

Max Scheler's Ethical Personalism

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ABSTRACT: As the title suggest, the present article elaborates Max Scheler's concept of *Ethical personalism*. The first section describes the relevance of phenomenology in Scheler's philosophical inquiry. It illustrates how he uses phenomenological approach by means of which he exemplifies a new understanding of the *emotive a priori*. Scheler agrees on the idea that intentionality serves as insight into essences, however, he contends that intentionality cannot be purely rational (Husserl). Phenomenology, for Scheler, is a psychic technique toward *emotive intuition*.

The second part deals primarily on Scheler's application of phenomenology to his concept of material or *non-formal* ethics. He carries out a shattering critique on the one hand on axiological *nominalism*, for which values are simply empirical facts, and on the other hand on ethical *formalism* (Kant). According to Scheler, values are the a priori grounds of emotion, the intentional objects of feeling. "Inclinations" (*emotions, feelings, sentiments*) are then important in the evaluation of moral experience.

From the objective theory of values, Scheler passes now to the analysis of his distinctive phenomenology on the person (the only carrier of values). Against positivistic, naturalistic and biological interpretation imposed on the person, Scheler defines the person as "the concrete unity of acts," which is not in itself objective; *the person is revealed in his actions*. He maintains that a person is not only given rationality and will but also a *heart*. Lastly, he concludes that a person is essentially *spiritual*, that is, a person has the ability to separate essence and existence (*ideation*) and as a spiritual being a person has an access to spiritual reality and, therefore, can posit the idea of God.

KEY WORDS: personalism, phenomenology, emotive a priori, material ethics of values, unity of acts, ideation, Spirit.

RESUMEN: Como sugiere el título, el presente artículo elabora el concepto de Max Scheler acerca del personalismo ético. La primera sección describe la relevancia de la fenomenología en la investigación filosófica de Scheler. Ilustra cómo utiliza el enfoque fenomenológico mediante el cual ejemplifica una nueva comprensión de lo *emotivo a priori*. Scheler está de acuerdo con la idea de que la intencionalidad sirve como una idea de las esencias, sin embargo, sostiene que la intencionalidad no puede ser puramente racional (Husserl). La fenomenología, para Scheler, es una técnica psíquica hacia la *intuición emotiva*.

La segunda parte trata principalmente de la aplicación de la fenomenología de Scheler a su concepto de ética material o *no formal*. Lleva a cabo una crítica demolidora por un lado del *nominalismo* axiológico, para el cual los valores son simplemente hechos empíricos, y por otro lado del *formalismo* ético (Kant). Según Scheler, los valores son los fundamentos a priori de la emoción, los objetos intencionales del sentimiento. Las “inclinaciones” (*emociones, sentimientos, sentimientos*) son importantes en la evaluación de la experiencia moral.

Desde la teoría objetiva de los valores, Scheler pasa ahora al análisis de su fenomenología distintiva de la persona (la única portadora de valores). Contra la interpretación positivista, naturalista y biológica impuesta a la persona, Scheler define a la persona como “la unidad concreta de los actos”, que en sí misma no es objetiva; *la persona se revela en sus acciones*. Sostiene que una persona no solo es racionalidad y voluntad, sino también *corazón*. Por último, concluye que una persona es esencialmente espiritual, es decir, tiene la capacidad de separar la esencia y la existencia (ideación) y, como ser espiritual, tiene acceso a la realidad espiritual y, por lo tanto, puede plantear la idea de Dios.

PALABRAS CLAVE: personalismo, fenomenología, emotivo a priori, ética material de valores, unidad de actos, ideación, espíritu.

Introduction

Ethical personalism is a philosophical movement preludes formally in the early years of the 20th century. It enacts in a relative approach, a kind of a metaphysical, ontological, and anthropological thinking which can be traced back to the antiquity such as in Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus and St. Augustine. The term *personalism* was first introduced by Charles Renouvier with his published work entitled *Le personalisme*¹. However, the term has a

¹ Cf. H.E. LANGAN, *The Philosophy of Personalism and Its Educational Applications*, Washington, D.C. 1935, 3. The title of this book shall be shortened as *The Philosophy* for the next citations.

wide range of application and various classifications for there are many different forms of personalism. Hence, in order to understand what the term implies we try to present it by inquiring first into its terms.

First, when we speak of *ethics* we are referring, in a more general sense, to a system of moral principles concerned with the questions of how person ought to act and the search for a definition of right conduct and the good life. It is the normative science of human acts in the light of reason. On the other hand, the word *person* comes from the Latin *persona* which is equivalent to the Greek *prosopon*², is traditionally referred to the mask used by an actor in a play wherein it represents the actor's role or character. In the course of time this component was interpreted in a deeper sense in which the dignity and value of its bearer became part of its meaning, the personhood. Now, what remains in the picture is the *ism* of the personalism. What would this *ism* denote? Just like other approaches to ethics, ethical personalism is a sort of approach that concentrates its philosophical reflections on the human person as its subject. Hence, it addresses ethics in terms of persons.

The adjective *personalism* explains somehow the role of the person in the field of moral and ethical realm. It deals about the centrality of the person with regard to, for instance, the foundation of moral duty, the foundation of moral values, the foundation of the moral laws and some other aspects. Also, when it comes to the social aspect, the person is seen at the center of this philosophical reflection. Thus, personalism addresses ethics in terms of individuals stressing their moral nature and acknowledges the unique value of the human person, its spiritual and self-conscious reality. The person is perceived not only as a social being but as an interpersonal being as well.

Having person as the subject of its philosophical investigation, ethical personalism shows also that subjectivity indicates the irreducible in humans. That is why it is common to personalists to defend the primacy and importance of the person against any attempt to reduce the person merely to any form of, for instance, a *thinking substance*, a *noumenal self*, an *object* etc. Thus, since the human person is central and foundational, ethical personalism centers its reflections on the dignity and value of its subject who is supreme both in reality and in value.

² Cf. I. PARACKAL, «Person», in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. II, Bangalore, India 2010, 1019.

Indeed, the realm of the personal was Max Scheler's³ innermost concern. In his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* he tells us also the very scope of his investigations:

The most essential and important proposition that my present investigations would ground and communicate as perfectly as possible is the proposition that the final meaning and value of the whole universe is ultimately to be measured exclusively against the pure being [...] the richest fullness and the most perfect development, and the purest beauty and inner harmony of the *persons*, in whom at times all forces of the world concentrate themselves and soar upward⁴.

On the other hand, Scheler informs us about the central theme of his ethical theory. He writes:

At no point does the ethical personalism to which our investigation has led us reveal its distinctiveness from other present ethical currents to a greater degree than in the position that it allocates to the becoming and being of the spiritual individuality of the person as the bearer of moral value⁵.

Considering the above description, this article seeks to elaborate three particular points that constitute Scheler's ethical personalism, namely, the role of phenomenology in his philosophical system, his material or non-formal ethics of values and its application to his distinctive theory of the person.

1. Scheler's Phenomenological Approach

Accordingly, there are different kinds of approaches to reality. The first is the *natural approach* that is characterized by our daily life. This is what we

³ Max Ferdinand Scheler (1874-1928) taught at the university of Jena, Munich, and Cologne. He studied under Dilthey and Simmel, and his philosophy of the "lived body" deeply influenced Merleau-Ponty. Edith Stein was one of his students, and Pope John Paul II wrote his postdoctoral thesis and many articles on Scheler. Scheler disagreed with Husserl's phenomenological methods and instead pursued psychic techniques toward intuition. He is also considered as the founder of philosophical anthropology.

⁴ M. SCHELER, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values, A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. by Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk, Illinois, 1973, XXIV. The title of this book shall be shortened as *Formalism* for the next citations.

⁵ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 508.

understood also as the “commonsense” approach, knowledge of reality. At the very foundation of this approach is the world vision. It deals about attaining reality through the world, in the society, a vision of the whole of the world. It describes the world without any scientific method. For instance, we know when the sun rises and sets in a particular time in a day without using any scientific procedures. Also, through commonsense, we learned unsurprisingly the difference between right and left. In other words, these things are part of our daily life experience, something that is natural to us and does not need any scientific experiment to know what it takes to be as such.

Next is the *scientific approach*. This type of approach to reality tries to take truth by using a method by elaborating an aspect or a fragment of reality. It seeks to explain and describe, individually a certain phenomena by means or with the help of symbols, data, just like in mathematics.

Another legitimate approach to reality is the *phenomenology*, a more natural and spontaneous approach. According to Scheler, this approach does not propose science as the starting point of investigation in order to arrive to a certain reality. “Phenomenological experience”, for him gives us the access to the essences. Every phenomenology is oriented to the essence of the things, to their essential structures, to pure phenomena. It tries to discover it not by means of scientific experiments as science do but by means of “emotive” intuition.

Hence, for Scheler, every phenomenology is oriented through essential structures and it tries to unveil reality through its immediate contact with the essences through an intuitive emotive contact. At some point, Scheler would agree to Husserl⁶ on the idea that intentionality can serve as insight into essences, however, he prefers to speak of an emotive kind of intuition rather than a purely rational. Indeed, Scheler had a profound admiration for St. Augustine who is known for his interest and deep emphasis on the “reason or logic of the heart”. In the succeeding sections we will see how he makes use of this approach and how he applies it in his material ethics of value and in his distinctive theory of the person.

⁶ Edmund Husserl, the founder of phenomenology, defines it as a sort of methodological attempt to reach the essences through an investigation of the pure consciousness, the objective content, which is known as the *phenoemenon*. For Husserl, consciousness is intentional and intentionality is understood as insight into essences.

1.1 Phenomenology is not to be based in a method

While Husserl's phenomenology implies methodology because it proposes a grasp of the phenomena it aims to investigate Scheler, on the other hand, doesn't consider it as a method.

Accordingly, phenomenological analysis is capable of fruitful application in a variety of fields, just like in the case of Scheler wherein he applies phenomenology in the fields of *values* while others have applied it in the fields of aesthetics, religious consciousness, etc.⁷ We need to be very clear that in Scheler values are essences, values exist as real and objective reality. Here we see that although he began his analysis of phenomenological approach following Husserl he did not end up agreeing with its founder instead he makes use of it in his own field, namely in the fields of values. Manfred Frings⁸ describes it this way: «The phenomenology of Scheler is distinct from all others by its wide subliminal range and aims. He does not confine himself to logical rigor because he emphasizes the emotive aspects of consciousness or the subliminal reasons of the heart»⁹. Indeed, Scheler does not see phenomenology only as an a priori science (purely rational) that can define the essential nature of being; rather, he sees that rooting intentionality could be best done within the emotive sphere.

Scheler contends that phenomenology is not to be based in a method. For him, the question of the methodology of phenomenology is a secondary question, «because we do not need to have a systematic definition of phenomenology in order to begin work on the things themselves- the essence of the material that is given to the intentional ray of consciousness»¹⁰. He argues that a method is a unified consciousness of a process in research that is a generalization based upon concrete work in some area of research and in phenomenology we don't apply that thing.

⁷ Cf. F. COPLESTON, *A History of Philosophy, 8th and 19th century German Philosophy*, Vol. 7., London, 2017, 435.

⁸ Manfred Frings is a professor of philosophy emeritus at DePaul University. Since 1970, he has been the editor of the collected works of Max Scheler.

⁹ M. FRINGS, *The Mind of Max Scheler: The First Comprehensive Guide Based on the Complete Works*, Marquette Studies in Philosophy, Vol. 13, Milwaukee 1997, 182.

¹⁰ E. KELLY, *Material Ethics of Value: Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann*, Dordrecht, 2011, 20. The title of this book shall be shortened as *Material Ethics* for the next citations.

In other words, what Scheler saw in phenomenology was «not so much a method as a particular attitude or mode of experience by which we attentively live through our experiences, intuitively apprehending matters as there are given in an immediate grasp of their essential eidetic contours»¹¹, but an attitude. What do we mean by an attitude here? Attitude, wherein a psychic technique is being applied and which involved the suspension of all vital energy or impulsion. Contrary to Husserl's *phenomenological reduction*¹², Scheler argues *bracketing* is reached by a psychic technique and not by any methodological or scientific process. This means that phenomenology does not provide a sort of series of actions to follow in order to arrive (for instance, step 1, 2, 3...etc.) at a given point as we have in methodology but, instead, phenomenology is an attitude or a special way of viewing the world in order to define the essential nature of being.

1.2 The “emotive” a priori or phenomenological experience

As we can see throughout his works, Scheler has chosen the emotive aspect of consciousness rather than a purely rational because he believes in the *logic of the heart*. Following St. Augustine and Blaise Pascal, he attempts to root intentionality in emotions rather than in pure reason. This is the key in understanding Scheler's position: he believes that the heart has its reasons that reason does not know. Now, in this context, he wants to demonstrate that just as values are pre-given to us objectively and so the emotive intentionality is also pre-given to all other acts. He explains:

All perception, willing and thinking are borne by the emotive experience of values. That every act is suffused by the person and that person varies in each different act by virtue of the qualitative direction of its acts encompasses, a fortiori, emotive intentionality that is, acts of feeling and their correlatives. Values are the pre-rational, intentional referents or *noemata* of emotive intentionality. Its essence is the act of love. Like colors, values are independent of their substrates¹³.

¹¹ M. FRINGS, *The Mind*, 183.

¹² *Phenomenological reduction* is the initial bracketing of questions about the existence intended by consciousness. Within this process the empirical subjectivity is being suspended so that pure consciousness may be defined in its essential and absolute being.

¹³ M. FRINGS, *The Mind*, 190.

Emotive intentionality consists in the *act of preferring* higher or lower values to the values given. For Max Scheler, the ultimate principle of phenomenology is that there is an interconnection between the essence of the object and the essence of intentional experiencing¹⁴. Here, emotive intentionality is pre-given to all other acts. Scheler demonstrates that «phenomenology also has within itself the resources for illuminating the mystery of the concrete individuality of the persons»¹⁵. The difference between Husserl and Max Scheler then is that Husserl uses the phenomenological reduction in order to come to a pure descriptive study of the whole field of pure transcendental consciousness in the light of pure intuition, a purely transcendental subjectivity while Scheler prefers the intuition by *emotive a priori*.

The idea of the emotive a priori is significant in understanding Scheler's phenomenology because this constitutes the new way of looking at the structure of being by taking the path of the emotive sphere. The phenomenological experience for Scheler is a kind of approach to reality that is oriented to the essence of the things, to their essential structures and it tries to discover it not by means of scientific experiments but by means of emotive intuition of the essence. Indeed, he was ardently an intuitive philosopher.

Moreover, Scheler's concept of the phenomenological experience or emotive a priori is best understood with its relation to Kantian a priori because in dealing with this point Scheler himself presented it as a form of criticism against Kant's¹⁶. So, at this point let us try to show what we mean by this. First, Kant defines the a priori saying:

We shall understand *a priori* knowledge, not knowledge independent of this or that experience, but knowledge absolutely independent of all experience. Opposed to it is empirical knowledge, which is knowledge possible only a posteriori, that is, through experience. A priori modes of knowledge are entitled pure when there is no admixture of anything empirical¹⁷.

As follows, Kant's definition of the a priori suggests that we must abandon all empirical experiences and seek the a priori in knowledge of pure form. For

¹⁴ Cf. M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 265.

¹⁵ J. CROSBY, *Personalist Papers*, 173.

¹⁶ Cf. M. FRINGS, *Max Scheler: A Concise Introduction Into the World of a Great Thinker*, Pittsburgh 1965, 40. The title of this book shall be shortened simply as *Max Scheler* for the next citations.

¹⁷ I. KANT, *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. by Norman Kemp Smith, New York 1929, 369.

him, a priori is pure formalism. Indeed, Kant connected a priori knowledge with the formal, spontaneity of reason, universality, and necessity¹⁸.

On the other hand, Scheler would not agree with Kant in defining the a priori as purely formalism. For Scheler, a PRIORI as expected will go with the emotive sphere and would consist in all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of immediate intuitive content, apart from any question of positing subjects or posited objects to which such units of meaning are applicable. He argues that, «we designate as a priori all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of an immediate intuitive content»¹⁹.

Indeed, the a priori in Scheler received a new significance. A priori for him is not purely *formal* and not just something added by the mind to what is given, but rather is to be found in the given itself. A priori, in this sense, is *emotive*, that is, not being reached outside the experience but instead inside the experience and given through the experience itself.

Thus, the fundamental difference between Kant and Scheler lies here, namely, that Kant identifies a priori knowledge with a constant organization of reason, whereas Scheler holds that reason is subject to historical change, and that only its ability to have forms of thinking, intuition, and valuation, is constant²⁰. Scheler holds that Kant is mistaken in limiting the a priori to be purely formal. Thus, what constitutes phenomenology in Scheler is that he privileges the world of values-emotive realm because he is convinced that only emotive a priori possesses a phenomenological content.

2. Non formal ethichs of values

In the ethical camp, Scheler discovers that we should not think that our moral life is essentially under the surface of obedience to duties or under the prescriptions of the laws just like what Kant claims. This is an important point to consider as we begin in our analysis of Scheler's ethical theory because in most cases Scheler's positions would be the opposite of Kant's. In his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, Scheler presents a new

¹⁸ Cf. M. FRINGS, *Max Scheler*, 40.

¹⁹ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 48.

²⁰ Cf. M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 40.

perspective of ethical theory. This work somehow has an objective to destroy Kant's ethical system because according to Scheler it does not respect the fullness of the person's moral life.

Scheler accuses Kant of reducing the person to a sort of a merely rational being, that is, a person becomes a person by simply obeying the moral laws by means of reason (a rule-based theory). Scheler saw it as a sort of simplifying the essence of the human being to its rational capacity alone and thus, this way the supreme principle of morality rests on reason and not to the fullness of the person's moral life. Kant also argues that the *Categorical Imperative* is the fundamental principle by means of which we determine what is and what is not practically good for us. This imperative tells us to act only on the maxim by which we can at the same time will that it should become universal law valid to all circumstances. In this context, the person must observe this universal law categorically because this is what constitutes the moral life. Somehow, Kant's purpose in his ethical theory is simply to reveal the supreme principle of morality implicit in ordinary moral commitments²¹. He discovers the dignity of the person but conceived it simply as the obedience to the laws by means of reason. Besides, he also insinuates that this law is universally valid because it springs from our own will as a sort of intelligence and also from our proper self²².

In contrast to Kant's position Scheler would not accept this ethical theory because he believes that such theory reduces the person to a particular instance, namely, to a merely reason which is universal, therefore, it does not respect the fullness of the person's moral life. Scheler criticizes Kant for conceiving an ethics of duty that reduces the morality to merely obedience of the law, and so, reduces also the essence of the person into rationality alone. Remember that for Kant a person cannot act having motivated by what is essentially sensible like emotions, feelings etc. simply because emotions are irrational and so we cannot build ethics in such type of foundation.

For Scheler, a human being is more than that. A human being is essentially *spiritual* and is capable of intuiting values or essences, a thing that only human being is capable of doing. He would argue that duty is somehow a sign of a

²¹ Cf. S. SEDGWICK, *Kant's Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals: An Introduction*, Cambridge, 2008, 3.

²² Cf. I. KANT, *Groundwork of the Metaphysic of Morals*, trans. by H.J. Paton, New York 1964, 49.

certain imperfection because someone who experiment to fulfill the duty may encounter in himself resistance in confronting what is good. The person, instead, is morally good without the idea of duty-compliance. Therefore he concludes that Kant's ethical theory does not lead to the fullness or to the sanctity of the person.

At this point Scheler speaks of what for him constitutes a person, that is, a being that enters in contact with others in daily living; a being that has not only reason but also a *heart*. Scheler insists that these "inclinations" (*emotions, feelings, sentiments*) important in constructing any ethical theory because it helps in the evaluation of moral experience.

The point of Scheler is that a person is not only given rationality and will but also a *heart*. Indeed, the heart is the center of the person. This term is very important in understanding his *non-formal* ethics of value. Accordingly, in moral life we can sustain that the conscience of the person can also be manifested in an emotive way. That is, the intentionality that discovers the world of values. We do not discover values by means of reason but through emotions. For instance, when we speak of spiritual or religious value, we discover them through sensible experience, through our contact with the empirical world. Also argues that we may discover the more basic values such as hedonistic, vital, spiritual, aesthetic values but religious values are being discovered only by means of an emotive intentionality. We feel the values, we discover them, and we intuit them. The person then becomes morally good when it responded to the hierarchy of values.

2.1 Formal and material or non-formal

The term *material* refers to matter as an adjective modifying an object, asserting its materiality. «*Material* refers to the substance of something that may not be physical at all, all the content of an argument at law, for example»²³. Scheler uses this term to indicate that his ethics is not a rule-based theory or a normative one. Again, what he proposes here is the opposite of Kant's moral theory. Material or non-formal ethics for him is a kind of ethical theory that shows phenomenologically the value material from which all moral rules are drawn.

²³ E. KELLY, *Material Ethics*, 8.

On the other hand, the term *formal* signifies the opposite of material, formalism means without material content. Kant's *Categorical Imperative* is obviously a kind of formalism. For instance, whenever you are inclined to act in a certain way, to borrow money without any intention of paying it back, you must always ask yourself what it would be like if everyone acted that way²⁴. Kant makes use an ideal, we say, to strive for respect for persons as fundamentally the same as respect for the moral law²⁵.

Scheler, on the other hand, would not agree to it because for him this is something empty. Why? Because he believes that it has no "phenomenological or material content" that could justify its validity. He criticizes Kant by saying that this formula together with the other formulas of the Categorical Imperative is totally void because this system is purely formal. Scheler argues that ethics should not be merely formal but must deal with actual deeds, actual values, actual intentions, etc. In other words, an ethical theory that deals with the phenomenological content (material) from which all moral rules is drawn.

2.2 The concept of *values*²⁶ and it's functional existence

The first affirmation Scheler tosses in this section is that values have no real existence in themselves. Explicitly, values only have a functional existence by virtue of their relationship with an existing bearer. What do we understand by this? This means that values are independent reality of the things to which they have its place. Values are considered as something that does not pertain to things. Values are essences and are objectively given. This is what we call the *functional existence*²⁷. According to this term values are inaccessible metaphysical real which means that they exist only when they are in function, namely, in human action and thought.

²⁴ Cf. A. KENNY, *A New History of Western Philosophy*, Oxford, 2010, 581.

²⁵ Cf. T.E. HILL, «Introduction», in *The Blackwell Guide to Kant's Ethics*, Chichester, UK 2009, 7.

²⁶ The center of Scheler's philosophical thought was his theory of values. Values derive its meaning from the Greek word *axios* which refers to the worthiness of being or something. For Scheler, values are universal axiological quality (essences) that can be discovered a priori. They are given through emotive intentionality a process that is proper only to human being, namely, the only possible bearer of values.

²⁷ M. FRINGS, *The Mind*, 24. I would like to note that the term *functional existence* as such does not belong to Max Scheler. It is Manfred Frings who usually uses this term to explain the nature of the values.

We can appeal to the analogy of color to illustrate the way values are given and how the functional existence works. For instance, suppose I have a *red* object in my hand. I see its color, namely, red. I see red because that color is spread all over the object. Now, what I see is not really the red itself but the object in color red. Hence, I see its *redness* through a sort of functional existence, that is, by the help of the object in which the color is present. The functional existence of the color depends on the presence of the object. The same thing we can say about values, according to Scheler, just as colors exist when they are in function in any material objects also values exist as real and objective independently from the things we see. For Scheler, there is no creation of values, they are sensed and discovered.

Further, Scheler explicates that the value-being of an object preceded perception, that is, the reality of values exists prior to knowing. Values could only be felt, just as color can be seen. On the other hand, Scheler claims, pure reason could not intuit values simply because the mind could only recognize values in a hierarchy after they had been experienced. For instance, I see an object that pleases me, and I call it beautiful. Now, it follows that «even if we assume that beautiful is not just in the eye of the person who experience it or the beholder, but exists as a property of a beautiful object it is because I perceive the thing as beautiful and that I come to know what beautiful is»²⁸. Hence, the reality of values is prior to knowing it.

2.3 Values and good

Scheler criticizes Kant for considering values to be abstracted from good. Here we see another difference between them. According to Scheler, we understand better the nature of values by its relation to what we call good, however, sustains that these two are not the same thing. The value is not the same thing as good. For him, value is an ideal entity that has its own way of being that is independent of what we think, of what we feel, of the things we like. It exists independently from the subject. He explains:

No more than the names of colors refer to mere properties of corporeal things-notwithstanding the fact that appearances of colors in the natural standpoint come to our attention only insofar as they function as a means for distinguishing various

²⁸ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 9.

corporeal, *thinglike* unities- do the names of vales refer to mere properties of the *thinglike* unities that we call goods²⁹.

The point he is trying to exemplify here is that values are different from good. For instance, let us say that I have a friend, now my friend is considered to be the good that makes me possibly understand what the value of friendship is all about. The good serves as an instrument for one to realize the value of friendship, while the value of friendship does not identify with my friend himself. I live the friendship we have but friendship is not exactly the person himself. This is to say that there are good in this world that makes present certain values.

Thus, we can emphasize two important points in this sense. First, is that, values are distinct from the objects of desire or good that serves as their bearers. Second, we can values are independent of the things that caused them to be felt. This means that a particular value could be experienced with a variability of objects. Scheler puts it this way:

A good is related to a value-quality as a thing is to the qualities that fulfill its properties. This implies that we must distinguish between goods and mere values which things have and which belong to things. Goods have no foundation in things such that in order for them to be goods they must first be things. Rather, a good represents a *thinglike* unity of value qualities or value-complexes which is founded in a specific basic value. *Thinglikeness*, not *the* thing, is present in a good³⁰.

Thus, we cannot admit that *good* can be regarded as mere valuable things because if we understand well the essence of good we will see that its value does not appear to be placed on a thing or object but on the contrary, namely, that good thoroughly infused by values.³¹

2.4 Hierarchy of values

There exists a hierarchy of values that is *a priori*, unchanging, and independent of objective things³². Each of us responds to the world of values in

²⁹ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 12.

³⁰ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 20.

³¹ Cf. M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 22.

³² Scheler asserts that value-qualities do not change with the changes that occur in things because the quality of values is something unchangeable, something immutable and universal. They are essences. Values are ideal entities that exist independently from the things that we know. They are objectivity, they make part of the world, and they are absolute and unchanging.

our own way. However, not all values have same weight and priority, some are more important than others. But when we speak of the hierarchy, we do not mean to devalue other qualities. Every value-modality in the ranks is important. The idea here is simply to reveal that there is a level of importance among values and not to show that other values are less important. Values can be classified into two groups, namely, *positive* and *negative* and one value cannot be both positive and negative at the same time.

Now, Scheler speaks of different value-modalities. He asserts that these value-modalities are the most important a priori relations obtain as an order of ranks among systems of qualities of non-formal values³³. These modalities, namely, *sensible*, *utility*, *vital*, *spiritual*, and *religious* values have their own a priori order of ranks that precedes their series of qualities. He explains it this way saying: «the ultimate division of value-qualities [...] must be as independent of all factual goods and special organizations of living beings of all factual goods and the order of the ranks of the value-modalities»³⁴.

The order of ranks is valid for good of correlative values because it is valid for the values of good. As he puts it, the order is, «the modality of vital values is higher than that of the agreeable and the disagreeable (sensible); the modality of spiritual values is higher than that of vital values; the modality of the holy (religious) is higher than that of spiritual values»³⁵.

2.5 Moral values

It is interesting that we do not find any moral values in Scheler's proposed model. So, what could be the reason why Scheler does not introduce the moral values in the hierarchy? Maybe the term *introduce* would be too strong because it is not really to introduce it but to construct properly the values within the hierarchy of values.

Scheler does not include moral values in the hierarchy because it cannot be found in there. Let us try to explain what he means by it. For instance, when we choose to go to somewhere like church, for instance, instead of going to play basketball, we can realize moral values. How? Well, going to church could denote religious value while going to play basketball could implies a sort of

³³ Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 104.

³⁴ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 105.

³⁵ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 110.

vital value. Between the two activities, whatever choice we make we can somehow find moral values in it. Thus, the said activities lead us to the realization of a certain moral value. That is why moral values are not found in the hierarchy.

Now, the difficulty comes in, would it not be the same when we choose “voluntarily” to be just, merciful or simply just to be peaceful instead of something pleasurable like vital values? Scheler would say that we cannot choose moral values directly as an object of our behavior otherwise this would be a sort of *phariseism*. Accordingly, «good and evil are purely temporal phenomena and emotive instances of what phenomenological vocabulary calls passive synthesis. As such, the essences of good and evil are not objects»³⁶. Therefore, such moral values could never be objective; we cannot construct objects for our values directly.

Finally Scheler tells us that the vehicle for attaining higher moral status is by what he calls “exemplar”, an ideal but nonexistent model of values. For instance, we follow as our example the person of Jesus or a saint such as Mother Theresa of Calcutta who we all know has been a role model for the entire humanity. This is what Scheler calls the *exemplars of persons*. Consequently, there are five ideal exemplars of personhood that correspond to the value-modalities. These are, in descending order of the value-modalities: the saint, the genius, the hero, the leading mind of civilization and the master in the art of living. These exemplars become vehicle for attaining a higher moral status. The existence of these five exemplars is the same with the existence of values, namely, of functional existence. This means that they exist only in the purpose of the pure outlines of personhood with a certain person in a historical era.

2.6 The act of preferring

We have seen earlier that emotive a priori pertains to the heights of the value ranks and to the positive and negative values of each rank. At this point we try to see how a priori of self-givenness of value-meanings is to be understood. Accordingly, «the self-given value a priori lies in the unmediated *act of preferring*, which is the foundation of the feelings of values. Only values given in acts of preferring can be felt»³⁷. The act of preference here must be

³⁶ M. FRINGS, *The Mind*, 190.

³⁷ E. KELLY, *Material Ethics*, 32.

understood as the emotional cognitive act that gives us the relative height of a value as feeling gives its content. Scheler explains:

This *preferring* occurs immediately on the basis of the felt value-material and independent of its thing-bearers. It does not presuppose pictorial goal-contents or contents of purposes, whereas choosing does. [...], therefore, preferring belongs to the sphere of value-cognition, not the sphere of striving³⁸.

All values stand essentially in an order of ranks, in relation to others, higher or lower and these relations are comprehensible only in preferring them or in rejecting them. Scheler is somehow showing here that we have access to the objective values, and it is up to us on how we are going to deal with it through preferring.

When we say *preferring*, we do not mean of choosing specific values directly, but it is more of a spontaneous “leaning toward” something. Accordingly, «this leaning toward is not found upon reason. It seats in the heart, the *ordo amoris*, whose reasons have logic of their own. Good and evil do not belong to the five value-ranks. They are not intentional referents that»³⁹. Again, we do not choose what values are we going to tag to ourselves otherwise it will become a sort of phariseism. Moreover, the *act of preferring* is not the same with the act of *placing after*⁴⁰. Scheler says that the proof to this is that we can choose only between actions. On the other hand, we can prefer one good to another, good idea to bad, good place to bad place etc.

3.- Scheler's phenomenology of the Person

At the heart of Scheler's system lies the problem of the human person. Scheler's theory of the person may sound strange for those who come from the classical anthropology in which the person is commonly define as a substantial unity of entities. For Scheler, to be a person is not the same as to have a soul or even to have selfhood.

Here, everything is different. Scheler presents us a stratified understanding of the human nature: the concept of the person involves maturity and complete

³⁸ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 260.

³⁹ M. FRINGS, *The Mind*, 190.

⁴⁰ Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 260.

powers of judging and choosing. For him, the person is not a substance in this kind of the term. In fact, he wants to criticize, in the first place, the traditional conception of the person as merely substance. For him, as persons we must understand that we have the access to the world of values (values=essences) not only by means of intellectual capacity but by our affective and emotive propensities, and that is something especial. Persons are unique entities. Scheler believes that the human being is the original and only bearer of these values and because the moral value of all acts refers primarily to acting person since only human persons bear themselves a material value.

On the other hand, we must admit also that Scheler's anthropology is somehow not that easy to understand because in some instances he speaks of the person by referring to what does *not* constitute the person. For instance, he argues that the person is not a rational will, not an object, not an ego, not a world etc. He sometimes examines the being of the person not in a conventional way in order to arrive at his point. However, what remains clear is that Scheler establishes his theory of the person by going against any *substantialist* and *actualist's* point of view.

3.1 Person and reason

Once more, Scheler's concept of the person can be understood better by setting it in relation to Kant's because it is what caused him to develop his own anthropology. At the beginning of section *Person and reason* in his *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, Scheler immediately criticizes Kant for holding that the being of the person as a logical subject, or as an *X* of intellectual activity and will. He sustains that it is not proper to designate the person simply as a rational because, according to him, rationality is not the totality of the person. Hence, the person cannot be reduced simply as a logical *subject of rational acts*⁴¹.

The person is more than its rational capacity. Hence, Scheler would criticize Kant's idea of the person as a rational subject because according to him it lacks phenomenological content and therefore, is something unacceptable. In particular, he criticizes Kant for holding that in every act of perception, imagination, etc., there is an *I think* presupposed, in which the *I* is the condition

⁴¹ Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 371.

for the unity and identity of the object, which is by virtue of the *I* identified⁴². Scheler argues,

Instead of *first* showing what the essence of the person with its special unity consists in and then demonstrating that rational activity belongs to this essence, it is assumed that the being of the person is nothing but, and exhausts itself in, a point of departure, some X of a lawful rational will or a practical rational activity. Whatever a being called a person, for example, a certain human being [...], may be beyond this point of departure of lawful rational acts cannot serve as a foundation for the being of the person⁴³.

It follows then that the person must not be identified merely as a subject of a rational activity. Anything beyond this definition would restrict or even relatively destroy the being of the person⁴⁴. The person is more than the reason, he has *heart*, and he has emotions. Scheler asserts also that, «the person must never be considered a *thing* or a *substance* with faculties and powers [...] the person is, rather, the immediately co-experienced unity of experiencing [...] is not merely though a thing behind and outside what is immediately experienced»⁴⁵.

The person for Scheler is, thus, *the unity of all acts*, the center of acts and the person exists in the measure of complying these acts. At some point, we can say that he agrees with Kant when he sustains the idea that the person are ends in themselves and can never be used merely as means. Kant underlines that the person cannot be treated as a thing or a means. Up to this point, Scheler is in accordance with Kant since the idea behind it promotes the value and dignity of the person. However, for Scheler defining person as merely rational or as a logical subject of acts would leads to the consequences that every concretization of the idea of the person in a concrete person coincides at once with a depersonalization. For, «that which is called person, namely, that 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»⁴⁶.

Scheler sustains that the being of the person is never exhausted in being a logical subject of rational activity of certain lawfulness no matter how his being must otherwise be more precisely conceived, and no matter how wrong it is to

⁴² Cf., M. FRINGS, *Max Scheler*, 133-134.

⁴³ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 371.

⁴⁴ Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 371.

⁴⁵ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 371.

⁴⁶ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 371.

conceive of this being as a thing or a substance. Also, he adds that the person could not even be obedient to the moral law. Why?, because the being of the person is also the foundation of any obedience. He would argue that the duty is a sign of a certain imperfection because someone who experiment to fulfill the duty may encounter in himself resistance in confronting what is good. Indeed, the person is morally good without involving in this kind of compliance to this resistance that one must overcome.

Moreover, Scheler emphasizes that Kant does not really speaks of the autonomy of the person but of the reason. He said that, «if we analyze it well Kant's definition of the rational person does not suppose autonomy but *logonomy* and at the same time extreme *heteronomy* of the person»⁴⁷. Accordingly, Kant's definition of the person does not leads to the autonomy or dignity of the person. Therefore, the person is being reduced to just a merely subject of rational activity. On the other hand, for Scheler, «the person is much rather the concrete unity of acts whether emotional or intellectual, which is not in itself objective. This follows that the person is only revealed in its actions. The person should not be reduced to a mere subject of practical rationality, a *homo noumenon*»⁴⁸.

Nevertheless, the theme of autonomy becomes complicated in Kant when he affirms that the awareness of the law is what makes the autonomy of the person. Even with this, it is not really autonomy. It is not me what I do. But I am autonomous because I tie myself up with autonomy to respect it. This is the foundation of human dignity for Kant. Now, contrary to Kant's position Scheler withstands that also material ethics of value could establish the autonomy of the person because, for instance, in the hierarchy of values it is *autonomically* being discovered and being sensed.

Scheler maintains that we cannot reduce the person to an instance of a reason which is universal. The person is not only a matter of will or reason, but also of *heart*. The heart would be the center of the person. He argues that ethics does not subordinate the person in his subjective states if not being hypothesizes that which value to be value. Also, he says that if one follows the objective

⁴⁷ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 372.

⁴⁸ According to Scheler, «Kant's idea of *homo noumenon* is nothing but the concept of the unknowable constant thing in itself applied to man. The same unknowable constant also pertains, without any inner possibility of differentiation, to every plant and every rock», M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 373.

hierarchy of values then it could be enough already. The person becomes good when correspond to the hierarchy of values. The person gets the proper essence like center of acts complied but not in a substantial sense, not even a sort of *actualist* type but in the middle of it. Hence, for Scheler, Kant's position is lacking concreteness to justify to the individuality of the person. As a result, the person is not equivalent to the transcendental reason of Kant because, if the person is merely a sort of a rational principle, it would not be possible to admit the individuality of the person, which at this point should be sought in the body or in the psychic functions. Indeed, he is determined that the supreme principle of morality cannot rests on reason alone.

3.2 Person and the ego of transcendental apperception

Scheler began his treatise on this matter by criticizing Kant who holds that the identity of the object is derived from the ego. He argues:

Egoness cannot be determined or delineated from the being of nature through either the idea of a *logical subject* of experiential predications or temporal manifold, which at the very least belong as originally to the given of our outer intuition as well. The ego cannot be made a condition of an object in any possible sense of the term. [...], the ego itself is, rather, only an object among objects. Its identity exists only insofar as identity is an essential characteristic of the object⁴⁹.

The ego for Scheler cannot be a condition for the possibility of objects, since it is itself an object and it cannot be considered identical to the person⁵⁰. This is a starting point. He sees a contradiction in Kant's definition saying that «for if the object is nothing but something identifiable, the *ego* whose own identity is supposedly the very condition of the object cannot be an object»⁵¹. Anyway, when we say *ego* in Kant, we do not mean that ego is a logical abstraction or not real. Instead, the ego is the subject of thinking. In the ego lies all the basis of thinking.

Another reason by which Scheler disagrees with Kant is that Kant's understanding of the individuality of the ego of experience appears to be limited

⁴⁹ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 375.

⁵⁰ Cf., P. BLOSSER, «Scheler's Person Against Its Kantian Background», in SCHNECK, S., *Max Scheler's Acting Persons: New Perspective*, New York 2002, 47.

⁵¹ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 375.

to the determination given in this stream of inner appearances. For Scheler, Kant's transcendental and moral conceptions of the ego have a very wide sense⁵². He claims that anyone who wants to refer to something from the sphere of essence as transcendental must consequently also speak of a transcendental individual ego, which is a particular material content of intuition.

Nevertheless, for Scheler the ego is «a positive datum of immediate phenomenological intuition quite independent of the factual contents of inner perception»⁵³. He is firm in maintaining that the ego does not really define the nature of the person, the ego alone cannot be the foundation for the constitution of the human being as a conscious being.

3.3 Person and act

In a very particular way Max Scheler defines the person saying:

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 and hating, ect.). The being of the person is therefore the foundation of all essentially different acts. But all this depends on a correct understanding of the relation which we call foundation⁵⁴.

By this definition Scheler is saying that the person is the concrete unity of acts, which is not in itself objective. In other words, the person is only revealed in its actions. Hence, the person not only represents the supreme of moral values but gives them as well the radical meaning of it. Here we see the nucleus of the essence of the person for Scheler. He disputes that the person is the center of acts and exists in the measure of complying these acts. In other words, the person is the only foundation for the realization of different kinds of acts and it is the ultimate presupposition for the coming into existence of all acts. Remember that his position is always in the middle between the “substantialist” and the “actualist” positions.

Further, he argues that, «the person is not only the sum of all acts, performed and to be performed, nor is it an object or substance behind such

⁵² Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 377.

⁵³ P. BLOSSER, «Scheler's Person Against Its Kantian Background», 47-48.

⁵⁴ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 383.

acts. The sphere of the person is *in* every act and experiences itself only as act-pursuing and act performing»⁵⁵. Hence, while the entire person is in every act, the person, at the same time, differs in and through every different act without being exhausted in any of these acts.

This description is quite unclear. However, Scheler stresses that this point of the varying of the person in order to show that the person cannot be connected with rationalistic construction of a substance or be treated as a thing⁵⁶. The person exists solely in the pursuance of his acts. This should be understood just as the person does not exist above or below the acts he performs. Thus, the person exists as long as he experiments himself as an soul that brings his acts to fulfillment. For Scheler, the unity of the person is not a simple sum of acts, rather it serves as the base of the multiple acts of a spiritual nature which exists only as long as they are acts of a specific person.

3.4 Person and object

The central point of this section is to show that the being of the person is never equivalent and not reducible to an object because it is an inadequate definition of the person to reduce it to an object. To introduce this section Scheler tries to differentiate the *ego* from the *acts*. He contends that «egoness is an object of formless intuition, and the individual ego an object of inner person. In contrast to this, an act is never an object»⁵⁷.

In this way, we can say that the act is not an object, thus, the person who lives in the execution of acts can never be considered as an object as well. Now, since what constitutes a person is his executions of all acts then it is important to differentiate the *acts* from what we call *functions*. Scheler would argue that these must be differentiate to each other because these two are not the same thing. He says:

All functions are ego-functions which means that they never belong to the sphere of the person. Functions are psychic; acts are non-psychic. Acts are executed; functions happen by themselves. Functions necessarily require a lived body and an environment to which the appearances of functions belong. But with the person

⁵⁵ M. FRINGS, *Max Scheler*, 134.

⁵⁶ Cf. M. FRINGS, *Max Scheler*, 134.

⁵⁷ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 386.

and acts we do not posit a lived body; and to the person there corresponds a world, not an environment. Acts spring from the person into time; functions are facts in phenomenal time and can be measured indirectly by coordinating their phenomenal time-relations with measurable lengths of time of appearances given in functions themselves⁵⁸.

Thus, *acts* originate in the person and pass into the phenomenal world of time while *functions* belong to the phenomenal world of time and are the instrument through which acts are brought into connection with objects⁵⁹. For instance, the function of seeing or hearing is some of the functions of the person that help persons to know something through sensibility. However, we cannot say that I perform my functions. When I hear something, I simply hear it I am not performing my functions as a person in this way. On the other hand, when we speak of *acts* we speak of performing something. I do something, for instance, the act of forgiving, of knowing, etc. Hence, functions and acts are two different things.

Scheler is pointing here that the sphere of the person cannot be simply reduced to acts, neither to ego. Person for him is absolute, a self-sufficient totality. Every person is a unique being and has a unique value. The person cannot be reduced to an object. It belongs to the essence of the person to exist and to live solely in the execution of intentional act. Again, we can see here that his definition of the person can be drawn in the middle between the *actualist* and *substantialist* positions.

Moreover, Scheler argues that the person cannot be identified with the *consciousness* for they are not identical. He said that our understanding of the person and the consciousness must not be the same of Descartes' wherein Descartes identified the person with the consciousness, that is, a thinking being. He said that Descartes' definition of the consciousness «is taken to mean and imply only in the *cogitare*, so that loving, hating, feeling, willing, and their own lawfulness have their foundations in the union of the person so defined (*res cogitans*) with a body»⁶⁰.

For Scheler, first we have to be clear what we want to say when we use the term *consciousness* otherwise it can be subjected to confusions. Indeed, he

⁵⁸ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 388.

⁵⁹ Cf., H.E. LANGAN, *The Philosophy*, 8-9.

⁶⁰ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 392.

is trying to say is that this term must be carefully qualified so that we can avoid the dualistic presupposition of Descartes and Kant⁶¹. Consequently, self-consciousness is not a person if in this consciousness of itself all possible kinds of conscious activities are uniformly contained in it. Nevertheless, the person for Scheler is eminently individual, that is every man in the degree to which he is a person, is a unique being and a unique value, and thus, the person is not reducible to any object.

3.5 The person and its relation to the world

Finally, the person according to Scheler corresponds to a *world* but always its correlate. The person is never part of the *world* but always its correlate. He observes:

Just as every act belongs to a person, so also every object belongs by necessity to a world. But every world is in its essential structure a priori bound to the interconnections of essence and structure that exist for essences of things. Every world is in its essential structure a priori bound to the interconnections of essence and structure that exist for essences of things. Every world is at the same time a concrete world, but only as the *world of a person*⁶².

Essentially, he is saying that the person is not the world. The person is correlate of a *world* where he experiences himself as a correlate. There we see the difference. So, what do he mean by correlate? This correlate, accordingly, «contains an ultimate peculiarity, an original trait, belonging only to the world of this person [...], cannot be grasped in terms of essential concepts pertaining to general essences [...] it is rather, a general essential trait of all possible worlds»⁶³.

The point here is that, as stated before, for Max Scheler what defines the person is the fact that it is seen as the unity of all intentional acts, however, he argues that acts remain abstractions unless they belong to a concrete world in the same way that objects must belong to a concrete world. In this sense, the *world* in which the person finds himself is one of the important elements in the realization of its acts otherwise it is nothing but a sort of abstraction.

Further, he maintains that we cannot insist that only a single world exists and is given as such a plurality of individual person otherwise the world

⁶¹ Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 393.

⁶² Cf., M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 393.

⁶³ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 393-394.

becomes a mere idea just like in Kant's sense of the term. It is because «Kant believed that he could degrade the nature of world itself to an idea»⁶⁴. On the contrary, Scheler says that this is not acceptable because the world cannot be reduced to a merely idea because the world is always an absolute, concrete individual being.

3.6 Person-God relation and the “*ordo amoris*”

Lastly, Scheler speaks of the world-God relation. Accordingly, this reality of God has its only foundation in a positive revelation of God in a concrete person. Max Scheler observes that «if we posit one concrete world as real, it would be absurd (though not contradictory) not to posit the idea of a concrete spirit (*Geistes*)»⁶⁵. However, only a concrete person according to the definition and condition given by Scheler can posit the idea of God.

It is important, however, to clarify as Scheler himself did in this section that he does not intend to speak of the nature of God, in the sense of providing a proof of God's existence. Rather, his intention of speaking God here is simply to relate it with the idea of microcosm and macrocosm. Hence, we will not be dealing with any demonstration of God's existence. Basically, Scheler just wants to underscore that there exist a concrete *Spirit* which is superior, omnipotent, and is capable of guiding the instinctive forces and impulses of the person. He asserts that since the person is also a spiritual being then he has access to spiritual reality and can posit the idea of “God”.

Scheler tells us, «Only a concrete person who is in immediate communication with something corresponding to this idea, and to whom its concrete being is self-given, can posit the idea of God as real; philosophy can never do so»⁶⁶. Hence, the person, who is fundamentally spiritual, reaches the completeness of his being when he exercises the superior faculties of the spirit. The person for Scheler is, thus, essentially spiritual and the function of spirit we call “self-consciousness” arises and takes the form of *personhood*.

Now, what would term spirit mean in the *schelerian* context? *Spirit* in this sense is objectivity, that is, the capacity of being determined by the objective nature of things. For Scheler, what constitutes the fundamental sign of the human spirit is the act of *ideation* or the ability to separate essence and

⁶⁴ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 394.

⁶⁵ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 396.

⁶⁶ M. SCHELER, *Formalism*, 396.

existence⁶⁷. Spirit does not consist of intelligence and the faculty of choice, is a new principle and is totally different from nature. The acts which the spirit generates are not functions of a self- they are non-mental (but not thereby physical) because acts are committed whereas mental functions occurs. *Spirit* opens us to the world. Man recognizes that there is a different reality outside him and is able to grasp themselves as persons in a coherent world.⁶⁸

Also, by being spiritual, a person lives his life in a constant tension towards the absolute, in openness to God, the supreme source of love. This consideration, namely, the openness of the person to God gives the person himself an absolute dignity, independent of any modulation or potentiality for self-manifestation.

Therefore, for Scheler the person is not merely a rational will or a logical subject, not simply a body, the person is not the soul, the person is not a substance, the person is not the world, the person is not a man in a sense that it compose of the simple unity of psycho-physics. The person is *essentially spiritual*, hence, is not reducible to any positivistic, naturalistic and biological interpretation⁶⁹. This is a very important affirmation on the nature of the person that Scheler gives us because it implies the absoluteness of value and dignity of the person. Nevertheless, this essential characteristic of the person makes persons capable of transcending every duality all of their psychic functions through the order of love because he has an absolute status, unique.

Finally, for Scheler, the person is called to be with others in a community. Now, the relationship among them within a community is based on understanding and participation that is realized in the relationship of love. Love in this context serves as «the tendency or, depending on the circumstances, the act that tries to bring everything in the direction of the fullness of value that is proper to it; and it succeeds effectively in such intention if there are no impediments»⁷⁰. Remember that for Scheler a person is more a loving being than a thinking being and is capable of trusting. The wisdom of love is more than the love of wisdom.

Accordingly, within every social unit, love constitutes the highest level of emotional life of an intentional act wherein the core of moral value rests upon.

⁶⁷ Cf. I.M. BOCHENSKI, «A Note on the Author», in M. SCHELER, *On the Eternal in Man*, New Jersey 2010, 475.

⁶⁸ Cf. I.M. BOCHENSKI, «A Note on the Author», 475.

⁶⁹ Cf. A. LAMBERTINO, *Max Scheler: Fondazione fenomenologica dell'etica dei valori*, Firenze 1997, 443.

⁷⁰ E. SIMONOTTI, *Ordo Amoris*, Morcelliana, Brescia, 2008, 69. My own translation.

The ethical value of a person is displayed to us when we share in the consummation of his loving act. Thus, in a way, love determines the moral dispositions of the person and the foundation of all possible intersubjective relationships could be found in it.

For Scheler, only love allows the total comprehension of the other and could define the whole of human personality. Again, love in this context is very important since moral disposition is somehow determined by it. Hence, to love a person means not wanting it different from what it is, but to love it for whatever it represents. Scheler speaks of the genuine love. Genuine love is always a love for a person and never loves for a value as such; is loving and not fixing the gaze on the person because it has these or it has that property or because it expounds these or those activities. It is genuine in as much as that love which in its object co-embodies those properties, activities, qualities, for the fact that they belong to this individual person. Scheler argues that only this kind of love is absolute because it does not depend on the possible change of these properties, activities, or qualities. Therefore, love goes through and beyond the value of the person. It is directed toward the person as reality. Love serves as the key to understand the complex reality of the person; is a common point of unity, that is, the order of love is the center of human reality, since the particular disposition of the heart and the specific realization of love constitute in the deepest way the most intimate personal identity of man.

Thus, love allows us to overcome the limits that any *positivistic*, *naturalistic* and *biological* interpretation imposed on the person by some modern thinkers⁷¹. Only through the concept of love can the person overcome all forms of objectification and of things that would spoil its essential structure. Scheler explains:

Man's love is only something particular, indeed a partial function of a universal force that acts effectively in everything and towards everything. Love has always been for us, dynamically, a becoming, a growth, a development of things in the direction of an original image, which is placed in God. Every phase of this growth of the intimate value of things, which love produces, is therefore always a place of rest, an intermediate situation, even if not yet so far on the road that goes from the world to God⁷².

⁷¹ Cf. M.T. PANSELA, *La posizione dell'uomo nel cosmo*, Roma 1997, 22.

⁷² E. SIMONOTTI, *Ordo amoris*, 69. My own translation.

Scheler claims that every love is a love directed God. Thus, the particular love we experience, a love that remains on the level of simple infatuation, a love that is partial receives its completeness only in God. We can love anything, such as material things or any sort but in the end every love that we experience is in reality a love for God and would always be directed to God. Hence, the order of love is the hearts of the order of the world understood as an order constituted by God, and, in the same order we also find the *person*.

4. Conclusion

We have seen how Scheler makes use of phenomenology by means of which he epitomized a different and a new view of values, emotive sphere and the person, and thereby, staked out a new approach in his ethical theory. The phenomenology exemplified by Scheler is indeed significant in many ways. Somehow, he was able to revive the *a priori* knowledge as something real and universal. He was able to recognize too more domains of a priori knowledge given that the traditional understanding of the mental sphere has been limited to only sensorial and rational categories. He demonstrates that a sort of *emotive a priori* is also possible. Hence, *a priori* in this context received a new significance and enormously enlarged field of application and from it, we can say, that the way to metaphysics stood open once more.

As an "emotionalist", Scheler establishes that it is possible to justify a non-formal ethics of values even in an objective and emotive a priori sense. By means of phenomenological approach he demonstrates the relevance and the important role of the emotive character in ethics and in the evaluation of the moral experience. First, it is important because the emotive sphere serves as a motivation for the person's actions. That is, the life of affection, emotions, passions, love, and anger can become motivations to act or not to act. It serves as a motivation to respond or not to respond to a particular situation and this is exactly what ethics is all about, namely, the questions of how person ought to act and how a person responds to what is right or what is not; it contributes in the evaluation of the moral experience. Second, the emotive sphere prevents us not to do or not to act according to what is good. Hence, there is a positive and negative implication of it in the evaluation of the human acts, and therefore, is an important element in any ethical theory. In Aristoteles's *Nicomachean Ethics* we see an outstanding attention regarding this point. In fact, for Aristotle, the emotive sphere has a positive role in ethics in the sense that it permits us to be

sensible to the concrete good. In this way, it helps us to achieve good through our acts. Aristotle would agree that there is a motivation in the sensibility to perceive the concrete good.

Therefore, any ethical theory must be a combination of both material and formal aspects. As Karol Wojtyła would say that we should not deny the relevance of the normative and formal elements in ethics because it also serves as a means in the evaluation of moral experience⁷³. Ethical theory then must be a combination of the two, namely of *formal* (Kant) and *material* or *non-formal* (Scheler). The idea is that we need to avoid one-sided position because both aspects are essential in the evaluation of moral experience. We must see human dignity not only in rational consciousness with the emphasis on self-determination but also in virtuous actions because the moral experience of a human person is an important manifestation of whom a person is.

On the other hand, we cannot deny that Scheler's concept of the person may be limited to some extents, limited in the sense that the development of his ethical theory as a whole was very dependent on his personal experiences. This is the reason why, somehow, it risks the validity of his ethical theory. In particular, we can observe that he was not able to succeed in solving, in a satisfactory way, the basic question of the relation between value and being. That is, the arguments presented by him do not allow us to capture the causal relationship of the person with respect to ethical values. We cannot even affirm anything about the way in which acts proceed causally from the person and the way in which ethical values linked to these acts depend causally from the subject.

In many instances it seems that Scheler's language does not suffice to describe what he really wants to say about the being of the person. For instance, his definition of being virtues as "the immediate experienced power to do something that out to be done", if we take it in a literal sense it follows that physically incapacitated persons cannot be virtuous since they are lacking the supremacy to actualize their acts. The same thing with his definition of the person as "*a concrete and essential unity of acts*" because it implies that a disabled person in this sense is not considered as a person because they are not in the possession of all acts which constitutes a person.

Yet, his emphasis on the *spiritual* nature of the person is commendable because it opens the person to the world. He demonstrates how the human being

⁷³ Cf. J. MERECKI, «Verso l'etica empirica e normativa», in K. WOJTYŁA, *Metafisica della persona: tutte le opere filosofiche e saggi integrativi*, Milano 2003, 251-262.

has in himself an incomparable value and dignity which comes from this being essentially "spiritual". This emphasis allows us to overcome the limits that any *positivistic*, *naturalistic* and *biological* interpretation imposed on the person. Scheler integrates all the dimensions of human life seeing the biological and spiritual reality complement each other because he believes that a person is the synthesis of these two. Moreover, human being possesses freedom, is free in the face of the surrounding world and is capable of objectivity for he recognizes that there is a different reality outside him; is able to focus upon the being-thus of things themselves, and not only on those things that have significance for the physiological and psychic drives. Also, humans are able to collect themselves and the world, that is, to grasp themselves as persons in a coherent world. In this way the function of spirit we call "self-consciousness" arises and takes the form of *personhood*.

Nonetheless, we can conclude that Scheler's *personalism*, though may be limited to some extents has become a major voice in the formulation of ethical theories in our time and marks a revolution in the history of philosophical anthropology.