

## **EMOTION: WOMAN'S STRENGTH OR FRAILTY?**

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**Abstract.** Edith Stein's viewpoint on woman presents a fuller sense of the metaphysical notion of the being of woman. Stein's position is that woman's nature as biological mother affects her whole being. Woman has two essential characteristics: attraction to the personal and attraction to wholeness. It is woman's emotions that account for these distinctly feminine traits. Woman is distinguished by her empathetic perception of persons, an intuitive grasp of a person's being and value as "person". Stein describes empathy as a clear awareness of another person, not simply of the content of his/her experience, but of his/her experience of that content. In empathy, one takes the place of the other without becoming strictly identical to him/her. One does not simply understand the experiences of the other, but takes them on as one's own. Stein reinterprets traditional readings of woman, challenging claims of the woman as the "weaker sex" and of emotions as inferior to reason.

**Keywords and phrases:** Edith Stein, emotions, woman, empathy, intuition, person

### **INTRODUCTION**

The inquiry into the essence of woman has its logical place in philosophical anthropology. Philosophers who consider women and men to be intrinsically different hold that for biological, psychological, intellectual, or spiritual reasons, the sexes are meant to differ. Edith Stein's view on woman provides a fuller sense of the metaphysical notion of the being of woman. Stein offers the important position that woman's nature as biological mother affects her whole being. The fact is that woman's monthly reproductive cycle prepares her to nurture a new human being within her body. However, even if she does not become a biological mother (because she is single or a consecrated celibate), her psyche is naturally designed for the greatest of intimacy with others. In her philosophy on woman, Stein brings to the fore two essential characteristics of woman: attraction to the personal and attraction to wholeness. Whether it is an awareness and sensitivity towards her own personal being or that of others, it is the centrality of a woman's emotions that is responsible for this feminine type of holistic knowledge and discernment. Through emotions, woman grasps the relationship of another being to herself. This leads us to consider woman's emotional life as an important hallmark of feminine nature. Moreover, woman is distinguished by

her empathetic perception of persons, an intuitive grasp of a person's being and value as "person". Stein offers a rich backdrop of insights against which more traditional readings of woman can be interpreted, challenging claims of woman as the "weaker sex" and claims of the metaphysical inferiority of feelings.

## **EDITH STEIN**

Edith Stein, a German Jew, was born in Breslau, Germany in 1891 and converted to Catholicism before she died in Auschwitz in 1942. Stein contributed three significant innovations in the history of philosophy: the reconciliation of Thomism with phenomenology, the integration of psychology and philosophy in the study of empathy, and the consideration of "woman" as a fundamental category for philosophical research.

Edith Stein studied and trained under Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology. Husserl had considered Stein to be his best student. Historically, Edith Stein ranks among the humanistic pioneers who were involved with the unique nature of woman's psyche. A lasting importance is attributed to her essays in the history of Differential Psychology. Pedagogically, in her work as instructor, Edith Stein was assigned to an educational system that was completely oriented to the intellectual needs of the masculine psyche. The efforts of the educators were not directed towards developing a young girl's unique nature but rather toward forming her into a suitable companion for man. Perceiving the unique character and the intrinsic value of woman, Stein asserted the fundamental necessity to provide a girl with a comprehensive education suited to her feminine uniqueness. This position enabled Stein to challenge the system of girls' education that existed during her time. She writes, "One-sided development should be replaced by an emotionally formative education, the different subjects of the curriculum should be so selected and handled that they advance the girl's spontaneous approach to living reality and to the individual" (Stein 1996, 15). Thus, Stein paved the way for educational reform, which incorporated at least three concepts from her pedagogical theory: first, a concern for a proper understanding of our human, feminine or masculine, and individual natures; second, the need for a harmonious education that develops our emotional, intellectual, and physical capacities; and finally, the religious foundation of all formation.

## **THE NATURE OF WOMAN'S EMOTIONAL LIFE**

Compared to man, emotion is stronger in woman in that she experiences the value of a human being as a person more powerfully. Being person-oriented, the

object of her emotions is persons. I examined the intentionality of emotions theories of Anthony Kenny, Robert Solomon, Max Scheler, Edmund Husserl and Jean Paul Sartre to elucidate Stein's claim of persons as the object of the woman's emotions. These theories show that as a matter of logic, every emotion has a specific object. The object of the emotion or that to which an emotion is directed or targeted tells us what we value. We only respond emotionally to objects that are important to us. For Stein, woman understands persons not only through reason but also more powerfully through her emotions.

### **WHAT MAKES WOMAN WOMAN**

Without undermining the equality of the sexes, Stein brings to the fore two distinctive characteristics of feminine nature. First, she claims that women have an orientation towards the personal, whereas men are more objective. Second, she claims that women are directed towards the whole, whereas men tend to compartmentalise (Borden 2003, 88). She says of man, "it is natural for him to dedicate his faculties to a discipline (be it mathematics or technology, a trade or business management) and thereby to subject himself to the precepts of this *discipline*" (Stein 1996, 255). In contrast, woman is oriented towards people and the personal; her concern is for living things, especially her own personal life and that of others. She focuses on the living, concrete person. Rather than dividing the various aspects of her life, she involves her total being in her work. In *Essays on Woman*, Stein writes,

According to the intended original order, her (woman's) place is by man's side to master the earth and care for offspring. But her body and soul are fashioned less to fight and to conquer than to cherish, guard and preserve. Of the threefold attitude towards the world – to know it, to enjoy it, to form it creatively – it is the second which concerns her most directly: she seems more capable than man of feeling a more reverent joy in creatures; moreover, such a joy requires a particular kind of perception of the good, different from rational perception in being an inherent spiritual function and a singularly feminine one. Evidently, this quality is related to woman's mission as a mother which involves an understanding of the total being and of specific values. It enables her to understand and foster organic development, the special, individual destiny of every living being. (Stein 1996, 73–74)

Stein believes that the woman's emotional life is the source of her attraction to the personal and to wholeness. According to Stein, without the emotions, the soul of

a woman would never know itself or others in their totality. Each woman perceives her own being in the stirrings of her emotions. That is, through her emotions, each woman learns who she is and how she is. It is through her emotions that a woman also grasps the relationship of another being to herself.

### **EMOTION AS THE WOMAN'S STRENGTH**

In earlier years, woman's emotions were viewed as her frailty. Woman was often referred to as the 'weaker sex' in that having greater sensitivity, she is more likely to be wounded than man, whose power of abstraction often shields him from negative feelings. Not only do women cry more easily than men, but they are also not ashamed of their tears, whereas men would generally rather die than be tearful. "Weak" was the term used to refer to that which is fragile, delicate, breakable, vulnerable and sensitive. With physical strength glorified, with patriarchy being the dominant form of societal order, woman's physical weakness (versus male strength) was viewed as an indication of inferiority. History shows that civilisation gradually institutionalised assumptions about gender that have powerfully affected the development of history and human thought. One such assumption is:

Men are "naturally" superior stronger and more rational, therefore designed to be dominant. From this follows that men are political citizens and responsible for representing the polity. Women are "naturally" weaker, inferior in intellect and rational capacities, unstable emotionally and therefore incapable of political participation. They stand outside of the polity. (Lerner 1993, 4)

Metaphors of gender emerged constructing the male as the norm and the female as deviant; the male as whole and powerful and the female as unfinished, physically mutilated and emotionally dependent. Due to this view, a functioning system of patriarchal hegemony arose, resulting in complex hierarchical relationships in which the woman's place and condition were "lower" than those of the man in social, economic, and political relations, and systems of ideas. This explains why feminists have resented being referred to as the "weaker sex". As women have become victimised by this distortion of the hierarchy of values, Stein's philosophy on woman may yet help to restore the proper hierarchy of values. Stein's views recognise the unique value of femininity and its crucial mission in the world. Woman's emotions, viewed as her frailty, can in fact be her very strength. We see this clearly in the following passage from Stein's *Essays on Woman*:

The strength of woman lies in the emotional life. This is in accord with her attitude toward personal being itself. For the soul perceives its own being in the stirrings of the emotions. Through the emotions, it comes to know what it is and how it is; it also grasps through them the relationship of another being to itself, and then, consequently, the significance of the inherent value of exterior things, of unfamiliar people, and impersonal things. The emotions, the essential organs for comprehension of the existent in its totality and in its peculiarity, occupy the center of her being. They condition that struggle to develop herself to a wholeness and to help others to a corresponding development, which we have found earlier to be characteristic of woman's soul. (Stein 1996, 96)

The importance of her emotions stems from the fact that the woman's monthly reproductive cycle makes her a potential bearer of a new human being within her body. Even if she is single or celibate and does not become a biological mother, her psyche is naturally constituted for the greatest closeness and affinity with others. Nurturance comes naturally to her; she more easily responds to the neediness of all men. This thinking is corroborated by psychoanalysts, who explain that a woman has facility for inner communication with other persons by virtue of her capacity for motherhood. In maternity, there exists an "infantile preconceptual communication with the mother" (Stern 1985, 82). This flux, according to feminine psychology, is by no means a one-way affair. The mother similarly participates in communication with the child. Long after the umbilical cord is severed, an invisible cord persists. That which exists is a deeply *knowing* relationship between the child and mother — "a mode of knowledge which *precedes* the advent of reason and, in a sense, *transcends* it" (Stern 1985, 82). This notion has led experts in psychology to believe that the "male" component of intelligence does not participate in this type of relationship. The father does not have the same inner relationship to the newborn child as does the mother. The type of inner communication that the mother has is not shared by the father until the child communicates by signals (Stern 1985, 82). Experts hold that the man — even though he shares in parenthood — always remains "outside" the process of pregnancy and the baby's birth. In fact, in many ways, he must *learn* his own "fatherhood" from the mother (Pope John Paul II 1988, in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, no. 18). We see that psychology substantiates Stein's claim about the woman's greater capacity (than man) for awareness of, sensitivity to, and empathy for persons. To be feminine is to manifest such qualities as warmth, tenderness, care, empathy, sweetness, responsiveness, and intuitive wisdom. In consequence, her "awareness of the needs of the living being benefits not only her posterity, but all creatures as well. It particularly benefits a man in making her a companion and helpmate appreciative of his aspirations" (Stein 1996, 74). Because of her

intuitive wisdom, woman is more easily able to ponder over the realities of life. Stein elucidates this as follows:

This is closely related to the vocation of motherhood. The task of assimilating in oneself a living being which is evolving and growing, of containing and nourishing it, signifies a definite end in itself. Moreover, the mysterious process of formation of a new creature in the maternal organics represents such an intimate unity of the physical and spiritual that one is well able to understand that the intimate unity imposes itself on the entire nature of woman. (Stein 1996, 95)

Because of this natural inclination to wholeness and self-containment, Stein suggests that women tend to aim toward a holistic expression of personality, while men tend to aim towards the perfecting of individual abilities. She argues that women have a natural tendency towards empathy in that they seek to grasp the other person as a whole being. This characteristic manifests itself in a woman's desire for her own wholeness and in her desire to also help others to become complete persons. Stein writes, "Woman is psychically directed to the concrete, the individual, and the personal: she has the ability to grasp the concrete in its individuality and to adapt herself to it, and she has the longing to help this peculiarity to its development" (Stein 1996, 100–101). Whether it is an awareness and sensitivity towards her own personal being or that of others, her emotions are responsible for this feminine type of holistic knowledge and discernment. Does this mean that woman is less capable of abstract thought and less oriented to that which is objective? Sarah Borden answers this question in an essay entitled *Woman and Women's Education*:

In saying that women are more personally and less objectively-oriented, Stein is not claiming that women are less capable of abstract thought; rather, as Mary Catharine Baseheart puts it, "characteristically women are not content to remain on the level of the abstract" (Stein 1989, 273). There is a drive in the feminine to relate the conceptual back to the concrete, the psychological back to particular psyches, and the theoretical back to the world of experience. Thus, the orientation toward the personal and the concrete need not be a denial of the abstract and conceptual, but it does indicate a dissatisfaction with the merely abstract and conceptual, and an unhappiness with only a part when one can be oriented to the whole. (Borden 2003, 88–115)

This leads us to sum up Stein's arguments about a woman's emotional life as a distinct property of the female species in one word: *motherliness* (Stein 1996,

82). Woman tends to the "mothering" of all that she meets. The feminine is characterised by "feeling, intuition, empathy and adaptability," whereas the masculine is characterised by "bodily strength, the ability for predominantly abstract thought and independent creativity." Women are made to love and cherish all living things and to desire their full development. The feminine is characterised by a responsiveness to the real. Psychologist and neo-feminist Carol Gilligan concurs with Stein on this view. In her book *Concepts of the Self and Morality*, Gilligan writes about the woman differing fundamentally from the man in that she is less political and more interactive, relating the two subjects of speaker and listener, as opposed to the subject and object of seer and seen. Man associates knowing with speaking and listening rather than with seeing. While the masculine vision lends itself to stages, steps, positions, and levels, marks differences with fixed boundaries, and establishes connections about space, the feminine vision is grounded in love, friendship and the recognition of needs (Carol Gilligan in David 2001, 7). In her 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, Gilligan further asserts that even in ethical reasoning, men differ from women in that women tend to an "ethics of care" and men have an "ethics of justice". Within an ethics of justice, men are more likely to reason by reference to abstract and universal principles, treating relations with colleagues and strangers in such a manner that they are "governed by rules and conventions which abstract selves from particularities of circumstance and are driven by the imperative to formulate universal principles".<sup>1</sup>

Women, on the other hand, exercise an ethics imbedded in life which "inclines one away from the tendency to reduce morality to a matter of obedience to abstract laws or principles, moving one instead in the direction of preparedness to change the rules, or even to forsake entitlements, if by so doing extremely meaningful, though faltering, human relationships, stand a chance of being rehabilitated." (7)

Gilligan contends that the fundamental characteristic that differentiates the ethic of care from the ethic of justice is a vital sense of personal embeddedness within a web of ongoing relationships.

Whereas the typical man will tend to downplay and even deny the value of intimate, particular relations, focusing instead upon relations and actions in accordance with universalizable maxims for action (justice, fairness, rules, rights), the typical woman will attend more closely to the daily experiences, wants, need, interests, and aspirations and moral dilemmas of peoples imbedded in relations and friendships that are quite fluid and

often presuppose and require a trust and imaginative engagement for which there are no rules.

Contemporary Christian thinkers, such as Alice von Hildebrand, G. K. Chesterton and Karol Wojtyla, share this position. Alice von Hildebrand contends that "female interests are centred on the human side of their lives: their family life, their relationships to those they love, their concern about their health, their welfare and, if they are Christians, the spiritual welfare of their children's souls; in other words, about human concerns. Most men speak about the stock market, politics, and sports; some speak about intellectual and artistic concerns" (Hildebrand 2002, 107). Chesterton declares, "Women speak to each other, men speak to the subject they are speaking about" (Chesterton as cited in Hildebrand 2002, 47).

### THE INTENTIONALITY OF EMOTIONS

In his book, *Love and Responsibility*, Karol Wojtyla writes that emotion is stronger in woman than in man because "she experiences more powerfully the value of a human being," while sensuality, which is oriented towards the "body as an object of enjoyment," is in general stronger and more importunate in men (Wojtyla 1993, 177).<sup>2</sup> This view on emotion in woman, understood with the theories on the feminist thinking on morality, helps clarify Stein's claim that a woman's emotions can in fact be viewed as her strength, rather than her frailty. "At the heart of every emotion is a set of fundamental ontological and evaluative commitments", writes Robert C. Solomon (1993) in his book *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*. All emotions are *intentional* because they are *about* something, ultimately both "about" ourselves and our world. One is never simply *in love*; he or she is in love *with someone*. It is impossible to fall in love without falling in love *with someone*. Following recent phenomenological tradition, this feature of emotions, called *intentionality*, states that all emotions are *about* something. That which the emotion is about is called its *intentional object*, or simply its object. As a matter of logic, every emotion has its specific object. Furthermore, this particular object constitutes the emotion. In his book, Solomon (1993) provides the example of someone being angry, with the object of his emotion being that a person (John) had stolen his car: "I am angry *that John stole my car*". The object of one's anger is irreducibly *that-John-stole-my-car*. To demonstrate that the emotion is determined by its object just as it is the emotion that constitutes its object, Solomon expands his example as follows:

Having long wanted to get rid of my car, I may also be *relieved* that John stole my car. Of course, the fact which stands at the base of my anger is identical to the fact which stands at the base

of my relief. But my anger and my relief are not separate feelings or acts or attitudes which are directed toward one and the same object. The object of my anger is an offense; the object of my relief is a boon. Thus the object of my anger is not the same as the object of my relief. There are not two components, my anger and the object of my anger. (Solomon 1993, 117)

Solomon stresses that an emotion is not distinct or separable from its object; the object as an object of this emotion has no existence apart from the emotion. Therefore, in order to understand an emotion, it is necessary to understand its "object". Stein argues, however, that while an emotion is not separable from its object, it is distinct from its object. For example, the object of a mother's joy is her baby smiling at her. The mother feels happy and relieved of her tiredness from work upon beholding her baby's lovable and angelic smile at her. The object of her joy is *that-the-baby-smiled-at-her*. In this example, the emotion is determined by its object; this clarifies the intentionality of emotions. Emotions are directed towards an intentional object. However, while the emotion and intentional object are not separable, they are certainly distinct. The emotion is how one is related to the object. Because that towards which one directs emotion and the being-directed are distinct, one can judge whether one's emotional response is too strong or weak, given the object. Thus, one is led to ask whether her lifepower is depleted and she is too exhausted to feel very intensely, or whether there are factors in her life that make her particularly sensitive to the situation or object.

This view is corroborated by Anthony Kenny (1963) in his book *Action, Emotion and Will*, in which he presents his theory of the object-directedness of emotions. According to Kenny, emotions, unlike sensations, have an intentional structure. He writes, "Emotions, unlike pain, have objects: we are afraid of things, angry with people, ashamed that we have done such-and-such" (Kenny 1963, 14). He labels this feature of emotions as "intentionality".<sup>1</sup> Kenny analyses the intentionality of emotions by employing the scholastic notion of a formal object (*that to which a thing is directed*). Emotions, Kenny explains, are mental states and mental states are specified by their formal objects, and not by their material objects (*that by which something came to be*) or by their causes. Mental states can have material objects and be caused by, or in some other way be related to, material objects; however, mental states are not specified by their material objects or their causes. To understand an emotion and, consequently, to understand why persons experience certain emotions or why they react emotionally to certain situations, it is not sufficient to know what caused

(material object) an occasion that gave rise to the incidence of the emotion. One must know that to which the emotion is bound or directed. For instance, it is not sufficient to know that the onset of darkness causes one to fear walking home alone. One is afraid of someone or something that arises during the darkness of the night such as an assailant or a robber who may attack him/her. The formal object of the emotion of fear characterises the directedness of the emotion in such a way as to specify the emotion itself. If the same person, on another instance, experiences delight rather than fear, it is because his/her emotion is directed to that which inspires delight in him/her and not fear. In other words, the formal object of an emotion restricts the emotion to be of a certain emotion and not another. Kenny's example is, "One cannot be afraid of just anything, nor happy about anything whatsoever. If a man says he is afraid of winning £10,000 in the pools, we want to ask him more: does he believe that money corrupts, or does he expect to lose his friends, or to be annoyed by begging letters, or what? If we can elicit from him only descriptions of the good aspects of the situation, then we cannot understand why he reports his emotion as fear and not as hope" (Kenny 1963, 192).

According to Kenny, the formal object of an emotion is inseparable from the emotion itself. "One may say with Kenny that the formal object of an emotion is conceptually connected with the emotion. Or, we may say, that its formal object is part of the concept of the emotion" (Sayson 1994, 5).

Therefore, to explain the behaviour of persons, it is helpful to discover the object to which their emotions are linked. To identify the object of emotions is to say that emotions have logical connections with something real. Emotions link us to concrete objects in our world. To understand our world, it is of vital importance that we understand the nature of the objects that affect us and stimulate an emotional response. The cause of an emotion may help clarify how the emotion arose, but it does not explain the intentionality and nature of an emotion. In Kenny's terms, the cause of an emotion must be distinguished from its object, which can be considered as the target or "the concrete particular at which the emotion is actually directed" (Sayson 1994, 6). As an illustration, I may be angry at a certain student at this moment. We might say that my anger is caused by a change in the chemical reactions and neurological changes in my body. However, the object of my anger is that my student is not listening in class and is uselessly talking with his seatmate, and thus is distracted from his lessons and performs poorly. My anger may be caused by certain physiochemical processes, but the fact that I am angry at this specific person for this particular reason circumscribes my emotion of anger. We are elucidated further on the distinction between causes and objects of emotion in the following passage from Kenny:

Emotions are specified by their objects. That is to say: if someone betrays the marks of emotion (as fear or embarrassment) we may seek to find the object of his emotion, by asking "What are you afraid of?" or "What is embarrassing you?" Having learnt the object of his emotion, we may then go on to ask such questions as "But why are you afraid of the dark?" or "But why do bawdy jokes embarrass you?" and the answer to these questions may, though it need not, assign a cause for the emotions thus specified. In such cases, we are seeking a cause for a general tendency to experience certain emotions in certain situations, or at certain objects. In other cases we may seek a cause for a particular emotion at a particular time: as when we ask why the manager has been so irritated this morning at small things (object) and learn that it is because he is suffering from dyspepsia (cause). Causes are sought for emotions-regarding-particular-objects, not for emotions *simpliciter*: we look for the causes of a man's fear of mice, or dislike of strawberries; we do not look for the causes of his fear, or his dislike: for this would be to ask the question "Why does he have fears?" or "Why does he have dislikes?" to which the only answer seems to be: because he is a human being. (Kenny 1963, 6)

Both Kenny and Solomon, demonstrate that emotion is *intentional*. The object of an emotion is never the same as its cause. The cause, we may say, is *objective*. On the other hand, the object is *subjective*, a part of the world as one perceives it, whether or not it is in fact the case (as in a case wherein I am angry that my student is talking to his seatmate and conclude that he is not listening to my lecture, when, in fact, he may have been listening intently and is clarifying a point with his seatmate, which is why he is talking). While psychological and physiological theories explain brain functions, complex factors in the upbringing of a person such as childhood traumas, and chemical constitution to be the causes of emotions, we realise that these explanations do not consider subjectivity and individual experience (Solomon 1993, 124). If that which characterises an emotion is its object, we can appreciate that our emotions reflect our way of seeing the world. For phenomenologists such as Max Scheler, the notion of *intentionality* denotes that all feelings "possess 'a lived reference to the I (or the Person)'. The intentional correlates of the feelings of life are the values closed within one's own vitality; those of the spiritual feelings are the self-value of the Person" (Strasser 1977, 84). Emotions, according to Scheler, are self-involved in that they are about objects that are important to us. To understand Scheler's notion of intentionality, we must first distinguish between the "*feeling of something*" and "*feeling states*". In his book, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-*

*formal Ethics of Value*, Scheler writes that *there is original emotive intentionality in the "feeling of something" as opposed to "feeling states"*.

All specifically sensible feelings, are by their nature, states, and may be more or less "objectless". They include moods, which may have causes but are not directed to any object in particular. For example, one may feel sadness and ask why he or she is in such a mood today, the cause being that the sky is downcast and the weather is damp and cold. In itself, the feeling of sadness is not related to an object. In Scheler's words, "It does not 'take' anything, nor is there anything that 'approaches me'. There is no 'signifying' in it nor is there any immanent directedness in it". (Scheler 1973, 257)

With *intentional feeling*, however, there is a connection between the feeling and that which is therein felt. Scheler writes,

There is here an original relatedness, a directedness of feeling toward something objective, namely, *values*. This kind of feeling is not a dead state of affairs that can enter into associative connections or be related to them; nor is such feeling a "token". This feeling is a goal-determined movement, although it is by no means an *activity* issuing forth from a center (nor is it a temporally extended movement). It is a punctual movement, whether objectively directed from the ego or coming toward the ego as movement in which something *is* given to me and in which it comes to "appearance". This feeling therefore has the same relation to its value-correlate as "representing" has to its "object," namely an intentional relation. It is not *externally brought together* with an object, whether immediately or through a representation (which can be related to a feeling either mechanically or fortuitously or by mere thinking). On the contrary, feeling originally intends its own kind of objects, namely "values". (Scheler 1973, 257–258)

In the passage cited, Scheler posits that values are genuine (phenomenological) objects of acts of intentional feelings. "Such value contents of intentional feelings are, according to Scheler, *pre-given* to any other act of consciousness" (Frings 1965, 87). Moreover, in every experience, there is an experience of values. We are either "attracted" to or "repelled" from that which we experience. In other words, we are "drawn toward" or "pushed from" all objects in any type of experience. Manfred Frings (1965) elucidates Scheler's notion of pre-give intentional feeling in the following passage:

Scheler makes the following comparison. He argues that in the same way as colors are given to the sense of sight, sounds to the sense of hearing, and concepts to acts of reasoning, values are given in intentional feelings as their intuitional correlates. Scheler can, therefore, say that a being who would have only intellect and will, but not intentional feeling, could have no experience of value at all. Such a being would be comparable to someone born blind, never having had colors given in sense experience. Acts of intentional feeling are, for Scheler, an original intentionality toward their proper objects: values. In practical life, such a value experience is most conspicuous in acts of love, upon which all intentional feeling ultimately rests. (Frings 1965, 87–88)

In Scheler's essay, *Ordo Amoris*, he wrote, "Man is, before he is an intellectual being and before he is a being of will, *ens amans*" (literally meaning man is a loving being or a being who loves). An analysis of the expression "love at first sight" may help us understand Scheler's meaning. In many customary experiences of love (not "love at first sight"), the object of one's love (the person who is loved) is thought about, judged, or assessed before he/she is loved. In "love at first sight", however, love is present first, even before an assessment or analysis of the object of one's love has been made. Quoting Blaise Pascal, "The heart has its reasons that reason itself does not understand," Scheler holds that "there is a type of experiencing whose "objects" are completely inaccessible to reason; reason is as blind to them as ears and hearing are blind to colors" (Frings 1965, 255).

Aristotle and Kant barely recognised the significance of the emotional; however, for Scheler, the emotional sphere of man holds a place of importance that is side by side with all laws of logic and reason. The emotional sphere of man occupies a fundamental place for Scheler, a sphere which he and Pascal called the "*ordo amoris*", which is "the harmonious structure of emotional intentionality and intentional feeling together with immanent intuited objects: values. Man, therefore, is the ontic place in which values occur" (Frings 1965, 89).

Edmund Husserl likewise recognised the intentional character of feelings, even though he assumed that they (feelings) were founded in knowing intentionality. Franz Brentano had maintained that the movements of the heart represent a "special mode of the relation of psychic activity to a content" (Frings 1965, 89). At this point, it is important to recognise Jean Paul Sartre's contribution to the anthropology of emotions to appreciate the conception of emotion as an intentional phenomenon. For Sartre, "feelings and emotions, according to their very essence, belong to the existential turning of a subject to persons, things and

circumstances of the environment and the world. As objects of feeling-consciousness, something is true of them that is not in consciousness. Therefore, the movements of the heart, according to Sartre, are determined upon objects and situations" (Frings 1965, 89). He illustrates his notion of intentionality through an analysis of a "happy" reunion. His analysis assumes the standpoint of a positivistic-scientific objectivism in which there is indeed neither an object called "friend", which causes happiness, nor a happiness-producing event such as a "reunion".

The advocate of a natural-scientific approach will simply establish the at-handness of a particular example of the species *homo sapiens* and its spatial progression in a certain direction. Factually, this is the raw material out of which one who is awaiting his friend makes the object of his happiness. That the emotionally aroused imagination plays a dominant role in the formation of this *hyle* is indeed incontestable. Moreover, this is also confirmed by empirical psychologists. Emotion is thus not only a passive being-grasped..., but also an **active intention**. The intention releases in the experiencing subjective formative powers which bestow upon reality a particular physiognomic expression: one that is happily-winged, one that is fear-inspiring, one that is hopeless, and so forth. (Frings 1965, 215)

Sartre shows that emotions cannot be conceived of as "states of excitement", confused reactions to "stimuli", or "accidents" of human existence. They are ways of seeing and living in the world. In emotion, we "open ourselves" to others, allow ourselves to share their experiences and opinions, their world views, and ultimately, their other emotions (Frings 1965, 215). Because woman is naturally inclined to nurturance, close personal attachments, and emotional responses to others, it is easy to understand why persons are logically the object of her emotions and that her emotions are indistinguishable from their object. For Stein, this is simply a consequence of her innate capacity for motherhood (be it cultural or spiritual), which includes the spousal dimension of the role of companionship. This role involves sharing the life of another, entering into it, and making that person's concerns one's own. One might argue that this is a vocation for both men and women, and it is unlikely that Stein would deny this. However, it may also be true that women generally possess a special genius for friendship because of their natural orientation to the human and personal as well as their greater capacity for exercising empathy.

This view suggests that women have a richer conception of persons and that they can more easily imbue human relationships with care and affection. Life is enriched and softened by the moral perception of women who respond to others

with empathetic engagement rather than detached application of abstract principles. Because morality for the typical woman "expresses itself in activity directed at the concrete, specific persons who need to be loved, cared for, shown compassion," women tend to be better attuned than men to care thinking, which enforces a duty to care for and empathise with the members of the human community (David 2001, 8). While this type of moral reasoning has been dismissed as "irrational", it has fashioned a clearly ethical tradition of kindness and benevolence in an otherwise violent world. Certainly, this standpoint is quite unlike the legalistic contractual thinking of men that stresses individual freedom and arms' - length relations with others. If women's "different voice" of emotion, care, responsibility, concern, and connection is essential to human living, then that which has traditionally been regarded as women's defective and deficient moral judgment should be considered as a sign of their strength. A world hardened by "autonomy, discontinuity, and aloneness with domination and maleness" may be a better place to reside with the gentleness, relation, understanding, concern, empathy, in short, the "mothering" of femaleness (David 2001, 10).

Stein's dissertation on the subject of empathy was completed several years prior to her lectures on women's roles, but one can see its influence on her later work. She describes empathy as a clear awareness of another person, not simply of the content of his/her experience, but of his/her experience of that content. In empathy, one takes the place of the other without becoming strictly identical to him/her. Empathy is not simply understanding the experiences of the other, but in some sense, taking them on as one's own.

## CONCLUSION

The aim of this study has been to reaffirm Edith Stein's position on woman and the strength of her emotions. Certainly, Stein offers a rich backdrop of insights against which traditional readings of the woman can be interpreted, challenging claims of the woman as the "weaker sex" and of the metaphysical inferiority of feelings. Stein's argument that woman's emotional life is an important hallmark of the female species, in which woman's emotions prove to be her strength rather than her frailty, can be viewed as an unambiguous philosophical framework with which long-standing claims that woman is "inferior" to man can be disputed.

Stein's philosophy helps us to appreciate that motherhood is the sole privilege and unique advantage of woman. Every human's first experience of love comes about through motherhood, which involves a "special communion with the mystery of life, as it develops in the woman's womb" (Pope John Paul II in *Mulieris Dignitatem*, no. 18). In exercising her motherhood, whether biological or

spiritual, woman can imbue human relations with empathy, delicateness, nurturing care, in short, with love. In a fast mechanising world where automation is designed to result in impersonal efficiency and productivity, we conclude that the feminine presence is necessary for building a civilisation of love. Influenced by Edith Stein's ideas on woman, Pope John Paul II (1988) wrote in *Mulieris Dignitatem*,

The mother is filled with wonder at this mystery of life, and 'understands' with unique intuition what is happening inside her. In the light of the "beginning", the mother accepts and loves as a person the child she is carrying in her womb. This unique contact with the new human being developing within her gives rise to an attitude towards human beings - which profoundly marks the woman's personality. It is commonly thought that *women* are more capable than men of paying attention *to another person*.

It is only to woman that we properly ascribe *motherliness*, from which ensues the empathy that arises naturally from her feminine ethos and which this world requires to counterbalance a culture of cold abstraction, anonymity, and distancing. As Stein's theory of empathy shows, intuitive intelligence is more intimately tied up with love than analytical intelligence. The "intuitive grasp of the living concrete, especially of the personal element" is the woman's strength. "She has the special gift of making herself at home in the inner world of others". In short, woman is endowed with unique and exclusive qualities with which she can contribute to the common good in a way that man cannot because he lacks those qualities or possesses them on a lower scale. Thus, in these times, the question of woman's position or standing in society takes on new significance in the light of her feminine singularity. Consider Karl Stern's statement, "If we equate the one-sidedly rational and technical with the masculine, there arises the ghastly spectacle of a world impoverished of womanly values" (Stern, p. 6).

With the recurrent question and controversy over the importance and value of woman, Stein's defence of the nature of woman is a remarkably deep source of enlightenment.

## NOTES

1. David notes that "the paradigm for this, of course, is Immanuel Kant's self-legislating moral subject, for whom the most distinctive thing about ethical reasoning lies not in any effort at consultation with others, but in the ability to deploy quasi-mathematical approaches in stating, defending, and applying universal principles" (p. 6).

2. Being the giver of the sperm in a sexual act, sexual arousal occurs faster in the man than in the woman (see Wojtyla 1993, 272), the arousal curve being shorter and more violent in the man (p. 275).
3. Kenny uses 'intentionality' in his book. I will employ 'intentionality', a more familiar usage.

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