-ref-113)
114. Stein, *Woman*, 71–72. [↑](#footnote-ref-114)
115. Ibid., 72. [↑](#footnote-ref-115)
116. Ibid., 100. [↑](#footnote-ref-116)
117. Ibid., 64. See also: Ibid., 188. [↑](#footnote-ref-117)
118. Stein, *Woman*, 72–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-118)
119. Ibid., 239. [↑](#footnote-ref-119)
120. Ibid., 78, 197. [↑](#footnote-ref-120)
121. Ibid., 110. [↑](#footnote-ref-121)
122. Ibid., 243. [↑](#footnote-ref-122)
123. Ibid., 208. [↑](#footnote-ref-123)
124. Ibid., 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-124)
125. Ibid., 215. See also: Ibid., 247. [↑](#footnote-ref-125)
126. Stein, *Woman*, 82, 210. [↑](#footnote-ref-126)
127. Ibid., 110, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-127)
128. Ibid., 101. [↑](#footnote-ref-128)
129. Ibid., 74, 109, 188, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-129)
130. Ibid., 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-130)
131. Ibid., 78, 242. [↑](#footnote-ref-131)
132. Ibid., 108. [↑](#footnote-ref-132)
133. Ibid., 260. [↑](#footnote-ref-133)
134. Ibid., 161. Full examination of fatherhood is outside the scope of this chapter, but fathers also serve families, but differently, see: Ibid., 68–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-134)
135. Stein, *Woman*, 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-135)
136. Ibid., 47, 119, 201. [↑](#footnote-ref-136)
137. Ibid., 48. For more Mary: Alexandra Cathey, “Edith Stein on the Highest Expression of the Feminine Genius,” *Studia Gilsoniana* 8, no. 2 (2019): 479–94. [↑](#footnote-ref-137)
138. Stein, *Woman*, 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-138)
139. Ibid., 267–68. [↑](#footnote-ref-139)
140. Ibid., 204. [↑](#footnote-ref-140)
141. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-141)
142. Ibid., 102. See also: Ibid., 239, 251. [↑](#footnote-ref-142)
143. Stein, *Woman*, 161. [↑](#footnote-ref-143)
144. See how good mothers contribute to “the recovery of the nation:” Ibid., 260. [↑](#footnote-ref-144)
145. Ibid., 154. [↑](#footnote-ref-145)
146. Ibid., 49, 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-146)
147. Duran, “Ontology,” 709. [↑](#footnote-ref-147)
148. Stein, *Woman*, 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-148)
149. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-149)
150. Borden, “Edith Stein’s Understanding of Woman,” 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-150)
151. Ibid., 172. [↑](#footnote-ref-151)
152. Stein, *Woman*, 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-152)
153. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-153)
154. Ibid., 105. [↑](#footnote-ref-154)
155. Ibid., 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-155)
156. Ibid., 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-156)
157. Ibid., 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-157)
158. Ibid., 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-158)
159. Ibid., 81. Later in life, Stein reflected on her own “misgivings” as a young professional regarding trading “a career for the sake of marriage” and her friends choices at the time (around 1907-1910); for more, see: Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: Edith Stein: An Autobiography, 1891-1916*, ed. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, trans. Josephine Koeppel (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2016), 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-159)
160. Stein, *Woman*, 44. [↑](#footnote-ref-160)
161. Ibid., 54. See also: Ibid., 82. For Stein’s reflections on the expression of her mother’s natural aptitude for business, which was born of necessity when Stein’s father died, see: Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: Edith Stein: An Autobiography, 1891-1916*, 42. [↑](#footnote-ref-161)
162. Stein, *Woman*, 49. [↑](#footnote-ref-162)
163. Ibid., 49, 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-163)
164. Ibid., 49. See also: Ibid., 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-164)
165. Stein, *Woman*, 49. See also: Ibid., 82. [↑](#footnote-ref-165)
166. Stein, *Woman*, 110, 262. [↑](#footnote-ref-166)
167. Ibid., 111–12. [↑](#footnote-ref-167)
168. Ibid., 112, 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-168)
169. Ibid., 112. [↑](#footnote-ref-169)
170. Ibid., 263. [↑](#footnote-ref-170)
171. Ibid., 114. [↑](#footnote-ref-171)
172. Ibid., 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-172)
173. Ibid., 53. [↑](#footnote-ref-173)
174. Ibid., 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-174)
175. Ibid., 123. [↑](#footnote-ref-175)
176. Ibid., 115, 261. [↑](#footnote-ref-176)
177. Ibid., 262. In terms of imparting faith, see: Ibid., 268. [↑](#footnote-ref-177)
178. Stein, *Woman*, 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-178)
179. Ibid., 50. [↑](#footnote-ref-179)
180. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-180)
181. Ibid., 50–51. For Mary’s work “at the wedding of Cana” as “the prototype of woman in professional life,” see: Ibid., 51. [↑](#footnote-ref-181)
182. Stein, *Woman*, 57. [↑](#footnote-ref-182)
183. Ibid., 115. [↑](#footnote-ref-183)
184. Ibid., 141. [↑](#footnote-ref-184)
185. Ibid., 254. [↑](#footnote-ref-185)
186. Ibid., 82, 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-186)
187. Ibid., 264. [↑](#footnote-ref-187)
188. Ibid., 54. [↑](#footnote-ref-188)
189. Ibid., 80. [↑](#footnote-ref-189)
190. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-190)
191. Ibid., 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-191)
192. Ibid., 78. [↑](#footnote-ref-192)
193. Ibid., 80. For her reflections on how her ambitions affected her family, see: Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family: Edith Stein: An Autobiography, 1891-1916*, 215. [↑](#footnote-ref-193)
194. Stein, *Woman*, 109. [↑](#footnote-ref-194)
195. Ibid. For Stein’s comparison to “the two fold occupation of the nun,” see: Ibid., 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-195)
196. Stein, *Woman*, 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-196)
197. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-197)
198. Ibid., 162. [↑](#footnote-ref-198)
199. Ibid., 135. [↑](#footnote-ref-199)
200. Ibid., 55. [↑](#footnote-ref-200)
201. Ibid., 56. [↑](#footnote-ref-201)
202. Ibid., 267. [↑](#footnote-ref-202)
203. Ibid., 124. [↑](#footnote-ref-203)
204. Ibid., 120. [↑](#footnote-ref-204)
205. Ibid., 53–54. [↑](#footnote-ref-205)
206. Ibid., 128. [↑](#footnote-ref-206)
207. Gelber and Leuven, “Introduction,” 8. [↑](#footnote-ref-207)
208. Stein, *Woman*, 143. [↑](#footnote-ref-208)
209. Ibid., 143–45. [↑](#footnote-ref-209)
210. Ibid., 121. [↑](#footnote-ref-210)
211. Ibid., 122. [↑](#footnote-ref-211)
212. Michael R. Paradiso-Michau, “Empathy and the Face: Edith Stein and Emmanuel Lewis,” in *Listening to Edith Stein: Wisdom for a New Century: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Kathleen M. Haney (Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2018), 272. [↑](#footnote-ref-212)
213. Maskulak, “Stein,” 66. [↑](#footnote-ref-213)
214. Paradiso-Michau, “Face,” 272–73. [↑](#footnote-ref-214)
215. Antonio Calcagno, “Empathy as a Feminine Structure of Phenomenological Consciousness,” in *The Philosophy of Edith Stein* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University, 2007), 64. [↑](#footnote-ref-215)
216. Kathleen M. Haney and Johanna Valiquette, “Edith Stein: Woman as Ethical Type,” in *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, ed. John J. Drummond and Lester Embree, vol. 47, Contributions to Phenomenology (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 452. [↑](#footnote-ref-216)
217. Beer, “Women’s Existence, Woman’s Soul: Essence and Existence in Edith Stein’s Later Feminism,” 45. [↑](#footnote-ref-217)