

**Love and Intersubjectivity:  
An Inquiry into the Personalism of Max Scheler**

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## **Abstract**

### **Love and Intersubjectivity: An Inquiry into the Personalism of Max Scheler**

**J.P. Zukauskas**

The purpose of this study is to investigate intersubjectivity in the work of Scheler, focusing primarily on writings of his middle or "Catholic" period. To do so, I consider the nature of the person as both the autonomous center of spiritual acts and as a vital ego immersed in a universal life stream with others. I then address the issue of intersubjectivity as it has been commonly formulated in phenomenology and demonstrate that for Scheler, true intersubjectivity is situated in love between persons and that it demands both a proximity and a distance that are positioned outside the bounds of theoretical formulations and cognitive knowledge. Following an exhibition of the role and forms of love in Scheler's philosophy, I address issues related to love and the order of material values as they pertain to the autonomy and uniqueness of the person, with reference to themes of "the same" and "the other" found in the work of Levinas. Ultimately we see that Scheler posits the person in such a way that it is the seat of absolute value, that the person cannot be limited by theoretical structures or language, and that for Scheler, the person as person is a phenomenon that lies outside the scope of philosophy.

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## 0. Introductory Remarks

The purpose of this study is to investigate intersubjectivity in the work of Scheler (1874-1928), focusing primarily on writings of his middle or "Catholic" period from 1912 to about 1922, including *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, *The Nature of Sympathy*, parts of *On the Eternal in Man*, and a number of other essays which originate from this time. At this point in his work Scheler had rejected positivism and had just rejected his formational neo-Kantianism; he was prepared to address the principal questions which were to define much of his writing career thereafter. By incorporating his understanding of phenomenology with a great interest in ethics, Scheler set out to erect a philosophy that would defend the dignity of the human person while taking into account the rich and broad constitution of the person situated in the real world. To do so, Scheler attempted to outline a cosmos which is comprised of absolute values, but in which the human person is an utterly unique individual, and that in our ethical relations with others in love we come to truly "know" them outside the strictures of reason or cognitive consciousness, growing towards an open-ended perfection supported by the love of God.

Speigelberg remarks that in spite of Scheler's public place during his time as "the number two phenomenologist" (Speigelberg 265), he is a difficult figure to categorize. His range of interests, concerns and topics addressed was broad and found expression in sociology, politics, religious studies as well as what might be considered strictly phenomenological philosophy. Speigelberg quite rightly points out that "Scheler was certainly more than a phenomenologist. It may even be asked to what extent, in the last analysis, he was a phenomenologist" (Speigelberg 268).

Scheler's work in phenomenology always seems to be motivated by something greater than what is apparent. Unlike Husserl whose phenomenological project might be characterized as the founding of a "rigorous science" (Speigelberg 271), Scheler's use of

phenomenology was a tool to be used along the way to answering perennial questions; a foundation by which he could derive what he deemed to be true knowledge to serve as a basis for metaphysical speculation in the realm of the probably true. Phenomenology was never a goal in and of itself. As Mortiz Geiger, an associate and sympathetic fellow member of the Munich Circle observed,

phenomenology gave Scheler such a tool. Its primary objective was to grasp what is given. It allowed, and even made it a duty, to intuit plainly and simply, prior to constructive systematizing and to genetic considerations. From now on Scheler's many-sidedness came into its own. After he had stripped off the constructivism of his earlier days, it became apparent that no one possessed the capacity for such intuition ("*Schau*") to a higher degree than Scheler; but also that no one was equally exposed to the danger inherent in phenomenological intuition, as in every intuition, that what *seems* to be intuited and what has been **seized without** proper examination is taken for something *really* intuited. (qtd. in Speigelberg 274-75)

This sets the tone for the kind of difficulties that will be encountered as we work through Scheler's thinking on the matter of the interpersonal. While at times he appears to be addressing a particular issue phenomenologically, he will suddenly slip into an assertive style that lacks the kind of description necessary to demonstrate the givenness of his intuitions. Sometimes he will take what he believes to have intuited as essences and work them into speculative metaphysical theories. At times his writing rings with a religious, semi-mystical vision. Spader muses that because of this inconsistency of tone and effort, "all too many people simply gave up on attempting to understand the development of his thought as having a philosophically understandable logic" (Spader, *Ethical* 11). However, despite this, I think that while it may become apparent that

Scheler's work travels along avenues of thought that run beyond the scope of philosophy, particularly the essential phenomenology of the period as it is commonly understood, his body of thought, regardless of labels, represents a deep personalism which provides a unity of vision to his work, and accents the primacy of his goal as an ethicist and a philosopher of the interpersonal situation.

In this study we will proceed by considering Scheler's idea of the person in the context of his argument against Kantian formalism, then move on to look at Scheler's work on intersubjectivity as it is traditionally formulated, as the problem of knowing other minds; from there we will present the interpersonal situation from the perspective of love and sympathy, and finally offer a concluding analysis, which will present some difficulties that Scheler's fullest assertions on the interpersonal situation furnish, and with reference to some analogous points in the ethical philosophy of Levinas, hopefully provide some possible roads forward for Scheler's position.

## 1. The Person

Before undertaking an analysis of Scheler's intersubjectivity proper, it is essential to state briefly his position regarding the human person. Like Kant before, the question of "What is man?" occupied Scheler greatly throughout his writing career. Scheler writes in his 1915 essay "On the Idea of Man",

...all of the central problems of philosophy can be said to lead us back to the questions of what man is and what the metaphysical position and status is which he occupies within the totality of being, world and God. (Scheler, "Idea" 184)

The theory of the person is arguably one of Scheler's most characteristic contributions to philosophy and is something of a unifying factor for all his work touching on his ethics, phenomenology, and theory of values, metaphysics and religious philosophy.

Scheler presents his most extensive direct treatment of the person in his major work on ethics *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, which appeared in parts from 1913-1916<sup>1</sup>, with the subtitle "A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism". In *Formalism*, Scheler attempts to establish an ethics based on so-called material, or non-formal values as opposed to the formalism of Kant. To Scheler, this was an effort to rescue the world of values, emotional experience, and the depth and dignity of the human person from what he understood to be an inordinately rational-idealistic system in Kant on the one side of the equation, and an equally reductive empirical psychologism on the other.

For Kant, both the dignity of the person (i.e. the person's non-contingent nature) and the possibility of a relevant and universally applicable system of ethics are grounded

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<sup>1</sup> The first part dealing specifically with the theory of non-formal values appears first in 1913, while the second part, largely on the person appears later in 1916. See Scheler's preface to the first combined edition. (Scheler, *Formalism xvii*)

in the person's capacity to reason. Thus as Perrin explains it, "insofar as an individual is conceived of as a Person – that is, as an autonomous and rational creature – he or she must command our respect" (38) and to treat the person as an object or an instrumental means to an end would be to subject them to "the laws of physical nature alone, laws which he or she transcends by virtue of the Person's stature within the intelligible world" (Perrin 38). The person is able to access a universally valid set of ideal values and norms through acts of the intellect, and is duty bound to do so by way of the categorical imperative. This formal, *a priori* knowledge is contrasted with *a posteriori*, contingent knowledge, derived from emotions and sense experience, both of which are essentially chaotic without the unifying touch of rational interpretation. According to Scheler however, this idealist, intellectual vision fails to do justice to the whole and unique person. He writes:

...the...definition of the person as rational leads first to the consequence that every concretization of the idea of the person in a concrete person coincides with a depersonalization. For that which is here called "person", namely, "something" which is the subject of rational activity, must be attributed to concrete persons – indeed, to *all men* – in the same way and as something *identical* in all men. Hence men are not distinguishable by virtue of their personal being alone. (Scheler, *Formalism* 371-72)

In order to recover this fullness and individual uniqueness of personhood, Scheler thinks back to lines of argument developed by Augustine and Pascal and he argues that the *emotive* elements of spirit, such as feeling, preferring, loving, hating, and *willing*, also possess original a priori contents which are not borrowed from "thinking", and which ethics must show to be independent of logic. There is an a priori *ordre du coeur*, or, *logique du coeur*... (Scheler, *Formalism* 63)

Scheler wants to readmit the full range of possible, uniquely lived-out experiences and acts into the constitution of the person and ethics, particularly the affective as it pertains to the apprehension of values in ethical activity, and establishes that “the actual seat of the entire value-*a priori* (including the moral *a priori*) is the *value-cognition* or *value-intuition* that comes to the fore in feeling, basically love and hate...” (Scheler, *Formalism* 68). . Values are the proper object of the emotional while “a spirit limited to perception and thinking would be absolutely *blind* to values...” (Scheler, *Formalism* 68). A person cannot be considered fully a person unless these are also included into the definition. Without these additional emotive acts, ethical activity oriented towards values would be impossible. Love, hate and other affective acts and functions are not reducible to intellect and are able to see what reason cannot and find a realm of material, or non-formal values in the real world. Thus as Owens explains,

By his discovery of the a priori value feeling and the correlative realm of values which addresses themselves to men, Scheler re-establishes ethics on a new basis. The ethics of intellectualistic formalism which reached its highest expression in Kant is replaced by an emotional material ethics. In place of the “ought” of the empty categorical imperative man is bound by the summons (*Ruf*) of the objective values, which are given to him in intentional feeling as colors are given in the act of seeing. This is the new center in man which Scheler reveals. (61)

The horizons of the person are expanded here and it becomes an ethical emotional being as well as intellectual one, and plays out its life over many levels of psychic and intentional life

If Scheler is going to situate the person in the non-formal realm, he must, in order to maintain the essentially free dignity of the person establish that the person maintains its autonomy, that it is not contingent upon the empirical which Kant argues is essential.

To do so, he introduces a two-fold model where the self occurs in the vital realm of life (contingent and empirical) and also in the realm of spirit (non-contingent, but non-formal).

According to Scheler, the life world, or the vital realm, is constituted in order of value by unconscious matter, instinctive animal life, associative memory and practical intelligence. Persons exist on this level as “egos” who perform “functions”, e.g. seeing, body feelings, lower psychic states, etc. This vital sphere is the empirical life-world where persons exist as incarnate, embodied subjects in space and time, and importantly, where an ego can become the object of inner reflection and reflective acts (Ranly 22), for example, the ego can be the object of scientific or psychological inquiry and is subject to physical laws and principles. Consequently though, the ego in itself does not constitute the autonomous non-contingent being required to defend against Kant's idealism.

Beyond the realm of the vital is the realm of spirit, which transcends the biological, the embodied, and therefore natural laws and scientific observation. Contrary to Kant, spirit, what Kant would consider to be the formal, is not the domain of reason only, but of all possible spiritual acts: preferring, willing, loving, and so on. Being home to non-rational phenomena like these, spirit is by definition non-formal. However, spirit is in no way reducible to the vital; it is not a “higher order of life” (Ranly 22) but is a distinct order of phenomena. From the realm of spirit in the performance of spiritual acts it is possible. Spiritual acts are in a way analogous to functions of the vital ego but, to drive home the distinction:

Functions belong to the ego, not to the person; functions are psychical phenomena, acts are not; functions happen by themselves, acts are executed; functions presuppose a lived body and an environment, acts do not; a world, not an environment corresponds to the person; functions are measurable in phenomenal time, but acts spring from the person into time.  
(Blosser 50)

Acts can make an object of real things on the vital level, including the activity of the ego where the self appears in its aspect of object. If the ego, that which can only be the object of spiritual acts and is not the one that performs them, what is it that unifies these acts to fill the place of the Kantian person whose sole function is reason? Here, Scheler posits the idea of the person. He writes:

*The person is the concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences which in itself...precedes all essential act-differences (especially the difference between inner and outer perception, inner and outer willing, inner and outer feeling, loving hating, etc.). The being of the person is therefore the "foundation" of all essentially different acts. (Scheler, Formalism 383)*

Unlike the ego, as a being of spirit the person is completely free from its environment and is free even to act beyond the strictures of the vital elements of the ego to which it corresponds. "Between *spirit and life*, between person and life-centre, we discern no unity of substance but only a bond of *dynamic causality*" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 76), and so, although Scheler does not elaborate on this point very much, he means to indicate that persons and egos are essentially different. Spiritual acts performed by the person are analogous to the functions of the vital ego. They are, however, transcendent in that they are non-durational, non-spatial and non-causal (Ranly 22), not reducible to anything but their own sui generis actuality, and therefore are not bound to the empirical in a contingent way. Spirit is pure actuality and "thus we can say that the person lives *into* time...but...does not live within phenomenal time, which is immediately given in the flow of inwardly perceived psychic processes, nor does he live in the objective time of physics" (Scheler, *Formalism* 385). Because of this, acts are by their very nature, non-objectifiable in the way that things on the vital level are. They are so immanent in their

actuality that the essence of an act is only given in its performance and to cognitively objectify an act would mean losing the act *as* an act.

The person, the concrete center of essentially different acts does not stand behind spiritual acts, and because spirit is pure actuality, the person does not represent some kind of substance or static object which performs the acts in question.<sup>2</sup> “It *belongs to the essence of the person to exist and to live solely in the execution of intentional acts*” (Scheler, *Formalism* 390). Based on this, Scheler proceeds, saying:

An act is never an object. No matter how much knowledge we have of an act, our reflecting on its naïve execution (in the moment of such execution or in reflective, immediate memory) contains nothing like the objectification which marks, e.g., all inner perception, especially all inner observation. If an act can therefore never be made an object, the *person* who lives in the execution of acts can a fortiori never be an object.

(Scheler, *Formalism* 387)

Further, as actuality, the essence of the person is determined by the direction of its acts, as:

the *whole person* is contained in *every* fully concrete act, and the whole person “*varies*” in and through every act—without being exhausted in his being in any of these acts, and without “changing” like a thing in time...And for this reason there is *no* necessity for an *enduring being* that subsists in this succession in order to safeguard the “identity of the individual person”. Identity lies solely in the qualitative direction of this pure becoming different. (Scheler, *Formalism* 385)

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<sup>2</sup> This is a debatable point. Frings on the one hand asserts that although Scheler makes use of the German word “*Substanz*” at one point in *The Nature of Sympathy*, the sense of the usage there is not meant to imply a substance in the Aristotelian sense, which would undermine the idea that the person lives only in the execution of intentional acts as presented in *Formalism* (95). Nota vehemently disagrees and prefers to take Scheler’s use of the term in *Sympathy* without qualification (47-48).

Scheler does not mean to imply a full on actualism. He says that “the person is not an empty ‘point of departure’ of acts; he is, rather, a concrete being” and “abstract act-essences concretize into concrete act-essences only by belonging to this or that individual person” (Scheler, *Formalism* 384). Still, the person does not remain static. Though it does not change in the standard spatio-temporal sense of change, it does become qualitatively different depending on what acts it performs. For example, the person can undergo moral development and can work towards a “completion” as its acts respond morally to values. This is not simply a matter of cognizing or recognizing value essences in value-feeling, essences revealed to affective acts, but an active response to an “individual value essence” of which Scheler suggestively says, “it is this value essence of a personal *and* individual nature that I also designate ‘personal salvation’” (Scheler, *Formalism* 489)<sup>3</sup>

While it may seem that Scheler is proposing a formal value system **with the mode** of apprehension simply switched to the affective, this is not exactly what Scheler intends. Further consideration as we go on will investigate whether or not he is successful in this. For the moment, we can assume that Scheler, at least to his own satisfaction, has proposed a core of the human being in the person that maintains its essential fullness and dignity of non-contingent autonomy while situated in a non-formal realm of material values and essences.

The focus of this study deals with intersubjectivity however, and our concern is the relationship between people. Scheler has proposed that the ego can be made the object of knowledge, while the spiritual person cannot be made an object due to its essential actuality. He does suggest that there is some level of “awareness” of acts or persons possible in a kind of “reflection”:

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<sup>3</sup> More will be said of this in my section on the *ordo amoris*.

No matter how much knowledge we have of an act, our reflecting on its naïve execution (in the moment of such execution or in reflective, immediate memory) contains nothing like the objectification which marks, e.g., all inner perception, especially all inner observation. (Scheler, *Formalism* 386-87)

He does not elaborate beyond this, and states strongly immediately after that:

The only and exclusive kind of givenness of the person is his *execution of acts* (including the execution of acts reflecting on acts). It is through this execution of acts that the person experiences himself at the same time. Or, if we are concerned with other persons, the person is experienced in terms of post-execution, coexecution, or pre-execution of acts. In these cases of the execution of acts of other persons, there is no objectification. (Scheler, *Formalism* 387)

This poses a problem for intersubjectivity theory as usually conceived, for it deals with the knowledge of others, and while Scheler here speaks of givenness and coexecution of acts, it is not clear that he is speaking of cognitive philosophical knowledge as commonly understood. How can we *know* a non-objectifiable person? Also, because the person is not reducible to the ego on the vital level, there is a problem of unity wherein a full theory of intersubjectivity would have to account for both sides of the equation, i.e. the way in which egos relate to one another on the vital level, and the way in which persons relate on the spiritual level. Both of these points will be of concern in the following chapter as we address intersubjectivity directly.

## 2. The Problem of Intersubjectivity

Intersubjectivity, the problem of “other minds” has been a significant theme in modern philosophy since it was given added emphasis in Husserl, and one to which satisfactory solutions have been largely lacking. Owens holds this to be a relatively recent occurrence and states the basic issue:

Ever since Descartes, philosophers have labored to explain how a subject knows an *object*. But not until the twentieth century did they begin to ask the much more fundamental and vastly more mysterious question - how does one subject encounter another subject precisely *as another subject*?  
(Owens 1)

In Husserl, the problem can be stated briefly as follows: all knowledge to be derived phenomenologically is intuited from within the phenomenological reduction, a ‘bracketing’ or putting aside of all assumptions as to the metaphysical or ontological state of the objects of investigation in order to view them as they are given as they themselves present themselves; hence, “the ‘mission of phenomenology is heralded in Edmund Husserl’s challenge for philosophy to ‘return to the things themselves’ (Perrin 55). What remains of the subject after the reduction is performed, the so called transcendental ego, is the self in its aspect of pure, solitary consciousness in a realm of pure essences. At this point the ego is “freed from the naïve realism of the natural standpoint and allows us to attend to essences and their modes of givenness in our consciousness...after the epoche I am no longer experiencing as a mundane ego...” (Spader, *Ethical*/243). While this is not necessarily a problem in itself, it may simply signify consciousness moving from a contingent to an objective realm, Spader argues by way of Alfred Schuetz that the problem in Husserl really derives from the fact that this realm is entirely private. It is not any realm of consciousness perceived in the reduction, nor a common space, but *my*

realm of consciousness and no other. (Spader, *Ethical* 244). If all phenomenological knowledge is obtained in this private state with me as the subject and all other foci of my intention as objects, it becomes a very difficult matter for Husserl to establish grounds for others to appear as other *subjects*, and not simply as objects appearing to a solipsistic consciousness.

It therefore becomes an issue of presence, which many of Husserl's critics from Heidegger on have been pleased to point out. The condition which the reduction is intended to achieve is one where presuppositions have been suspended in order to view things as given. However, this bracketing does in fact labor under an important assumption, namely that the objects intended are "present", i.e. that they are in fact open to the probings of intentional consciousness, which is then itself "open to fulfillment, to verification" (Fuchs 84). Another ego, the Other, is not like any possible object of intention, though. While the Other does appear in the field of perception in the world, what gives it its special character, namely that it produces an individual, private stream of transcendental consciousness of its own, is precisely what cannot be apperceived under the conditions that Husserl sets for himself. Consequently, the alterity of the other in this sense would have to be experienced as an absence which is precisely what transcendental phenomenology does *not* intend. Husserl attempts to resolve this issue by introducing the phenomenon of "pairing", where the Other in its bodily presence is assumed by analogy to be like mine and a consciousness like mine is then inferred. The problem with this is that Husserl fails to meet the demands of his own epistemology where phenomenological evidence must be such that it must be given in an originary intuition. The Other of pairing is a conjecture of the intending ego, is constituted by the intending ego, and consequently the Other reduces to that which it absolutely must not be in order to be other, namely a projection of me.

Even though a thing transcends me, it nevertheless has its sense, its meaning constituted by me and it can continually be brought into presence. A thing has its sense constituted by me, it precisely *does not* have the characteristic of otherness" (Fuchs 85).

Hence, the transcendental cosmos is populated with asocial monads incapable of recognizing one another.

As we move along, it will be important to keep the issues involved with Husserl's argument in mind. He failed, in part, because the other could not be situated or known on its own terms, so the self as it looked for the other, eventually traveled in a circle arrived where it began having only discovered projections of its own consciousness. Scheler, though influenced by Husserl's method does not follow him to the letter, and consequently there are a number of important differences in the way that he approaches intersubjectivity, the problems he faces or indeed does not have to face. What is important to discover here, though, is how does Scheler answer the basic issue of whether the conscious self is capable of finding the other in its otherness?

The most detailed account of the problem as traditionally formulated, the one which most of his critics and commentators turn to when dealing with intersubjectivity in his work, occurs in the third part of *The Nature of Sympathy*.<sup>4</sup> According to Frings's reading, Scheler differs from Husserl when approaching the problem in that "the transcendental character of Husserl's phenomenology must...be rejected due to its untenable idealism" (Frings, H&S 146). Husserl "never entertained theories alternative to his idealistic explanation of reality as given through consciousness or the mind" (Frings, H&S 147) but for Scheler, the way in which a thing is "given" is a complicated affair, and will be discussed after a consideration of his main arguments.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The third part entitled "Other Minds" was added in 1922, ten years after the first edition. See Scheler's preface to the second edition (*Sympathy* xlv-ii).

<sup>5</sup> See the upcoming subsection on love and knowledge.

In the third section of *Sympathy*, Scheler begins with a consideration of the awareness of a “general sphere of the thou”, though not of particular others as such. He provides an example that he used in *Formalism*<sup>6</sup> when he proposed the problem of a hypothetical “Robinson Crusoe”. Robinson Crusoe is fancifully envisioned here as a person who, existing in a social vacuum, has never had any contact with others in the bodily sense, and it is asked whether or not he “could know anything of the existence of a community or of conscious subjects resembling himself; and whether he could be further aware of ‘belonging’ to such a community” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 234). Scheler believes that Crusoe most certainly would because certain spiritual acts attributable to the person are necessarily social in nature and would demand some kind of response. If no response were forthcoming, he would experience the lack of reciprocation as a kind of emptiness or un-fulfillment.

Crusoe's' evidence of the existence of a Thou in general and of his own membership of the community is not merely a contingent, observational, inductive ‘experience’, but is certainly *a priori* in both an objective and subjective sense and has a definite *intuitive basis*, namely a specific and well-defined consciousness of *emptiness* or absence (as compared with the presence of some genuine entity already there), in respect of emotional acts represented, for instance, by the authentic types of love for other people. In the case of conative acts one might also refer to the consciousness of ‘something lacking’ or of ‘non-fulfillment’ which would invariably and necessarily be felt by our Crusoe when engaged in intellectual or emotional acts which can only constitute an objective unity of meaning *in conjunction with* the possibility of a social *response*. From

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<sup>6</sup> See *Formalism* 521. In *Sympathy*, Scheler also includes the qualification that it is not only spiritual acts that establish this general sphere of the thou, but also “all those psychosomatic forms of knowledge (instinct) and tendency (basically impulsive factors of a directed kind)...” (237), though these do not give evidence of other spiritual persons.

these necessarily specific and unmistakable blanks, as it were, where his intentional actions miss their mark, he would...derive a most positive intuition and idea of something *present to him as the sphere of the Thou, of which he is merely unacquainted with any particular instance.* (Scheler, *Sympathy* 235)

He continues with an attack on two accounts of intersubjectivity, that of analogy and that of projective empathy. The argument from analogy states that we can assume the existence of other subjects like ourselves by observing them empirically, "whereby, on perceiving expressive movements similar to those which we experience in ourselves in consequence of our own individual self-activity, we infer a similar self-activity in others" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 238). If my body contains an "I", so too must other bodies behaving in a similar fashion contain an analogous "I". Scheler identifies two problems with this: Firstly, he believes that a similar assumption of the presence of others based on bodily kinesthetic activity can be observed in both very young children and in animals. Referring to Wolfgang Koehler's *The Mentality of Apes*, he cites an example of causing chimpanzees to react in alarm to a perceived danger when one mimics the behavior of an alarmed chimpanzee. He also cites the example of babies reacting to the facial expressions of people around them and concludes that it is "hardly possible to attribute inference by analogy to a twenty-five-day old baby" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 239). Neither babies nor animals can convincingly be said to rationally reflect on the constitution of their subjectivity in order to extend the analogy to another. They are aware of others it seems, but analogical inference certainly cannot account for it.

His second objection is that the analogy cannot establish that in the observed body there is in fact an "I" distinct and actually different from myself. An analogy, like the empathic argument which will be seen shortly, is projective not responsive and arises only through a comparison to the self-experience of the observing subject "I". Therefore,

“such an argument would be logically correct...only if it implied that on the occurrence of expressive movements similar to those I perform myself, *it is my own self that is present here as well - and not some other and alien self*” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 246). This means that the analogy would only demonstrate the point that “I am over there”, not that the other is a separate, independent and different subject to me.

The argument from empathy on the other hand states that we infer the existence of others by projecting our own psychic activity empathetically into the observed body similar to my own, and is in the projective sense similar to the analogy argument, but is not based on expressive movements. If I have thoughts and feelings that constitute personhood, then I assume a body that looks like mine must also have such psychic activity. This is problematic for Scheler in that “it provides a hypothesis concerning the manner in which the assumption is arrived at [but] it can never assure us of the legitimacy of the assumption itself” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 241). It would be a matter of blind faith even worse than the analogical argument and it “would be pure chance that the process of empathy should coincide with the actual presence of mind in the bodies so perceived” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 241).

In response Scheler begins his investigation by questioning what he feels is the primary assumption of both of the preceding positions and asks whether in fact “it is always our own self, merely, that is primarily given to us” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 244) He goes on to assert that it is self evident also that we can think with, share the feelings and thoughts of others, He also argues that there are cases where a thought or feeling can arise “*without presenting itself either as our own or as another's*” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 246) His position is that underlying the differentiation of the “I” people are situated in an undifferentiated psychic stream from which we arise as individuals afterward. Scheler writes:

It is not the case therefore...that we have to build up a picture of other people's experiences from the immediately given data furnished by our own, and then to impute these experiences, which have no intrinsic marks of 'foreignness' about them, to the physical semblances of other people. What occurs, rather, is an immediate flow of experiences *undifferentiated between mine and thine*, which actually contains both our own and others' experiences intermingled and without distinction from one another. Within this flow there is a gradual formation of ever more stable vortices, which slowly attract further elements of the stream into their orbits and thereby become successively and very gradually identified with distinct individuals. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 246)

The "I", in his technical terminology the ego, does not begin as a distinct individual and neither does our experience of it. Therefore attempting to establish the existence of others on the vital level becomes something of a non-problem insofar as it is plainly evident that there is psychic activity to which we have access that is not in all regards held by us privately.

#### Some Criticism:

In the following, critical remarks on Scheler's theory of intersubjectivity will be offered and considered, which mainly focus on Scheler's intersubjectivity of the ego. Both Schuetz and Owens find that Scheler's references to the person lack the phenomenological evidence required to take his commentary in this area very seriously, and consequently neglect much of what could be a fruitful investigation of Scheler's interpersonal philosophy. This seems to come down to a difference of opinion about what constitutes the phenomenological reduction on one hand, and a misconception and

oversight of what Scheler means by “knowledge”. We will elaborate on this as we proceed.

Schuetz begins his argument against Scheler’s positions in *Sympathy* first of all by taking issue with the evidence offered for the pre-given sphere of the “we”, that we are aware of the totality of psychic life in the vital realm prior to the differentiating of individuals. Schuetz claims that “[Scheler] supports his theory not by analysis within the transcendental sphere, but by references to empirical facts taken from the psychology of children and primitives” (Schuetz 335).<sup>7</sup> Scheler has, in doing so, strayed too far from the phenomenological method and cannot offer an argument which sufficiently addresses the problem of intersubjectivity as it occurs in Husserl’s philosophy which was outlined briefly above. He says that Scheler has lapsed into metaphysical speculation with a theory he considers “neither better nor worse than other metaphysical hypotheses on this topic” (Schuetz 335) and that “for the problem of transcendental phenomenology as a science founded on accurate analysis of the transcendental field, Scheler’s hypothesis does not offer the desired solution” (Schuetz 336). He then goes on to restate the problem of solipsism and its proposed solution in Husserl’s *Cartesian Meditations*, with the standard critique which again, has been outlined at the beginning of this section. Schuetz concludes by asking whether or not

the existence of others is a problem of the transcendental sphere at all, i.e., whether the problem of intersubjectivity does not exist between transcendental egos (Husserl) or Persons (Scheler), or whether intersubjectivity and therefore sociality does not rather belong exclusively to the mundane sphere of our life world. (Schuetz 337)

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<sup>7</sup> Here Schuetz is referring to Scheler’s arguments regarding the “psychic stream” where he supports the assertion that “...a man tends, in the first instance, to live more in *others* than in himself; more in community than in his own individual self” (*Sympathy* 247) with evidence from child psychology regarding a young child’s “family feeling”, and the existence of blood feuds in “primitive peoples”. (*Sympathy*, 247-48)

Now given that the part of Scheler's demonstration that Schuetz is referring to does not pertain to the person but rather to the ego of the life world, it seems that Schuetz is making assumptions about what he feels Scheler should have been doing rather than addressing what is actually there. He is making an error both in assuming that Scheler intended to follow the Husserlian style of transcendental, idealistic reduction in order to pursue his investigation (which as Frings has suggested, he specifically does not do); furthermore he is making an error by equating the Husserlian transcendental ego with Scheler's person, which, while both are transcendent after their fashion are founded on rather different bases.

Schuetz also takes issue with Scheler's belief that there can in fact be a field of thought wherein it cannot be distinguished whether or not a particular thought arises in me, in the other or that it might not belong to either party. He again accuses Scheler of not rigorously following the transcendental reduction and of making such observations from within a naïve, mundane attitude for

there is no such thing as an experience given to me that would not indicate which individual stream of consciousness it belongs to. As soon as I turn to the stream of experiences, and this means as soon as I adopt the reflective attitude, this stream is through and through a stream of *my* experiences. (Schuetz 340)

He also doubts the logic of the assertion that the person (again, he dangerously mixes his terms here) is non-self-reflective, and that it cannot reflect cognitively on its acts in the reduction. The distinction that Scheler makes between acts of the person and functions of the ego (which can be objects of reflection) he feels is artificial and somewhat dubious, derived largely from "his philosophy of religion and ethics" (Schuetz, 341) and was only ham-fistedly merged with what Schuetz understands to be a transcendental subjectivity well after the fact.

Overall, Schuetz accuses Scheler of mixing evidence of different orders appropriate to disparate disciplines and therefore lacking sufficient methodological rigor to engage in phenomenology properly. "It is a piece of 'phenomenological psychology' as Husserl calls it in antithesis to 'transcendental' phenomenology" (Schuetz 344), and while it may be a "sufficient frame of reference for the foundation of empirical psychology and social sciences" (Schuetz 344) where naïve observation of the everyday world is par for the course, it cannot be seriously considered as a project of phenomenology. There is something unfair in Schuetz's critique in that he at once accuses Scheler of not practicing transcendental phenomenology properly, and then accuses him of failing to convincingly answer the transcendental phenomenology's "community of monads" problem.

Owens follows Schuetz in mainly centering his comments on the third section of *Sympathy*,

since we have already explained what little Scheler has to say about the relationships between *Persons* effected through the co-performance of acts, we shall now discuss only the explanation he provides for the possibility of intersubjectivity through the perception of the other Ego.

(Owens 82)

From here he follows a similar presentation to that of Schuetz, though he does not resort to accusations of methodological inconsistencies with regards to transcendental phenomenology.

What he identifies, as did Schuetz, as a major failing in Scheler's work is the person/ego distinction. Owens is certainly well aware of the place of the person in Scheler's ethical theory and the peculiar terms and conditions of the person in this usage, i.e. that the person cannot be made an object, that persons "know" or understand one another through the co-performance of spiritual acts, etc. He argues that while "Scheler

proposes an elaborate theory to explain the relations possibly between men on the level of the ego, there is no corresponding theory to cover the relations between *Persons*" (Owens 104). And again following Schuetz, Owens attributes this anomaly to Scheler developing his person from his earlier religious and ethical work and claims that "the necessity of establishing the absolutely free center of ethical acts as a correlative of the value-ethics seems to have led Scheler to extremes" (Owens 105). He consequently judges Scheler's account of intersubjectivity incomplete as it only provides significant phenomenological description to establish one half of the person/ego dyad. He claims further that Scheler's ethical work is also put in jeopardy in that if the person, apparently the subject of ethical activity and theory, cannot be made an object of "knowledge" at all, then ethics would be impossible, for that is what ethics is essentially about, theorizing about the acts of persons. Here he quotes a similar objection raised by Hartmann who argues that

If there were no possibility of a presentation of acts and persons as objects, ethics would itself be an impossibility. For man as a person is the object of ethics. And his actively transcendent acts (disposition, will, conduct) are just what is subjected to valuational judgments, they are what constitute the object of the judgment of value. Ethics takes as its object what Scheler says is incapable of becoming an object. (qtd. in Owens 320)

Firstly, it seems in some respects unfair to dismiss work coming out of Scheler's ethical and religious work simply on the grounds that it departs from a Husserlian model of phenomenology. As Spader points out, it seems that scholars are much more willing to admit Sartre<sup>8</sup> or Heidegger as phenomenologists in spite of their obvious methodological deviations and forays into interpretation, because "there is a sense of

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<sup>8</sup> In fact, Owens actually *has* a section on Sartre in the same monograph which includes his above comments on Scheler, and it does not take Sartre to task for comparable departures.

what they are about and why they depart when they do" (Spader, "Metaphysics" 275), whereas in Scheler's case, it is not always clear why he will suddenly, in the middle of a phenomenological exhibition resort to scientific evidence (as Schuetz has accused him) or religious and metaphysical speculation. Spader argues that it may be true that "in exploring the implications of newly discovered phenomenological facts we are no longer doing phenomenology", but that often Scheler makes his departure "where the logic of his phenomenological approach demands a position" (Spader, "Metaphysics" 277), whether or not he can immediately provide the richness of description to justify his assertions, as in the case of Scheler positing the person (Spader, "Metaphysics" 277).

Owens criticism is also disingenuous to an extent in that if one is to consider Scheler's theory of intersubjectivity and then assert that he does not allow for the other subject to be an object of some kind in order to know it, one seems to be missing the point of a theory of intersubjectivity. The person is the subject and, as Scheler insists, it cannot be made into an object as such. It is obvious that the approach he ~~takes~~ with persons should be radically different than that of egos. Egos can be objects, and can therefore be known through perception and philosophical reflection as it is commonly understood. The concept of co-performance as a kind of knowledge, which both Owens and Schuetz acknowledge but do not investigate in detail, does provide the needed theoretical grounding for a full articulation of intersubjectivity. I think in this Spader has the right of it when addressing why acts, and by extension the person, cannot be objects of knowledge he states that "the simple direct answer is that acts do not need to be objects for us to have phenomenological access to them" (Spader, "Person" 202) and that Scheler "as a phenomenologist...was unusually sensitive to the correlation between *what* is given and the *way* in which it is given" (Spader, "Person" 202). Persons and acts, phenomenologically, and by this we do not mean Husserl's transcendental phenomenology, are simply not given in the same way as objects within the subject-

object relationship as observed by cognitive consciousness. In order to establish this we will have to consider what Scheler means by knowledge. While his work in this regard is not easy or expressed with great consistency or clarity, it opens up a large part of Scheler's work, namely that on love, which can be brought to bear on the problem of intersubjectivity though the terms become quite different from the standard approach as conceived by Husserl and his critics.

### Knowledge as Love:

Frings points out that for Scheler, "knowledge" should be distinguished from "cognition". Cognition is an operation of representational consciousness, "a knowing possession of something as something" (Frings, *Scheler* 140), while knowledge is of a different nature, and is thought of as an "ontological relation". It is a matter of the subject transcending itself in order to make contact with, beyond or prior to conscious representation, that toward which it is directed. As the subject approaches the "object" of its concern in an intentional act, its "thisness" comes into view in a kind of ontological participation.

The thisness becomes then gradually clear in increasing degrees of adequacy...in this event of coincidence (evidence) of intuition and meaning. All activities of thinking observing, etc., are only operations which *lead to* 'knowledge', but they are not already knowledge. (qtd. in Frings, *Scheler* 140-41)

Further, Scheler feels that this radical transcendence of self is founded yet again on another movement prior to it saying, "I do not have another word for this tendency but "love", self giving devotion and, at the same time, a breaking through the boundaries of one's own being and thisness through love" (qtd. in Frings, *Scheler* 141).

Also, according to Frings, Scheler makes use of three categories of knowledge, which are persistent through out his work. Of the lowest order is scientific knowledge which determines natural laws and aims at the control of nature for the purpose of meeting material needs. Next is phenomenological knowledge of essence proper to objects of philosophy and metaphysics, and finally is religious knowledge of the holy which aims to provide a means for personal salvation (Frings, *Scheler* 143-44).

These two points are relevant in terms of re-interpreting, or expanding a view of Scheler's "co-participation" between persons in his work on intersubjectivity. It is important to see that love is a necessary condition for doing philosophy at all, and also that it was never Scheler's intention to found an idealist system of transcendental philosophy. For Scheler, philosophy is more than phenomenology and the way in which things are given do not always conform to the strict method laid down by Husserl. Scheler characterizes the act of philosophizing in the 1917 essay "The Nature of Philosophy and the Moral Preconditions of Philosophical Knowledge" as "the love determined act of participation by the core of the finite human person towards the essential factors of all things" (Scheler, *Eternal* 74). He further offers by way of an idiosyncratic "reduction", that there are moral conditions that must be achieved before philosophy can begin. These are:

1. *the whole spiritual person must love absolute value and being;*
2. *the natural self and ego must be humbled;*
3. *self-mastery must be achieved..( Scheler, *Eternal* 95)*

There are two important things to notice here: First, a certain asceticism is required to deny the lower levels of being in order to arrive at a knowledge of essence and though his choice of words carries a religious tone, the point seems to agree with a conventional understanding of the phenomenological reduction. Next, the first condition implies a "commitment of the whole person to participation with being" and a "moral

upsurge (*Aufschwung*) of the whole person adhering faithfully to the primary love-act by the person towards being" (Ranly 12). Kelly reminds us here that these moral conditions for knowledge of course do not imply a "commitment to specific ethical norms or world views" but rather that the key is that "the only way of attaining the insight into values required for the establishment of ethical norms is an attitude that is loving, humble and contemplative" (Kelly, *Scheler* 65). This much agrees with Scheler's proposition that love is the ontological relation which founds knowledge. Ranly detects a division here where knowledge of essence and love appear to operate differently, and here one might recall Scheler's threefold division of knowledge. The natural standpoint that Scheler brackets out with his asceticism corresponds to pre-philosophical scientific knowledge; the position of the ascetic would correspond to philosophical knowledge of essence; love of being corresponds to knowledge of the holy and religious.

Scheler states in *Eternal* that "the goal of religion is not rational knowledge but the *salvation of man* through vital communion with God" (139).<sup>9</sup> As he rejected rational formalism in his ethics, so he does the same with religion. Hence, the third level of knowledge pertaining to the holy and the religious, does not correspond to a rational, cognitive knowledge at all. Ranly finds this separation of knowledges problematic.

For Scheler, there is an ontological and temporal movement...of *love* prior to the act of knowledge. One can only know what he loves. Philosophy, as a very special type of activity by the human person, seeks participation in no lower level of being. Its impulse is towards the absolute being of Primary Essence...But at the same time, philosophy is always and

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<sup>9</sup> The use of the word "vital" here may seem unusual considering that Scheler clearly takes religion to be spiritual. An explanation for this usage might have to do with the fact that religious knowledge is pre-rational, as is knowledge of the unqualified presence of external, physical reality, which is given not in cognition, but in a vital "resistance" to our will and striving. That both kinds of acts are pre-logical and provide something a priori gives them something in common by analogy, if not in essence. On resistance, see Scheler, "Idealism and Realism" 317-327, Kelly, *Max Scheler* 76-77.

essentially a *cognitive* activity. It seeks participation in being *through knowledge*. There is an ambiguity here between “loving participation” and “essential knowledge” which divides Scheler’s meaning of philosophy as well as his theory of being. (Ranly 12)

What Ranly is driving at here is that Scheler, in making this division has left the purely theoretical/cognitive aspect of philosophy on one side of the fence, and the living personal participation into being, i.e. the religious and salvational on the other to the extent that the personal/religious side loses its rationally cognitive content entirely. I would not deny this, but this division and all that it implies seems fairly consistent with what Scheler says overall regarding formalism and the person.

The person as we have seen already is the center of all essentially different spiritual acts and that it lives only in the performance of those intentional, spiritual acts. Actuality, pure spirit, cannot be made the object of knowledge and by extension neither can persons who can only be “known” through the co-execution of these spiritual acts. Love is the chief spiritual act, the one that founds all others and the act by which persons transcend themselves and thus “know” things and other persons. While love may not be rational, that is not to imply that it is not somehow objective, or that in its own way does not bring to givenness the things proper to its nature. Scheler says of love in *Sympathy*, we might not judge the letter sent to us by a loved one according to its grammatical accuracy because the achievements and activities of a loved one “acquire all their value from him or her alone as the object in which they inhere or the subject who carries them out” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 150), and therefore, “from the rationalist point of view this is sufficient reason for regarding love and hatred as blind” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 150).

However:

...this tells very little. For the fact that the inner ‘spiritual vision’ of love and hatred should see something *other* in values, high or low, than that which

the 'eye' of reason can discern, is no indication that we are merely getting a worse view here of the *same* thing which the eye of reason would discern more clearly. Love and hatred afford an *evidence of their own*, which is not to be judged by the evidence of reason. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 150)

Consequently, we might draw the following conclusion: persons cannot be the object of philosophical knowledge; love is prior to knowledge of all kinds and allows for a person to go beyond the confines of the self and ontologically reach others; knowledge of the religious and holy, related to moral movement, salvation and the personal on the level of spirit, is obviously different from philosophy as commonly understood.

Though it may be difficult to call what Scheler is doing here "philosophy", and the "co-execution of spiritual acts" is an unconventional definition for what philosophers might generally think of as knowledge, I think it would be fair to say that the intersubjective situation on the level of the person is not something that falls under the province of representational, cognitive philosophy or phenomenology as Owens and Schuetz understand it. The inter-*subjective* situation (and I mean this quite literally: egos are objects; persons are always truly subjects) is characterized and defined by love and love alone. It is a religious love directed towards the bearers of personal values, salvation, and ultimately as we will see ahead, towards the person of persons, God.

### 3. Love and Sympathy

In Scheler's posthumous essay, "Ordo Amoris", he writes "man, before he is an *en cogitans* or an *ens volens* is an *ens amans*" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 110-11) and Manfred Frings remarks in his commentary on the passage that "...this proposition of Scheler's is the core of his philosophy of man. If this is not understood, Scheler's philosophy as a whole is not understood. Love is the fundamental spiritual act" (Frings 41). Love is the primordial act of the person upon which all other possible knowing, willing, preferring or acting at all is made possible. It is that faculty by which a person truly transcends the confines of its own being and enters into an ontological relationship with things, and most importantly with other persons in such a way that neither the self nor the "object" of the self's love are compromised in their dignity and uniqueness. In the co-performance of spiritual acts, the intersubjective situation is defined both by a proximity and a distance. Persons develop together morally towards a salvation in love, and at the same time towards their own peculiar place and calling within that economy of salvation. The relationship between persons is of an ontological-ethical nature which develops selves through an infinitely extensible, valuable realm of being. It is metaphysical in the sense of being transcendent. A.P. Luther comments,

To say that the person discloses the metaphysical is to say that a sphere of reality is opened or actualized that is not limited by the psycho-physical, by physical space-time, by circumscription as this or that, in fact, is "beyond" restrictive boundaries of any kind in some sense. Where persons are concerned there are no objects, no things, no entities, no substances etc. etc.; there is only being in the direction of that fullness, that is, a radically open dynamic structure essentially boundless. (16)

To begin, we will look at Scheler's phenomenology of sympathy, or "fellow-feeling".<sup>10</sup> He indicates in the preface to *The Nature of Sympathy* that he begins his own investigation of the ethical interpersonalism this way because there, apparently, have been a number of errors in confusing the foundational order of the two similar phenomena, fellow-feeling and love, from "whence it has been possible to regard love as a particular case or consequence of the attitude of fellow-feeling" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 3) and that "it is of considerable importance for the present condition of *ethical* studies that these matters should be clarified" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 3). Love as we have indicated before has an ethical, religious dimension; it is the act related to salvation in a theistic order of being and to it is given the highest possible personal values which are of moral significance. By contrast, fellow-feeling cannot be the foundation of an ethics for, as a "feeling" and not an "act", it is "essentially a reaction – as love, for instance, is not" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 5). It is an intersubjective sharing of feeling with another but "from the attitude of a *spectator*" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 5) and therefore, while "in acts of love and hate there is an element of valuation present...mere fellow-feeling in all its possible forms, is in principle *blind to value*" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 5).<sup>11</sup> For example, in feeling what the other feels,

it is certainly *not* moral to sympathize with someone's pleasure in evil, his chagrin in contemplating goodness, or with his hatred, malice or spite.... Clearly, the sharing of another's pleasure can only be moral when the latter *is itself moral*, and warranted by the value-situation which evokes it. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 5)

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<sup>10</sup> In Heath's translation, "fellow-feeling" is used to translate the German "*Mitgefühl*" to emphasize Scheler's technical use of the word, and to avoid confusion with the more generic "*Sympathie*". We will follow this convention as well. See the Translator's Note in *The Nature of Sympathy* (liii).

<sup>11</sup> There are times when Scheler speaks of love and hate together as if they were effectively co-originary. This will be explained further on.

The importance of discussing fellow-feeling at all, even though it is clearly not the same thing as love for Scheler, is that while it is a lower order emotion comparatively, it does in a sense model and act as a preamble to love from the perspective of the one who performs it. Scheler outlines a set of “laws of dependence” of intersubjective emotions which works in two directions. The lower manifestations of emotional life must be enacted correctly for the person to be able to perform ones that are higher, though from the perspective of the actual value ranking of things, the higher manifestations are ontologically foundational of the lower. This highest form of love depends on what comes before because

from an ontological viewpoint, the vital self as such and its real substratum, the vital soul in mankind generally, are no more than a *supporting structure* for the spiritual personality....But in the genetic order of presentation and development, the situation is reversed. **This is to say** that a person...cannot become available to the spiritual comprehension of others save by the prior establishment, through fellow-feeling, of a parity of esteem for the reality of the vital self...on either side; and by ever-deeper penetration of the spontaneous good-will so engendered, up to the very threshold, as it were, of human personality itself. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 100-01)

Although some of the terms will require elaboration later, a demonstration of these laws runs as follows: actual identification with another which is “unconscious, automatic and confined to the sphere of vital consciousness” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 97) must occur before one can have a vicarious experience of another’s feeling. For example, this would be the difference between “the primitive’s sense of *unity* with his ancestors” and “the later ‘piety’ of the ancestor cult” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 97). In turn, a vicarious feeling must precede actual fellow-feeling. In vicarious feeling we understand what kind

of feeling is occurring in the other, but we do not (at the risk of sounding barbarous) feel that feeling ourselves, as we do in fellow-feeling which involves “actual participation in the Other’s feeling as presented in vicarious feeling” (Barber 116). Fellow-feeling underlies benevolence, the first order of love in the scheme; in true fellow-feeling the other is recognized as possessing a “*reality equal to our own*” and thus “self-love, self-centred choice, solipsism and egoism are first wholly overcome” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 98). Thus, benevolence or an altruistic “humanitarianism” becomes possible based on the realization of the “reality” of the other and one “embraces *all* men, simply because they are men” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 99). Finally, an experience of benevolence underlies the “non-cosmic love of persons”, the apex of love in Scheler’s hierarchy, and which according to Scheler “first made its historical appearance in Christianity” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 99). Out of the generalized love of individuals as examples of humanity, we are then “predisposed to the Christian conception of spiritual love that is a love of the individual as a person...” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 101). At this highest point, the heart of the intersubjective situation is revealed as we experience others in their most unique aspect, in their spiritual personhood. This finally, is a preparation for, and simultaneously founded in the love of God:

Since the non-cosmic love of persons is necessarily connected, in nature and meaning, with theism, the love of humanity in general is no less essential as a prior condition for the love of God; so far, at least, as this latter is something more than the *amare Deum*, already known to Plato and Aristotle, namely an *amare in Deo*, and so far as it is felt and thought of as effectual only through a prevenient love of God towards mankind. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 102)

So, by following Scheler's extensive phenomenology<sup>12</sup>, one uncovers a compounding of essential features as each level of intersubjective feeling from vital to spiritual that opens the door finally on the pure ontological relationship of persons acting together, loving together in God.

### Sympathy

In *The Nature of Sympathy*, Scheler attempts to distinguish true fellow-feeling from phenomena that he believes are often mistaken for it. Roughly, these are errors of identification, genetic errors (i.e. of origin), or metaphysical errors, plus a special case, the "unity with the cosmos" problem, which he added in a later edition.<sup>13</sup>

For example, fellow-feeling is not to be confused with "emotional infection", like the way in which "the cheerful atmosphere in a pub or at a party may 'infect' the newcomers", or in fact in "all mass-excitement, even in the formation of public opinion" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 5). In cases like these, the "infection" is divorced from the subjects involved, are involuntary, and the process "generates purposes beyond the designs of any single individual" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 16). Furthermore, it can take on a sinister cast in cases where a person makes use of the infective process as a means for personal pleasure or, as Scheler notes, "in the genesis of psychopathic group movements..., in the onset of panics, and particularly within all revolutionary mass-movements" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 16, note 1). In these situations, there is no self involved, no autonomous person, but only a mob mind that represents at once all and none of the mob members. It affords no individual consciousness, save perhaps the decision to seek out such infection in the first place. An example cited by Barber demonstrates the point further.

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<sup>12</sup> Much of which occurs in the negative, i.e. what fellow-feeling is *not*, or what love is *not*, etc. Love is an elusive phenomenon for Scheler and he has been accused of not providing sufficient positive phenomenological evidence in some instances, especially regarding the person and love. For some comment on this, see Spiegelberg 300-01.

<sup>13</sup> The second edition, 1922. See Scheler's preface, *Sympathy* xviii.

When Scheler considers Nietzsche's idea of pity, that it in fact does little but increase misery in the world by doubling it through infection, he comments:

Indeed, it is just where suffering is infectious that pity is completely excluded; for to that extent I no longer view it as the other's *suffering but as my own*, which I try to get rid of by pushing the notion of suffering out of my mind...Pity would be a 'multiplier of misery' only if it were identical with emotional infection." (Scheler, *Sympathy* 17-18)

Nor should fellow-feeling be confused with emotional identification, of either the "idiopathic" or "heteropathic" types. In Scheler's classification these correspond to 1) "the total eclipse and absorption of another self by one's own, it being thus...completely dispossessed and deprived of all rights in its conscious existence and character" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 18) and 2) "where 'I' (the formal subject) am so overwhelmed and hypnotically bound and fettered by the other 'I' (the concrete individual), that my formal status as a subject is usurped by the other's personality..." (Scheler, *Sympathy* 19).<sup>14</sup> To illustrate further, Scheler critiques an example taken from Freud where he describes a schoolgirl who receives a letter from a boyfriend, has a hysterical fit over it, at which point her friends present at the time follow likewise. Freud's assessment is that this is not a case where the fit arises out of sympathy, but that sympathy here follows the emotional identification of which the fit is a symptom. Scheler questions though, "whether 'sympathy' arises here at all. For sympathy presupposes just that awareness of distance between selves which is eliminated here by the identification" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 23).<sup>15</sup>

Or again, Scheler cites the idea of "mother love" which is characterized by von Hartmann as "an extended form of egoism, or...an extension of the instinct of self-preservation beyond the immediate self, by the adoption of another self into one's own"

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<sup>14</sup> We have already cited one illustration of this with the "primitive" identification with ancestors.

<sup>15</sup> Scheler is commenting on work in Freud's *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. Trans. James Strachey. International Psycho-analytic Library 6. 1922.

(Scheler, *Sympathy* 26). Scheler of course confirms that such feelings and such an attitude may in fact be present between a mother and child, but challenges whether or not this instinct is an occasion of true fellow-feeling. This egoistic urge to re-absorb the child may be the result of an instinct for self-preservation, but the phenomenon of “mother love” is not reducible to it. He argues rather

It is maternal *love* which first checks this tendency, directing itself upon the child as an independent being, slowly making his way from darkness of mere physical life into the increasing light of consciousness. Like love generally, it conceives the child in its *terminus ad quem*, not, as instinct does, in its *terminus ad quo*. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 27)

According to Barber’s reading of this, “both fellow-feeling and love stand over against modes of identification wherein the distinctiveness of the other, whose feelings are distinct and whose independence is irreducible, is obliterated” (Barber, 109).

A genetic theory of fellow-feeling, a comparison of the self with the emotional state of the other beginning with the question, “how would it be if this had happened to *me*?” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 39), Scheler finds equally unsatisfactory. This he dismisses as essentially egoistical in that it while it is not a projection of the self onto the other in the way that errors of identification are, the genetic position is founded on an imaginary feeling postulated from memories of prior experience. True fellow-feeling then collapses as the observer’s attention turns in on himself at the expense of the other. “This genetic theory does not clarify the positive and pure fellow-feeling, which is a true grasping beyond one’s self and entrance into the Other person and the Other’s individual condition, a true and actual transcendence of one’s own self” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 46). It would no longer be possible to understand anything which was not already a part of one’s corpus of prior experience, and as Barber points out, again with a defense of intercultural dialogue in mind, “the possibility of being enlightened in dialogue with a

completely alien culture would be out of the question" (Barber, 110). As mentioned before, from the perspective of human experience and performance, the lower levels of emotional life are foundational for the higher. If it were not possible to learn something new from the feelings of another, "the idea of an *inner moral unity of mankind* over and above the actual contacts of its members would become pure fiction" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 49). Underlining the importance of a real understanding of the other, Scheler offers the example of the Buddha who, though raised as a prince, "was led by the sight of a few instances of poverty and sickness to discern and respond to all the pain and misery of the world" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 50).

In dealing with metaphysical theories of fellow-feeling which can fall into error, Scheler follows the model that he set for himself regarding identification. Whereas identification could be either idiopathic or heteropathic, metaphysical errors fall generally into either solipsism or monism. Solipsism, "the illusion of taking one's own environment to be the world itself" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 58), Scheler characterizes as "autoeroticism", and in a note says that "'autism' seems the most suitable [term] for the pathological symptoms of that type of self-preoccupation" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 58, note 1). Metaphysical monism, and here Scheler includes Schopenhauer's "Vedantism", Hegel's world spirit and Bergson's *élan vital*, is equally untenable, again because the distance between selves is dissolved. "The monistic view is that, if love is not to be an imposture, the lover and the beloved must actually be *identical* in the metaphysical order of being..." (Scheler, *Sympathy* 63), and "our decisive ground for an uncompromising *rejection* of the metaphysico-monistic theories is that in fellow-feeling proper, the 'distance' of the persons and their respective and reciprocal awareness of separateness is kept in mind throughout..." (Scheler, *Sympathy* 64).

Scheler also sees Schopenhauer's monism in error when he exalts the "sympathy" of common suffering as a component of the world's salvation:

The basis for Schopenhauer's fundamental appreciation of pity...rests on the function of suffering with, as such, wherein sickness, poverty or misery are merely occasions of its emergence. It does *not* lie in the display of love, nor in the comfort which compassion may bring, and he more than once expressly emphasizes that it is not the diminution, but the *increase* of suffering as a 'way of salvation' which gives it value as a source of moral redemption. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 52)

Not only does sympathy in this view not promote or appreciate the positive value of alleviating pain (we will say more about the necessary relationship of sympathy to love and therefore movement toward positive value later), but it is mistaken as Nietzsche had been in assuming that pity doubles suffering by reproducing the same feeling over, something that Scheler does not believe to be an attribute of true sympathy or fellow-feeling with a distinct other. The other's pain must remain the other's own, and the goal is not to reproduce, but rather to "know" what the other knows as he knows it. There are no two experiences alike when it comes to persons on the spiritual level of acts.

## Love

In his treatment of love, Scheler begins by re-emphasizing the difference between love and fellow-feeling. Overall, he demonstrates that love is a more primary, unique and indefinable idea pertaining to the highest level of spiritual life. Love differs essentially from fellow-feeling, firstly, in that love is not reactive, it does not arise on account of or in response to a preexisting condition, feeling or want in the object of its attention. Love is entirely spontaneous, a true spiritual act as opposed to a feeling or a feeling state as in the case of fellow-feeling:

...love is not a 'feeling' (i.e. a function) but an *act* and a *movement*. All feeling is passive or receptive, whether it be for values or circumstances (e.g. suffering, enduring, tolerating, etc.) and we describe it therefore as a 'function'. But love is an emotional and a spiritual act. It does not matter here whether, phenomenologically speaking, the gesture is mainly called forth from its object or is felt to proceed from the self. The conception of 'act' employed here does not relate to the self but to the person which can never be treated as an object...But love is above all a *spontaneous* act, and remains so even when given in response, whatever the grounds for this may be. Fellow-feeling, on the other hand is always a reactive condition. Thus one can only have fellow-feeling for that which is *subject to feeling*, whereas love is altogether free of this limitation. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 141-142)

Love has a speculative quality. While fellow-feeling is directed to emotions, to values, love itself is not directed towards values as such but towards the bearers of values, most importantly persons, and in the direction of higher values not yet present or brought to light. Scheler explains:

"there *is* an awareness, in love, of the positive value of the things loved, for instance, the beauty, the charm and the goodness of a person; but we can also be aware of this without any love at all. Love only occurs when, upon the values already acknowledged as 'real' there supervenes a *movement*, an intention, towards potential values still '*higher*' than those already given and presented. These additional values are *not yet* manifested as positive qualities, being merely envisaged concurrently as potential ingredients of a corporate structural pattern. In doing so, love

invariably sets up, as it were, an '*idealized*' *paradigm of value* for the person actually present. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 153-54)

Given this much, love also ought not to be thought of as some kind of value-judgment, either, insofar as one does not love based on the presence of this or that value present in the beloved. One loves first of all, then what is valuable, and then more valuable than that comes to light. One would be misguided in attempting

to account for one's love for an individual person in any such terms as those relating to his qualities, acts, achievements or dispositions...for we always find out in the process that we can imagine every single one of these details to be altered or absent, without being a whit the more able, on that account, to leave off loving the person concerned. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 167)

Naturally, the opposite holds true as well; the person we love is always more than the sum of the qualities we perceive, "there is always a surplus we cannot account for" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 167). An expansion of love deepens one's contact with the world and thereby makes rich and meaningful projects of knowledge, striving and willing possible. This expansion is potentially limitless as love respects no boundary in its extension into new possibilities of value. For the person, "the fullness, the gradations, the differentiations, and the power of his love circumscribe the fullness, the fundamental specificity, and the power of his possible and of the possible *range* of contact with the universe" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 111). It is not a matter of loving what we know, but rather it would be impossible to know what has not been first revealed in the act of love. Scheler continues:

The things and properties of which we can have knowledge do not define and limit his value world; his world of essential values circumscribes and defines the being he can know, raising it up out of the sea of being like an

island. Where his 'heart' is attached, there, for him, is the 'core' of the so-called essence of things. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 111)

If it is the case though that love somehow becomes disordered, for example in the case of Scheler's principle moral disease, *ressentiment*, or some kind of misplacement of values, hate,<sup>16</sup> infatuation, "idolatry", etc., any of the acts or functions which depend on love for their foundation, namely all of them, are also hopelessly disordered.

If a man in his actual loving, or in the order of his acts of love, in his preferences and depreciations, subverts this self-existent order, he simultaneously subverts the intention of the divine world order - as it is in his power to do. And wherever he does so, his world as a possible object of knowledge, and his world as the field of willing, action and operation, must necessarily fall as well. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 111)

While the particular order of love as it pertains to an individual **person delimits a** range of vision, it must be emphasized that this range is not limited in depth, though it may be in breadth. The condition is much like that of a non-linear equation in mathematics that produces a fractal. While the form of the equation puts limits on the kind of results a certain relationship produces, the resulting figure or pattern can be magnified to reveal ever increasing levels of detail and permutation. It is infinity in a bottle, so to speak. The world is a unity, but one of infinite extension:

From the primal atom and the grain of sand to God, this realm is *one* realm. This 'unity' does not mean that the realm is closed. We are conscious that no one of the finite parts of it which are given to us can

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<sup>16</sup> Hate, represents a movement depreciating value, the "opposite" of love. Though they are often spoken of together as if they are equally original, Scheler assures us this is not the case. They are not "equi-primordial modes of behavior. *Our heart is primarily destined to love*, not to hate. Hate is only a reaction against a love which is in some way false" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 126). False love arises from *ressentiment* or any of the above mentioned moral disorders. One must always bear in mind that for Scheler, the human person loves imperfectly. The movement of love always opens new depths of value and thereby relativizes the old ethos.

exhaust its fullness and its extension...we see that this realm cannot have precise boundaries. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 112)

Love, Scheler argues, is a movement, a dynamism which tends toward a higher value to be realized in its "object", or in the person toward whom it is directed. Because the realm of values has no cap, no glass ceiling (except from God's perspective), the motion of love properly ordered does not have a limit either, it is constantly ascending a scale of values, with no definite end. It is much like looking at a ruler that while it can measure things relative value, its scale begins at negative infinity and ends at positive infinity. It can compare, but it cannot measure the extent of the realm itself.

Just as the essence of certain operations of thought to create their objects through self-given laws (e.g., the inference from  $n$  to  $n+1$ ) prevents any limits being placed on their application, so it is in the essence of the act of love as it fulfills itself in what is worthy of love that it can progress from value to value, from one height to an even greater height. 'Our heart is too spacious', said Pascal. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 112)

Love differs also from benevolence, or well-wishing, in that love does not imply that the lover is necessarily intending what is materially beneficial for the beloved. "Love is entirely concerned with the positive values of *personality* and with welfare so far as it promotes personal value" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 140). Importantly, benevolence contains an implied superiority or remoteness on the side of the benevolent person in that they have something to offer the object of their benevolence, or that they have a positive goal to be striven after, some kind of project to be achieved in the field of the other. Scheler points out that, for example, in the case of God who can most certainly be the focus of a person's love, either of these conditions would be problematic. "We also love things such as beauty, art or knowledge, for which it would be meaningless to feel benevolence. We

love 'God' though it would be ridiculous to entertain benevolence toward Him" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 146). After all, what does God require for his well-being?

Scheler goes further toward the heart of the matter when in reference to the project of benevolence, he reiterates his finding that love can have no "object" in the true sense. Unlike benevolence and striving which seek to realize a goal in their objects, love has nothing to realize. Scheler argues that:

In all endeavor there is a content to be realized, which is inherent as its goal (or 'purpose' when we will). Love does not have this at all. What does a mother seek to 'realize' when she gazes at her bonny child asleep? What is supposedly 'realized' when loving God? Or in loving works of art? Love may give rise to all kinds of effort, desire, or longing for the beloved object, but these are no part of it. It follows an *opposite law to that of effort*. Whereas the latter exhausts itself and comes to rest once it is satisfied, love either remains the same or increases its activity, becoming ever more engrossed in its object, and ever more perceptive of values not at first disclosed. It makes no sense to talk of the act of love being satisfied, unless we mean something quite different, namely, the satisfaction or gratification felt upon the completion of the act of love. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 141)

Neither should love be confused with a desire or a yearning for the beloved, a "naturalistic" mistake, where love is reduced to a desire for satisfaction of some description. Love is, again, essentially of a different order for as can be observed, even if the person achieves satiety in relation to a present desire, if love were indeed love, it would remain. As in the comparison to projects of benevolence, because love has no goal, no end to realize, no satisfaction (aside from an infinite one) could spell an end to its movement. Scheler provides a good illustration of this in "*Ordo Amoris*". Sensualism

represents a bottomless pit of diminution which demands a satisfaction it cannot grasp being directed the wrong way on the scale of values attempting to converge with a negative horizon, "for this water makes one thirstier, the more one drinks" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 113). Love however directs itself toward the other end of the scale. Like the sensualist the lover is never satisfied, but not because the object of his intention is exhausted as a sensual object is, used up so that the sensualist must make a horizontal move through indeterminate succession of ultimately unsatisfying objects of pleasure. Rather, it is because the lover is ever more satisfied the further love extends, the vertical height or depth of the beloved increases indefinitely as higher values and possibilities of values "flash forth" in the motion of love. There is always the anticipation of something higher and better not yet realized. "Love loves, and in loving always looks beyond what it has in hand and possesses" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 113), and further:

The satisfaction always lets the ray of the movement of love peer out a little farther beyond what is presently given. In the highest case, that of love for a person, this movement develops the beloved person in the direction of ideality and perfection appropriate to him and does so, in principle, beyond all limits. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 113)

Love, in its spiritual aspect is infinite, and though it is never satisfied to the point of being rendered static, it does have a possible goal, as opposed to sensualism which does not. Sensualism looks to posit an ultimate goal in a limited sphere. Love posits its ultimate goal in the realm of spirit and can, in principle be satisfied:

A love which is by its essence infinite, however much it is interrupted, however much it is bound to and particularized by the specific organization of its bearer, demands for its satisfaction an *infinite good*. Thus, the object of the idea of *God* (considered from the formal side of the two predicates of 'good' and 'infinite form of being') already underlies the

thought of an *ordo amoris*, by reason of this essential character of all love.

(Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 114)

## Ordo Amoris

Scheler's concept of the *Ordo Amoris*, most directly referred to in his 1913 essay of the same name, was published posthumously in the *Schriften auf dem Nachlass*. In this short paper, Scheler outlines the idea of love as it relates to the cosmos in general, how love defines and provides the most significant structure of it, and how it has direct reference to the person as such and the person's place in the world. In the concept of the *ordo amoris* "we find the coincidence of objectivity and subjectivity, of universality and individuality. The *ordo amoris* elucidates the objective moral order as well as man's knowledge and pursuit of values" (Deeken, 177).

Scheler describes the *ordo amoris* as having both a normative and a descriptive quality. In the normative sense the *ordo* refers to the "knowledge of the ranking of everything which is possibly worthy of love in things, in accordance with their inner values" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 99). The essential order of values is objective, immutable, and independent of particular persons perceiving it. However, the *ordo* in a descriptive sense refers to the way in which an ordering of values, either properly in accordance with the objective universal ranking or misguided and possibly in error, the *ordo* occurs in the heart of the person. This *ordo amoris* in the particular is the fundamental structure of the person which colours and defines the whole of his experience in the world, which sets the bounds of his interests and activity. Scheler writes that the *ordo amoris* is:

...the means by whereby we can discover, behind the initially confusing facts of man's morally relevant actions, behind his expressions, his

wishes, his customs, needs, and spiritual achievements, the simplest structure of the most fundamental goals of the goal-directed core of the person, the basic ethical formula, so to speak, by which he lives and exists morally. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 99)

If a person's essence is to exist morally, the *ordo amoris* is that which defines the parameters of those possibilities for living in what is at its root an ethical cosmos. As mentioned, it is both objective and subjective, both the universal ranking of value and the actual system of valuation and preference unique to the individual person. The *ordo* is entirely unique to a person and is "for the man as a moral subject, what the crystallization formula is for a crystal" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 99). Scheler further elucidates his point:

He has a spiritual model of the primary source which secretly nourishes everything emanating from this man. Even more, he possesses the primary determinant of what always appears to surround and enclose the man: in space, his moral environment; in time, his fate, that is, the quintessence (*Inbegriff*) of possibilities belonging to him and him alone. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 100)

This represents also, different from what Scheler here calls "fate", a construct of the psycho-vital level of reality, an individual destiny on the spiritual level. This individual destiny is "the place which belongs to this one subject in the plan of the world's salvation" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 104); it is the person's "special task, his 'calling' in the old, etymological sense of the word. The subject can deceive himself about this; he can (freely) fail to achieve it, or he can recognize and actualize it" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 104). What is really significant here is that while this individual destiny is a calling to a unique perfection within the order of values, it does not imply a submission to a universal system of norms as such and neither does it imply a subjectivism in the pejorative sense of the word. For Scheler, values are certainly objective in the sense of being "real", not

generated solipsistically in the mind of the person, but are not necessarily universal. A particular value or prompting to ethical action may be applicable to a culture, a community, or even to an individual person exclusively. It is in fact a real value, but it is, importantly, a real value personalized. "Consequently, what ethically ought-not-to-be is not this absence of uniformity; on the other hand, it is the uniformity of all standards for men, peoples, nations, and societies of every sort" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 104).

While this is so, the individual destiny of a person is not entirely private in the sense that another may have knowledge of, may be able to perceive the individual destiny of a person. The value is objective and open to affective apperception as a value, and in fact in a community sense there is a moral solidarity between persons insinuating a collective guilt and/or merit based on the degree to which persons assist one another in love to achieve these particular orders of perfection. "Sharing a life in common, working and producing together, sharing beliefs and hopes, living for one another and respecting one another are themselves a part of a universal destiny of every finite spiritual being" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 104).

A person is always situated in a world of accidents and life experience, is never a purely formal construct that can be separated from the realm of lived experience, lives and moves in an environment made up of a fate, environment under the aspect of time, and under the aspect of space as *milieu*. As mentioned above, they are grown out of the "effective, goal-directed processes of the psycho-vital subject in man" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 106). The individual destiny is separate and pertains to a higher spiritual order of values, it is "a timeless and essential value-essence in the form of personality" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 106). It can be helped or hindered by environment depending on its tenor, its figuring of moral context either offering resistance or assistance to the person seeking to achieve their place in the ranking of values, in the economy of salvation. Fate and milieu are not chosen, nor are they active; they are there only to be confirmed. Kelly

comments that “they are the things and processes [the person] finds ‘there’ for him as he fights his way to a discovery of significance”, and that fate and milieu “seem similar to Sartre’s account of ‘facticity,’ that is, to the ways in which the human person is necessarily related to things it finds in the encompassing world” (Kelly. *Structure*, 123). We find ourselves in a historical reality, but the person can “relate himself to it as a *free person*” (Scheler, “Ordo Amoris” 105). He can “surrender to it or resist and oppose it. Indeed, in principle he can...completely cast aside or transform the structure of his environment...as well as his fate” (Scheler, “Ordo Amoris” 105). Interestingly, this does not contradict the previous assertion that environment is not chosen, because this possible movement towards a transformation of environment is not a function of choice, or of volition. The individual destiny is a form of the *ordo amoris*, in short love, and love is in Scheler’s scheme of things absolutely primordial. Love founds will, striving, knowledge, feeling, and all other functions with which we engage the world of experience.

Ultimately, because it is a value and values are not discoverable by lower ordered faculties or functions, this “understanding” of one’s individual destiny must be preceded by an act of love, in Scheler’s estimation an act of appropriate, “genuine self-love, or love for one’s own salvation” (Scheler, “Ordo Amoris” 106). To love one’s self in this usage is to see one’s self with our intention directed beyond the confines of fate and milieu and to “see ourselves as if through the eyes of God himself; and this means, first, that we see ourselves quite objectively, and second, that we see ourselves as part of the whole universe...” (Scheler, “Ordo Amoris” 107).

The propositions of God, love and individual destiny, attaining one’s proper place in the universal order of values are all intimately intertwined. In a moment of positive clarity, Scheler states his definition of love. Referring back to his phenomenological analysis in *The Nature of Sympathy* he writes:

Then the essential definition that remained was that love is the tendency or, as it may be, the act that seeks to lead everything in the direction of the perfection proper to it -and succeeds, when no obstacles are present. Thus we defined love as an edifying and uplifting [*erbauende und aufbauende*] action in and over the world...Man's love is only a particular type, a partial function, of the universal power active in and on everything. Love, in this account, was always a dynamic becoming, a growing, a welling up of things in the direction of their archetype, which resides in God. Thus, every phase in this inner growth of the value of things, a growth which love produces, is always an intermediate station on the way of the world toward God, however distant it may still be from its goal. Every love is a love for God, still incomplete, often slumbering or self-infatuated, often stopping, as it were, on its way. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 109)

In loving, the person stands in his unity, in his being *qua* person and enters into a joint pursuit of elevating toward that or whom love is directed, thus "blessing it" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 110). This is what ultimately defines the intersubjective situation in Scheler's work: love is that which permits the person to transcend himself, his particular location in the world of time and space, the representational contents of cognitive knowledge and the prospective plans of willing. Love allows for a space where that which lies beyond the self is really contacted, neither eliminating the self nor the other in his alterity in the process. Love is

...the primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself, in order to participate in another being as *ens intentionale*. This participation is such that the two in no way become real parts of one another. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 110)

The unique nature of the person and the individuality of his place in the order of values is not compromised by this assisting, blessing relationship in the context of love. Scheler's emphasis on the primacy of love here offers what amounts to his solution to the problem of solipsism and intersubjectivity on the level of transcendental consciousness.

Consciousness in the "objective", cognitive representational sense is not what is in fact transcendent, but rather love is. Acts are not objects, persons are not objects, and therefore that which reaches across the gap in order to reach the other cannot be an act or function which requires an object in the way that cognition does. Acts of personal love as emotions without objects are what effect true transcendence. What we call 'knowing', which is an ontological relationship, always presupposes the primal act of abandoning the self and its conditions, its own 'contents of consciousness', of *transcending* them, in order to come into experiential contact with the world as far as possible. The foundation upon which all of this is made possible is God. "The *ordo amoris* is the core of the world-order taken as a divine order" (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 110). The nature of the world, its persons, all possible relations and functions rests on the existence of God as a loving "Person of Persons".

The One...who participates in everything...through whom all things somehow participate (spiritually) in one another and enjoy solidarity with one another; the One, who creates them and toward whom they aspire, striving with one another within their proper and assigned limits; this One all-loving, and thus all-knowing and all-willing God is the personal center of the world as a cosmos and as a whole. (Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" 110)

## Co-performance and Community

Love ultimately works towards a kind of union between people, but one in which a necessary distance is maintained. Vaeck comments that Scheler shies away from using the term 'union' as such and prefers 'co-performance' "because it is possible to love objects and persons without communion taking place. Friendship requires mutuality, but love does not" (176). As we have seen, a condition for knowing one's *ordo amoris* is true self-love, which as such is not necessarily social. It seems that the use of co-performance with regards to persons goes somewhat beyond this though. Persons cannot be objects, and must retain their dignity and autonomy for it to be said that there is love between them. Consequently, co-participation between persons is not a union in the common sense of the word and neither is it knowledge. As Scheler points out, persons are revealed to one another in an entirely different way:

The moral core of the personality of Jesus, for example, is revealed to only one man only: his disciple. This is the only path which can lead to such a disclosure. It may be vouchsafed to a disciple who knows nothing of an 'historical' kind about Jesus, nothing of His outward life, or even His historical existence; for even to be *aware* of oneself *as* a disciple, which naturally implies an awareness of one's master as having a historical existence is already a different thing from *being* a disciple. The theologian on the other hand, for all his knowledge of Jesus' career (including his inner life), is forever precluded by his office from any such insight; it necessarily transcends his field of view. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 168)

It is not so much that communion does or does not take place, but that the kind of relationship that occurs in love that grants access to personality cannot be any other way than to "associate ourselves with its own act of love. In order to elicit this moral value in

our original, we must love what he loves, and love it *with him*" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 168). This is essentially Scheler's view on the matter in *Formalism* when he speaks of model persons or exemplars as being our guides in ethics. Ethics is not so much a matter of establishing moral norms and laws, but where ethics are best exemplified in a concrete person; our love of that person manifests an upsurge of higher and better personal, moral values. Scheler says, unsurprisingly since the relationship is one of love, that "model persons, essentially are, from a genetic point of view...*more original* than norms" (Scheler, *Formalism* 574) and it is

the *only* relation in which the morally positive personal values of a person *A* can *immediately* determine the origin of the same personal values for *B*, i.e., *the relation to a pure and good example*. Nothing on earth allows a person to become good so originally and immediately and necessarily as the evidential and adequate intuition [*Anschauung*] of a good person *in his* goodness. (Scheler, *Formalism* 574)

In this, a community of love is implied. Persons are necessarily together in the world and perform acts of love together. In doing so, Scheler proposes that there is a reciprocity in love, that barring any obvious impediment such as hate or *ressentiment*, love will be returned in kind, a "prevoluntary tendency toward a return love" (Vaeck 176). Because love is by nature an invitation with the possibility of a reply, that as love contributes to the expansion of moral horizons,

there emerges a principle which we propose to call the '*principle of the solidarity of all moral beings*'. It implies that with regard to their respective moral values, each is answerable, in principle, for all, and all for each; that where it is a question of mankind as bearers of all moral values, in collective responsibility to the morally perfect Being, all stand proxy for one and one for all; so that each must bear the blame for another's guilt,

and each is *party from the outset* to the positive moral values of everyone else. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 164)

This community, which Scheler goes so far as to grant the value of personality, the so-called "community-person", he finds best represented during this middle period in the Church, "the idea of an all-embracing, catholic, unifying Christian *ecclesia*, the idea that all men together fell 'in' Adam and rose 'in' Christ" (Scheler, *Eternal* 378). Here he envisions the mystical body of Christ making its way towards a collective salvation of the irreducibly unique and valuable individual persons of which it is comprised. It is positioned above all other forms of community and society because of its foundation in moral, personal love.

### St. Francis

With the preceding in mind, I think we can conclude our discussion of love and fellow-feeling with an example, which to Scheler's mind embodied the ideal convergence of intersubjective tendencies both of the spiritual and the vital kinds, and fittingly enough, that example should be a concrete person, in this case St. Francis of Assisi.

In an expanded section added to the manuscript in the 1922 edition of *Sympathy*, Scheler reconsiders the idea of identification with the cosmos, which he had previously criticized as pantheism and monism. Barber notes that "Scheler's tone alters markedly. Instead of opposing identification and monistic metaphysics...he now dwells on the *value* of entering into unity with cosmic life forces" (Barber 112). In doing so, rather than offering a complete turn about, Scheler is driving towards a synthesis of relationality on the levels of both life and spirit, which seems in a way to reconcile the dual motion proposed in his laws of dependence.

He begins his discussion by offering that regrettably, historical Christianity has grown into a hostility towards nature and the vital. Due to certain tendencies derived both from Roman and Hebrew thought, “the *whole of Nature becomes vastly less animate and alive*, while man as a spiritual being is given such decided precedence over Nature that all feeling for unity with Nature is branded as paganism for centuries afterward” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 84). As a consequence, Christian spirituality through various forms of asceticism begins to involve extreme forms of disengagement from the vital world to the extent that “Nature comes to be thought of as an essentially lifeless *instrument* of man’s spiritual will” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 84). This is done under the impression that one will then be able to “concentrate all the energies so liberated on that spontaneous, *non-cosmic* love of Jesus Christ...” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 84). Unlike the “Indian and even the ancient Greek sense of unity with the animate cosmos” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 85) we find that Christianity’s non-cosmic personal love in its spiritual aspect has overshadowed the vital to the extent that even the values proper to the level of the vital are no longer recognized. Scheler argues that only in the persistence of the sacraments where “we find preserved a truly vital identification with the inner destiny of the very *body* of our Lord, and even with his actual flesh and blood” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 85) is there still any significant point of contact between spiritual, personal love and the values inherent in nature itself.

Where he begins to turn the corner on this is in his presentation of Paul’s “taking up the cross” or “putting on of Christ” of which he says it would be nonsense to say that this concept was a case of mere fellow-feeling, but that “they are genuine examples of identification, *though based on personal love*” [emphasis mine] (Scheler, *Sympathy* 85). Here is where the convergence of the spiritual and vital begins for Scheler, where a vital act becomes in effect a vehicle for a spiritual act. He continues along this line saying that in becoming a disciple of Christ, Paul is expressing a true

identification, "an ingrafting of his own personal substance into the Person of Christ; in short, and ontological process" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 84), and as we know from our earlier exhibitions, this "ontological process" is precisely what Scheler thinks of as knowledge and ultimately, love. The highest expression of this unity of the vital and the spiritual is St. Francis. As we have seen before, love is an act which always sees beyond what is present; it is inclusive and expansive, never the opposite. While it was implied before that this expansion worked its way towards fuller realms of spirit, here Scheler inverts the relationship and shows the way in which the chain of sympathetic dependence can trickle down. Francis, when he "addresses both the sun and moon, fire and water, animals and plants of all descriptions, as his 'brothers' and 'sisters'", he "achieves an *expansion* of the specifically Christian notion of love for God the Father, and for our neighbor and brother in God" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 87). In this Scheler sees heresy in terms of traditional theological formulations, and in terms of biblical exegesis, there is little to suggest any precedent for this sort of relationship with the vital world outside of the symbolic or in parable. In Francis' case, the crucial factor is that his bridging of the vital and the spiritual is *not* a matter of parable. Francis, unique in the history of Christianity as far as Scheler was concerned, instituted something entirely different. He writes:

For what is really new and unusual in St. Francis' emotional relationship to nature is that natural objects and processes take on an expressive significance of *their own*, without any parabolic reference to man or to human relationships generally. Thus sun, moon, wind and so on, which have no need whatever of compassionate or benevolent love are greeted in heartfelt recognition as brother and sister. All created things are taken in their metaphysical contiguity (man being also included), to be immediately related to their Creator and Father as self-sufficient beings

having, even in relation to man, a *quite intrinsic value of their own*.

(Scheler, *Sympathy* 89)

Francis in so enacting love uplifts the vital and calls down the spiritual, not to compromise it but to bless the world. Francis himself, in an entirely non-symbolic way, becomes a concrete personal form of the sacrament when in his

...momentous revival of true identification with a unitary conception of a divine life that is merely incarnate in the works of Nature, there is not the slightest impairment, on the non-cosmic level, in his personal spirituality; as can be seen in his Christian vision of God, coupled with a love of Christ that can truly be described...as amounting to intoxication, and an *Imitatio Christi* which extended even to the physical stigmata. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 90)

Moreover, Scheler makes the connection between Francis' inclusive love in positing it as the source of his social mission in "moderating social distinctions and class-antagonisms" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 91), in extending aesthetic values contributing "to the greater freedom and plasticity of Trecento painting (Giotto)" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 91), and incorporating erotic love by way of his relationship with St. Claire, which Scheler asserts was founded on his immersion in the "*Provençal cult of chivalrous love*" and which he affected with "incomparable *spiritual artistry*" (Scheler, *Sympathy* 92).

In this, Scheler argues that Francis had taken what might have been branded pantheism, and embodied a panentheism,<sup>17</sup> an unprecedented

*confluence of Eros and Agape* (an *Agape* steeped in *Amor Dei* and *Amor in Deo*), occurring in a soul of native saintliness and genius; an

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<sup>17</sup> And here Scheler specifically notes that this might be what Francis would have characterized his philosophy as had he "been a theologian and philosopher –which fortunately for him, and still more fortunately for us, he was not..." (Scheler, *Sympathy* 91). Amusing though this is, I think it is an extremely important point that Scheler's ideal is not a philosopher. Love is never a matter to be subordinated to the theoretical. *It is lived experience*, par excellence.

*interfusion* of both, in short, which has become so complete as to present the greatest and most sublime example of a simultaneous 'inspiring of life' and 'enlivening of the spirit', of which I have any knowledge.

Never again in the history of the West have the emotional forces of sympathy regained the pattern we find in St. Francis. Nor do we ever encounter such a simultaneous and complete integration of their activity in Religion, Love, Social endeavor, Art and Knowledge. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 93)

White makes an interesting argument that really, in the figure of Francis we find the key to Scheler's philosophy as a whole. Scheler's deep personalism, the fact that 'philosophy' was essentially a moral endeavor, and the crucial role played by exemplars in the expression and expansion of moral life, that for Scheler, Francis actually filled the role of exemplar. While I will not comment on White's exploration of the ways in which Franciscan scholars may have indirectly influenced Scheler's work (White 77-87), I think that his assessment of the role of the concrete person of Francis, and indeed the moral value of persons that must precede all theoretical formulation is entirely admissible. Scheler questions how Christian the Christian philosophy of his time was; he concludes that "there never was and is not now a "Christian philosophy," unless one understands by this an essentially Greek philosophy with Christian ornamentation" (Scheler, "Love and Knowledge" 156). White adds that "the key to a truly Christian philosophy is not to be found first and foremost in a philosophy of being...but in the philosophy of love and the person..." (White 88). Further, White asserts that based on the significance of Scheler's apparently personal relationship with Francis, there might be found the basis of a revision of the history of philosophy that would "not focus only on the genesis of ideas but primarily on a unique sort of interpersonal relation, one which can in principle reach across history" (White 89). I think this rings true when considering Scheler, not only in

how one looks at his work, but perhaps in what is at the heart of his philosophy. Only the concrete person sufficiently represents the true depth of personal meaning: there is no satisfactory theoretical intermediary. There are only persons loving together "as fellow-servants, *partisans of a common Ideal and co-partners in a common Love* (Scheler, *Sympathy* 164).

#### 4. Concluding Analysis

At this point, it has hopefully been demonstrated that Scheler's theory of intersubjectivity, in its truest sense, is located in his phenomenology and ontology of love. In love, persons as non-objectifiable, spiritual act centers, contact one another without diminishing the otherness, or uniqueness of the other subject person. And move together towards uniquely positioned ideals of moral and spiritual fulfillment in holy communities. This approach to intersubjectivity appears to have little to do with the work done by Husserl and his critics on the topic. Scheler's peculiar view of knowledge as it pertains to persons makes intersubjectivity less of an epistemological question, but more of an ethical-ontological question. Persons, in their copformance of the primordial love act in solidarity, deepen the ontic relationship between them and the degree of value they realize. Moved by the love of the Person of Persons, they elaborate their grasp of the *ordo amoris* peculiar to each, and work toward a fulfillment of each individual or community, a process which for Scheler is salvation.

We have already discussed objections and criticism related to intersubjectivity on the level of the ego, and demonstrated its limited relevance to a discussion of Scheler's intersubjectivity. The ego is basically the self in its aspect of object, and even as a subject of vital functions, it lacks the autonomy required of a true moral subject. However, Scheler's love-as-intersubjectivity philosophy has its own difficulties and points of contention that must be considered in terms of the task that Scheler sets for himself.

Deeken characterizes Scheler's ethical project as a "quest to achieve a synthesis between the developmental and the permanent dimensions in ethics" (7), a statement which certainly includes the person: persons are absolutely unique and autonomous, yet they are in a constant state of moral development (or degradation); they are non-contingent, and at the same time non-formal; they possess a place in the absolute

hierarchy of material values and an individual destiny, or personal *ordo amoris*, but are not exhausted by it nor do they exhaust the possibilities of being in aspiring to it; they belong to a community, but are not limited or made less unique by this association; they follow in the footsteps of exemplar-persons as disciples without losing their own identity or obscuring the identity of that exemplar. It must be demonstrated that persons or personhood are of absolute value. Being itself is ultimately personal, all moral love and development relates only to personhood, be it of the self, the other, or God. What would stand to threaten the integrity of Scheler's position is any inconsistency that reduces the person to something less than the absolute seat of value.

In the vocabulary of Levinas, it is a problem of totalities, or totalization: the self or "the same" must not infringe upon the otherness of the Other and must establish "a relation that is beyond domination, consumption, or delectation. Levinas calls this relation 'ethical,' and 'metaphysical' because the other alone resists incorporation by me. It is religion" (Bergo 71). Scheler's work walks a fine line between "religion" and domination, and "at his best..." argues Barber, "maintains a focus on the Other as not one to be subjugated to theoretical, interpretive or action frameworks that are not the Other's own" (156) Whether or not he is successful overall is another matter altogether. In order to investigate this initially, we will follow up some lines of discussion offered by Barber in which he relates the ethical personalism of Scheler to analogous points in the work of Levinas.

I think that in many ways what Scheler is doing is establishing "ethics as first philosophy". Levinas in his characterization of language as founding a relationship which is beyond totalities, tells us that nexus of this relationship "is the face; its revelation is speech. The relation with the Other alone introduces a dimension of transcendence, an leads us to a relation totally different from experience in the sensible sense of the term, relative and egoist" (Levinas 193). Levinas characterizes this relationship, this

transcendence as ethical, and in that I think one can see something of Scheler's idea of personal love. Wychogrod comments on Levinas that:

the ethical relation which is commanded in the epiphany of the other is not a preliminary to a theoretical exercise. It is in and of itself a command to action without intervening theoretical structures. It breaks down the distinction between theory and practice Action no longer rests upon illuminating knowledge, upon preliminary reflection. (94)

Personal love is that which, prior to all thematizing, affects a true transcendence that is, exclusively the seat of moral value I think it is not difficult to see some kinship here, calling to mind Scheler's love as dynamism and ontological relationship, and also in his example of Francis for whom others are a source of their own intrinsic value that calls us into relationship, but that in fact went directly against the theoretical constructs of scholastic knowledge.

And like Levinas, Scheler is short on the details of specific values. He is not attempting with his material values necessarily to construct a system of norms, for as we have seen, values are absolute but not universal. Bergo comments that Levinas' ethics, is "a minimalist definition of ethics—a relation with another whose approach interrupts the flow of my thought!" (38) Scheler too, for all his voluminous writing on the subject, might be thought of as an ethical minimalist. When it finally comes to describing love, he resorts mostly, as we have seen, to a negative phenomenology while his positive descriptions of love are short and assertive by comparison. Except of course when he describes the heart of his ethics, St. Francis. For Scheler, love, ethics and the person are really represented best when represented by an exemplar, the concrete person in the world loving in such a way as to imbue all levels from vital to spiritual with dynamic enrichment of value.

Barber argues that Scheler's work represents a possible defense of the person against the dehumanizing elements of nominalist (relativistic) or mechanistic moral systems, which he claims lead to an "encapsulation" of the self, while an ethics based on a dialogic relationship between the self and other has the effect of liberating the self from egoism and a totalizing, instrumental relationship with the world and persons (154). Scheler's unique middle ground of nonformal, a priori values matched with fellow-feeling and love "overleaps egocentrism and reaches the Other" and it is possible to "conceive of a trajectory of liberation from self –growing in proportion as the distinctiveness of the Other and the Other's independence from one is recognized and honoured" (Barber 156).

He cites here a number of examples from *Sympathy* many of which have already been outlined above in the sections on love and sympathy (fellow-feeling). Scheler opposes monistic metaphysics in favor of reciprocity between act centers on the level of the spiritual, thereby maintaining the integrity of distinct individuals (Barber 157). This is of course in contrast with intersubjectivity on the strictly objective level of the ego where a kind of monism is in place given the common life stream in which egos participate collectively. Persons though are unique and the intersubjective relationship between persons must maintain that uniqueness.

In contrast to the general tone of Levinas' work, which emphasizes that the Other must be elevated above the self in order to safeguard the relationship against the inherent violence of making the Other into the same, Scheler tends to favor a reciprocity between persons and in fact thinks it wrong to find value in the Other simply for its otherness. Curiously, and importantly I think, Scheler does not subordinate love to the social at all.

...love and hatred are *in no sense relative* to the polar co-ordinates of *myself and the other*. In other words, love and hatred are *not intrinsically social dispositions* as are functions of fellow-feeling, for example. Thus,

one can love or hate oneself, but cannot have fellow-feeling for oneself.

(Scheler, *Sympathy* 150)

In fact, Scheler goes to great lengths to demonstrate that we do not love another simply because they are other. In his treatment of Comte's version of altruism in *Ressentiment*, we find him waxing polemical about the matter:

Comte fails to note that it is incomprehensible why our fellow man should have a right to benefaction –since love, for Comte, has value only as a 'cause' for good deeds– for the silliest of reasons: simply because he is the 'other'. If I myself am not worthy of love, why should the 'other' be? As if he were not also an 'I' –for himself, and I 'another' –for him! (Scheler, *Ressentiment* 125)

What Scheler intends here is that the other be viewed as the source of personal value, and that we love them in that dynamic relationship that penetrates ever deeper into new realms of value. Otherness is not necessarily the defining factor, as personal love can include appropriate self-love insofar as it pertains to personal value. I do not believe that Scheler is in any way trying to reduce the other, but rather that he is trying to elevate personhood.

It might strike one oddly that love, the starting point for Scheler's intersubjectivity is so explicitly here rendered non-social. Scheler would argue that this must be the case because love is not directed at objects but is rather a movement revealing values. This might easily be misinterpreted as a turn back toward Kantian idealism: the dignity of the person is maintained by referring to a common set of formal values, the only difference being that for Scheler they are realized in the sphere of the affective rather than in the rational. Perrin asserts that in his doctrine of the person, Scheler does not really go much beyond Kant in that for both Scheler and Kant, "the concept of the Person denotes Man's moral capacity and, more important, for both it is a

concept established by means of a transcendental deduction" (Perrin 126). This is not entirely untrue; one of Scheler's points of continued agreement with Kant was that the dignity of the person must be maintained, and it is maintained through a perception of value situated beyond the empirical (though not necessarily the material) realm. The distinction to be made though is that personal love proper is not directed even to values, but towards personal bearers of value. Personhood is still the defining factor in love, but not otherness per se insofar as personal love can include an appropriate self-love and a love for God, which is not of the same order as a love for the human other.

Still, Barber maintains that in Scheler there are a number of examples that point towards a beneficial submissiveness in the presence of the other, where the other appears as moral teacher. Here he cites Scheler's examples of the Buddha undergoing his spiritual transformation in his encounters with the poor and sick, Tolstoy's master's change of heart upon meeting his servant freezing to death in the cold, and again St. Francis who

manifested most clearly this reverent welcoming of the Other....in defiance of medieval aristocratic-hierarchic metaphysical views, [he] forsook all condescension to look upon the sun and moon and wind as brothers and sisters, apart from whatever significance they may have possessed for humanity....(Barber 157)

He again brings to mind Scheler's theory of solidarity in the community of love which, though it implies a reciprocity of moral responsibility and co-merit in community, "he [Scheler] emphasizes not the love that the Other owes, but rather the love of the Other, which confronts one and makes its demand whether one responds to it or not" (Barber 157-58).

Scheler's realism might be said to establish the undeniable givenness of the Other, and Barber thinks that this bears some resemblance to the ethical resistance that

Levinas outlines his work (160). While Scheler's basic theory of resistance has no inherent moral value offering only an "empty resistance" of given real objects and might be seen more a counterpart to Levinas' experience of the *il y a*, what is given in resistance shares something with how the Person is given undeniably in love to the extent that both resistance and love are prerational. The relationship between real persons, the ethical relationship is founded on "the a priori ranking of values, which well-ordered acts of preference apprehend and which perdure despite the changing fortunes of intellectual systems, [and] makes its demand before reasoning commences as does Levinas's Other" (Barber 161).

However, by way of critique, Barber poses a poignant question: "Does the a priori value ranking ultimately subject the Other to the absolutes of Scheler's categorical system" (162)? What is at stake here is this: the person is said to be revealed in love as absolutely unique and the relationship with that person is the source of all moral being and development. The source of persons' supposedly irreducible individuality and value is in their individual *ordo amoris* their own place and vocation within the absolute order of material values. Are persons, in spite of the uniqueness of their place in the hierarchy ultimately judged and granted value by that hierarchy prior to their individual personhood? Are values ultimately the judge of the person?

To illustrate this possible difficulty Barber cites an example from Formalism where Scheler gives a rebuttal to Wundt's condemnation of human sacrifice in "primitive" cultures:

The killing of a man is *not* murder; it is only its presupposition. In cases of murder the *value of the person* in a being "man" must be given in intention, and a possible intention of action must aim *its* annihilation.

Perhaps Wundt was thinking of the institution of sacrificing humans to gods, i.e. to beings considered absolutely holy. Was such an institution a

legitimation of “murder”? Certainly not! It rested on diverse superstitions, e.g., that by sacrificing humans, one could do service to *both* the gods and the sacrificed humans, or fulfill the just demands of the gods...The intention was hardly to annihilate the being of the *person* concerned, or the “let it be annihilated,” which belongs essentially to murder. There was rather the co-intention, implicit in the intention of love and favor, of the *affirmation* of the being of the person. How else could there have been genuine sacrifice? (312)

Barber commends Scheler for his cultural sensitivity in calling to mind the fact that different cultures are situated at different points in the history of moral development of their ethos and *ordo amoris*: “Thus human solidarity enjoins the abolition of ethnocentric judgments and painstaking efforts to illuminate the otherness of the Other...” (157). Yet he finds it astonishing that “other than references to the values of the superstitious underpinnings of this belief in human sacrifice...Scheler pronounces *no ethical judgment against such human sacrifice!*” (Barber 162). It appears to be Scheler’s argument that because the human sacrifice in the above mentioned example is directed towards the “holy”, the highest possible value ranking in the hierarchy, and that the intention of the act was not annihilation but reconciliation with the gods, we cannot pass moral judgment on this taking of human life. Barber points out that “there is a danger that as long as one observes the material value ranking, one can incur no ethical blame, no matter what happens to the bearers of those values, whether they be persons or things” (162).

In Scheler’s defense, Barber then offers an argument by way of Kaspar Hurlimann from his essay “Person und Werte”, which points out that in addition to a ranking of values Scheler assumes a ranking of value bearers. The ranking of values themselves run from the useful at the bottom up to the holy at the top, and in parallel the ranking of value bearers runs from things at the bottom, through persons and finally to

the Person of Persons, God. In this dual value system, not all value bearers can bear all kinds of values and the specifically moral values are reserved solely for the person. Thus, in the case of the human sacrifice offered above, the values particular persons should theoretically outweigh any other concerns that might be the impetus for such a ceremony. However, Barber agrees with Hurlimann that unfortunately, values are still divorced from the being of the person directly; they are still subject to a valuation on the scale of value bearers and that ultimately "humanity is not the measure of value, but rather humanity is itself measured against values" (Barber 163, trans. Hurlimann, 296-298).

Summing up the difficulty; Scheler begins by using a phenomenological methodology in such a way as to establish an objective order of values which is not dependent on history or culture and is not created arbitrarily by people. If people become the sole measure of value he would fall into a relativism which he specifically says he does not want and cannot be the foundation for a real ethics. In positing that people *do* subscribe to a common set of values, even though some values may be only applicable to individuals at a particular time, he opens up the possibility of moral communication with a common reference point. But the problem appears to be that the nonformal value system he formulates fills the same role as the formal ethics of Kant and the psychological determinism he argued against, and reduces the dignity of the person in exactly the same way but under a different name (Barber 163). In this way intersubjectivity on the level of the person is also put in danger because the ethical distance required in love is compromised by an all-too accessible field of values by which we must judge and understand a person.

Spader, in his book *Scheler's Ethical Personalism* responds directly to Barber's comments and begins specifically with the example of human sacrifice raised by Barber and Hurlimann. Here he brings to attention (as does Barber, in fact) that Scheler's argument against Wundt had to do with his apparent insensitivity to the value orderings

of other cultures, and though he does use risky language here that invites charges of relativism, it would be a stretch to interpret his comments here as an actual attempt to defend human sacrifice. In referring to human sacrifice as the adjunct of a “superstitious” set of beliefs, Scheler is obviously pronouncing some kind of moral judgment and Spader thinks this “indicates that he does not believe such sacrifice does justice either to the gods or to the person being sacrificed” (Spader, *Ethical* 250). One has to bear in mind that because people are able to develop morally and to perceive values and value possibilities does not mean that they do so perfectly. Persons are finite, and as such they do not necessarily apprehend the order of values properly as in cases of resentment, hate or idolatry (Spader, *Ethical* 249). Consequently, understanding the *ordo amoris* of another need not imply condoning it, but “simply condemning a practice does not help us see why any person could have approved of what is now seen to be so obviously and horribly wrong” (Spader, *Ethical* 251). Also, one of Scheler’s contributions to ethics was to view the ethos of a person or culture in a historical context. By contrast, in

not recognizing the very ‘historicity’ of the ethos *itself*, which it possesses as a form of experiencing values, and their orders or ranks, formal ethics is necessarily led to the assumption that at any time there must be the possibility of a complete ethics that would *exhaust* moral values and the mind comprehending them. (Scheler, *Formalism* 304)

What Spader then addresses is the more general question of whether moral values in general are of greater importance than the person itself. As Barber has mentioned, Scheler might have avoided this difficulty had he simplified his system and located the source of value or ethical imperative in the person directly rather than in the material values (Barber 164) which do not always have a moral content as it stands. Spader suggests (as does Barber, see Barber’s comments 165) that part of the confusion might result from an over emphasis on the work Scheler does in *Formalism*

without taking into account his other writings (Spader, *Ethical* 252). *Sympathy* was written around the same time as *Formalism* and certainly fleshes out the centrality of the personal in ethics, as does “Ordo Amoris”, especially insofar as it implies that God, the ground of all being and value is necessarily theistic and personal Himself. Even in *Formalism*, argues Spader, references to the absolute value of the person do occur, for example: “An ethics, which, like the one developed here, locates the highest and ultimate moral meaning of the world in the possible being of (individual and collective) persons of the highest possible value...”, and further “...all norms have their foundation in values, and that the (formally) highest value is not a thing-value [*Sachwert*], a value of a feeling state, or a value of law, but *a value of the person*” (Scheler, *Formalism* 572). Persons in these examples are not characterized as containers or bearers of the highest values, but rather as being of the highest moral meaning (Spader, *Ethical* 252). As Scheler points out in sympathy, in terms of love which can be directed both towards persons and things, it is only when love is directed at persons that moral value can be revealed. Love for the moral good itself he characterizes as “Pharisaism” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 163), and poses the question that “if love of goodness is not moral love, how is the scope of the latter defined?” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 165), his answer being “that love has a specifically moral value *insofar as it represents a relationship between persons*” (Scheler, *Sympathy* 165). In order for values to have any kind of ethical content they must be referred to the person.

Spader raises a related issue, attempting to address the question of the role of love in Scheler’s system, and to what extent the person is actually “free” to love. We have seen earlier that Scheler asserts for example that we are free to work towards our unique degree of perfection in the ordo amoris, but on the other hand he insists that love is prior to all other acts including willing. If it were the case that love simply occurs within the person, “then truly open choice and self-determination would...be lost” (Spader, *Ethical* 263).

This is an important issue and seems to relate to the earlier criticism of Hartmann when he charged that ethics seems impossible if the person and the person's acts cannot be made the object of knowledge. Commonly, that is what ethics means. Here, the same difficulty arises, in principle. If love is prior to choice, and we do not choose to love, it becomes difficult to see how this can be the basis for either a functional ethics or the foundation of an autonomous person. Love appears on the surface to be a drive that deprives the person of the moral agency it is intended to enable. Spader's answer seems at first glance to be fairly weak. Through a sympathetic reading he finds that because love is such a primordial phenomenon, what amounts to choice is in fact a free choice, but it is only analogous to what we might normally think of as choosing, for example in "choosing between two courses of action". We can either open ourselves to love, as we have discussed earlier with reference to solidarity and choosing to attain one's perfection in the *ordo amoris*, "but such an 'opening' is at so deep a level of our being that it is at best only an analogue to ordinary 'choice,' and how it occurs is a mystery we live through at the heart of our being" (Spader, *Ethical*/263). The idea of a choice that is not really choice seems on the level of logic and common sense, somewhat abhorrent. However, with Scheler, it is likely that this is exactly what he means, but it is an issue that demonstrates both the limits and the promise of his philosophical project.

Much of the criticism that has been leveled against essential phenomenology by postmodern thinkers has been directed to the basic assumption that there is actually something out there beyond the confines of language to be found. Kelly bemoans the state of affairs in contemporary critique, and harkening back to a point earlier in our discussion on Husserl, says that the metaphysics of presence has led to an admission of disunity in discourse, and "seems to have left nothing but intellectual paralysis, analytical Byzantianism, or a furtive beating about the margins of things" (Kelly, *Structure* 221). This is nothing especially new, though for those who are still committed to the original

phenomenological project of sorting out real essences like Kelly and Spader, it is a challenging undertaking to mount a convincing defense of meaning that exists apart from the language which conveys it. Spader calls to mind Scheler's position on this matter in the essay "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition":

Something can be *self-given* only if it is no longer given merely through any sort of symbol; in other words, only if it is not 'meant' as the mere 'fulfillment' of a sign which is previously defined in some way or other. In this sense *phenomenological* philosophy is a continual *desymbolization of the world*. (Scheler, "Phenomenology" 143)

As we have seen, Scheler is by no means exclusively conducting strict phenomenology in his work. Still, this desymbolization, this removal of intermediaries on the way to truth and in attempting to see the real value in things that is intrinsic to them alone precisely as they are given, is very much at the heart of Scheler. This is his compassion. Scheler directs this desymbolization toward the scientific view of the natural standpoint saying that science is essentially naïve, and by using its own terms to describe the world, fails to bring anything to self-giveness. It is always mediated by the language of science (Spader, *Ethical*, 295; Scheler, "Phenomenology" 144). When things in their givenness are mediated by symbol, by language and presupposition, for Scheler, one can no longer have "knowledge" of something as he envisions knowledge. The only thing that can affect true transcendence out of a solipsistic position is love. This problem is especially acute when considering the person, that non-objectifiable source of absolute meaning and value. As we have seen, Scheler is short on language with which to describe the person and short on language with which to describe the bridge we cross to the other, love. This poses problems on a double front: the post modernist position will tell us that Scheler is positing real value outside of language, and strict Husserlian phenomenologists like Schuetz and Owens will tell us that Scheler has failed to provide

enough descriptive language to make his analysis convincing. I think that White's interpretation of Scheler's comments on St. Francis is telling here: when it comes to the person, there is nothing to be said that the actual concrete presence of persons themselves does not say better. The interpersonal situation for Scheler, *is* that deep; "choices that are not choices", "knowledge that is not knowledge" or "awareness that is not awareness", while paradoxical by the standards of the natural standpoint with its investment in language and symbol, or even transcendental phenomenology which may be similarly invested, lies literally at the limit of what Scheler can say. Love seeking the person always finds more than first appears, and always looks beyond, even beyond the language which Scheler uses to describe it. I think it is telling that in the final entry of his laws of dependence, that of non-cosmic personal love, that even there we find a point beyond which we cannot go. Scheler writes:

In spiritual love of the person, however, a new principle comes to light. For apart from his acceptance of the mere existence of the **other person** as given, it no longer depends entirely on the spontaneous act of the person who loves or understands, since it also rests upon the free discretion of the person who is to be loved or understood. 'Persons' cannot be intuitively understood (by reproduction of their spiritual acts), unless they *spontaneously disclose themselves*. For they are also capable of silence and concealment... Hence language, which also includes the possibility of silence or reticence, is essential in order to grasp the content of personality. The psychic life of animals is in this sense completely open to human inspection, in principle, if not in actual fact; but a man's personality is not so. It can either *enclose* or *disclose* itself. (Scheler, *Sympathy* 102)

The person is the absolute seat of value. Even love, which is knowledge beyond thematizing philosophy or cognition, ultimately cannot penetrate the silence of persons who can always remain the other firmly in their alterity, and most certainly, in their dignity.

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