

5-1-2013

# Scheler's Phenomenological Ontology of Value: Implications and Reflections for Ethical Theory

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SCHELER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY OF VALUE: IMPLICATIONS & REFLECTIONS  
FOR ETHICAL THEORY

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B.A. Philosophy and Political Science, Slippery Rock University, 2003  
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A Dissertation  
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Doctorate in Philosophy

Philosophy Department in the Graduate School  
Southern Illinois University Carbondale  
May 2013

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

SCHELER'S PHENOMENOLOGICAL ONTOLOGY OF VALUE: IMPLICATIONS AND ETHICAL  
REFLECTIONS FOR MORAL PHILOSOPHY

By

J. Edward Hackett

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In the field of Philosophy

Approved by:

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6 December 2013

AN ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION OF

J. Edward Hackett, for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Philosophy, presented on December 6, 2012 at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: Scheler's Phenomenological Ontology of Value: Implications and Reflections for Ethical Theory

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Kenneth W. Stickers

My dissertation provides the first comprehensive account of what values are in Max Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics* (*Formalism* hereafter). As a phenomenologist, Scheler did not attempt to invent a new ontological language to describe value experience clearly as Heidegger invented for his fundamental ontology of *Dasein*. In so doing, Scheler's phenomenological descriptions often use metaphysically rich language and in so doing, Scheler generates ambiguity surrounding what he most sought to make clear, value. To remedy this confusion, I argue that Scheler's concept of *Aktsein* can supply an ontological understanding of value given the dearth of a clear ontological explanation of value in his phenomenological period culminating in the *Formalism*. This inquiry is divided into three chapters.

In Chapter 1, I explain the central concepts in his phenomenology of value at root in the *Formalism*. I both explain and reveal the central ambiguities in the *Formalism*. For the most part, Chapter 1 is expository and develops an interpretation of the central ambiguities in Scheler's phenomenology of value.

In Chapter 2, I problematize these central ambiguities and take note of when and where phenomenology collapses into ontology. This transition can best be made clear in his *Idealismus und Realismus* essays where Scheler explicates the structure of being-in-an-act at the very moment he "ontologizes" phenomenology. In addition to that moment in this

work, I make analogies to Heidegger's phenomenology as a way into ontology. By making specific analogies to being-in-an-act and being-in-the-world, I show how the similar ontological tendencies in Heidegger provide us with a way to regard Scheler's *Aktsein*. In making this analogy, I do not reduce Scheler's phenomenological ontology to Heidegger, but instead put them into dialogue with each other revealing the solution of Scheler's ontology of value is realized in the act-intentionality of love. When I draw my conclusions both from the analysis of the *Idealismus und Realismus* essays and Heidegger, I label Scheler's ontological account of value: participatory realism.

In Chapter 3, participatory realism is, then, put into contact with philosophers from the emotivist tradition. I define the emotivist tradition to include a noncognitivist interpretation of David Hume, A. J. Ayer and C. L. Stevenson. While I could have been content to seek out a solution to this ambiguity in Scheler's work and conclude the merits of my interpretation, I am a firm believer in Scheler's position as a solution to the problem of value ontology. As such, participatory realism's uniqueness and merit are better served by putting it into contact with another decided alternative. Given that the analytic tradition had supplied emotivism as a view that connects the emotions with value-experience, it seemed only fitting that Scheler could call into question a dominant answer to value ontology and further clarify the resources Scheler brings to bear on the problem itself.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A philosophical education and the motivation from peers, colleagues, mentors, teachers and everyone in my life is a product of many voices present in my soul. There have been many voices from the earliest days where I caught the “bug” to philosophize at Slippery Rock University, the transition to scholar during my Masters at Simon Fraser University and to the refinement and culmination in my PhD at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. This infection only grew to the point that without proper attention, I could not be the philosopher I am without acknowledging so many.

I am indebted to Evan Tiffany at Simon Fraser University for permitting the phenomenological infection, and to encourage my growth despite my proclivity to reading “Continental philosophy.” Without his tutelage and mentorship, I would never have succeeded elsewhere. The friendship of so many at SFU has been very rewarding to this day, and the education I have received in analytic philosophy has made me a better scholar.

At Southern Illinois University, my heart belongs to the entire department. The Philosophy Department has always provided an encouraging atmosphere to work and teach. There are a few muses to whom I am especially thankful. In no particular order, let me thank them wholeheartedly. In Randall Auxier, I have found a tenacious honesty about the facts of the profession, and encouraging discussions of professional development. I am indebted to all members of my committee: Sara Beardsworth, Stephen Tyman, and Mark Amos.

Next, I cannot thank Kenneth Stickers enough. Ken devoted innumerable hours and meetings both during the semester and summer hours. His comments and insight into Scheler permeate these pages. His generous spirit and commanding presence will always

be a source of inspiration in my life, and I am thankful to be one of his students. In addition, I have received feedback from many that have read sections of this work. The few conversations I have had with Eric Mohr's engagement with Scheler have been very thought-provoking.

In many ways, I am thankful for the scholarship on Scheler prior to my arrival. The work that inspired this dissertation is taken from Philip Blosser and Eugene Kelly whose clarity in the Scheler literature cannot be rivaled. Both of them reveal how philosophers can traverse disciplinary boundaries and the necessity of doing so with such a dynamic and systematic thinker.

Finally, there are many threads of support from my family. I am thankful to my mother-in-law "Cam" Terrago. She has never wavered in confidence in me despite stealing her daughter away to Canada for three years. I am especially grateful to my mother and father. They have always been supportive of my efforts, and encouraged me to study whatever major I wanted no matter what. My mother's tenderness and my father's courage are continually rejuvenating.

For my wife, the center of all things blissful: I could not have done this without her. There is so much I owe to her. We have traversed North America in my philosophical journey, and it is plainly clear that without her nothing is possible.

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## INTRODUCTION

Several years removed from my earlier analytic days, this work arose in the very same ambition with which I started my PhD studies. I found myself thinking that before moral theorizing could formulate conceptions of agency and value, a moral phenomenology needed to account for these concepts. At the time I made this discovery, I became increasingly aware that Max Scheler had already employed phenomenology to disclose the structure of values as experienced. Rather than reinventing the wheel, I set out to read Scheler's magnum opus, *Formalism in Ethics and the Non-Formal Ethics of Value: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. What I found in Scheler is a provocative thinker who had pushed phenomenology as far as anyone could to describe values as such in terms of their givenness in emotional intuition. Scheler had successfully bridged the gap between value and their concretion in action, but in so doing, the descriptions fell short in one way. Scheler's *Formalism* had articulated the modes of givenness inherent in experiencing values, but it had never provided a satisfactory account of value ontology despite the heavy-handed metaphysical and theological language used to describe value. Despite these ambiguities, Scheler does describe "value" as "being-in-an-act" (*Aktsein*) thus providing this as a clue regarding the ontological status of values. Therefore, it is my thesis that if we understand what being-in-an-act (*Aktsein*) is in Scheler's thought, we can then see how that concept opens up an insight into Scheler's ontology of value and offer an insight into the ontology of value elsewhere.

The impetus of asking about the ontology of value resides in a desire to understand the heart of reality. Reality always befuddles us, especially with the mysterious presentation of values. Values are seen, following Mackie, as a queer property. As Mackie

puts it, "If there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe."<sup>1</sup> For values are supposed to feature in things or in our judgment, yet they do so only indirectly. They are not overt structures like physical properties, yet we have a host of ethical terms in our language that often make sense of them as if they were properties. In our daily life, we apply this language without much thought: "right," "wrong," "fair," "just," "good," and "evil" just to name a few. Moreover, in our employment of value language, we constantly evaluate others, things and actions and justify relating to all of them in a certain way. It is, therefore, undeniable that values permeate the field of human experience, but the clarity of their sheer existence is a constant focus and attention of moral philosophers since Plato, who famously conceived values as Forms.

Most philosophical answers to the problem of value ontology proceed to impose either an ontological interpretation about values prior to the normative theorizing in the case of skepticism, or consider the ontological problem after the fact of experiencing value while still presupposing an ontological interpretation of it. Furthermore, proponents of value theory are not skeptical that values exist and attempt to ground values in a comprehensive strategy consistent with the philosophical baggage necessary to arrive at their proposed normative standard for moral deliberation. Therefore, utilitarianism for example will impose its psychological interpretation of human preferences consistent with its reduction of value to pleasure/pain-state calculations. In these terms, utilitarianism commits itself to a hedonic conception of the good, a doctrine of human nature and the codifiability thesis that morality is best understood as a set of optimal consequences. In

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<sup>1</sup> J. L Mackie, *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), 38.

such theories, the ontological interpretation of value is already presupposed in an interpretation of human nature. However, we want more from moral theorizing than simply expressing logical consistency with our presupposed metaphysical commitments. Instead, we want our moral theorizing to unpack conceptual features of value with an eye to how they are experienced. Otherwise, moral theorizing has no intellectual purchase. We might as well abandon moral theory the moment it gives up trying to reveal aspects of practical moral experience as it is lived. In this way, moral theory should be efficacious and elucidate how values are first experienced, and the ontology of those values should be no different. Hence, the phenomenological dictum of this work and all my other subsequent works in which phenomenology and moral philosophy commingle: Any problem in metaethics or normative ethics must first be brought to phenomenological description in order that the problem be rendered clearer than the suppositions behind its impetus.

Usually, the problem of value ontology is a strategy to bolster efforts against moral skepticism. This seems very common in analytic worries about values given the rise of naturalism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and its quasi-orthodoxy held by many moral philosophers today. Christine Korsgaard explains this worry very well. In the *Sources of Normativity*, she says,

We seek a philosophical foundation for ethics in the first place because we are afraid that the true explanation of why we have moral beliefs and motives might not be one that sustains them.<sup>2</sup>

Here, Korsgaard's foundation has a similar sense I intend by the phrase "ontology of value". As a phenomenologist, however, I want to move the search for foundations past simply worrying about concerns of the moral skeptic. What is important for my project is that we

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<sup>2</sup> Christine Korsgaard, *Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 49.

acknowledge in the history of ethics that definite strategies have been tried. Values have been substances, properties, and God's law. These responses to the ontology of value problem have all been derived from presupposed and speculative categories, and never have these approaches put experience first. In the *Formalism*, Scheler writes as if the question is decided—it is unstated and never addressed directly. Scheler is trying to work out how values appear in experience phenomenologically, and given that commitment, Scheler does not ever entertain that what he is describing will have implications for value ontology.

Therefore, the question of value ontology proves important on two fronts. First, anyone that will make appeals to values must think through what values are. Otherwise, they cannot fend off moral skepticism. Second, the past philosophers in the history of value ontology have never regarded experience as they should. Metaphysicians have always contemplated the whole of reality and thought to deduce the parts of the world. Only until the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century did we see philosophers (both American Pragmatists and European Phenomenologists) turn exclusively to experience as a resource on its own, and it is this commitment to experience-based approaches in Scheler's phenomenology that can rise to the task.

The phenomenological attention to modes of givenness and the elucidation of their accompanying descriptions offer a unique way to enter a promising bridge of interaction between analytic ethics and Continental phenomenology. The point of convergence between these two disparate traditions is that both analytic ethics and phenomenology attempt to describe the lived experience which moral theory is supposed to address. The first-person viewpoint features prominently in normative theory since these are theories

about how we ought to deliberate about exigent matters. Ethics never loses sight of the practical orientation to the first-person viewpoint. The first-person viewpoint is inherently the simultaneous starting point of phenomenology as well. Therefore, these two moments are steeped in the same beginning even if analytic ethics has always presupposed commitments prior to analyzing the structure of moral experience that vitiates a proper phenomenological articulation. Analytic ethics is at least *prima facie* phenomenological. It is therefore my intention to build off of this point of convergence.

This point of convergence explains much of the impetus of this work. There are times where I appropriate Scheler for my own efforts, and where Scheler's efforts stand on their own. Moreover, there are times where I differ in degrees from his thoughts. In the end, this work is about formulating a response to the deeply unsettling legacy of his *Formalism*, and the persisting perplexity of the ontology of value felt across philosophical boundaries and trajectories. In this way, this work is not purely about Scheler. As such, it is about the ontology of value and the Schelerian inspired account offered as a solution to the ontology of value question. I call this view ontological participatory realism. It is my hope that my interpretations of Scheler can inspire a provoking account to this question, and be a force to show Scheler's and phenomenology's relevance to moral theorizing more generally.

The problem-based approach is also the only way to approach the ontology of value in Scheler. Following the example of Manfred Frings, some might see Scheler's later speculative metaphysics as a possible place to answer this question. Such optimism about the later metaphysics is questionable, however. Scheler cannot answer questions of value ontology in his later thought. A philosophical anthropology answers the question: What is

man? And this question, more to the point, invites speculation about man's situatedness to God and the world at large. In such an undertaking, the ontology of value is overlooked. A concern with value ontology would be myopic, and subsumed in the larger concerns within his speculative metaphysics.

Scheler developed his metaphysics out of his ethics as he confesses in the "Third Preface." In the Third Preface of the *Formalism* Scheler remarked that "the reasons and intellectual motives" that "led to this [metaphysical] change" were rooted in "the idea of this work [the *Formalism*]." <sup>3</sup> Scheler arrived at his metaphysics from his ethics, not vice versa as many moral philosophers do. To understand Scheler's later metaphysics means to understand how phenomenology provides categories for later speculative thought. Therefore, my approach to develop an analysis of being-in-an-act is the most reasonable approach to Scheler when answering this question. I am looking to the phenomenological period surrounding his ethics (1911-1918) in the *Formalism*. Developing his value ontology internal to his phenomenological period will allow for a greater synthesis with his later works eventually, but that is a separate project than attempting to answer the question of Scheler's value ontology and unpacking being-in-an-act within the phenomenological period.

As the reader will see, Scheler "ontologizes" intentional acts, and this insight only comes to light when great pains are taken to analyze what Scheler means by being-in-an-act. This conception is not a phenomenological approach through and through, but an attempt at answering concerns in his later metaphysics that grow out of phenomenology. The later "movements" of spirit (*Geist*) and life-drive (*Lebensdrang*) are rooted in the

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<sup>3</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, xxvi.

ethics, but this root takes on a life of its own moving beyond the strictures of phenomenology. This observation is why I agree with some authors in the secondary literature that the later work is uncharacteristic of Scheler's earlier phenomenological work. As Eugene Kelly's emphatically put it best, Scheler's speculative metaphysics is "an unfulfilled promise, a noble ruin, a ruined torso of speculative metaphysics."<sup>4</sup>

Let me speak to this work's organization. In Chapter 1, I provide an expository sketch of those concepts necessary to understand Scheler's phenomenology of value. In so doing, I argue that many of those concepts are ontologically indeterminate. By ontological indeterminacy, I understand that the phenomenological method employed to discern the structures of value were presented as if Scheler had committed to an ontology of value already. It is not an indeterminacy in the phenomenology's very being. Instead, the indeterminacy expresses itself as an inadequately developed ontology. Phenomenological reflection on value in Scheler leaves us wanting. Therefore, I problematize areas of the *Formalism* that leave us wanting. I am especially drawn to how the pull of realism and idealism surface as a tension in Scheler's work, and this tension finds expression in how the values are ideal qualities but concretize in worldly of goods. This talk of realization is always at the heart of this problem.

In Chapter 2, I navigate through three separate but interrelated tasks. First, I show that phenomenology opens up into ontology. This turns on interpreting *Idealism and Realism*, its reflection on the participatory emphasis of persons, and the fact that Scheler provides an answer to the nature of the given. He ontologizes phenomenology and the intentional relation such that phenomenology practiced in the earlier works of the

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<sup>4</sup> Eugene Kelly, *Structure and Diversity: Studies and Reflections in the Phenomenological Philosophy of Max Scheler* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1997), 196.



*Formalism and the Nature of Sympathy* open up into an ontological space. Given that phenomenology becomes a way into ontology, analogies could not help but be made to some aspects of Heidegger's *Being and Time*. In so doing, I simultaneously make an analogy to Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*, and in Heidegger's own development generally, phenomenology leads into ontology. Thus, Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit* explains that attunement and mood are operative in the same sense that the intentional relation becomes "ontologized" in Scheler, and this ontologized relation is what I refer to as "participation," which features prominently in *On the Eternal in Man*. Being-in-the-world and being-in-an-act are very similar in many respects. They also pull apart in their very difference. Scheler's phenomenology of value appears on a different order of givenness than the horizontal givenness in Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology.

In Chapter 3, I conclude my thoughts on what I am calling ontological participatory realism. Through an analysis of the emotivists, I present Hume, Ayer and Stevenson as representing the "emotivist tradition." My appeal to the emotivist tradition lies in the simple fact that these thinkers were the only other moral philosophers in recent times to take up the relation between values and the emotions. Yet, they construe the relation between values and the emotions in very erroneous ways. Thus, the critical evaluation of my interpretation of Scheler and his relevance to the ontology of value is brought to bear. My aim is to show Scheler's relevance for this type of inquiry as well as indirectly hoping that phenomenological reflection can be revitalized for moral philosophy as a whole

## CHAPTER 1

## The Ontological Indeterminacy of Value in Scheler's *Formalism*

-Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.  
William Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Act III, Scene 1

In this chapter, I expose the dearth of clear ontological commitment on the part of Scheler with regard to value. In attempting to explain what exactly Scheler's views on the ontology of value are, we must pay attention to several things. First, I must explain the phenomenological method and its elucidation of essences in Scheler's magnum opus—*Formalism in Ethics and the Non-Formal Ethics of Value: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. This text does not provide a clear answer to the problem of the ontology of value, and this also forms the starting place of my inquiry into Scheler's thought. Next, despite the unclear commitment to ontology, Scheler provides some clues as to what that view might be in his work, "*Ordo Amoris*." Bringing the *Formalism* into relation with the "*Ordo Amoris*" will provide some clues for future interpretation about how phenomenology relates to the ontology of value, and the ontological indeterminacy of Scheler's suggestive phenomenological language.

Ultimately, this work will explore the most relevant question Scheler's thought provokes to any ethical thinker: What is Scheler's ontology of value? However, before answering that question, we must understand what the relation between phenomenology and ontology really is, and this can only start first by examining the phenomenological concepts and themes in the *Formalism* firsthand.

### 1.1 Scheler's Intuition of Essences

Scheler's conception of phenomenology is given in *Chapter 2* of the *Formalism*. On a scholarly note, Scheler's positions are very developed and nuanced. On a whole, phenomenology could be interpreted as the psychotherapeutic attempt to suspend *Drang*. Such an interpretation overall would have to account for Scheler's engagement with suffering in Buddhism and his later metaphysical commitments in philosophical anthropology. As my text only concerns the phenomenological period surrounding the *Formalismus*, I focus my efforts here.

While this analysis starts *in media res*, thrust into Scheler's phenomenology of intuited essences, there are several facts that should be in the foreground of our mind about Scheler. Scheler encountered phenomenology for the first time as a mature thinker, and therefore, while many might maintain that such notions as essence, intentionality or acts would simply be a species of Husserlian phenomenology, this is extremely erroneous. Scheler is an incredibly original thinker. Nowhere is this originality more supported and explicitly shown than in Manfred Frings entry in *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology*:

The Phenomenology of Scheler is distinct from those of other phenomenologists in several respects: Phenomenology is not to be based in a method; Phenomenology must suspend sensory data in intuition; time originates in the center of self-activity of life; consciousness presupposes the being of the person; emotive intentionality is pregiven to all other acts; the ego is an object of internal perception; and reality is resistance.<sup>5</sup>

I cannot explain these differences here, but they will arise as we proceed in this chapter and the next. Moreover, Peter Spader cites evidence that Scheler may have adopted phenomenology prior to his first meeting Husserl in 1901. Apparently, Scheler had withdrawn a half-completed book on logic with a newfound dissatisfaction of Kantian

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<sup>5</sup> M. S. Frings, "Max Scheler" in *Encyclopedia of Phenomenology* ed. Lester Embree (Dordrecht, Kluwer Publishing, 1997), 629-634. Cited here, 630.

philosophy (this is also a starting place of the *Formalism*). Scheler indicated this in correspondence. Scheler “had come to the conviction that what was given to our intuition was originally much richer in content than what could be accounted for by sensuous elements, by their derivations and by logical patterns of unification.”<sup>6</sup> This account may provides evidence that Scheler had been more open to what is given in experience.

In the *Formalism*, he outlines his concepts of the *a priori* and phenomenological intuition, or what he calls “essential intuiting” (*Wesensschau*). Scheler designates “as ‘a priori’ all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of an immediate intuitive content in the absence of any kind of positing.”<sup>7</sup> Like Husserl, phenomenology is opposed to the natural attitude and is, therefore, a special type of experience.<sup>8</sup> In the natural attitude, we regard phenomena as natural facts described by the sciences, and this attitude’s standpoint distorts how it is that phenomena are constituted when we live through them firsthand. The natural attitude reveals phenomena in terms of their non-experienced features and distorts any interpretation of the phenomena. This skewed interpretation is not what is experienced though we live in the natural attitude naively. Phenomenological description is the attempt to render elements clear that undergird and constitute experience itself *as we truly live through these elements*. Within the natural attitude, phenomena can only be described by the impersonal third-person

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<sup>6</sup> This is cited by Peter Spader in his book *Scheler’s Ethical Personalism: Its Logic, Development and Promise* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2002), 51. The translation belongs to Herbert Spiegelberg *The Phenomenological Movement 2 ed 2 vols.* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 229.

<sup>7</sup> Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and the Non-Formal Ethics of Value: A New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 48. I cite this as the *Formalism* hereafter.

<sup>8</sup> Manfred S Frings, *Max Scheler: A Concise Introduction Into A Great Thinker* (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1996), 18.

standpoint. The experiential dimension of how consciousness attends to phenomena and the constitution of meaning remain concealed in the third-personal standpoint. For example, let us consider the example of loving another. If I told my wife that *love* is merely the evolutionary adaptive strategy to facilitate human pair bonding and that we need not concern ourselves with the actual content of love as it is lived, I would seriously disregard what it means to be in love in the first place, nor does such an explanation even care to address *what it is like to be in love*.<sup>9</sup> Thus, Scheler opposes the propensity of the natural attitude to posit and take for granted the origins of meaning-constitution. Instead, meaning constitution can only be apprehended through phenomenological description that pays specific attention to what is *given* in experience. What is given in experience is how a phenomenon is lived through, and that is what phenomenologists, including Scheler, are trying to describe. Scheler differs from Husserl on this point. For Scheler, attempting a description is an attitudinal approach rather than a well-established method.

...phenomenology is neither the name of a new science nor a substitute for the word philosophy; it is the name of an attitude of spiritual seeing in which one can see or experience something which otherwise remains hidden, namely, a realm of facts of a particular kind. I say attitude, not method. A method is a goal-directed procedure for *thinking about* facts...before they have been fixed by logic, and second, of a procedure of *seeing*... That which is seen and experienced is given only in the seeing and experiencing of the act itself, in its being acted out; it appears in that act and only in it.<sup>10</sup>

For Scheler, phenomenological description is about *describing the sphere of acts in which we experience the world*. The inherent meaning is disclosed in describing act-essences, and this meaning is prior to all other cognition and experience. In such a way, the phenomenologist

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<sup>9</sup> The priority of this type of act is central to the entire sphere of moral experience in Scheler.

<sup>10</sup> Max Scheler, "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition" in *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973): 136-201. Scheler, *Phenomenology*, 137-138 here.

attempts to retrieve the “most intensely vital and most immediate contact with the world itself, that is with those things in the world with which it is concerned and these things as they are immediately given to experience.”<sup>11</sup> Experience, according to Scheler means the immediately given nature of phenomena and these phenomena revealed in act-essences “are ‘in themselves there’ *only in this act.*”<sup>12</sup> *It is only within the sphere of acts in which we have a living contact with the world*, and this work attempts to establish exactly what is at issue within being-in-an-act (*Akt-sein*) in Scheler. Only by clarifying the nature of acts will Scheler’s ontology of value be made explicit. This analysis will become clearer as I proceed.

For Scheler, the immediate apprehension of whatness/essence cannot be disclosed by scientific thinking, and the content of that apprehension is what enables our efforts to understand science. We must first, however, clarify exactly what is *given* to us in experience before we can theorize about it, or to put this in Scheler’s terms, “we can also say that essences and their interconnections are a priori ‘given’ ‘prior’ to all experience.”<sup>13</sup> This approach is not a traditional conception of the necessary precondition of experience as in Kant, or the innate idea of Descartes. Elsewhere, Scheler describes the realm of givenness as the law of acts established a priori by phenomenology “*which are a priori in nature.*”<sup>14</sup> In this way, Scheler gives priority to a phenomenological elucidation of how constitutive elements manifest or actively unfold in immanent experience. In Scheler’s case,

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<sup>11</sup> Scheler, *Phenomenology*, 138.

<sup>12</sup> Scheler, *Phenomenology*, 138. Emphasis mine.

<sup>13</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 388. The emphasis is mine, and I drew attention to this fact since the a priori in nature is directly parallel to what Heidegger will call the “existential a priori” or what others denote as the operative a priori.

this can only be done by describing “essential intuiting.” Scheler equates phenomenological intuition with phenomenological experience.<sup>15</sup>

It is through phenomenological description on experience that we have access to the essences of experience. In phenomenology, this connection between consciousness and the world is collapsed in how experience is undergone, and this is called “intentionality.” Consciousness is consciousness of something. Anytime I am fearful, I am fearful of the spider, or of some other intended object. When I perceive, I am perceiving the tree. There is no moment in which consciousness is not taking an object. Thus, we are constantly undergoing moments of intentional relation with the world, and it is phenomenology that attempts to retrieve how it is that experience is undergone by careful attention to what we intuit as given prior to any theoretical commitment. Scheler’s term for intentionality that emphasizes the constant unfolding linkage of consciousness and the world is *interconnection*.<sup>16</sup> Interconnections express the immanent intentional relation between acts and their objects.

An essence is not mysterious for the Schelerian phenomenologist. Instead, “essence” refers only to “what-ness” of a thing (*Was-sein*). For Scheler, an essence does not refer to a universal or particular concept of a thing. For example, if I have a blue thing in front of me, the essence blue is given in the universal concept of the thing as well as the particular experience of the thing in question. Therefore, the essence is the whatness that carries over into both the universal and particular conception of a thing. In this way, the phenomenological essence is neither a particular thing, or a universal abstraction or

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<sup>15</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 48.

<sup>16</sup> The translation of interconnection is *Zusammenhänge*. Essential interconnections is *Wesenzusammenhängen*.

ideality. Instead, the phenomenological essence is the mode of givenness exhibited within experience and is always of some particular object. While these modes of givenness constitute experience of the phenomenon as such, this is all Scheler wants from his initial characterization of phenomenology. Therefore, phenomenological content cannot be reified to support any particular ontology. Phenomenological description attempts to remain neutral metaphysically in relation to what it describes. This is one possible reason why Philip Blosser articulates the weakness of Scheler's thought and relationship it has acquired in relation to Heidegger's fundamental ontology. On this, Blosser writes

...the chief defect of Scheler's phenomenology, like all philosophies of value, was the weakness of his treatment of the *ontology* of values. The insufficient development of this fundamental aspect of Value Theory has left it especially vulnerable in a philosophical climate that has been distinguished, since the 1930s, by the major "growth industry" of Heideggerian ontology, making this appear probably the most critical defect of Scheler's *Formalismus*.<sup>17</sup>

Blosser is not alone in his assessment. Stephen Schneck says, "In accepting phenomenology, Scheler was already steeped in the life philosophies and was committed to an as yet undefined metaphysical position."<sup>18</sup> Both Schneck's observation about the beginning acceptance of phenomenology and Blosser's accurate description of the *Formalism* is a product of the "as yet undefined metaphysical position." This "as yet undefined metaphysical position" carries over into Scheler's later works that engage in a speculative metaphysics opened up by his phenomenological efforts in the *Formalism*. For now, it is worth bringing to light that Scheler's sense of phenomenology remains nebulous with respect to its relation to the ontology of value, and this opens spaces of inquiry in the

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<sup>17</sup> Philip Blosser, *Scheler's Critique of Kant's Ethics*, (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1995), 16. Later on in this work, I will refer to this as Blosser's Charge.

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Schneck. *Person and Polis: Max Scheler's Personalism as Political Theory* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 31.



*Formalism* to ask about what the status of the act-essences are and what ontological implications the phenomenological attitude generates for Scheler's conception of values. In passing, the eminent Scheler scholar Eugene Kelly reminds us that for Scheler, phenomenology "rescinds from questions of metaphysics...in the sense of the question: What is the nature of the given?"<sup>19</sup> This retreat could be explained as the ontological neutrality of the phenomenological attitude itself, yet I am skeptical that ontological neutrality can explain the whole story between phenomenology and ontology in Scheler's work.

Beyond Blosser's assessment, the ambiguous status of essences is tied to the phenomenological nature of experience. Scheler is against accepting an "absolute ontologism, i.e., the theory that there can be objects which according to their nature, beyond comprehension by any consciousness."<sup>20</sup> It is, therefore within the bounds of experience in that any ontology of value in Scheler could suggest itself. Like a rubber band, phenomenology then snaps back upon itself. Scheler's attitudinal approach to phenomenology cannot exceed the given. For Scheler, "value itself always must be intuitively given or must refer back to that kind of givenness."<sup>21</sup> Such a givenness can only be described through phenomenology. In accord with that realization, Scheler suggests that the "ultimate principle of phenomenology" resides in the object of phenomenological description, namely, "that there is an interconnection between the essence of the object and the essence of intentional experiencing."<sup>22</sup> *Intentional experiencing of value occurs in*

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<sup>19</sup> Eugene Kelly. *Material Ethics of Value: Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann* (Dordrecht: Springer Publishing, 2011), 17.

<sup>20</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 265.

<sup>21</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 15.

<sup>22</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 265.

*being-in-an-act*. This commitment implies that any class of objects to be discussed must occur within “a description of the kind of experience involved,” or as Scheler puts this directly, “values must be able to appear in feeling-consciousness.”<sup>23</sup> However, before we can fully explicate this interconnection we must continue to explain the tenuous nature of essences.

Essences fill out both sides of the interconnection in terms of acts. The elucidation of what-ness not only holds for perceptual acts, but also there are essences to propositions.

Whenever we have such essences and such interconnections among them, the *truth* of propositions that find their fulfillment in such essences is totally independent of the entire sphere of observation and description, as well as of what is established in inductive experience. This truth is also independent, quite obviously of all that enters into causal explanation. It can neither be verified nor refuted by this kind of “experience.”<sup>24</sup>

In other words, essences locate the interconnections between what is given originally prior to experience in act and its object. These essences are disclosed to such an extent that this *originally prior sense* is independent of the empirical determinations about experience and responsible for why empirical determinations are capable of fulfillment in the first place. Science, therefore, has its ultimate source of justification in the pure self-givenness of essential intuiting.<sup>25</sup> To put it another way, non-phenomenological experience presupposes the intuitive contents given in phenomenological experience. Those intuitive contents are the preconditioned elements that build up non-phenomenological experience and make experience intelligible. They build it up since phenomenological experience is in Scheler’s words “immanent experience.” By immanent, he means “only *what* is *intuitively* in an *act* of experiencing” and by contrast, “non-phenomenological experience is in principle an

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<sup>23</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 265

<sup>24</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 49.

<sup>25</sup> This also opens the way for science to depend on Scheler’s later revival of metaphysics.

experience through or by means of symbols and, hence *mediated* experience that never gives things “themselves’.”<sup>26</sup> This immanence is an absolute form of evidence. Here, one can notice the specific attention to acts. Being-in-an-act reveals itself in intuitive immediacy front and center. This will be a point of significance as we continue.

Whatness can only be gleaned in experiential relation to objects “which come to the fore” or come to givenness in essential intuiting. The result and clarification of essential intuiting clarifies the whatness of phenomena to the point that phenomenological facts are disclosed but without any mediation—or what Heidegger calls interpretation (*Auslegung*). In this way, Scheler describes phenomenological investigations about essential interconnections. For our purposes, it should be noted that all three essential interconnections consist *in acts*.

- (1) the essences (and their interconnections) of the *qualities* and other thing-contents (*Sachgehalte*) given in acts (things-phenomenology) (*Sächphanomenologie*);
- (2) the essences of *acts themselves* and their relations of foundation (phenomenology of acts or foundational orders);
- (3) their interconnections *between the essence of acts and those of things* [*zwischen Akt- und Sachwesenheiten*] (e.g. values are given in feeling, colors in seeing, sounds in hearing etc.)<sup>27</sup>

Husserl’s description of perception in *Ideen 1* might satisfy a type of phenomenology meant by (1). In such a phenomenology, the intentional moment of perception and the phenomenal content are revealed together. In Husserl’s case, a perceptual act always has the quality of adumbrations (*Abschattungen*). The perceptual object, the thing, is never given entirely. Instead, it is given in terms of one or several profiles facing us. In the second

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<sup>26</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 51.

<sup>27</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 71-72. The German and italics of this long passage belong to Frings and Funk.

sense, the perceptual act carries an enriched sense: the profiles gestures to the other sides that are not directly given. There is a unity of sense that is prefigured in the act of perceiving an object. When we examine the perceptual act, we are simultaneously explicitly aware of that side which is given and those that are not. Perception in Husserl's phenomenology is the founding act and exemplar case since much of his early phenomenology had epistemic motivations. In Scheler, phenomenology regards experience as primary though it is unclear whether Scheler wants to secure an ontological underpinning for his personalism from the brief treatment he gives it in the *Formalism* (though I suspect this to be the case).

A passage in Scheler's "*Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition*" provides support that phenomenological description in general has a deep connection to future ontology. "Essential connections and essences have an ontological meeting from the start...the *ontology of the spirit and world* precedes any theory of cognition."<sup>28</sup> Here, Scheler is further emphasizing that phenomenological description in its independence from causal sciences – in particular various epistemic theories of cognition – must first consider how *spirit and world are first encountered in conscious acts*. Those very same acts are accessed through the essential intuiting of the phenomenological attitude to render it clear. In this way, we can begin to see that Scheler's phenomenology is neutral with respect to describing immanent acts, but ontological implications originate in Scheler's description of the structure of acts once we start to inquire into the phenomenological scaffolding

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<sup>28</sup> Scheler, *Phenomenology*, 158. A footnote from Spader confirms the reliability of the essay *Phenomenology and a Theory of Cognition* as representative of his views about phenomenology are similar to the *Formalism* since they hail around the same time of authorship, 1913-1914. These dates are provided by Maria Scheler, editor of the *Gesammelte Werke*. See Spader, *Personalism*, 52, FN 6.

surrounding intentional acts. *It is my thesis that discerning the structure of acts in Scheler's phenomenology will help explain the indeterminate ontology of value that plagues his ethics during his phenomenological period of the Formalism.* However, before this thesis can take off, I must provide a thorough analysis of Scheler's phenomenology of value and reveal exactly where the ontological indeterminacies arise.

## **1.2 Ordo Amoris Considerations**

In the "*Ordo Amoris*," Scheler grapples with questions about "being in an act."<sup>29</sup> Specifically, Scheler attempts to describe the intelligible order of value and the functionalization of essence within acts of love. For Scheler, the *ordo amoris* is the irreducible value-preferencing in which values are first *felt* in experience. The *ordo amoris* is already inherent in our experience since value-preferencing has its source in the acts of love, and they are *given* as such. The crucial phenomenological insight to keep in mind before proceeding is that the *ordo amoris* is given. Values are intended in intentional feeling, and they are given within an order of preferencing.

In the essay, Scheler begins by describing three senses to the *ordo amoris*,

1. *Intuitive*: In this dimension, Scheler means the shell by which man perceives value qualities and values in their simplest sense.<sup>30</sup> Scheler claims we are "encased" in these value-preferences as they constitute our

2. *Normative*: This is "the knowledge of value ranking of everything which is possibly worthy of love in things in accordance with their inner values"<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Some may worry that the incomplete nature and often unsystematic nature of this text. I, however, do not find it unsystematic when viewed as an elaboration on some points one finds in the *Formalism*.

<sup>30</sup> Max Scheler, "Ordo Amoris" in *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973): 97-134. Scheler, *Ordo*, 100 here.

<sup>31</sup> *Ordo*, 97.

3. *Descriptive*: This sense discovers “the structure of the most fundamental goal-directed core of the of the person.” Scheler describes this specifically “the basic ethical formula, so to speak, by which he exists and lives morally.”

My approach puts forward that the phenomenological period of his thought can unify aspects about what he says in relation to love in both the *Formalism*, and the *Ordo Amoris*. *Ordo Amoris* stands on its own as an incomplete but ambitious statement about the objective realm of values to which the essay’s title refers. The essay also appears later than the *Formalism*, and likewise, in reading the *Ordo Amoris* into the *Formalism*, we can arrive at a better understanding of what he regarded as most important in the *Formalism*.

In the above distinctions, Scheler parses out the different senses of the *ordo amoris*. These different senses are contained in the last one. In the descriptive sense, we pick up on the fact that Scheler regarded the descriptive dimension as a coming together of the first two. The person’s goals are directed from the core of the person, and this can only be intuited from values in their simple immediate sense. Furthermore, the normative dimension recognizes how values constitute experience through intuition such that a relation occurs between what is worthy of love and us. The intuitive and normative culminate in describing how values are recognized through emotional intuition, that we have knowledge of that which is intuited and then how those values enter into experience and are capable of being described and accessed by phenomenology.

Given that phenomenology is the way into, or point of access to the *ordo amoris*, and that phenomenology in Scheler pays explicit attention to the most fundamental acts, it is only through love that we can begin to appreciate the depth of Scheler’s moral philosophy. This depth can be seen in Scheler’s first articulation. The *ordo amoris* “must be reduced, however many steps it may take to the particular structure of his acts of loving and hating,

and his capacities for the love of and hate.” Scheler continues, “it must be reduced to the *ordo amoris* which governs these acts and expresses all of man’s stirring and emotions.”<sup>32</sup> Notice the primacy of phenomenology in this investigation. This investigation requires many steps to trace back the givenness of value to its grounding act’s essence. We must peel back the layers of fulfillment and see what presents itself to us in systematic description within being-in-an-act. Accordingly, Scheler sees the *ordo amoris* as the “primary source which secretly nourishes everything emanating” from it.<sup>33</sup> More than that, the source is always attendant to every effect nature will have on us as individuals, or we on nature and other individuals. To illustrate this necessity, Scheler uses the metaphor of a shell that accompanies us no matter where we go.

Man is encased as though in a shell in the particular ranking of the simplest values and value qualities which represent the objective side of his *ordo amoris*; values which have not been shaped into things and goods. He carries this shell along with him whenever he goes and cannot escape from it no self through the windows of this shell and perceives no more of the world, of himself, or of anything else besides what these windows show him, in accordance with their position, size and color.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, Scheler thinks human existence, and all of creation is saturated first in value. For us, the *ordo amoris* is like a filter that colors how a phenomenon of life is given to us. For anything that enters into a relation with us, or anyone who enters a relation with the world does so through the *ordo amoris*. Put into Scheler’s words, “the structure and content of each man’s environment is determined” and ultimately organized according to its value-structure. Therefore, not only does this value-structure accompany us, the value-structure also does not change no matter where a man may go throughout life, although

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<sup>32</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 100.

<sup>33</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 100.

<sup>34</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 100.

Scheler will speak about conversions of the heart wherein a reordering of value occurs. The *ordo amoris* remains constant, and the fulfillment of the *ordo amoris*, as a fundamental act of love “must obey the law of formation prescribed by the value structure of the milieu.”<sup>35</sup> Accordingly, there are two theses being offered here. First, the *ordo amoris* is permanently constitutive of all other intentional acts, including willing, acting and other feelings. This permanent preceding constitutiveness is why it makes sense that we find goods attractive or are repulsed by them.<sup>36</sup> Our perception of a thing, including knowledge of it, requires that value-qualities precede perception. The allure of a rose is already established by the intersubjective unfolding of our participation in the *ordo amoris*, and, likewise, the rose is given *as* beautiful. The *ordo amoris* stands behind each case of attraction and repulsion. This insight leads directly to the second thesis.

Second, the ontological constitution of acts at the fundamental level exists outside the contingent variability of time and place. This eternality is not to say that the *ordo amoris* does not make its way through history. Love is participatory in Scheler, yet in order to understand love, we must first explain how love functions in the *ordo amoris* before grappling with some problematic distinctions in Scheler’s thought.

### **1.3 The Fundamental Nature of Love**

To be clear, the fundamental nature of love as an act and the inherent lawfulness of its structure is the *heart* of the *ordo amoris*. Up until now, love has only been hinted at, and yet at this juncture in the text, Scheler requires love to relate fate and destiny together. The world makes no sense if the environment is cut off at the heels of those acting within it. This is why I think Scheler began talking about fate and individual destiny prior to love in

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<sup>35</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 101.

<sup>36</sup> See Scheler, *Formalism*, 247.



the essay. He wished to imply a conceptual order needed for their relation, and that could only be found in a love that preceded the formation of a person's destiny whereby the person *participates* in the world.

Scheler introduces two conceptions of love: a genuine self-love and a love of self. In the latter, a love of self is seeing oneself from one's own perspective. Self-love is a perspective only from within. If I desire to seek pleasure in adultery, I only pursue what I want in terms of my own desires. In so doing, I confuse even my highest spiritual capacities – in this case the ability to love another human being intimately – with the slavish conditions of my bodily nature.

Genuine self-love reveals love's true act-essence; it concerns itself in its "ray of intention" on the "transworldly spiritual center." With simply the expression, the "ray of intention" Scheler has in mind something akin to Husserl's intentionality as "a ray of regard." Scheler is most phenomenological at this point in the essay. In focusing on the spiritual act-center, we act as if through the eyes of God Himself, not through our own eyes. In acting as if God sees us, we demonstrate the ability to see ourselves as part of a larger order—the microcosm in the macrocosm. By contrast, other moral theories have tried to capture this experience by suggesting that we can occupy a transcendental impartial standpoint, such as in Kant's categorical imperative or when we apply the greatest happiness principle in utilitarianism. These are theories about the form that our deliberations about moral matters should take. These theories assume that we can gain reflective distance in deliberation and judge what we ought to do with that reflective distance in mind. Now, I have taken this digression to highlight the significant phenomenological difference of getting at the core of the person. In Scheler, love reveals

itself in its peculiar act-structure always in relation to a given value-correlate. It can be an impersonal other, God, one's own ego, personal other, or a collective person (*Gesamtperson*). In genuine self-love, we relate to ourselves in the right type of way and we bring out the spiritual core of who we might be in relation to the larger whole. Here, the larger whole is not simply human community, though human community is experienced in this wholeness, but the whole world-order as revealed in love.

Love's peculiar structure comes into play at this point in the essay. Love is "*an act* that seeks to lead everything in the direction of the perfection proper to it and succeeds when no obstacles are present."<sup>37</sup> In this way, Scheler describes love as a movement that allows the fullness of its object to come to fruition. Nothing hinders the act of love in its movement. In this way, "love is uplifting."<sup>38</sup> Love is, therefore, an enhancement of value.<sup>39</sup> To say love is an enhancement of value is to also say that love itself is never a value for Scheler, but the act-essence in which value is given as ascending the value-rankings. Here, Scheler defines love as an act, and while it might not be clear now, we should say that love as participation and principal orientation is the movement from lower values to higher values. This movement is a movement between value spheres, but love itself is never a value. In addition, this love permeates creation, and man is only part of creation. In us, "love is a dynamic becoming, a growing, a welling up of things in the direction of their archetype, which resides in God."<sup>40</sup> All love is directed towards God, even when it is incomplete. If a man loves knowledge or the landscape, he does not reduce that love to lower values, such as those located in man's bodily nature. Instead, love enacts a growing

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<sup>37</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

<sup>38</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

<sup>39</sup> This description can be found in Part B of the *Nature of Sympathy*, e.g. 154.

<sup>40</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

effect on us that enables us to promote, bless, and assist in the loved object or other. The dynamic power and movement in love as a phenomenological experience are deeper and more primal than any other orientation we take towards the world, and they allow for the possibility of community. For Scheler, love is “a primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being abandoned itself in order to share and participate in another being’s *ens intentionale*.”<sup>41</sup> Before anything else, love awakens us to the irreducible element in others that they are *persons*. It awakens us to acting and willing in a world with others. Finally, our relation to others in the act of love is a microcosm of Scheler’s larger view of God’s participatory nature.<sup>42</sup> In Scheler’s words, the heart is a “structured counter-image of the cosmos of all possible things worthy of love...it is a microcosm of the world of values.”<sup>43</sup> This quote should be in the back of our minds as we come to understand God’s participation in the world and His basis in the dynamic unfolding of love. God is the ultimate person.

According to Scheler, love’s participatory calling in and through us issues forth from God in the direction of life’s energies. God’s creative act of love is also the origin of life’s striving—“The One, who creates them and toward whom they aspire, striving with one another within their proper and assigned limits.”<sup>44</sup> Within strife, the proper and assigned limits of creation are sustained in God’s love. This is why Scheler can maintain that the *ordo amoris* is “the core of the world-order taken as divine order.”<sup>45</sup> Our participation and ability

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<sup>41</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

<sup>42</sup> I address the phenomenon of God later on in this work. For now, I think it is best to say that God is understood phenomenologically as the unfolding movement of the act-essence of love. I also address the participation in love’s movement in the next chapter.

<sup>43</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 116.

<sup>44</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 110.

<sup>45</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 110.

to recognize love makes us the most worthy servants of God. Let me make this clearer by describing what Scheler assigns as man's proper role in the *ordo amoris*.

Before man is a thinking being or a willing being, man is a loving being. Love is a fundamental orientation that discloses the world's primordial valuation. In this sense, the *Ordo Amoris* is to be read as a phenomenological work describing features of value-experience at the precognitive and prevolitional level. In this way, we can see that Scheler regards love as primordial, and this primordially flies in the face of the success of modernity's epistemic subject that has influenced so much contemporary philosophy. For modernity attempted to establish the primacy and privilege of the epistemic subject, subordinating all other modes of orientation (and therefore the complexity of various intentional acts in emotional life) to a narrative of epistemic centeredness and mastery. Now, this is not the time to rehearse philosophical suspicion of modernity. However, it is an appropriate time to comment that Scheler distrusted a mechanistic view of nature and our relation to it brought about in the modern period.<sup>46</sup> Instead, Scheler's conception of love is a revitalizing force.<sup>47</sup> Love delimits the possible range of contact with the universe. More specifically, in love we come to comprehend "the *value-qualities and value-modalities* which man can grasp in general, and thus in things whatever they may be."<sup>48</sup> This is the core of *ordo amoris*, and love is its internal structure. Scheler thought this love permeated all,

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<sup>46</sup> In some sense, Scheler's appropriation of love as a central component of human life and for philosophy is pre-modern. Notable influences on his thinking are Augustine and St. Francis of Assisi who is especially known for his writings on love.

<sup>47</sup> For example, consider Scheler's comments about the men of the natural standpoint that associate values only in relation to their bodily needs. In the natural attitude, values are only symbolic and not indicative or gesturing towards an ontology grounded in a metaphysics of loving acts. See Scheler, *Formalism*, 267-268.

<sup>48</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 111.

His actual *ethos*, the rules of value-preference and value-depreciation, defines the structure and content of his worldview and of his knowledge and thought of the world, and in addition, his will to submit into, or be master over things. This is true of individuals and of races, of nations, of cultural orders, of peoples, of families...Within the world-order...every particular form of the human is assigned some definite range of value-qualities.<sup>49</sup>

As I have already indicated, God's love created and sustains all that is worthy of love. Being only created and finite, we do not create objects worthy of love. Instead, man's love is restricted. It recognizes the objective demand the *ordo amoris* presents and demands of us. In the above passage, this is true of all times and places for human beings, and it provides a standard by which we may say that "Love can be characterized as correct or false only because man's actual inclinations and acts of love can be in harmony or oppose the rank of ordering of what is worthy of love."<sup>50</sup> In other words, love has its own evidence in which we may find ourselves in tension what is worthy of love. Love may have limits in its occurrence. It moves us to value and higher value. Our finite condition limits the expression of this movement. Love, though, is not itself limited. As Scheler put it,

Love loves and in loving always looks beyond what it has a hand in and possesses. The driving impulse (*Triebimpuls*) which arouses it may tire out; love itself does not tire. This *sursum corda* which is the essence of love may take on fundamentally different forms at different elevations in the various regions of value.<sup>51</sup>

To illustrate love's inexhaustibility and its assistance in promoting the growth of the loved object or other, Scheler furnishes two examples. In regards to the first, Scheler describes the sensualist. The sensualist goes from one drink to another wanting to quench his thirst. He succumbs to a self-propagating unrest and is, therefore, stuck in the lower sensual sphere. For the second, Scheler describes the spiritual person. The spiritual person

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<sup>49</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 111.

<sup>50</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 111.

<sup>51</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 113.

seeks satisfaction in a cultural or spiritual object (a thing or an object). Such works always hold out the promise of their satisfaction. These cultural objects are beautiful or a spiritual object is valued for its insight into salvation. No matter how many times one has seen Shakespeare, Shakespeare does not exhaust itself; instead it urges us onward to listen.

Each experience, however, illuminates the infinitude of love and its subsequent movement. After all, love is an infinite process while we are finite and restricted to what we can love and value. In the first, the infinity of love is felt in its increased variety no matter how much unrest one feels in remaining in the sensualist sphere. In sensual experience satisfaction diminishes. In the second, the infinite gesture is felt in the “increased depth of absorption in growing fullness of one object.”<sup>52</sup> The value-experience of the *ordo amoris* in these two examples confirms what by now might be clear:

A love which is by its essence infinite, however much it is interrupted, however much it is bound to a specific organization of its bearer, demands an infinite good. Thus, the object of the idea of God (considered here from the formal side of the two predicates ‘good’ and ‘infinite form of being’) already underlies the thought of an *ordo amoris*, by reason of this essential character of love...God and only God can be the apex of the graduated pyramid of the real that which is worthy of love, at once the source and goal of the whole.<sup>53</sup>

Having the source and the whole in God indicates the objective realm of values, the *ordo amoris*, can be represented in “limitless profusion” by spiritual individuals, families, peoples and nations.<sup>54</sup> Recall that love is participatory, and that means that the *ordo amoris* is exhibited in a unique ethical history. The *ordo amoris* can manifest in a range of possibilities in a spiritual person, event, or a collective person.

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<sup>52</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 114.

<sup>53</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 114.

<sup>54</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 115.

For Scheler, the entire “*Ordo Amoris*” reaches its philosophical crescendo at this moment,

The unity of this realm of love lies, therefore, on another plane. It consists objectively in the unity of the lawful character. It consists objectively in the unity of the lawful character of its graduated constitution in the two directions of what is more and more, and what is less and less worthy of love. It consists in the strict and law-governed gradation of essential values that remains constant throughout every phase of the infinite process. On the side of human personality, this unity consists in the lawfulness and insightful preference and depreciation of values and things of worth. This lawfulness is inherent in the acts and capacities of love, and it is through this that the act of love directs itself to things in which values and things of worth come to light for our heart and spirit (*Gemüt*)<sup>55</sup>

Love is an act we experience, and it is the very movement and realization of higher values. In love, we experience the demandingness of value, and it moves us to consider higher values to achieve the givenness of the person, and its inherent value. The *act* within love has not been explained yet since the nature of intentional acts is not thoroughly dealt with here, and Scheler has paid attention to the phenomenological structure of this experience by elucidating the structure of the *ordo amoris*. In addition, Scheler has provided the mechanism or source of how love operates throughout the cosmos *beyond phenomenological consideration in individual experience*. In this way, the *Ordo Amoris* opens up the possibility for all other subsequent acts in the human experience and explains partly why Scheler finds God necessary for value-experience. Thus, in order to anticipate and interpret a future ontological ground of value in Scheler’s philosophy we must come to know what both God and human beings share. Both God and human beings share and subsist within love (or better put in Schelerian language as persons realizing love as a

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<sup>55</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 116.

being-in-an-act), and as such, this is the direction our inquiry is taking.<sup>56</sup> Before such an answer can be found within the act of love, we must undertake an explanation of 1) what act intentionality amounts to in Scheler, and 2) what act intentionality implies about persons.

In the next upcoming sections we return to an exposition of Scheler's phenomenology of value, but I wanted to pause for a moment. After engaging the *Ordo Amoris*, an appropriate analogy comes to mind. Like Kant developing his postulates of pure practical reasoning, Scheler's *Ordo Amoris* is an extension to where phenomenology in the *Formalism* potentially leads. Thus, Scheler applies the insights we are about to discuss in terms of a moral theology. As such, phenomenological influence on Scheler's thought waxes and wanes throughout the *Ordo Amoris* even though almost all aspects of the *Ordo Amoris* find earlier expression in the *Formalism*. I will return to these connections later on in this chapter. For now, I will only say that this waxing and waning reveals how ontology (even metaphysics) breaks in on phenomenology. If anything, this is the insight we should hold in our minds as we proceed.

#### **1.4 Fate and Destiny**

Scheler distinguishes among *fate*, the *milieu structure* and *individual destiny*. Fate and the environment are both anchored in the *ordo amoris*. Scheler distinguishes them only by their assigned relation to space in the case of the environment and time in the case of fate. Puzzlingly, Scheler admits that fate is not what happens in or around us. That would include everything and be everything. Instead, he defines fate as "the unity of a persisting and unvarying sense" which establishes "an essential correlation between the individual

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<sup>56</sup> While I do not say much about Scheler and God in this analysis of the *Ordo Amoris*, I address God and love in Chapter 2.



human character and the events around and within him.”<sup>57</sup> Now, Scheler is very phenomenological with this definition, but also very ambiguous. The operative concept of fate here requires the collapse between the individual human character and events in and around him. Thus, the meaning of that union emerges or comes into being only as interaction, and fate is our ability temporally to relate to the sense there is a unified lived-past and a sense to a lived-future. Hence, it is a type of valuative-orientation towards the world. Life’s course is, therefore, a harmony between world and man, and it acquires its own value. This harmony of value is unity of sense, and it achieves an emergence independent of the conjunction between man and the world. Each forms a reciprocal action on the other. It is unclear what fate is other than the emergent meaning it acquires by being lived.<sup>58</sup>

Differently from fate, Scheler introduces individual destiny. For him, individual destiny refers to a sense of *calling* inherent in the unique individual. This calling is a vocation which unfolds in participation with the *ordo amoris*. The *ordo amoris* is also individuated to a particular person. It is at this point that Scheler explicitly defines the *ordo amoris* for the first time as a “strictly objective realm independent of man, the objective order of what is worthy of love in all things, something we can recognize but cannot posit, produce or make.”<sup>59</sup> This definition provides a basis for accepting that there exists an individual destiny in each unique person. We recognize it in ourselves as a vocation. Even in the Latin, the term “vocation” originates from *vocare* the verb meaning “to call or summon.” Scheler does not think that individual destinies are properties of the unique or

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<sup>57</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 102.

<sup>58</sup> I will clarify and have more to say about value-fatedness in the next chapter.

<sup>59</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 103. This direct textual evidence implies a type of ethical non-naturalism perhaps at work in the background of Scheler’s thoughts.

collective spiritual subject, though it seems that a collective spiritual subject can have a destiny too. In his own words, a destiny signifies “the place which belongs to this one subject in the plan of the world’s salvation” and it is in this way that we are called.<sup>60</sup> Individual destinies, further, must find their place within the general framework of universal destiny, and this universal destiny, I interpret, is the plan for the world’s salvation previously mentioned. This plan requires that we share in knowing and comprehending our own calling, yet we might not know what our calling is. Someone may experience a calling to serve the Holy, and as such, the value of the holy is rooted in the *ordo amoris*. However, it is less clear in Scheler how the form of this calling gets fleshed out. I may experience this calling of the Holy to become Buddhist or Christian. The vocation unique to me is an individuated experience of my particular *ordo amoris*, and likewise a friend of mine may observe this calling unique to me. He may guide me and know me better than I know myself. I may have blundered this call to the Holy. In pursuant of this calling, I could have fallen victim to a cult, and my friend facilitates the conversion of my heart to honor what I should have valued the whole time. As such, Scheler’s use of a theological language of “calling” here is intended to discuss not the content of how these values call us, but the fact that they manifest in experience at all. Values call us.

With Scheler’s notion of fate, one might easily assume that when we claim to know our calling we could just assimilate the past into our future and become complacent to our calling. In this way, one might suggest fatalism is really at work here or at bottom some manner of existential inauthenticity. However, Scheler anticipates that thought. He largely sees that in Calvinism or in Augustine, the talk of predestination reifies destiny and

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<sup>60</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 103.

unwittingly identifies individual destiny with fate. However, both destiny and fate are completely different concepts existing on two separate orders. For Scheler, choice is determined by fate, and fate seemingly comes to identify the space and temporal sense of our environment in which we act. Therefore, fate is not determined by choice. In Scheler, fate has a structural component to it and unfolds in its own way,

Fate grows up out of life of a man or a people. As it continually nourishes itself with content and in content and in turn functionalizes the content of the preceding time. Fate shapes itself for the most part in the life of the individual or, in any case, in life of the species. And the same applies for the structure of the milieu.<sup>61</sup>

Fate is a scaffolding generated as it proceeds on its own accord. In this way, fate is confirmed and is not under our control. Instead, it grows “out of effective goal directed processes of the psycho-vital subject,” and it has no origin in a free actively judging, choosing or preferring free person.<sup>62</sup> Individual destiny is a matter of insight. Individual destiny is a “timeless and essential value-essence [*Wertwesenheit*] in the form of a personality.”<sup>63</sup> If it is our fate therefore to resist the universal destiny of man, this can only be done with the help of God.

Let me take stock as to what I have done thus far. First, I have explained individual destiny as an articulation of the calling of a unique singular individual and referred to that unique singular individual as a person. Individual destiny is mine, the very mineness [*Jemeinheit*] of my own existence in Heidegger comes to mind. Second, I have explained fate as the general intersubjective emergence of value’s meaning in the environment to which we all belong. However, Scheler is unclear how the structure of the world as value and the

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<sup>61</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 105.

<sup>62</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 106.

<sup>63</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 106.

uniqueness of the person relate in individual destiny to the environment. They are related through the fundamental and primordial nature of love. The *ordo amoris* binds them together in some way, but, as I said, that is not very clear in Scheler's essay.

### 1.5 Acts and Persons

Phenomenology looks at how human life is given to itself purged of the natural attitude. Each respective phenomenological thinker has had a term for human life revealed through phenomenological analysis: "*Dasein*" in Heidegger, "transcendental subjectivity" in Husserl, and for Scheler, the term is "*person*." Parvis Emad agrees,

Notwithstanding their unmistakable differences, major contemporary German thinkers (Husserl, Heidegger and Scheler) seem to share a common philosophical interest which can be seen in their attempt to develop a notion of man without objectivizing him.<sup>64</sup>

Among the earliest mentionings of it in the *Formalism*, Scheler defines the person following the above passage from Emad.

For the person is not a thing; nor does the person possess the nature of thingness, as is necessarily the case with all value-things. As a concrete unity of all possible acts, the person is *outside* the entire sphere of all possible "*objects*" (including the objects of internal or external perception, i.e.) psychic or physical objects); the person is, above all, outside the entire sphere of thingness, which is part of the sphere of objects. The person exists solely in pursuance of his acts.<sup>65</sup>

In other words, the phenomenological perspective describes what it is to undergo an experience from the perspective of the person. If a perspective is taken to describe experience outside the perspective of the one undergoing the experience, such a perspective uses a thing-like language. Such a perspective makes an object out of the person, and situates that person in the sphere of causal objects. For instance, if I started

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<sup>64</sup> Parvis Emad, *Person, Death and World*. in *Max Scheler: Centennial Essays* ed. Manfred Frings (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1974): 58-84, cited here 58.

<sup>65</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 29.

explaining the experience of love as a necessary adaptation to promote the propagation of the species through evolutionary psychology, I would have imposed several frameworks that objectify the experience in such an analysis and lose perspective as to *how the givenness at the level of acts is experienced*. Now recall, Scheler thinks that science receives its ultimate justification from the self-givenness of our contact with the world. In this way, science can still posit and explain as it typically does, but science is not a privileged form of inquiry. Instead, Scheler's phenomenological attitude attempts to retrieve the primordial pre-reflective content of experience as it is revealed first through emotive intuition. The person cannot be made into an object as the person is the source of meaning and content in experience. Moreover, this commitment explains why Scheler's motif emphasizes the phenomenology's priority over the sciences. As he reminds his reader at one point about the intention of the *Formalism*, "we are attempting to found psychology and ethics simultaneously in a phenomenological fashion."<sup>66</sup>

In another way, Scheler's term "the person" is a refusal to universalize and establish a theory of agency such as one might find in moral philosophy. If, for instance, I define everyone through a presupposed conception of human nature hostile to others and grounded in self-interest, I have pre-delineated all possible formations of experience before looking into experience itself. I have imposed a ready-made interpretation upon all individuals such that I prevent any vision of others as radically unique unto themselves. Now, the obvious Hobbesian example is but one in which many assumptions about human nature that seemed self-evident at the time. Hobbes assumed at the very outset what others were like in their natures, motivated by self-interest. Like all moral theorists, he painted

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<sup>66</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 201.

everyone in the same light, and all moral theories are guilty of this fact. They generalize to the whole of humanity fairly quickly, and in doing so, they make an “object” out of individuals rather than basing an ethics off of the radical uniqueness of an individual person, which Scheler will later characterize as the non-objectifiability of the person. In Kant, human beings are rationally autonomous in their ability to set ends for themselves. For the utilitarians, human beings prefer pleasure over pain and will actively seek to minimize pain if the choice presents itself between only painful outcomes. In every case, moral philosophers succumb to a vision in which the theorizing obliterates the person, de-personalizing everyone into “agents.” Instead for Scheler, the person is concrete, unique and the sole basis of experiencing. As Scheler put it,

*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, etc.) The being of the person is therefore the “foundation” of all essentially different acts.<sup>67</sup>*

The person is revealed in every act spontaneously and creatively. The person is the source of acts, but never itself an objectifiable thing. For a person is not like a thing, inert and predictable, as one might predict what happens to a round rock kicked downhill. With things, we have a concordant expectation about how a rock will act in my perception of it. We have experienced similar size rocks before in our garden, and likewise, we will have a sense of the rock’s weight simply by looking at it. This accued sense will form the anticipative apprehension we have of rocks over the course of our lives. My perception is constantly unfolding and forming these concordant expectations. I can readily move by body without foresight or deliberation when it comes to my apartment staircase. By

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<sup>67</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

contrast, concordant expectations of a person are not like the concordant sense and expectation we have of perceived rocks or the kinematically habituated movements in familiar apartment staircases. In fact, Scheler's notion of the person is the same in Husserl's "Fifth Meditation" in the *Cartesian Meditations*. The other is given to us *in the mode of its inaccessibility*. The characteristic givenness of the other is given as "what is not originally accessible."<sup>68</sup> The person outstrips our ability to ever know it, or represent it. This is why, again, for Scheler that the person is non-objectifiable. Persons are spontaneous and of spirit.

For Scheler, the person is more than a non-objectifiable concept. "Concept" is not even the word for it. Person is the unity that stands behind every possible concrete intentional act. The person is a surplus of fullness, never completely present to the point it could become an object. As Arthur Luther described,

Person is never given as a finished thing, but rather as a dynamic orientation. Person is a radically unique being lived out of the past through the present into the future, varying qualitatively in and through each executed act.<sup>69</sup>

At this point, Luther describes the ongoing unfolding dynamism of the person, and its rich fullness. The person's fullness comes to the fore in its relation to acts. Scheler agrees,

Surely the person is and experiences himself only as a being that executes acts, and he is in no sense 'behind' or 'above' acts, or something standing 'above' the execution and processes of acts, like a point at rest...The whole person is contained in every full concrete act—without being exhausted in his being in any of these acts, and without "changing" like a thing in time.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Edmund Husserl. *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* trans. Dorion Cairns (Martin Nijhoff: The Hague, 1960), 114/144.

<sup>69</sup> Arthur R Luther, "The Articulated Unity of Being in Scheler's Phenomenology: Basic Drive and Spirit" in *Max Scheler: Centennial Essays* ed. Manfred Frings (Martinus Nijhoff: The Hague, 1974): 1-42, cited here 14.

<sup>70</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

There is not a time in which a person is absent in any given act. Only a person for Scheler is capable of loving, willing, preferring and understanding the world and others. If I meet someone on the street handing out pamphlets, I cannot grasp what he is doing without seeing his very person in the activity. Yet, something escapes me. The person is non-objectifiable, When I grasp the activity of “handing out pamphlets,” I can only grasp his personal being by re-creating his cognitive and emotional life by re-feeling or co-experiencing with him. Scheler thinks this is part of everyday life. We constantly enter the cognitive and emotional life of others. When I see the man handing out pamphlets on a street corner, I might understand this is the only work he can find, and it doesn’t pay enough to afford housing. We might not entirely get this re-creation right within our own life of acts, yet we might be partially successful.

One more point should come to our attention regarding persons. In the above passage, the person is present though we experience variation and changeability. The whole person is not exhausted by changes it experiences. For Scheler, the person is atemporal. “Thus we can say that the person lives into time and executes his acts into time in becoming different. But the person does not live within phenomenal time...nor does he live in the objective time of physics.”<sup>71</sup> Instead, personal acts can only be reached by a phenomenological description of the person apart from the ego, as I have already explained above.

Let me conclude some brief observations about the ontological indeterminacy of persons.<sup>72</sup> The person forms a central concept of the *Formalism*. The subtitle of the

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<sup>71</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

<sup>72</sup> I am only making claims about the person as an individual person. It is the individual person existing in intrapersonal relationships that is at the heart of any normative theory



*Formalism* reads “a new attempt toward the foundation of an ethical personalism,” and while this focus is undoubtedly central to his efforts the sixth chapter “Formalism and the Person” does not clarify this central concept of persons very well, even though it is the one mostly devoted to it. Alongside values, the person’s atemporal persistence and inexhaustible nature seem like a hypostatization, and yet we do not have that much text to conclude even that interpretation. The atemporal inexhaustibility likely removes it from full phenomenological attention, though at the same time phenomenological description of act life is the only way to establish the person’s givenness as a unity of sense. Therefore, the concept of the person is given in phenomenologically in the act, but the ambiguity of its initial givenness delimits a full articulation of its ontological nature.<sup>73</sup>

To fully understand the significance of Scheler’s ontological indeterminacy of persons we must transition to acts.

Acts are inherently intentional in Scheler. They differ from psychic functions. In his words, “[Functions] never belong to the sphere of the person.”<sup>74</sup> Functions just happen to us as a matter of life. Functions are generated as reactions since “they happen by themselves.”<sup>75</sup> Examples of functions are: seeing, hearing, tasting etc. These functions are objectifiable since they originate in life, and thus they are part of life’s causal order. To illustrate the concept of psychic functions think about any time one listens to several noises in the background of one’s apartment. Several noises can be “on” simultaneously, and one

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of ethics. I do not intend to draw out the discussion on Scheler’s theory of the collective person (*Gesamtperson*).

<sup>73</sup> Likewise, an entire work about the inadequately developed concept of person could also be done that parallels the ambiguity of value. I plan on researching a phenomenology of person and agency after this work that takes its departure in Scheler’s thought.

<sup>74</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 388.

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 388.

can listen to many things and not even know what it is exactly one is listening to. Only by listening specifically and acknowledging the object of one's attention in listening can one know what one is hearing. In other words, the attention functionalizes the sound into an object in the presence of the sound. As such, functions can become objectifiable whereas acts are fundamentally different.

Acts, on the other hand, issue forth from spirit, and this is clearly the reason Scheler suggests the constant non-objectifiability of persons and consequence of acts. The person interjects acts into time, and this arises in the performative aspect of the intentional act. Importantly, Scheler's non-objectifiability does not mean "ego" either. The ego arises, according to Scheler, only when we describe the act of inner perception. An inner perception is a perception of the inner life of consciousness, and like Sartre in the *Transcendence of the Ego*, it is only within specific concrete attention to that inner perception that an ego appears to us. Thus, we should not confuse person and acts with anything like a transcendental ego, soul-substance, or monad. In addition, the person cannot be reduced to any particular ontic entity, and moreover, it cannot be reduced to any one particular state, function, disposition or to any psychological or biological nature. To reduce a person's givenness to any biological or psychological category is to lose phenomenological perspective altogether<sup>76</sup>, and we would lose the person's distinctly spiritual mode of givenness. This mode of givenness is at the cultural and phenomenological level in which the person experiences the whatness given in intentional acts—in other words, where the "spiritual seeing" of the phenomenological analysis is efficacious and where the answer to being-in-an-act can be seen. According to Scheler, the

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<sup>76</sup> In so doing, one would similarly commit the radical uniqueness of the person to what Levinas calls the reduction of the other to sameness.

phenomenological analysis may take place at all levels of being, from the being of the sensible all the way into the vital sphere and lived body, but Scheler reserves a place for examining the act-classes of spirit. These, he reminds, are “distinguished from the sensible sphere” and exhibit an “independent lawfulness” from the “activity of sensations.”<sup>77</sup>

Scheler’s phenomenological attention to values focuses on how values are given to us in a unique mode of intuitive apprehension in feeling acts. This givenness pertains to the act essences revealed in feeling. As such, the acts while spontaneous and issuing forth from spirit must not be confused with anything other than themselves. Their unique mode of givenness demonstrates a lawfulness far different than other typical modes of consciousness like reason. For most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many analytic philosophers construed the most basic form of experience from an epistemically-situated subject, or as reason itself. However, this is not the case in Scheler’s thought.

...there is a type of experiencing whose objects are completely inaccessible to reason; reason is as blind to them as ears and hearing are blind to colors. It is a kind of experience that leads us to genuinely objective objects and the eternal order among them, i.e., to values and the order of ranks among them, i.e., to values and the order of ranks among them. And the order and laws contained in this experience are as exact and evident as those of logic and mathematics; that is, there are evident interconnections and oppositions among values and value attitudes and among the acts of preferring etc., which are built on them...<sup>78</sup>

In other words, the acts of intentional life are rooted in emotional life, and they are the object of phenomenological analysis.

By emphasizing the primordially of emotional structures constituting human life and that reason is subordinate to them (i.e. its “blindness”), Scheler is simultaneously arguing no principle or rule of reason can convince a person to value an object or way of

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<sup>77</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 65.

<sup>78</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 255.

acting. There is no argument why I should love holiness, life, or beauty in an artwork. The blindness of reason to values is the impotence of reason itself. The acts of preferring, choosing, willing, loving and hating are therefore the primary sphere of how it is we experience life. The acts have a lawfulness demonstrated phenomenologically, and internal to themselves the acts lead to their own type of knowledge, received through *insight* apart from any other type of knowing achieved through reason. In fact, Scheler even describes the “coming of age” of a moral person as one who can differentiate one’s own acts are from those not that of another. It is only the ability to understand intuitively that the acts of intentional life represent their own lawfulness within my experience that allows one entrance into moral life.<sup>79</sup>

By contrast, one who is incapable of distinguishing one’s acts from the acts of others is incapable of moral life and therefore of being a person. Scheler describes a young adolescent who cannot discern and perceive the value content inside his own acts as the effect of contagion, cooperation, and tradition. Therefore, it is not only important that we recognize that Scheler’s phenomenology of value rests on discerning the eidetic structure of acts in emotional life, but that a level of maturity parallels the insight that being a person requires us to be open to the very structure of acts discerned in emotional life. Otherwise, one cannot be a person at all.

I am arriving at a place where Scheler’s phenomenology of value is opening up different conceptual spaces. What remains obscure, however, is how exactly the emotional life is articulated to allow for the type of lawful givenness pertaining to the different act-

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<sup>79</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 478-479. In addition, just as I said pertaining to the collective person, I do not focus on what Scheler calls “social acts.” These are acts that require the presence of the other against what Scheler observes as singularizing acts that are ways the self relates to itself in an interconnection.

feelings described in his ethics, and more ambiguities will open as we proceed. For this reason, I must transition to the important distinction between feeling-states (*zuständige Gefühle*) and intentional feeling. After that, I can articulate the levels of feeling in his system and subsequently introduce Scheler's value-rankings, their hierarchy and the special dimension of loving and hating acts.

Ontological indeterminacy remains a problem for persons and acts in Scheler's thought. This problem persists insofar as the concepts remain in a phenomenological register. Phenomenological description is never aware of the ontology of what is given, but only pays attention to the modes of what is given. The difficulty of phenomenology is, then, how long a sustaining gaze can be fixed on the modes of givenness without transitioning to the inevitable curiosity the modes of givenness invite for ontological speculation.

### **1.6 Feeling-states and Intentional Feeling**

Scheler distinguishes two levels of feeling. It is within emotional life that values are first given to us. As such, these two levels navigate the initial primordial contact we have with values. For Scheler, there are intentional feelings (*Fühlen*); these are "feelings of something" (*Fühlen von etwas*). The feeling of something is the immanent relation taken to the correlate of the emotion. It is here that values give themselves without mediation. In other words, as I said in "1.1 Scheler's Intuition of Essences," values must be able to give themselves to "feeling-consciousness." This feeling-consciousness is where values are felt and apprehended intuitively in their givenness.

By contrast, feeling-states (*Gefühlszustände*) are mediated. For example, pain is a feeling-state (*Gefühlen*). It is reactionary and is caused by something. I have to investigate why I experience the pain. The pain in my tooth is caused by the erosion of enamel and

exposure of a nerve-ending. It does not manifest immanently and immediately as one experiences value-ception (*Wertnehmung*). Accordingly, it is vitally necessary that we do not identify the givenness of values with feeling-states. Otherwise, we would lose out on the “objectivity of values.” Let me explain. If we did make that identification, then those feelings would be contingent, capable of being influenced in any number of causal ways. Hence, the division between intentional feeling and feeling-states secures the independent objectivity in the former that, without that level of feelings, we could not report on the phenomenological givenness of moral experience in general if such givenness occurred in feeling-states.

Scheler never provides a reason for these essential distinctions, but that does not mean these distinctions are inconsistent within the larger scope of Scheler’s thought. It is understandable, however, that one side of emotional life is phenomenological whereas the other side is more determinate in causal ways. Feeling-states are the perspective of human emotion revealed through the view of human life as causally related through the sciences and the empirical standpoint—that is, the “natural attitude” in Husserlian phenomenology. The natural attitude is what Sebastian Luft aptly calls “the mode of life prior to entering the sphere of phenomenology.”<sup>80</sup> Such a perspective cannot elucidate the essences that reveal themselves within the emotions. To do so, one must fundamentally shift the attitude of one’s theoretical attempts to elucidate the structure of intentional acts. In this way, intentional feelings, as we already indicated, are feelings-of-something, and phenomenology attempts to describe the significance of emotions from the first-person perspective—that is, how human life is lived before one imposes any scientific theoretical

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<sup>80</sup> Sebastian Luft, *Subjectivity and Lifeworld in Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2011), 51.

construction that assumes more than it can explain. Intentional feeling is the mode of givenness through which I first encounter values. They occur in persons and ultimately it is at the spiritual level of feeling where feelings are wholly intentional. In saying that feelings are wholly intentional at the spiritual level reveals a depth of personality experienced at that level. I will explain this more in detail later on, but needless to say, persons are made manifest in a unified sense at the highest level of intentional feeling.

Many moral philosophers have construed feelings as something that can be commanded.<sup>81</sup> Utilitarians, for instance, adopt a hedonist conception of the good. For any utilitarian, the measure of pleasurable outcomes and their maximization of pleasure over pain, or the determination of the least amount of pain between several painful outcomes. These outcomes rest on assuming that these feelings are a matter of willful choice. Moral agents apply the greatest happiness principle and locate the experience of feeling at the level of the ego. Similarly, Thomas Hobbes refers to sensations that motivate action as either appetites or aversions. We may calculate the satisfaction of these desires or impose a normative standard of deliberation upon them. However, the phenomenological interpretation of feelings cannot support that view since feelings cannot be commanded as objects of willful deliberation. We cannot determine how we will feel in any *a priori* fashion, and as Scheler has explained, it is the fact that values are given in experience, carried “on the back” of objects, actions and persons that motivate our attraction and repulsion to values.<sup>82</sup> Eugene Kelly provides a palatable example. Consider when you have

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<sup>81</sup> In Chapter 3, this will be shown in A. J. Ayer’s thought.

<sup>82</sup> *Formalism*, 27.

sugar on your tongue. The pleasant sensation of sugar on your tongue is a feeling-state. The agreeableness of sugar is a carried value that is intended by feeling.<sup>83</sup>

I do want to make one last connection in this section. While this will be thematic in the next chapter, I wanted to touch upon the fact that intentional feelings are the forms in which being-in-an-act occurs. As I have stated, this is the locus of phenomenological description. Intentional feelings are the mode of value-givenness, and what this means for a phenomenological thinker is that there is an order of evidence suggested by intentional feeling-acts. Since intentional feelings issue from spirit, they are non-objectifiable in the same way that persons are, and for Scheler, the being of an act “possesses its mode of being only in performance” of the act. Here, Scheler claims that “the being of an act does not in turn require another *cogitare*.”<sup>84</sup> According to him, there is something *given*; the act is given in terms of its performativity in human life. If we were to trace back all feeling-states, we would find that there is something given to which any phenomenon owes its justification. In terms of feeling-states, there is an intentional act-feeling that undergirds its possibility. This undergirding act-feeling is what Scheler means when he claims that no other *cogitare*, or a mode of thinking, is required. Phenomenological focus on intentional act-feeling is the first principle suggested by this order of evidence. I interpret *this first principle to be ontological*. Scheler is claiming that intentional feelings may manifest themselves as acts insofar as they are performed, and we must accept them as constitutive of human life. In this way, Scheler asserts their irreducibility and finds in their performativity a type of phenomenological evidence and knowledge distinct from the

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<sup>83</sup> For this example, see Kelly, *Material*, 31.

<sup>84</sup> Max Scheler, “Idealism and Realism” in *Selected Philosophical Essays* trans. David Lachtermann (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1973) 288-356. Cited here, 29.



empirical standpoint. It is for this reason that Scheler defines knowledge as “an ultimate, unique and underivable ontological relationship between two beings.”<sup>85</sup> In our case, this is the interconnections between acts and objects in which essences are revealed, and by “underivable,” Scheler means irreducibly constitutive in the fullest phenomenological sense.

Following this irreducibility, a methodological principle is suggested. It follows on the heels of the first. In Scheler’s own words:

Everything which ‘is’ in any sense of the possible kind of being can be analyzed in terms of its character or essence and its existence in some mode.<sup>86</sup>

In other words, methodologically, any phenomenon may be given to us in terms of how it exists *as felt*. This second principle accounts for phenomenological analysis of a phenomenon and is central to Scheler’s thought. Any being, including acts, can be articulated as it exists in lived-experience. However, Scheler admits the connection between acts and essences in the above passage through their performativity or the fact that they can appear to us in experience.<sup>87</sup> We also saw this in the very beginning, too.

Scheler starts his phenomenological project by analyzing emotional life and describing

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<sup>85</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292.

<sup>86</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292.

<sup>87</sup> A connection to pragmatism could be made here. Performativity of an act-essence comes about from our participatory nature in relation to the world. This participatory relation could emphasize the same practical orientation one maintains in the pragmatic attitude. Although, I do not think that Scheler will stop with the practical orientation, and for him, there are deeper levels of orientation we take towards the world; this might be a place where some common ground might be shared between them. Pragmatists might find the proclivity to description of lived-experience as a starting point but the over intellectualization of experience disdainful. Zachary Davis has already touched upon these themes in his *The Possibility of Phenomenology: Scheler’s Confrontation with Pragmatism* presented at March 2012 Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy meeting at Fordham University.

emotions as underivable. Scheler presents no argument for intentional feeling and its ontological underivability. Instead, intentional feeling is “irreducible,” or what the phenomenologist might indicate as “self-evident.” This implicit ontological emphasis is a central point throughout Scheler’s work. In the *Meaning of Suffering*, Scheler writes: “A certain kind of emotion presents itself in experience as something of a ‘meaning’ as a ‘sense’, in which the emotion presents certain objective evaluations of state of affairs, of an activity or of a fate that befalls us.”<sup>88</sup> In so doing, we might find fault with him on that score if he did not provide a fleshed out typology of the various levels that feeling-consciousness takes. Thus before any ontological indeterminacy can be offered on the part of the manner in which values are received in experience, we must first understand the levels of givenness in terms of feelings and then the ordered values that correspond to these feelings.

### 1.7. Stratification of Feeling

Scheler distinguishes four levels of feeling. These four levels of feeling correspond to the different levels of givenness of the value hierarchy. In other words, Scheler describes the four types of feeling that come-to-be felt as value. As he puts them,

I find this phenomenal character of the depth of feeling to be essentially connected with four well-delineated levels of feeling that correspond to the structure of our entire human experience. These are (1) *sensible feelings*, or “feelings of sensation”, (2) *feelings of the lived-body* (as states) and feelings of life (as functions), (3) *pure psychic feelings* (pure feelings of the ego), and (4) *spiritual feelings* (feelings of the personality)<sup>89</sup>

Let me describe sensible feelings and those characteristics Scheler attributes to them.

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<sup>88</sup> Max Scheler, “The Meaning of Suffering” trans. Daniel Liderbach, S.J. ed. M. S. Frings in *Max Scheler: Centennial Essays* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974): 121-163. I cite this as *Meaning* hereafter and the passage comes from 121 at the very outset.

<sup>89</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 332.

Sensible feelings are localized and extended in certain parts of the body. Scheler thinks of these sensations not as acts, or even functions as we have already outlined. Instead, these are experienced through identifiable units of organs in the lived body (*Körper*). Scheler describes them as states. They can extend throughout the body and affect more parts of the lived body. The most immediate example Scheler uses is pain, but he also includes forms of sensible agreeableness in eating, drinking, touching and lust among his other examples. In these examples, the states are never objectless, and we cannot adjust our ray of regard to them like we would intentional acts. The conjoined objects to our states can change from location to location. If I am pricked in my arm with a pin, I will experience pain, but the same would be true if I had pricked my toe. In this way, the states do not occur at the level of intentionality and therefore are outside the realm of phenomenological attention. In his words, "Purely sensible feelings therefore lack even the most primitive form of intentionality."<sup>90</sup>

Given that sensible-feelings are non-intentional, they cannot be given to the person. Instead, Scheler observes sensible feelings only relate "to the *ego* in a *doubly indirect* manner"<sup>91</sup> as psychic feelings are attached to the ego. Sensible feelings are not attached to the ego as, say, sadness, grief or woe. Moreover, these feelings do not fill out the psychophysical union of the body-ego. These feelings do not relate to the lived-body as an emotional shade. Instead, sensible feelings are given as founded on some part of the lived-body. They are passive in this respect. I experience them wherever they occur.

Finally, sensible-feelings are the lowest feelings since they are exclusively factual. They are undergone, but do not point to any emotive remembering or re-feeling as the

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<sup>90</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 333.

<sup>91</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 334.

higher feelings require. In Scheler, the love I have for a person is re-felt or re-experienced in someone else as a mutual understanding, and it is the very basis of the intersubjectivity of value. This re-feeling includes moments of any psychic feeling that I have never experienced but can nonetheless apprehend by reliving, remembering, and expecting it. Here, however, the sensible feelings are not constituted in this way. It is possible to call up from memory a sensible feeling by remembering the stimuli that gave rise to that sensible feeling. Yet, this recollected stimuli is a new sensible feeling. Only the sensations experienced relate to the object present to them even if it is recalled. We must bring to memory the sensation of being pricked by a pen to experience it anew.

Sensible feelings are so determined as states that they are not disturbed by attention to them, nor do they have any continuity of sense. To have a continuity of sense, sensible feelings would have to occur at an intentional level. "There are no interconnections of fulfillment among them."<sup>92</sup> In addition, no matter how much I focus on the experience of the pinprick pain, the pain will be the same. Likewise, sensible feelings are subjected to the changes of the environment upon us. They are the most contingent and only admit of some control. For instance, I will always encounter some objects in sensible states as agreeable, but I cannot control the fact that they will occur. I can, however, change the conditions under which I experience agreeable pleasure for instance.

Vital feelings form the second layer. They diverge significantly from sensible feelings, and therefore vital feelings cannot be reduced to sensible feelings. Phenomenological description of the various modalities of vital feeling prove that vital feelings are not a species of pleasure and displeasure. Let me explain.

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<sup>92</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 335.

First, vital feelings concern the lived-body, but Scheler observes that vital feeling participates “in the total extension of the lived body but has no special extension in it.”<sup>93</sup> Sensible feelings take place within a specific organ unit. However, vital feelings involve the whole lived-body. Vital feelings include comfort, discomfort, health, illness, fatigue, and vigor just to name a few. They involve the lived-body at a deeper level than simply pleasure. They are more unified. Vital feelings exhibit a unitary character “that does not possess the manifold form of extensionality belonging to sensible feelings.”<sup>94</sup> Though it should also be said that vital feelings may still be present in an experience while we are paying attention to sensible feeling. I may feel incredibly vigorous after a run even though I periodically experience a muscle spasm. I might not even notice the lingering sensation of pain due to the more enduring vital feeling.

Thus, the striking difference is that sensible feelings is what Scheler calls “dead states” whereas vital feelings are always functional and intentional in character. The dead states of sensible feelings only can hint at or symbolize certain states in organs and tissues of the body. Sensible feeling is remarkably different from vital feeling. Within vital feeling, we have access to so much more due to the functional and intentional character of these feelings. As Scheler puts it,

In a vital feeling, on the other hand, we feel our life itself, its “growth,” its “decline,” its “illness,” its “health,” and its “future”; i.e. something is given to us in this feeling. And this holds for both the vital feeling that is directed toward our own life and the vital feeling that is directed toward the outer world and other living beings through postfeeling and fellow feeling through vital sympathy.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 338.

<sup>94</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 339.

<sup>95</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 340.

In a very real concrete way, vital feeling is the starting place where values first are intended in feeling. We come to know a more holistic picture of our orientation in a very bodily way in relation to the physical world. Moreover, we can also pick up on the value-content of the surrounding environment. We pick up on the “freshness of the forest” and come to know “the living power of the trees”— or the nurturing power of rolling fields of wheat in Southern Illinois. Vital feeling is also the start of the foundation of feelings of community. Scheler provides the example of passionate love. In passionate love, lust is experienced as a sensible feeling. At this point, we start to help bring others to their own enhancement and fruition.

Vitality is the expressive givenness of life itself and the relation such givenness manifests in our experience with particular relevance to our bodies—this is what Scheler calls the intentional character of vital feelings. The intentional character of vital feelings is of “special importance in that vital feelings can evidentially indicate the vital *meaning of value* of events and processes within and outside my body.”<sup>96</sup> Vital feelings can indicate the sense of an event or process, and as Scheler notes, this is quite distinct from epistemic moments of comprehension and representation. Vital feelings can reveal anticipated dangers, disadvantages, or advantages in the environment, and this also further distances them from sensible feelings. Sensible feelings, as we know, require the presence of the stimuli to engender them. Vital feelings can anticipate these dangers for instance since the value of the stimuli, event or process is given prior to its arrival. In this way, Scheler finds this value-giving quality in vital feelings present in anxiety, disgust, shame, appetite,

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<sup>96</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 341.

aversion, vital sympathy, and vital aversion.<sup>97</sup> In this way, vital feelings in their anticipatory orientation share in a futural sense. They are concerned with and point to “the value of what is *coming*.”<sup>98</sup>

As we proceed up from the sensible, vital and *purely psychic feeling*, Scheler can draw more and more upon phenomenology. One could say that the feelings take on a more increasing givenness as they approach the height of the person. In ascending the stratified layers, the mode of givenness becomes more independent from the lived-body of both sensible and vital feelings. In this way, we can understand that the givenness of psychic feelings is “*originaliter* an ego-quality.” There is no necessity on the part of the givenness to enter through the lived-body, nor do psychic feelings become states by entering through the lived-body.<sup>99</sup> For example, “a deep feeling of sorrow in no way participates in extension”<sup>100</sup> as ill-feeling suggests in the lived-body on the part of its being a vital feeling. However, Scheler reminds us that the variety of the strata to which certain ego qualities are connected shares little to do with those connections. Likewise, ego-qualities can be affected by different feelings of the lived-body. I can feel sorrow about someone’s sickness if I acquire it or a similar condition. Psychic feelings are feeling-states. Moreover, Scheler reminds us that the lawfulness of psychic feelings are “subjected to their own laws of

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<sup>97</sup> I find it interesting that Scheler puts anxiety in the vital sphere whereas Heidegger has no delineated typology other than fundamental and ordinary moods to which some are more primordial than others, e.g. fear is an abstraction of anxiety as the primordial mood of human existence. Scheler does mention what the translators have called “despair” in spiritual feelings, and this is closer, if not identical, to Heideggerian anxiety.

<sup>98</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 342.

<sup>99</sup> Scheler describes spiritual feelings as being independent in their givenness. It is a confusing feature of psychic and spiritual feelings that the body is less relevant to valuing. “In the kind of their *givenness*, spiritual values have a peculiar detachment from the independence of the spheres of the lived body and the environment” Scheler, *Formalism*, 107.

<sup>100</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 342.

oscillation as are different types of feelings in general.” In other words, though there may be some connections between vital and psychic feelings, we should not forget that the psychic realm of feeling [like its spiritual counterpart to be discussed below] shares in its own irreducibly complex givenness independent from the other strata.

Finally, Scheler reaches *spiritual feelings*. These feelings can never be states, and this Scheler considers the hallmark of the difference between psychic feelings and spiritual feelings. Instead, spiritual feelings

...seem to stream forth, as it were, from the very source of spiritual acts. The light or darkness of these feelings appears to bathe everything given in the inner and outer world in these acts. They “permeate” all special contents of experience.<sup>101</sup>

In other words, spiritual feelings are candidate experiences that permeate everything in one’s field of experience. Scheler has in mind experiences like bliss, despair, serenity and peace of mind. These feelings are given to us without mediation, as I draw out in the next chapter in much the same way that Heidegger describes the fundamental mood [*Befindlichkeit*] of anxiety [*Angst*].<sup>102</sup> These feelings take possession of our whole being, and other nexuses of feelings or values can steer us away from experiencing our whole being. This possession of our whole being is why we must have no other motivating nexuses of sense to feel them, and in a direct sense we cannot feel bliss or despair. Instead, one can only *be* blissful. These feelings can only be given to us when we are in absolute possession of ourselves as ourselves. They can only be given when “we ourselves as selves” can be given to ourselves with no mediation between how the self manifests back upon the self. This reflexive manifestation of self-revealed-to-self is the core experience of a

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<sup>101</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 343.

<sup>102</sup> I draw this structure out in the next chapter.



phenomenological account of human life. For Scheler, this phenomenological account *is* the core of the *person*; only as a person can I fully be revealed to myself as myself. In this way, bliss and despair are feelings revealing personal being. These feelings have no other source than the person as the person is the foundation of these feelings. At this level, being-in-an-act shows itself in the fullest sense, even though Scheler never directly draws out this structure. The fullest sense of being-in-an-act is manifest since, Scheler believes, the highest form of feeling intends the Holy value of the person. The highest value of the person is revealed as absolute in the very sense described above as the whole self-reflecting-back-upon-its-own-self.

Scheler's brief treatment of both psychic and spiritual feelings leaves much to be desired. Both types of feeling receive only one paragraph each, and Scheler's presentation of that content leaves much to be desired. Concealed within, Scheler seems committed to the fact that persons are spontaneous and creative. They can shift their attitude phenomenologically in the higher forms of psychic and spiritual feelings, but cannot control the fact that their being and world are thoroughly saturated in feeling. Being and world are felt in Scheler, and hence why being-in-an-act is an ontological concept birthed in phenomenology. We can only *participate* in this world so saturated in feeling, and a developed ontology of value must take to heart this penultimate truth. We cannot step outside of the thoroughly saturated condition of feeling. This pre-reflective and pre-volitional saturation in feeling is the remarkable legacy of Scheler's thought. He inverts the priority of feeling over reason that has come to characterize Western philosophy since Plato.

## 1.8 The Phenomenological Language of Values in Scheler

In this section, I briefly interrupt the exposition of Scheler's phenomenological ethics to remind the reader where these efforts are headed in part by recalling the impetus that made me ask the question about the ontology of value in Scheler's thought: the ambiguities in the metaphysical and theological language in the *Formalism* surrounding value. To be specific: *essences*, *persons*, *feeling* and *value* are ontologically-salient terms, but if simply taken in a pure phenomenology of immanent interconnections, these terms remain silent about what ontological import they have for Scheler, or what ontological work they are doing beyond phenomenology.

Values carry a strange meaning in moral philosophy. Ever since Plato, we have wondered what their nature is, and in the *Formalism*, values are described as given in experience. Rather than thinking of value as propositions, or predicates in those propositions values are described as they are given to us in experience in intuitive feeling. This is what I have alluded to up until now, and the basis for taking this orientation to value through phenomenology is what makes Scheler's thought so provoking. Let me now provide a little context to the discussion underway.

Now, I have cited Blosser's charge in the opening of this work. This charge is a starting point for my engagement with Scheler. As such, if Scheler's ethics is rooted in phenomenology and his metaphysics develop out of its phenomenological root, then there is a deep-seated relation between an ontology of value and its phenomenological inception, even if this is not as clear in the beginning as I have insisted. Therefore, the ontological indeterminacy of value occurs first as a showing sign of Scheler's consistent phenomenological attitude. My charge of ontological indeterminacy takes into view a time

slice of Scheler's lack of ontology in his *Formalism*, and explaining this lack of ontology is a byproduct of remaining true to the ontological neutrality of phenomenological description itself. Despite this neutrality, however, values are constantly described in terms of their independent objectivity, intuitive givenness, and act-essences. These heavy-handed terms are inspired by adopting long-standing metaphysical and theological vocabulary that obfuscate the clear expression of values phenomenology attempts to achieve. By contrast, Heidegger's fundamental ontology *qua* phenomenology attempted to re-invent philosophical terminology and move away from a language of presence that prevented phenomenological seeing. In an alluring passage, Heidegger illuminates what he thinks the ultimate business of philosophy is.

...the ultimate business of philosophy is *to preserve the force of the most elemental words in which Dasein expresses itself* and to keep common understanding from leveling them off to that unintelligibility which functions in turn as a source of pseudo-problems.<sup>103</sup>

I love that phrase "to preserve the force of the most elemental words" in which human life can best express itself phenomenologically. We live through life in its depth and mystery. Following this depth and mystery, Heidegger has always had a poetic bent to his phenomenological orientation to human life. Some insights escape us if we do not hold fast to how we undergo and experience them firsthand. Furthermore, modes of givenness cannot be encapsulated by previous philosophical frameworks that actively avoid experience firsthand; instead, modes of givenness can only be apprehended in a phenomenological attitude. Therefore, a new vocabulary that attends to the

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<sup>103</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* trans. J. Macquarrie and E Robinson (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), 262/220. All citations hereafter of *Being and Time* will be *BT*, the translated page/followed by the Heideggerian pagination of the original. The italics and emphasis are mine here.

phenomenological mystery must be brought to the fore while at the same time not creating an "uninhibited word mysticism" as Heidegger described.<sup>104</sup> Scheler's adoption of certain phrases in his articulation of value attempts to recover and preserve the forceful elemental presence of value. In recalling Blosser's charge though, the attempt to recover and preserve the forceful presence of value falls short unless we can open phenomenological seeing to the full ontological implication has in Scheler's thought. Explicating the ontological import of being-in-an-act achieves this aim of putting elemental force into the ambiguity surrounding Scheler's conception of value.

### **1.9 Values in Experience, and Ontological Indeterminacy**

In Anglo-American ethics, if I were to talk about values, then one might think that I was talking about a class of reasons apart from other reasons, such as reasons formed by my desires or reasons of etiquette. Moral reasons are different. Moral reasons compel me to act a certain way, commanding my assent regardless of my desires, and moral reasons would apply to anyone in an identical situation. In ethics, moral reasons usually possess two conceptual features. They are overriding and impartial.<sup>105</sup> Moreover, moral reasons come to embody a type of knowledge. Hence, not only would the problem of value suggest an epistemology for moral reasons, but their ontology is a factor as well.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 242/220.

<sup>105</sup> This would not hold for deflationary accounts of moral reasoning, but holds traditionally for ethics rooted or sufficiently inspired by dichotomy between Kantian deontologists and Millian utilitarians.

<sup>106</sup> Phenomenology can often be presented as a pure method in terms of the reduction. However, the method does conceal commitments in terms of its employment in which modalities of other inquiries could take root. Certainly, Heidegger's interpretation of phenomenology as a way into ontology comes to mind. Phenomenology is also a way into epistemology. For a larger look at this prospect, see Heiner Pietersma's *Phenomenological Epistemology* (London: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Hopefully, the direction I am taking is clear. The paragraph above outlines assumptions we reject at the very outset. Since our methodology is phenomenological, then we must attempt to get underneath how values are experienced rather than attempting to adjust our intuitions for normative theoretical fit and assertion. Instead, values are described phenomenologically.

Values are “perceived” through a type of value-ception (*Wertnehmung*). Value-ception precedes perception as a fundamental and primordial relation to the world. Actions, events, things and people are already value-laden. Before me, the landscape is pleasurable or agreeable already. More strongly—even before a “landscape” is perceived, a value is felt. Actions, events, things and people are all “bearers of value.” To say that they bear value is, however, not to say that value inheres in the object like we would if we were to describe value as a property actions, events, things or people possess. Instead, values are like color. The color red is given in the object, even though we know that red is constitutive of the perceived object, but not inherent in the object. Values are given in the same way. They come almost from behind on the back of their bearers *in feeling*. A tool can be found therefore to be useful or threatening. Religious artifacts can be holy offering insight into salvation and paintings can be given as beautiful or ugly. The bearers of value must “necessarily have already brought” value-qualities “to givenness with things in order for such things to be characterized as beautiful, lovely or charming.”<sup>107</sup> In this way, values are not perceived properties, as I have explained. Instead, values are apprehended. Value is always *intuitively given* or at the very least must always refer back to this type of givenness.

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<sup>107</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 13.

While things, states of affairs and goods may be valued as such already, values are independent of their instantiation.

All values are non-formal qualities of contents possessing determinate order of ranks with respect to “higher” and “lower.” This order is independent of the form of being values enter – no matter, for instance, if they are present to us purely objective qualities, as members of value-complexes (e.g., the being-agreeable or being-beautiful of something) or as values that “a thing has.”<sup>108</sup>

The insight Scheler demonstrates is that values will still apply to a situation even if they are not present. The knowledge of wine’s value has nothing to do with its composition. This is to say that values are completely independent from the manner they are carried by their bearers. For example, “the value of friendship is not affected if my friend turns out to be a false friend and betrays me.”<sup>109</sup> The value of friendship still remains true. The value is conveyed by its absence.

Scheler distinguishes a central difference between goods and values. First, Scheler defines goods. Goods are a representation of “a ‘thing-like’ unity of value-qualities and value-complexes which are founded in a specific basic value.”<sup>110</sup> Thus, it is only in goods as concrete things that values become real, and goods are experienced in intentional act-feeling. Unlike goods, values are given as ideal objects. This ideal quality of value is why Scheler can regard them as immutable and eternal, and at several places he is committed to that view. However, these value-qualities, such as the value of the holy, must come to concretion. Following Scheler, we must reject that when values become real in goods, goods increase in value; Scheler’s position is not an identification of goods and values. We cannot reduce the concrete-thingness to a good or a good to a value itself. Likewise, the

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<sup>108</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 17.

<sup>109</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 19.

<sup>110</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 20.

common analogy of color surfaces again. Values only make their way into the world through concrete givenness in the performance of acts, within being-in-an-act.

More importantly, there lurks an ontological indeterminacy in Scheler's presentation of value. What surfaces between the value-qualities as ideal objects and their concretion is the "ontological conflict in Scheler's thought – his idealism with his realism."<sup>111</sup> This conflict is the first ontological conflict present in Scheler's thought I am taking note of the ambiguity surrounding value. On a whole, one might suspect this to be a problem for phenomenology given its history. Many phenomenologists could not follow the idealistic tendencies of Husserl's 1913 publication of *Ideen 1*. In this vein, Paul Ricoeur famously remarked that the history of phenomenology is "the history of Husserlian heresies."<sup>112</sup> Similarly, many phenomenologists opted for realism in the early Munich circle that Scheler joined while teaching at Munich from 1907-1910. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that the phenomenological attitude presents us with the conflicting tendency of idealism and realism. Values exist independently, but only appear on the back of deeds in a bearer of value. This appearing on the back of deeds finds concretion in a realist sense, though values exist independently as "ideal qualities." In this way, the ontological indeterminacy first rears its head within this tendency of phenomenology to dissolve at the borders of what is privileged on either side of the subjective or objective pole, or what we might call the tension in Scheler's thought between ideal qualities of values and their concretion in goods. I will continue with this tension between realism and idealism within Scheler's thought as we continue explaining values. I take this tension to be an animating feature of the other ontological indeterminacies I explain at the end of this chapter.

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<sup>111</sup> Kelly, *Material*, 10.

<sup>112</sup> Paul Ricoeur, *A l'Ecole de la Phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 1987), 9.

Inspired by Franz Brentano, Scheler articulates eight propositions concerning value.

These axioms explain the laws of preference when faced with two values. Let me reproduce them. The first set concerns the existence of values to be preferred.

- I. 1. The existence of a positive value is itself a positive value.
2. The non-existence of a positive value is itself a negative value.
3. The existence of a negative value is itself a negative value.
4. The non-existence of a negative value is itself a positive value

Then, Scheler describes the materialization of values. Values are realized on the back of deeds. Scheler continues.

- II. 5. Good is the value that is attached to the realization of a positive value in the sphere of willing.
6. Evil is the value that is attached to the realization of a negative value in the sphere of willing.
7. Good is the value that is attached to the realization of a higher (or the highest) value in the sphere of willing.
8. Evil is the value that is attached to the realization of a lower (lowest) value in the sphere of willing.<sup>113</sup>

In these laws of preference, they illustrate that there is “movement” between higher and lower values, but also that contained within the revealed contents in feeling, a non-formal ethics is possible. We must think of preference phenomenologically. “All that is ‘good’ and ‘evil’ is necessarily connected with acts of realization which take place with respect to (possible) acts of preferring.”<sup>114</sup> “Higher” and “lower” occur at every level of value-ranks, and these laws of preference gesture to an objectively independent order of value-ranks. Values enter feeling as the primordial contact with the world in personal acts. Though if you were to view both I. and II. apart, 1 to 4 emphasize value-qualities as ideal. Values can exist apart from their realization, though for them to have any efficaciousness in the world, they require instantiation. Therefore, one can understand how both these I. and II. relate.

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<sup>113</sup> *Formalism*, 26.

<sup>114</sup> *Formalism*, 27.



However, it is in 5 to 8 that values require instantiation, or in his words “realization.” Therefore, we can understand that existence of a value and its instantiation are quite different. Yet, they are related, the ideal flows somehow into concrete experience. For values to be efficacious, they must come into the world and be realized in some way, and this gesture indicates that coming into the world and realization is experienced in being-in-an-act. Otherwise, this formal axiology would have no purchase.

Scheler does, however, reveal another limitation in III. On this Scheler writes in the *Formalism*,

III. The criterion of “good” (“evil”) in this sphere consists in agreement (disagreement) of a value intended in the realization with a value preference, or in its disagreement (agreement) with the value placed after.<sup>115</sup>

An evil man is a person whose intended action attempts to realize a value other than what he ought to prefer. The ought-to-prefer is given in the preference such that it is impossible for him not to prefer the higher value. In this way, Scheler’s material ethics contains a kernel of Christian faith and optimism, but also limits the understanding of evil possible. In Christianity, the created world reflects God’s thorough goodness and moral perfection. Evil can only be a privation. Moreover, a man that decides only to do good for its appearance sake is not good at all. Thus, the limitation is in Scheler’s inability to fully grasp radical evil.

The ontological indeterminacy surfaces again when we take into consideration that these propositions about the laws of preferences come to surface only in relation to persons. The instantiation of, say, good and evil can only be attached to persons or put another way, they make sense only in relation to persons.<sup>116</sup> No thing is evil or good on its own. Thus, the atomic bomb is only dangerous and potentially evil by how persons will put

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<sup>115</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 27.

<sup>116</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 85.

it to use. Values enter into experience out of nowhere just like persons. Persons only come into being through acts wholly unified and so full of givenness that they are incapable of objectification. Thus, persons are disclosed only by the phenomenological realization of human life purged of the natural attitude, and in the phenomenological attitude persons can only be given in their overwhelming fullness. There is so much givenness in persons and consequently the values related to them, that the phenomenologist is overwhelmed with their givenness (being). As such, I think phenomenology only secures the ontological underpinning of what is given in Scheler's thought, and it then becomes a question for the later Scheler to inquire into the nature of the given. Accordingly, this limitation of phenomenology is my interpretation as to why the *Formalism* lacks clear expression about a value-ontology. Nowhere is this ontological indeterminacy clearer than how values mysteriously appear in acts, and no articulation of their mysterious appearance in acts to be found in Scheler's corpus. In the next chapter, I start to open up this dynamic.

### **1.10 Acts of Preference: The How of Givenness**

If I am to choose between a dangerous path and a safe one, then values enter the situation and the paths appear as safe or unsafe, agreeable or disagreeable. They come into realization from behind us. In this, we cannot dispute. Though to say they are *given* does not invite thinking of values as properties. Values can only be given to the essence and sphere of the persons involved, and when confronted between two values, the act of preference (*Vorziehen*) apprehends which is higher and which is lower. "That one value is higher than another is apprehended in a special act of value-cognition: the act of

preferring.”<sup>117</sup> In our experience, these values appear real. In Scheler’s language, they appear as “real bearers.” Moreover, preference is different than conation, choice, or willing.

The height of a value “is given not prior to preferring, but *in* preferring.”<sup>118</sup> The height of a value is therefore an evidential order intuited phenomenologically. This evidence may be *given* in two ways. First, the evidence may give us the height between one value in relation to another, and the preference made between two values, or any deliberation about them relies on this phenomenological evidence. Second, I may experience one value over another. For instance, ascetic lifestyles often require that spiritual values be placed after (*Nachsetzen*) sensual ones. In this way, the ascetic lifestyle reveals the lower value from the ascended platform of the spiritual path. Both acts of preferring are an *a priori* interconnection that leads to the same relation of value ranks.

It is important to observe that *preference is very different from the realization of values*. In this way, what we prefer is not open to deliberation, as many normative ethical theories often insist. On the one hand, Scheler describes that the realization of values “may consist in the special activity that we experience in its execution.”<sup>119</sup> In this way, choice is not preference. In some cases, the height of the value comes to us automatically such that we are not even aware of any special activity such as deliberation or choosing. “In this case a higher value comes to us as it were coming ‘by itself’ as in ‘instinctive’ preferring.”<sup>120</sup> Preference is not an act of will. Acts of will consist in choice and deliberation. Choice and deliberation pertain to the goods, not to values.

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<sup>117</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 87.

<sup>118</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 88.

<sup>119</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 89.

<sup>120</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 89.

The ordered evidence only provides how the value-height is given to us. There is no criterion offered about height in preference. Instead, a value's height depends upon the givenness of value itself.

It appears that values are "higher" the *more* they *endure* and the *less* they partake in "*extension*" and *divisibility*. They are higher the *less* they are "*founded*" through other values and "*deeper*" the "*satisfaction*" connected with feeling them. Moreover, they are higher the *less* the feeling of the is *relative* to the *positing* of a specific bearer "feeling" and "preferring."<sup>121</sup>

The higher values are less transient and more endurable than lower ones. Scheler does not mean existence over time. Instead, Scheler means an absolute and qualitative phenomenon of time. If Scheler meant objective time, then the value in question would only be contingently relevant. It would not have much weight and valence if moral life applied only to transient convenience.

Moreover, values opened up by sensible feeling, or pleasure and the vital feelings, such as health require extension in the lived-body to varying degrees. As such, the less they partake of extension and division the more there is an indication of a concretion necessary in the world. These values seem less substantial, more embodied and contingent than higher values. The implicit assumption here is the classical devaluation of the body in Christian thought for a higher, more objective and spiritual reality. Likewise, the more concretion of how values are intended in feeling, the less concretion in a lived body pertains to that givenness. By contrast, higher values are decreasingly located in the lived-body and tied to bodily extension. While this in itself may seem consistent within Scheler's often Judeo-Christian thinking, it belies the ontological indeterminacy that we have noted from before. It conceals an opposition between the realism of lived-bodies and the

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<sup>121</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 90.

Cartesianite ephemeralism of holy values and spiritual feelings. Scheler's phenomenology of value insists on the durability of the given as it is revealed in immanent acts. If these immanent acts pertain to less concrete and tangible givenness, such as non-bodily dimension of experience, then one might be skeptical that the less concrete is associated with extension and divisibility and the more stable givenness obtains at the level that is without extension.<sup>122</sup> In this regard, Scheler is similar to all other phenomenologists. For him, there consists an irreducible complexity that will be labeled more concrete than what is obvious.

The irreducibly complex nature of value itself is not entirely revealed in the act of preference. If it were entirely revealed, then we would find ourselves more susceptible ontological indeterminacy described above. Extension and concretion are pulled apart in Scheler's thought for a reason. For Scheler, preference has nothing to do with comportment and relation to values. Preference is only a proto-epistemological mode of apprehension; it is a point of initial contact, the initial beginning of the coming-to-be feltness of value. "The phenomenon of *endurance* is implicit in both the value which we are directed and **the experienced value of the act of love**; hence there is an implicit unceasing endurance."<sup>123</sup> As our earlier discussion of "love" suggests, Scheler has in mind a Christian love, *agape*. *Agape* is a freely given form of love. This love is participatory in its very structure. It opens us up to higher values, and this is the point to bring up now from the *Ordo Amoris*. Scheler's phenomenological ontology of values "ontologizes" the species of acts in which we encounter value. This focus on love is why it is so necessary to get clear on what being-in-

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<sup>122</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 93.

<sup>123</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 91. The bold-faced text is mine.

act entails.<sup>124</sup> This point should be in the back of our minds as I describe the last facet of value in Scheler's *Formalism*—that is, the ordered rank of values.

### **1.11 The Ordered Ranking of Values and Ontological Indeterminacies**

In order to arrive at this point in the work, several factors had to be explained. Let us review them. First, I had to explain Scheler's conception of phenomenology and its task to elucidate essential interconnections. Second, the *Ordo Amoris* was introduced as a backdrop for the *Formalism*. Next, the specific nature of acts and persons was shown, and that entailed working through the phenomenological basis of their non-objectifiability. Then, I introduced the distinction between feeling-states and intentional feeling, and the corresponding complexity of stratified layers of feeling. These feelings corresponded to the ordered ranking of values, described later herein. Finally, I showed what acts of preferring disclose the height of values, but left alone the fact that value-content is apprehended only in feeling.

As I have said, four types of values are introduced in the beginning of the *Formalism*. They correspond to four types of feeling. Later on, Scheler's objective value-ranks will consist of five values with Scheler adding pleasure and utility in the value modality of the agreeable and disagreeable, and this interpretation of Scheler has been advanced significantly by Frings that secondary literature recognizes it without acknowledging it as such. For now, however, I find that the four values suit our purposes. As Scheler puts it,

The order is this: the modality of vital values is higher than that of the agreeable and disagreeable; the modality of spiritual values is higher than

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<sup>124</sup> This point is, of course, the specific thesis in the next chapter connecting phenomenology as a way into Scheler's ontology of value. This ontology of value is revealed through loving act as a participatory ontological relation with the world itself.

that of vital values; the modality of the holy is higher than that of spiritual values.<sup>125</sup>

These values are the source components of all loves and hate. In addition, these values are not reducible to each other. Instead, each realm of values is given in a particular feeling-consciousness, and it is with respect to how they are given to us that we are able to formulate an order among them. We start with the lowest values: the agreeable and disagreeable.

The feelings of agreeableness and disagreeableness belong to sensible feeling. They consist in the functions of enjoyment and the feeling-state of pleasure and pain. Since animals share in these values and feelings, they are not particular to us, and as such, what is agreeable to one organism might not be agreeable to any other. However, it is an essential interconnection that what is preferable will always be agreeable. For Scheler, “the preferable is always agreeable” is a truth that surpasses all ethnological, evolutionary, or inductive experience.<sup>126</sup>

Second, there are the vital values. They belong to vital feeling. These values consist in the noble and the base and the good and the bad. Moreover, these values are rooted in a connection to the lived-body as a whole, and this is because all feeling-states in this value-modality are expressive of life in general. In other words, pleasure and pain are localizable in the lived-body. Many mistake, however, that these value-modalities can be reduced to the sensible sphere in pleasure and displeasure. For example, utilitarians in adopting a hedonic conception of value reduce the vital sphere to the sensible value-modality of the

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<sup>125</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 110. It is important to that we do not conflate the terms for spiritual feeling with spiritual value. They are not the same thing, nor do they correspond. Spiritual feelings correspond to the values of the holy whereas psychic feeling corresponds to spiritual values.

<sup>126</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 106.

useful/agreeable and thereby ignore the experienced qualitative difference vital values have over the merely sensible ones.<sup>127</sup> The vital is not reducible to the pleasurable.

Beyond the vital values, there exist the values of spirit. These values are given as independent of the body and the environment. These values are what we most think of when philosophers talk about values in philosophy. These values include the beautiful, the ugly, the true and false, right and wrong. Epistemic and aesthetic values belong here and the all too often disembodied nature of philosophical contemplation. In this value-ranking lived-bodies do not matter with respect to the givenness apprehended. Furthermore, the spiritual values prompt cognitive responses of approval and disapproval, too. The unity of these values “reveals itself in clear evidence that vital values ‘ought’ to be sacrificed for them.”<sup>128</sup> The sacrifice required is strong language. In Scheler, spiritual values are given as worthy of sacrifice of vital and sensible values. The experience of spiritual values draws one out of one’s lived body. Finally, Scheler informs us that these values are apprehended in spiritual feeling which consists of the act of preferring, loving and hating.

Finally, the highest value is the value of the holy. First, in mentioning the term “holy” Scheler reminds us, that “this modality is quite independent that has been considered holy by different peoples at various times, such as holy things, powers, persons, institutions and the like.”<sup>129</sup> The holy consists in an entirely unique form of givenness. For their givenness, holy values “appear only in objects that are given in intention as absolute objects.”<sup>130</sup> The only absolute objects that can be given as such are persons. Again, persons are non-

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<sup>127</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 107, FN 84. Scheler identifies both Kant and the utilitarians guilty of this reduction. For more information of this Kantian mistake, see the *Critique of Practical Reason*, pt 1, bk II, chapter 2.

<sup>128</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 107.

<sup>129</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 109.

<sup>130</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 108.



objectifiable and are the only noemata that can be given in such overwhelming fullness, that persons are entirely and absolutely separated in their individual uniqueness from each other.<sup>131</sup> For this reason, the self-value in the holy sphere is a value of the person.

Now, I have already explained the nature of love in “1.3 The Fundamental Nature of Love.” Scheler describes love as an act that allows us to participate in relation to others. We come to enhance the loved object by allowing it to come to fruition or in other words, we allow the person to be. In allowing it to be, one lets the person shine forth in the fullness and excess of its own givenness. Accordingly, we value persons as persons since love is the way in which we encounter them. As he put it,

The act through which we originally apprehend value of the holy is an act of a specific kind of love (whose value direction precedes and determines all pictorial representations and concepts of holy objects); that is to say, in essence the act is directed toward persons, or toward something of the form of a personal being, no matter what content or what conception of personhood is implied.<sup>132</sup>

In Scheler, love is meant as *agape*. It is never a romantic or sexual notion of love we largely mean today. As I described earlier, *Agape* is love meant in the Christian sense of sacrifice and constitutes the highest form of human conduct, especially in Western civilization, as modeled on Christ’s crucifixion. *Agape* denotes a sacrificial love. It is for this reason that Scheler models ethics and political understanding of the community off of it. For our purposes, the fact that love is the way we relate to others at the highest level of value, commits us to consider love in its elemental force. *Love is an openness through which we encounter the other as a person. In other words, the ontology of value in its highest form must bring together the participatory nature of the act of love with the world.* While love is where

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<sup>131</sup> Scheler’s notion of the absolute has much in common, I think, with the Levinasian notion of absolute indicating a wholly other absolute individuated by his/her uniqueness.

<sup>132</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 109.

we will turn to clarify the ontology of value in Scheler's thought, its articulation suffers from ontological indeterminacy.

An ontological indeterminacy surfaces for the entire ordered rank of values. What is clear is that concealed beneath the irreducible complexity of value modalities within those ranks, Scheler articulates different levels of being from the most basic biological, psychic all the way up to the spiritual levels. In this way, Scheler conceals why the foundation must proceed in that order, and why the givenness of value is internal to life and even abandons the necessity of bodily existence in the Holy. Insofar as Scheler is a phenomenological thinker, Scheler inverts the typical intuitions as to what we normally consider concrete. Following Merleau-Ponty, many regard incarnate existence as central to human experience. For Scheler, the act of love reveals the most basic, if not the most expressive quality, about what it is to be human. As such, Scheler immediately finds commonality between the content of this experience and the only other parallel where love has this similar quality, the Christian tradition. Scheler takes on the theological language for this very reason. His phenomenological description of love focuses on *agape* without ever really coming out and proclaiming it.

Scheler's phenomenology of value identifies the structures of experience by which value is experienced, but those structures are taken in a twofold way. First, there is the phenomenological orientation towards them. He describes value phenomena in their givenness, but second Scheler never links the phenomenologically-basic categories to an ontology of value. In the objectivity of those phenomenological results throughout the *Formalism*, values receive an ambiguous articulation that opens up ontological rifts that prevent any determinate answer to the question about the being of value. These rifts occur

in the articulation of value itself, e.g. "Value phenomena are, in their essence as value phenomena thoroughly independent of the distinction between the psychic and the physical."<sup>133</sup> We observed this tension already between the biological and the psychic animating both the stratification of feeling and the ordered ranking of value. According to Scheler, values exist independently of human beings as "beings endowed with spirit," yet it seems they cannot exist independently of God. In these passages, it is unclear what it means for values to exist at all. Consider another one, "'Man' as the being with the 'highest value' becomes comprehensible and phenomenologically intuitable only on the presupposition of the idea of God."<sup>134</sup> In interpreting this last passage, I do not know where to place God; the microcosm of persons is grounded in the macrocosm of God. Beyond this instance, there are a host of inadequately developed distinctions that lurk beneath the *Formalism* exposed by this analysis: idealism/realism, value as ideal qualities/goods as the realization of values, spirit/life, person/world, just to name a few.

These inadequately developed distinctions do not persist simply because phenomenology attempts to remain neutral with respect to phenomenological description of meaning-fulfillment. For Scheler, phenomenology opens up ontological spaces.<sup>135</sup> This shortcoming is no fault of Scheler, but part of the phenomenology itself. Scheler never wholly adopts a rigorous Husserlian methodology in which the exercise of phenomenological attention can fully bracket the world and await the phenomenon's fullness to be discerned. Instead, Scheler's phenomenological impetus grows naturally, almost unconsciously. Phenomenological seeing opens up eidetic seeing in others, but it

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<sup>133</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 198.

<sup>134</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 288.

<sup>135</sup> The exact manner in which Scheler opens up of ontological spaces in phenomenology will be explained in the next chapter.

can do so only for a short time before losing sight of its inability to sustain that opening due to the constraints placed upon the given: history, tradition, context and the demand for concretion itself. It is this last demand for concretion that lurks in Scheler's thought even though it does not appear so in the *Formalism* alone, and it is the source of an answer to the inadequately developed ontology of the *Formalism* itself. The answer lies in the *participatory* emphasis one finds in Scheler's account of love, love's participatory nature featured in the *Ordo Amoris*, and what being-in-an-act entails for those two works revealed in *Idealism and Realism*.

The dearth of participatory language in the *Formalism* is a noticeable difference between the *Ordo Amoris* and itself, yet it does lurk beneath the surface. Consider this one passage about the earlier dichotomy between value as ideal qualities/goods as their realization,

Values and goods by no means have objectively real efficacy. However, values as values, goods as goods and not merely things are *experientially* efficacious or motivating. They "*attract*" and "*repel*."<sup>136</sup>

In the passage above, values are still ideal. They are not real in the clearest sense that any physical object is real. However, their reality effectuates our experience. Values are experientially efficacious. As such, the experientially-efficaciousness is the sphere of that realization that requires ontological clarification and articulation. The articulation is only within experience as being-in-an-act that such an ontology would suggest itself in Scheler's thought. By focusing on being-in-an-act, we can solve the problem of value's constant ontological indeterminacy in Scheler's phenomenology.

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<sup>136</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 247.

To allay any wrongful interpretation, let me just dispel a problematic notion of ontological participation found in the Platonic tradition. First, by “ideal quality,” Scheler only means that the manner of givenness is phenomenological inasmuch as the number three, for example, is given in acts of counting. There is no Platonic *eidos* to be found here, or anywhere in Scheler’s thought, although despite elements of his thought may be distorted to suggest such an interpretation, and Scheler’s metaphysical language invites much misinterpretation. In Platonic participation, the ideal Forms are ontologically-basic to the world, and they supervene upon particulars and appearances in a top-down structure.<sup>137</sup> Like the natural-attitude thinker, however, the Platonist presupposes the validity of the Formal reality without first looking to how structures of experience and the phenomenon are given within particular experience. In this way, Scheler’s attempt to disclose the thisness (*Sosein*) of an experience prevents initial distortion of presupposing the validity of speculation. In conclusion, the realization (or what can be called the functionalization) of an act’s essence is not a Platonic participation in eternal value, despite what some of Scheler’s metaphysical language suggests. Instead, Scheler is a thoroughly committed phenomenological thinker, and within the phenomenological approach, we can find adequate resources to figure exactly how the ontology of value is situated in his thought.

In the next chapter, I link phenomenological description of these ontological indeterminacies with ontology. The link between phenomenology and ontology in Scheler’s

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<sup>137</sup> Scheler remarks even in his later metaphysics opened up by phenomenological exploration that “the fortuitous “what” of things, run from below upward in the world we live in, and not from the top down” in his *The Human Place in the Cosmos*. Trans. Manfred Frings (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University, 2009), 47. Here, the “what” in the passage is the act-essence disclosed to us by spiritual seeing of phenomenology that opens up the space for later Scheler’s ontological speculation.

thought is rendered clearer by elucidating what they have in common, the personal sphere of acts and the functionalization of essence involved in those acts, especially love and their relation to a resistant reality.

## CHAPTER 2

### Ontologizing Being-in-Act and the Phenomenological Shift to Ontology

*...for not all things have to be subsumed—certain things as autonomous realm of objects and activities, have in fact the right to decline subsumption.*  
- Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 81.

This chapter focuses on three separate but interrelated tasks. First, we ended on the ontological indeterminacy of value in Scheler's ethics, but throughout my efforts, I have hinted towards being-in-an-act as key to understanding the ontological status of value. Being-in-an-act is the key concept that when rendered clear will provide us with Scheler's ontology of value. Therefore, the first task is to show how phenomenology opens up into ontology, and how being-in-an-act is understood with that opening in mind.

Second, since love orients us toward the experience of values in Scheler's thought, my attention turns toward elucidating love's act essence as the exemplar being-in-an-act in Scheler's thought. In so doing, I will explain these themes through my third intention: to render the connection between phenomenology as a way into ontology and to explicate love's participatory structure as the being-in-an-act that explains Scheler's value ontology. Underlying the ambiguity of Scheler's *Formalismus*, his phenomenological ontology is constituted by the being-in-an-act structure with love in mind. In Scheler's other writings, love is the exemplar being-in-an-act that explains why we ought to realize higher values over lower values. Directly analogous to my reading of how phenomenology becomes ontologized in Scheler's writings, I draw on Heidegger's *Befindlichkeit*. The reason for this interpretive move is simple. Heidegger has already conceived of phenomenology as a way into inquiring about the fundamental ontology of Dasein, and Heidegger's explication of

existential moods is very similar to the structure Scheler regards at the basis of all being-in-an-act.

## 2.1 Idealism-Realism Considerations

Scheler offers us a glimpse into his turn to the ontological in his “Idealism-Realism” essays. This text opens up with a criticism of both idealism and critical realism with respect to three errors. First, both positions start on a false statement of the question. Second, both positions offer unsatisfactory understanding of the parts of the problem. Third, both positions share in the “false presupposition that we cannot separate what we call the existence or reality (*Realität*) of any object (whether of the internal or external world, another self, a living being, an inanimate thing and what we call its nature (*So-sein*))”<sup>138</sup> We cannot separate out the existence or reality of an object from its nature when it is immanent to knowledge or reflexive knowledge more generally.

For Scheler, this inseparability is a deeply troubling since both idealism and critical realism are ontological theses motivated by how we fundamentally relate to objects. First, the nature of a being can be either present to consciousness in the reflexive mind or outside of it. The nature of being can be revealed in its immanence in consciousness or outside of it. It can be in consciousness with varying degrees of adequation corresponding to “different levels of relativity of existence” all the way to existence and constitution of the “knowing subject.”<sup>139</sup> The nature of being transcends the immanence of phenomena. Thus, the nature of being of an object is separable from the very existence of the object. Put in reverse, both critical realism and idealism of consciousness treat the nature of an object as

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<sup>138</sup> Max Scheler, “Idealism and Realism” in *Selected Philosophical Essays* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973): 288-356. Scheler, *Idealism*, 288 here.

<sup>139</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 289.



inseparable from its possible immanence. Understanding this separability thesis and its negation is a key to navigating both idealism and critical realism as offered in *Idealism and Realism*.

Let me explain how Scheler understands this error by being more precise as to what he means by critical realism. First, any realism accepts the fact that there exists a mind independent of its object. In Scheler's thought, this mind-independence amounts to accepting that *the existence of an object is always transcendent to every possible consciousness*. If the object exists apart from any knowing consciousness, the object can never be the content of any knowledge or consciousness for that matter. This error forces our hand to accept the wholly independent status of the object. The object stands detached and separated from every knowing consciousness. In such a view, there is no phenomenological givenness to consciousness. Instead, at best, we only have representations or signs that stand in for the character of the object. There is no intentional act whatsoever.

A similar line of reasoning can apply to idealism. According to Scheler, idealism is the thesis that all existing objects reside in the mind. It follows that such a thesis is committed to an erroneous falsehood. Thus, *there is no existence transcendent to or independent of consciousness*. Put in more contemporary terms, all objects are mind-dependent. As such, if the object exists as a constant dependence of the mind, the mind's constant operation is needed in order to sustain the transcendence of an object. In idealism, being an object is conflated with being-in-an-act to the point that any articulation of the *given* is vitiated. There is no separability. More importantly, there is no getting at the core of what is experienced. The mind is in constant circular reference to itself such that whence

it understands an object it cannot get out of itself to experience the transcendence of the given. Again, this renders phenomenological insight all but impossible.

Both positions reify one aspect of the overall intentional structure described by all phenomenological thinkers. In Scheler, this intentional relation has two sides—being-in-an-act and being-an-object. In Husserl, the subject constitutes the object. The constituting subject is one side, the constituted object is on the other. In the last chapter, I spoke about how Scheler's phenomenology tended towards an inner tension between realism and idealism. This tension occurs in phenomenology when one puts more stock into one side of this structure than the other. If objects are not given to us in acts, but instead subsist on their own, independent of being given to acts, then a non-phenomenological realism is true. If the subject's constituting is given prominence over objects to the point objects are rendered as mere representations of minds, then idealism is true. As such, one can see that phenomenologists walk a tight rope between both sides of the intentional relation. Scheler maintains this balance when he claims that one cannot reify either side, though it is certainly more prone to objectify the being of an act. This reification can take hold when one is convinced entirely that a science can explain the sense of the world or that in explanation we must prioritize one-side of the intentional relation (acts over objects, or objects over acts). The phenomenological perspective preserves the truth of the first-personal intentional consciousness that bestows sense upon the world. Therefore, the phenomenologist sustains a balanced view of both sides of the intentional relation, and phenomenology is the name of the research program that describes this intentional relation with respect to both intentional acts and objects. In Scheler's case,

phenomenology is that attitude that discloses the immanent essences inherent in intentional acts.

Recall, however, that we cannot reify being-in-an-act. Acts flash forth from spirit and are non-objectifiable. The being of an act “*possesses its own mode of being only in the performance*” of the act.<sup>140</sup> Here, Scheler claims that experiencing is its own mode of evidence, much as Husserl does in the *Cartesian Meditations*.

In the broadest sense, evidence denotes a universal primal phenomenon of intentional life, namely ... the quite preeminent mode of consciousness that consists in the *self-appearance*, the *self-exhibiting*, the *self-giving*, of an affair, an affair-complex, a universality, a value...<sup>141</sup>

We *participate* in the intentional relation with the world, and the participatory/performative aspect of being-in-an-act captures the truest sense of Scheler’s ontology yet to come. Moreover, Scheler insists that any act can be in relation to any possible kind of being such that it can be “analyzed in terms of its character or essence and its existence in some mode.”<sup>142</sup> In other words, prior to any epistemic or metaphysical position, any possible kind of being can either be *given* to us, or we can *constitute* the essence of some object, and the modes of our intentional relation are subject to phenomenological description. In this way, Scheler begins to open up phenomenology into ontology, but before we can establish this opening up of phenomenology into an ontological space we must first understand how the intentional relation opens up to this space. This opening becomes clearer with Scheler’s analysis of the intentional relation as an ontological participatory relation.

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<sup>140</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 291. Italics are mine.

<sup>141</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian*, 57/92.

<sup>142</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292.

## 2.2 The Ontological Participatory Nature of Being-in-an-act

It is by no accident that Scheler begins next by advocating that knowledge is prior to consciousness and is itself ultimately “a unique and underivable ontological relationship (*Seinverhältnis*) between two beings.”<sup>143</sup> This underivable ontological relationship is the irreducible performative aspect of being-in-an-act. In his words,

A knows any being B when A participates in the essence or nature of B, without B’s suffering any alteration in its nature or essence because of A’s participation in it.<sup>144</sup>

Thus, participation is ontological through and through. When Albert knows the tree is alive, it only arises from the fact that A’s knowing the essence of the tree requires an intentional relation. Recall the fact that in vital feeling one can apprehend the growth and vitality of the forest. One picks up on features of the vitality or decay of the forest. The fact that trees are given as unfurling towards the sun, or wilting away to an unhealthy industrialized landscape is *given in feeling*. At their root, *all feelings are modes of apprehension and participation*. There is no separable moment between knowledge of an object as epistemology and that such knowledge requires involvement in the world. In other words, epistemology infects the metaphysical and vice versa. Feeling-states are affected in relation to the world, but also reveal in their own directedness the fact that we are involved with them, or as I will put it in this chapter, we share in an ontological participatory relation, the very intentional relation at root in our being. For Scheler, as for all the phenomenologists, subjectivity folds into the world, and the world folds back upon us too. Thus, this ontological participation in the nature or essence of a phenomenon can occur in either act or object, but for the ontology of value, I will pay attention to being-in-an-act.

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<sup>143</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292.

<sup>144</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292.

According to Scheler, participation is non-causal, but rather the source of creation itself. When we relive an essence in co-feeling (*Mitgefuehl*), we are participating in a phenomenon's essence. Co-feeling, however, takes place only in the vital sphere, and ontological participation concerns any value-modality. It is not a causal relation or one of sameness and identity. If I stand before the forest, close my eyes and take in its vitality in one breath, I can turn to another say, "Can you feel it?" Moreover, this participation in the essence not only takes place with respect to intentional feeling, but also with respect to the already effected feeling-states and objective being. However, again, this is a source of danger leading to idealism. As Scheler puts it,

We say that further of B when A participates in B and B belongs to the order of objectifiable being, B becomes an objective being (*Gegenstand-sein*) confusing the being of an object (*Sein des Gegenstandes*) with the fact that an entity is an object is one of the fundamental mistakes of idealism.<sup>145</sup>

The being of an object is that which can be given phenomenologically and it cannot be confused with anything else. That an entity is an object has no bearing on its givenness.

Now, I have been urging that the intentional relation is fundamentally participatory in a full-blown ontological sense. Scheler framed his definition of the intentional act to reflect this participatory status. An intentional act is defined as "the process of becoming (*Werdesein*) in A through which A participates in the nature or essence of B or that through which this participation is produced."<sup>146</sup> I come to be joyful through my participation in the essence of joy as experienced. At my wedding, I had never felt so much overpowering joy at the thought of Ashley spending a lifetime with me. The intended value in feeling only arose as I had been involved or participated in the very experience. Moreover, this ontological

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<sup>145</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 292-93.

<sup>146</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 293.

interpretation of participation is present in the *Formalism* that discloses who we are as persons,

It is the person himself living in each of his acts, who permeates every act with his peculiar character. No knowledge of the nature of love, for instance, or of the nature of judgment can bring us one step nearer to the knowledge of how person A loves or judges person B; nor can a reference to the contents (values, state of affairs) given in each of these acts furnish this knowledge.<sup>147</sup>

Therefore, it is only being involved in the essence of love, or any intentional feeling, that discloses ourselves to ourselves and others. The participation in value is love's movement. The knowledge of any particular act cannot bring us any closer to understanding that act itself without reference to the participating person. Notice the language of persons in Scheler's *Formalism*. We only know the person "as a being that *executed acts*, and he is in no sense 'behind' or 'above' acts, or something standing 'above' the execution and processes of acts."<sup>148</sup> Instead, the *whole person* is simply contained in every act and there is nothing prior, before, or outside that gives rise to knowing the person. For Scheler, the person permeates each and every act that she executes through participation. In that sense, execution is participation. The person *participates* in these acts wholly and concretely. Hence, the execution of being-in-an-act takes on an ontological significance I call participation.

Before transitioning to Heidegger, I want to make one final equivalence. Just as the person is known through the execution of acts, the person participates in the functionalization of essences. Participation in and functionalization of the essence are two sides of the same coin. In *Idealism and Realism*, we have evidence for this interpretation. Already Scheler reminds us that "thoughts and intuitions belonging to the human mind first

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<sup>147</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 386.

<sup>148</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

arise through ‘functionalization’ of insights into the essence of a thing, originally achieved in a single exemplary experience.”<sup>149</sup> Functionalization is the process whereby our ideas, concepts and the mind interact with reality. In that sense, Scheler’s understanding of functionalization is very much akin to that developed in pragmatism or the operative everydayness about to follow in Heidegger’s existential analysis of Dasein. In this way, the *a priori* in Scheler and Heidegger is a material or existential *a priori*. Unlike Kant, such an *a priori* originates in the ontological participation with the world in the active sense implied by functionalization. If our ideas mesh and function in accordance with reality, then our ideas work. If they do not mesh and function in accordance with reality, then they do not “functionalize.” Thus, we intuit and form essential interconnection of insight into the nature of things derived from this interaction. In Scheler’s words, “all functional laws derive from original experience of objects.”<sup>150</sup> These insights become the basis for the rules and norms governing our future ontological participation. In this way, a conceptual intelligibility and meaning arise only from an interaction with the world through which all other subsequent apprehension and meaning of the world are made possible, and this interaction is participation.

### **2.3 Transcendence, Being-an-Object and the Beginning of Resistance**

Scheler observes that every intention points “beyond the act and the contents of the act and intends something other than the act.”<sup>151</sup> Being-in-an-act, therefore, gestures to an order and evidential insight not contained within the immediate immanence of the given. In this way, the *intentio* signifies “a goal directed movement toward something which one

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<sup>149</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 312.

<sup>150</sup> Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man* trans. August Brunner (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2010), 202. In subsequent citations, I will cite this as *Eternal*.

<sup>151</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 296.

does not have oneself or has only partially and incompletely.”<sup>152</sup> Contained within being-in-act is an insight, a givenness of a content that is not present, a form of absolute evidence. The immanent givenness in Scheler’s phenomenology therefore contains a sense of something or some structure beyond itself. To recall an inspired Husserlian theme, there is a transcendence within the immanence of the given. This will become clearer as we accompany Scheler in thinking through the dimensions of the being-in-act and being-an-object. The absolute evidence given in feeling is what Scheler calls value.

According to Scheler, the transcendence of the intentional object in relation to the intention and its present content is common to every being-an-object. Recall that being-an-object is the other side of the intentional relation in phenomenology. For Scheler, mathematical objects, like the pure number three, have no physical reality, but are an ideal qualities (like values). These ideal qualities, Scheler says, are “produced from the *a priori* material of intuition in accordance with an operational law governing the steps of our thought and intuition.”<sup>153</sup> Moreover, fictitious objects also possess the same level of transcendence. Scheler’s point is that proper to objects given to consciousness they have a transcendence all their own. In so possessing this transcendence, a distinction can be introduced between the transcendence of the object *in principle* from the existential status of objects themselves. In the latter, we are involved with the object in many different ways. We can talk about the different existential relations we have towards the sun, yet the transcendence of the sun *in principle* allows us to focus on its givenness in its real concrete phenomenological depth.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 296.

<sup>153</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 296.

<sup>154</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 303.



What the distinction between transcendence in principle and existential status of objects does is remove our ability to ask about the ontological status of objects. My usage of “ontology” follows this line of thought. When I say “ontology,” I do not mean the reification of one side of the intentional relation on the part of the subject, namely, idealism, or the reification of objects, namely, realism. These two reifications are first introduced in *Idealism and Realism* since they are proffered as what Scheler calls the “problem of reality.” Instead, for Scheler and myself, *ontology has always meant the material unfolding of the intuitive givenness of a primordial affective depth at the heart of all existence to which all other forms of knowledge are subordinate.* Given the distinction of transcendence in principle from existential sense, it becomes therefore silly to ask whether objects subsist in our minds or are produced by our minds. The problem of reality thus construed between idealism and realism has no traction. However what role does Scheler’s thought on transcendence of the object play? It leads to how the consciousness of transcendence may make some headway about the problem of reality. It is in the heart of the articulation of the problem of reality where we first see phenomenology opening up into an ontological space in Scheler’s work.

Scheler thinks that the transcendence of the object leads to an identifiability of the object in a plurality of acts. To use Scheler’s example, no matter the being-an-act in relation to the meaning of the sun, the sun will be the same sun whether I relate to it as an astronomical body or a mysterious disk that hides behind mountains. This identifiability can hold for one object or many, nor is this identifiability restricted to ideal objects alone like the aforementioned number three. Identifiability is the result that there exists a definite operational law and the same material of intuition that produces the act of the

given prior to any sense-experience. The transcending quality of the given object constitutes the sum of the same in all these manifestations.

For Scheler, there is only one way consciousness of transcendence can enter into the problem of reality properly considered.

The acts which consciousness is present can bring the givenness of reality...into "objective" form, and can therefore elevate that which is given in this way as real to the status of a real "object". But with this, the contribution of consciousness of transcendence is at an end.<sup>155</sup>

In other words, the being-in-an-act when described phenomenologically puts us into relation with what is to be described. Therefore, the phenomenological attitude can bring aspects of reality into givenness. These aspects of reality, however, consist in our intentional relation to the world. When a phenomenon is properly given phenomenologically, the consciousness of its object's transcendence can contribute no more to the status of its reality. All that can be established is the fact that acts relate to objects: in Scheler's words, "Whenever there is consciousness, objects transcendent to consciousness must also be given to consciousness. Their relationship is indissoluble."<sup>156</sup> There is no self-consciousness without the object of consciousness. Self-consciousness and object arise in relation to each other simultaneously and through the same process. This process is operative, an involvement, a directed-towards, or a participation; the process inherent within the intentional relation carries within it all these senses.

The intentional relation between the spiritual-act center of the person and the objects that accompany those acts is a process. This process does not occur in any one primary cognitive egoic act. Instead, the process is more primordial and fundamental, and

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<sup>155</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 298.

<sup>156</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 298.

this process is the insight I have articulated about Scheler's phenomenological thinking. Phenomenological description is an attempt to achieve the primordial constituting feature of intentionality and acquire insight into the pre-reflective modes of how experience is first given to us. As such, "Consciousness of an object precedes all judgment and is not originally constituted by judgment."<sup>157</sup> We have already seen this in Chapter 1, but perhaps it bears repeating. Judgments, meant here, can be regarded as judgments about the world in terms of causal explanation. The causal explanations of any science that produces such judgments cannot provide an account of the world that is already there before such explanations are undertaken. In other words, causal explanations can only account for the object amongst other causal objects. Causal explanations and judgments that assume a naturalistic framework cannot give us the sense of the world. The sense of the world only comes from paying attention to the intentional relation, the fact that consciousness is a consciousness of the world. The *sense* of the world originates only from the standpoint of intentional experience, that is, in terms of how consciousness encounters the objects toward which it is directed.

Here, in *Idealism and Realism*, what Scheler is doing with this intentional, relational structure finds expression in the "pulling back" of the reflexive act (intentional relation) in which "the ecstatic act knowingly turns back onto itself and comes upon a central self as its starting point."<sup>158</sup> The unfolding structure of an ecstatic consciousness and its encounter is given in a reality (*Realität*) of resistance. Reality discloses itself to us as resistance. This resistance throws us back upon our self, and it is in this inward awakening of resistance that we find reality disclosed. In this way, Scheler gives flesh to the intentional relation. He

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<sup>157</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 299.

<sup>158</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 299.

“ontologizes” the process by which we come to know the simultaneous occurrence of self-consciousness (being-in-an-act) and the consciousness of the object (being-an-object).

Scheler’s description of the intentional relation adds the materialization of the process. In giving flesh to the process of the intentional relation, Scheler’s phenomenology opens up into ontology such that the meaning of the intentional relation finds concretion in reality’s resistance. Reality’s resistance generates the conditions of that intentional relation, and Scheler informs us about the nature of givenness itself.

The consciousness of transcendence shows how mere ecstatic possession of reality on the level of immediately experienced resistance of an X to the central drives of life passes over onto the reflexive and this objective possession of reality.<sup>159</sup>

According to Scheler, reality is encountered as a resistance to the life-drive (*Lebensdrang*). These “central drives of life” are carried into the very being of our relation, but so is the transcendence of the object. Later, Scheler will develop a metaphysics in which both spirit (*Geist*) and life-drive will each have their own developed principles in his unfinished philosophical anthropology. For now, the ontology of value rests on the opening awareness of how phenomenology opens spaces of inquiry that develop into these specific areas of concern. In my interpretation, there are many forces converging on that experience. These energies come at the cost of constantly undergoing experience of the world and how the feeling of reality constitutes experience of the world. Yet, phenomenology can suspend in part aspects of our ontological participation in the world, but phenomenology cannot suspend reality entirely—that is, the sense of reality (*Realität*) entailed in resistance. Part of fleshing out the conditions under which phenomenology and the intentional relation manifest is the ontological delimitation of what each may purport.

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<sup>159</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 300.

Reality slips away from our grasp, and we can only catch glimpses of the transcendence of an intentional object in the phenomenological attitude.

It is the prior passage “the ecstatic act knowingly turns back onto itself and comes upon a central self as its starting point” that struck me first as evidence of the move from phenomenology as the description of eidetic structures in the whole of *Idealism and Realism* to a phenomenological ontology. Moreover, in fleshing out the intentional relation, Scheler provides further description of how phenomenology opens up into an ontological inquiry. Quickly after the above passage, Scheler posits several spheres of irreducible reality. Strikingly, like all of Scheler’s categories, they occur in four types.

1. The sphere *ens a se*, absolute being in contrast to relative being; 2. The spheres of the external and internal world; 3. the sphere of the creature and its the environment; 4. The sphere of the I, the thou and society.<sup>160</sup>

For each sphere, Scheler provides a basic law: “the being of the sphere itself is always given prior to the individual empirical objects, which are given through the various types of perception and intuiting.”<sup>161</sup> In other words, these spheres of being possess a givenness, a sense of them already in the world prior to empirical study. This givenness occurs within these spheres of being, and it very much seems as if Scheler has prescribed the totality of what can be given. Again, this passage is evidence for a phenomenology that puts us into contact with the world, suspends the fact that reality resists our affective drives in it, but in so doing, phenomenology identifies those transcending aspects in relation to me, and beyond me.

Moreover, these four spheres do not map onto value-modalities or value-feelings all that well. In some sense, the absolute reality more than likely refers to that which is

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<sup>160</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 300.

<sup>161</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 301.

absolutely given, and in Scheler it is only that which expresses itself in spirit that could even occupy the absolute sphere of being—God and persons. However, the spheres of the internal and external world occur at all levels, but the sphere of the creature and its environment occur most prominently in the vital modality and feeling. Given this difficulty, I only want to point out that resistance now comes into play and Scheler becomes mindful of the limitations of a phenomenological attitude. For this reason, I turn to characterize precisely where this journey of Scheler’s comes to fruition much later in *Idealism and Realism* in Section 8: The Problem of Reality.

## 2.4 The Problem of Reality

The problem of reality refers to the two central questions opening up *Section 8* in *Idealism and Realism*. Scheler asks,

What is the givenness of reality? What is experienced [*Erlebt*] when anything whatever is experienced as real?<sup>162</sup>

Scheler calls this the “question of the lived-experience of reality.” Since it is the first question, it reveals the final collapse of pure eidetic description motivating phenomenology. Instead, Scheler’s phenomenology has become a phenomenological inquiry into the ontologically participatory nature of intentional lived-experience. Lived experience becomes conjoined with a sense of the *real*. The *real* is now reality-as-a-whole, and we are inquiring into its givenness. Reality is given in the ontological dimension of life. Unlike Heidegger, Scheler regards the vital experience of life as the point of contact with the world and its disclosure. Life is given in terms of the unfulfillment of drives that stem from worldly resistance.

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<sup>162</sup> Scheler, *Idealism*, 313.

This drive of life becomes more and more prominent in Scheler's thought. One could see that already in the *Formalism* the vital sphere of both values and feeling is the most significantly developed of all his distinctions, and in the *Nature of Sympathy* the analysis of the psychic bonds of community are articulated with a figurative sense of organism.<sup>163</sup> For Scheler, the organic movement of life is not simply contained in a distinction between life and nonlife. Throughout all of nature, Scheler's sees an animating principle of movement, and this movement in us is the tendency to move from the life drives [*Drang*]<sup>164</sup> towards ever increasing modes of spiritualization. In this way, the life drive is not random, but is an ordered striving towards higher modalities, and within us, it is a projection of possibilities. In a sense, participation is where vital-urge meets worldly resistance.

Heidegger put death first and foremost as that which lies ahead of ourselves. In this way, Heidegger used vitalistic symbols and expressions to which his existentialism could not reach any further. In other words, the whole of Being given is our being-unto-death. Unlike Heidegger, Scheler is putting us first and foremost into contact with a greater whole. Scheler pays attention to the givenness of reality, and the disclosure of the world alludes to senses beyond the vitalistic drive of life intimated in Heidegger's existentialism. Scheler describes the givenness of spirit even though the ontological dimension of human life is manifested within the movement of life's drives. In Scheler, the spiritual potencies reside

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<sup>163</sup> Scheler will even call his metaphysics a "meta-biology."

<sup>164</sup> I like rendering *Drang* as vital drive, or vital urges of life. I do not think that Frings's later translation of *impulsion* connects this to the prominence of the vital sphere more generally in both feeling and value-ranking. While it might not be clear to the reader in this study, *Drang* is put into operation alongside *Geist* in Scheler's later metaphysics found in his phenomenology of religion and philosophical anthropology. As I do not touch upon these here, it is a goal of future research to connect up the ontological participatory realism about values in Scheler with his later metaphysical works.

within *Drang* even though many may be drawn to interpreting a dualism in his thought.<sup>165</sup>

Spirit is always already manifest within life. The phenomenological attention to the givenness on the part of Scheler apprehends these two-aspects of the world, yet these aspects are disclosed as one and the same.

As I said, the vital drives encounter the world and the world resists our efforts to fulfill its projected interest and prohibition. What I find 'real' is then that which withstands or resists the emergence of vital drive's projected interest. The sense of our ego emerges from such resistance. This encounter is the source of realism for what I am calling the participatory realism about values. Within the sphere of life, I value the serene landscape of a park before me. I lose myself here from the de-personalization common from living an industrial life inside an office cubicle. I feel at peace here in the park. Say a commercial developer is petitioning the state to develop this park. Even though developing the natural landscape will bring jobs and an influx of well-paying jobs, the value of the forest is higher as a place of serenity than the economic utility it could provide, and it is important to the local community that such a place persist unspoiled. Given that economic interests occur as agreeable in the sensible sphere, the pristine serenity of the forest is *felt as more valuable* in its current natural form as a green space in the vital sphere. Moreover, in our age, these green spaces are disappearing rapidly. Their rarity reflects the disordered heart that has captured our age and can only feel the value of the forest as instrumental to profit. In my valuing, I experience the values as felt. They are *felt in resistance* to persons blind to the serenity of the forest and natural landscapes.

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<sup>165</sup> I have to really thank Kenneth Stickers for bringing this to my attention.



Strife constitutes life. Strife is the experience of resistance when our desires or wants, and even our most basic vital-urges clash against a world that does not yield to them. The world is disclosed as that which resists and challenges us. It is an ontological principle of the world that its reality is given only in terms of resistance, and the vital urges are constantly in relation with the world. This principle of strife cuts all the way into our vital urges. We would have no urges if there were no strife and no resistance, as in the example above. Moreover, this principle of strife cuts all the way down into our vital drives. Vital drive encounters the world in the experience of resistance preceding consciousness of experience. In this way, the vital drive's experience of worldly-resistance is primordial; it is a foundation in itself just as much as the fact that, according to Scheler, the world is saturated in emotions prior to any other perceptual or epistemic act. In this way, this ontological dimension of experience is prereflective.

The primordially of worldly resistance means that humans suffer from an inability to fulfill these drives. Human life is, then, one of suffering. Therefore, Scheler reveals that the impulse behind philosophy, art and science is to suspend the movement of this suffering. As Kenneth Stikkers once noted, "Thus the task of all thinking—philosophical, religious, scientific, etc.—is, according to Scheler, to eliminate this and this means to make the world less real."<sup>166</sup> By suspending suffering, we do not make the world "less real" in a full-blown ontological sense. Instead, we cultivate strategies of coping with that suffering, modes of *participation*. Metaphysical systems can thus be understood as such coping strategies, or ethics of suffering. From my perspective, ethical experience is one way to cope and likewise a systematic reflection on moral experience is part of moral philosophy.

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<sup>166</sup> Kenneth W. Stikkers, "Introduction to Scheler" in *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge* trans. Manfred Frings (New York: Routledge, 1980), 11.

To realize values in ever-higher forms is to bring more love into the world from a loving orientation (in loving acts) despite the strife we feel and encounter. Even if the world pulls away from our efforts, love still realizes values into the world. In this way, the realization of vital drives into higher forms of value cannot commence without those cultural goods that make life meaningful and valuable. These goods are not distractions from the ever-present fact of life's vital drives go unfulfilled. Instead, these attempts ameliorate the pull of resistance more generally. Why else form communities if not to face the harsh reality of life's givenness while at the same time realizing that it is within life that all things valuable are made possible?

## **2.5 *Befindlichkeit*, Being-in-the-world and the Structure of Care**

This section attempts two interrelated tasks. First, *Befindlichkeit* is introduced as an example of a primordial affective dimension of experience situated in a phenomenological ontology. Therefore, its articulation in Heidegger provides a parallel effort to my own in establishing that being-in-an-act opens up into the ontology of value. Second, I introduce *Befindlichkeit* in the structure of care at the expository level to make good on this connection.

I want to first introduce the use of Heidegger along the criticism one finds in *Being and Time*. As we have already established the necessity of the performance of acts as the meaning of being-in-an-act and looked here for the ontology of value, Heidegger problematizes this very effort. Heidegger says,

Acts are something non-psychical. Essentially the person exists only in the performance of intentional acts, and is therefore essentially *not* an object. Any psychical Objectification of acts, and hence any way of taking them as something psychical is tantamount to depersonalization. A person is in any case given as a performer of intentional acts which are bound together by the unity of a meaning...Acts get performed; the person is a performer of acts.

What, however, is the ontological meaning of ‘performance’? How is the kind of Being which belongs to a person to be ascertained ontologically in a positive way?<sup>167</sup>

The Heideggerian point is a familiar one. The ontological clarity of Scheler’s concepts: person, act and feeling are not very clear. Here, the focus is on the person, and while this work addresses the ontology of value, both concepts remain inadequately developed in Scheler.<sup>168</sup> Above, Heidegger addresses the concept that links both person and act in performance. Performance, as we have seen, is the ontological constitution of a person in their act-essence; it is an intentional relation constitutive of every human experience. Rather than insist on the ontological meaning of performance, I have articulated it as the ontological locus that explains Scheler’s ontology of value. For Heidegger, that answer will not suffice. Instead, as Bernard J. Boelen describes, “Scheler has failed to think the Being of values, and has reduced them to something like beings.”<sup>169</sup> Such a criticism, Boelen points out, might rest on a misunderstanding of value-feeling in Scheler. However, we can extend the Heideggerian point to encompass a larger criticism of Scheler. Let me explain.

Up to this point, I have agreed with Scheler that the “logic of the heart”, the *ordo amoris*, is a pre-reflective, pre-volitional, pre-conceptual, and fundamental orientation towards the world exhibited in being-in-an-act. According to Boelen, “there is no purpose in retorting that value-feeling has a thinking of its own.”<sup>170</sup> Such thinking and any “theory of value” presuppose a “metaphysics of morals—that is, an ontology of Dasein and

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<sup>167</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 48/73.

<sup>168</sup> My next work in moral phenomenology will be on the person and agency.

<sup>169</sup> Bernard J Boelen, “The Question of Ethics” in *Heidegger and the Quest for Truth* ed. M. S. Frings (Quadrangle Books: Chicago, 1968): 76-105. Cited here: Boelen, *Question*, 88.

<sup>170</sup> Boelen, *Question*, 89.

existence.”<sup>171</sup> In that way, the presupposed metaphysics is one of presence. The metaphysics of presence is a reification of world-disclosure. The reification of world-disclosure assumes the ontological validity of categories prior to Heidegger’s efforts to establish the fundamental ontology of Dasein’s practical involvement. Under such a rubric, the value-feeling and the various value-modalities are just psychological schematization that take for granted a primordial relation between Dasein’s self-disclosure and its relatedness to Being. Does value-feeling in Scheler presuppose the very categories of fundamental ontology? Does value-feeling presuppose *Befindlichkeit*? We must pause to answer this question and introduce exactly what *Befindlichkeit* is, and its overall place in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology in the structure of care to make the analogy to Heideggerian thought more concrete.

In its simplest terms, *Befindlichkeit* is the basic structure of *Being-in-the-world* (*Sein-in-der-Welt*), and by discerning it phenomenologically, Heidegger can describe the conditions under which Dasein can understand itself as this *understanding unfolds in the very activity of everyday living*. For Heidegger, it is within Dasein’s ability to pose the question of its own existence that reveals the meaning of Being. It is therefore incumbent for us to remember that the structure of care provides a twofold function. First, the structure of care is a proposed answer to the *Seinsfrage*, the question of Being. Next, the structure of care is the manner in which Dasein understands the event of Being through its ability to call into question its own being. The structure of care is the unified structure that we all share in our lived-experience of ourselves that discloses the world.

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<sup>171</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 293/339.

The structure of care has several components called *existentiales*. Dasein is understood not in terms of traditional metaphysical categories like substance in Descartes' *cogito*, or Kant's transcendental apperception, rather *existentiales* are basic structures of human existence constitutive of its experience of *being-in-the-world*. Unlike modernity's conception of the subject (especially in the previous two thinkers: Descartes and Kant), Dasein's *existentiales* are not traits or properties that belong solely to the subjective mind apart from an objective world. Instead, they are the ontological structures that constitute the way that humans exist in the world. These ontological structures undergird human life as much as the ontological participatory nature of Scheler's proposed being-in-an-act. In Heidegger, the four most basic *existentiales* are attunement (*Befindlichkeit*), understanding (*Verstehen*), discourse (*Rede*), and fallenness (*Verfallenheit*).

In *Being and Time*, these constitutive structures are co-penetrating and wholly emergent as a "structural whole." Dasein is not any one of these more than another. A helpful analogy might better clarify this point. In knowing space, we cannot help but think of space as the simultaneity of length, width and height. In much the same way, Dasein's basic ontological structure, revealed in the everydayness of its being, moves within this structure. Dasein brings its "Da" (there) along with it (*Sein*) which means according to Heidegger "the Being which is an issue for this entity (*Dasein*) in its very Being is to be its 'there'."<sup>172</sup> In other words, Dasein in its structure is disclosed to itself. This work concerns only attunement and more specifically, the way that we are attuned ontically through mood and the dearth of values within that conception.

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<sup>172</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 171/133.

There is no satisfactory translation for *Befindlichkeit*. It is not even a German term, but a neologism invented by Heidegger. As David Weberman points out, "*Befindlichkeit* is a nominalization of the phrase *sich befinden*."<sup>173</sup> It is a reflexive verb used to ask how one is faring or feeling like, e.g. "*Wie befinden Sie Sich?*" (How are you doing?). In this way, Heidegger is choosing to avoid common ontic understanding of a vocabulary of the emotions. The "passions" imply a passivity. We can be overtaken with passion, and the passions are thought to occur on the hotter end of the emotional spectrum. The term "feeling" implies reducing emotional life to a life of sensations, and that is not quite right either. Instead, the expression "*finding oneself*" seems correct. One often finds oneself in some affective state without knowing it, and on top of that one is "always in a position to find oneself faring in some manner."<sup>174</sup> Thus, one could understand how the *existentiale* of *Befindlichkeit* suggests a more fundamental orientation than "value-feeling" for Heidegger. In fact, Heidegger's point is exactly that value-feelings are ontologically grounded in *Befindlichkeit*.

If Scheler's notion of being-in-an-act is fully understood, then the Heideggerian criticism will have no intellectual purchase. Instead, value-feelings are ontological. However, this point can only be gleaned if we consider Heidegger too. For Heidegger, being-in-act is still admittedly obscure. Being-in-the-world helps foster the proper orientation to experience in a phenomenological ontology. Therefore, the analogy is helpful in unpacking what participation/performance is. Without drawing analogies to

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<sup>173</sup> David Weberman, "Heidegger and the Disclosive Character of the Emotions" in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* vol. 34 (1996): 379-410. Weberman, Heidegger, 385 here.

<sup>174</sup> Weberman, *Heidegger*, 385.

*Befindlichkeit*, we cannot properly apprehend the dynamism underscoring being-in-an-act and how best to understand that value-feelings are ontological.

In order to articulate *Befindlichkeit*, I must look to §29 and §30 to expose the dearth of values in the care structure's articulation of *Befindlichkeit*. I have opted to render this term as "attunement." As phenomenology is a study of immanent acts and their essences for Scheler, so too should we understand that Heidegger's fundamental ontology *qua* phenomenology secures a similar level of irreducibility and participatory orientation as I find in Scheler's work. However, unlike Scheler, Heidegger attempts to disclose these structures in a completely new vocabulary that is not undermined by the history of metaphysical-theological presence (as I argued in section 1.8). Instead, the *elemental force of words* are revitalized with a poetic revelatory power that captures phenomenology's attention to experience without the metaphysical-theological heavy-handedness that mires Scheler's articulation of act givenness in the *Formalism*. In effect, Heidegger opens up spaces of disclosure and meaning for phenomenology's possibility and in this respect, he is exceptionally clear.

By contrast, Scheler does allow for a type of broadened givenness that differentiates one central aspect from Heidegger's being-in-the-world. Being-in-an-act signifies that any act of feeling can intend values, whereas Heidegger cannot accommodate value's givenness at all. With that in mind, Heidegger is understood here only as an analogy for how I am interpreting being-in-an-act as a parallel to Heidegger's employment of phenomenology for the sole purpose of undertaking ontological inquiry. For Heidegger, ethics is always on the ontic-level of analysis and implies no fundamental ontological status whatsoever. Therefore, Heidegger's *Daseinsanalytik* is articulated as a fundamental ontology without

reference to value experience at all. Despite this suspicion, Heidegger's work is poignant to our efforts to inspire how being-in-an-act is situated in Scheler's phenomenological ontology.

## **2.6 *Befindlichkeit in §29 and §30***

In the sections to follow, the analyses of §29 and §30 presuppose the discussion as it relates to Division 1 of *Being and Time*.

Attunement is an everyday sort of experience. Heidegger never references experiences that are out of touch with what is familiar. On the contrary, all of his phenomenological descriptions are a way into fundamental ontology and these descriptions always reference that which is most close to us even if at first they are concealed in some way. Most of the time, we are unaware of the profound depth these experiences have for us. Even before we have a scientific conception of the phenomenon, in this case some psychology of the emotions, we are attuned through the presence of moods. These moods fill out our experience of the world to the point where we are always attuned through a mood; we are always mooded. "We slip over from one [mood] to the other, or slip off into bad moods."<sup>175</sup> For example, a mood of elation, Heidegger states, "can alleviate the manifest Burden of being," or what Heidegger might come to call the burdensome character of Dasein as Angst.<sup>176</sup> In having a mood, such an experience discloses the feature of how one is and how one is faring—these emerge together in a simultaneity of meaning. Specifically, moods illuminate situational contexts.

Moods always deliver us over into our Being as they are *a way of Being*. This is what is meant by stating that moods are ontologically constitutive. Unlike Husserl, some of these

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<sup>175</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 173/134.

<sup>176</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 173/134.



states of how-one-is-faring do not take an object. These are fundamental moods. In the words of Tanja Staehler, “a fundamental mood has no definite object, but concerns everything and nothing, or the world in contrast to something in the world.”<sup>177</sup> Feelings in Scheler operate at the same level of primordiality. They are pre-intentional and pre-reflective ways by which we are oriented in the world, and it is here that we first experience human life. We experience ourselves in the world as constantly given over to some mood, some emotional depth—even if we are aware of it or not. Scheler’s analysis is in full agreement on this point, and this is why, despite the Heideggerian impulse to consider moods more fundamental than feeling, both Scheler and Heidegger are in touch with an affective primordial structure. Given how fundamental moods constitute the basic aspects of human life, everyday moods can distort the overall more fundamental moods. According to Heidegger, everyday moods are inauthentic versions of fundamental moods. In *Being and Time*, this discussion will arise below in this very chapter. For now, we should note this distinction between everyday and fundamental moods following Staehler’s language. As she puts it,

...everyday moods can be regarded as inauthentic versions of fundamental moods, and that fundamental moods in general open up authenticity and inauthenticity as ‘possibilities’ of Dasein ...<sup>178</sup>

Attunement through mood undercuts basic human life to the point that there is no neutral orientation to be taken concerning human existence. Put another way, there is no point in human existence free of moods. However human life may be structured as such, “Dasein

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<sup>177</sup> Tanja Staehler, “How is a Phenomenology of Fundamental Moods Possible” in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 15.3 (2007): 415-433.

<sup>178</sup> Staehler, *How*, 417.

always evades the Being which is disclosed in the mood.”<sup>179</sup> Two things must be said to make sense of this thought. First, disclosure here is, as I have called it before, bringing the *there* into its own *being*. Disclosure is the revelation of how Dasein’s everydayness unfolds within the structure of care. Disclosure is not a report of the subjective state one finds oneself in, and rarely is it ever that simple to know oneself. In Heidegger, knowing oneself amounts to an authentic type of self-understanding, and this authenticity is wrenched from the herd mentality of the They-self (*Das Man*). Authenticity must be won, and as such it is not like reporting the transparent access the *cogito* has of itself in Descartes anymore than the radical access the transcendental Ego has to access itself within Husserl’s phenomenological reduction. Instead, authentic self-understanding is a product of understanding how all these *existentials* fit together within Heidegger’s fundamental ontology.

Second, the evasion of how moods disclose ourselves is produced by another Heideggerian feature that affects disclosure of the care structure, thrownness. Within the section currently under analysis, Heidegger defines thrownness explicitly. For him, “thrownness is meant to suggest the facticity of being delivered over.”<sup>180</sup> Facticity is not, Heidegger reminds, a brute fact about existence taken as present-at-hand, or what we might call a mind-independent fact. If it were the case that we even had access to mind-independent facts about Dasein, then the “that-it-is” could never be ascertained from within human life. Instead, the “that-it-is and has to be” of Dasein finds expression only by looking at the actual experiencing, not by assuming what in principle cannot be known beforehand and imposing those assumptions back onto experience. For Heidegger, all

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<sup>179</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 174/135.

<sup>180</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 174/135.

philosophical insights in *Being and Time* revolve around our capacity for us to describe the way in which human life unfolds for us as *being-in-the-world*, and this is the locus of attention Heidegger brings to being-in-the-world as a way to understand Scheler's being-in-an-act.

Through mood, Dasein is always brought before itself. It cannot be helped. An example might prove useful. If I am thoroughly absorbed in my practical activity of composing an image with my Canon 7D, I never enter into cognitive deliberation about what numerical representation my light meter reads, ISO, or the shutter speed. I know from constant repetition what needs to be done to get a certain "effect." I rarely, if ever, think "in terms of the numbers" in any exact sense. When looking through the lens, I move my finger over the dial to adjust accordingly while at the same time trying not to lose my shot. Now, suppose on the same day, I promised Ashley, my wife, to meet her for dinner. Anyone who has ever been married knows how easily one slips from intense practical circumspection (*Umsicht*) to the fact that a cell phone call about the pressures of life can make one slip into a frenzy of a neglected promise. She will be home any minute and I am out over Crab Orchard Lake trying to get a sunset picture with darkened-silhouetted trees. However lighthearted the example, the point is simple. Within our typical everyday experience, I am constantly delivered over by the moods of/in my being, and there are aspects of the world in thrownness that I must face through no choice of my own. In this thrownness, moods saturate and color aspects of my experience beyond me. Thus, moods acquire a shared intersubjective sense.

Most of the time, Heidegger thinks people will flee the burden of Being. The burden of Being refers to the fact that we are inherently delivered over to how we truly feel. This

disclosure in mood puts us ill-at-ease. Some of us might rejoice at an honest revelation that we are not in control of the world around us as much as we think we are. Rather, we are not in “strict” control about matters within our own life, such as our moods. This is not to say that Dasein cannot master its moods through knowledge and will. In fact, sometimes, it must. It is just hardly won over without great difficulty. The difficulty lies within the fact that moods are primordially constitutive and the mastery of a mood can only be accomplished by a counter-mood. One cannot transcend a mood without another mood countering it. Moreover, moods are not something easily known like the color of the wall, or any perceptual act. A candidate passage from Heidegger will help take stock about our discussion thus far,

...Dasein is disclosed to itself *prior to* all cognition and volition and *beyond* their range of disclosure. And furthermore, when we master a mood, we do so by way of a counter-mood; **we are never free of moods**. Ontologically, we thus obtain as the first essential characteristic of attunement that *they disclose Dasein in its thrownness and—proximally and for the most part—in the manner of an evasive turning away.*<sup>181</sup>

In other words, there is no neutral position we can take within ourselves that is free of moods. There is no impartial standpoint for Mill’s competent judge, an ideal spectator in consequentialism more generally, or the Kantian transcendental standpoint from which to judge things practically. As David Weberman puts it, “we are always affected because although we may not always be in the grip of some episodic emotion, we are always in some mood since we are always affectively attuned to the world.”<sup>182</sup> The mastery of our moods must introduce a new orientation towards the older one. These moods are not a disruption, but an ever-present reality in the field of our experience.

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<sup>181</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 175/136. Bold-faced emphasis mine.

<sup>182</sup> Weberman, *Heidegger*, 386.

Moreover, the referential structure of disclosure is not as simple as reporting how one is aware of one's mood as one might report a psychological state as one does when making some subjective report of psychic life in the psychology lab. The psychological state or condition uses a language that is phenomenologically inadequate to describe these experiences. Even worse, interpretations of the emotions and affective life in general "sink to the level of accompanying phenomena."<sup>183</sup> Understood empirically and naively, affective life becomes a secondary importance, that is to say, the emotions become derived or reified into something they are not. This is true not only of empirical interpretations of emotional life, but also scholastic theology as well. Like Wittgenstein's private language argument, Heidegger denies there is a private interiority to how we are in the world, and likewise no science that divides the world up between the interiority of consciousness and objects in the world can carry the day. Instead, we are primarily *being-in-the-world*, and as I have already repeated, *being-in-the-world* does not reference anything private or transcendently *a priori* to make its mark. *Being-in-the-world* as care conceives of Dasein as the site where we must look to discern the structures that underlie it as it unfolds. Again, the same holds for Scheler's being-in-an-act. Given its ambiguous nature within the *Formalism*, Scheler's being-in-an-act benefits from this Heideggerian comparison.

In attunement, the discernment of basic structures is problematized by the evasion Dasein enacts, and this could be a willing retreat exemplified in the previous discussion of the burden of Being, or it can be realized by bad moods. Bad moods can have the effect of steering us away from our basic concern. Attunement through the moods can "assail Dasein in its unreflecting devotion to the world with which it is concerned and on which it expends

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<sup>183</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 178/139.

itself. A mood assails us. It comes neither from the 'outside' nor from 'inside' but arises out of *Being-in-the-world*, as a way of such Being."<sup>184</sup> A candidate bad mood might be how easily we slip into a mood of discomfort and extreme uneasiness. For example, imagine a family in which the mother is an alcoholic. Next imagine that such a mother had succeeded in overcoming her addiction to alcohol while the memory of her transgressions weigh heavily on the child entering high school. Such a young man might spend his entire life steering clear of alcohol parties and make friends at the university who do not drink. Even to this day, such a person might find it difficult to be around alcohol, since the affective allure generates within him a bad mood. Its very presence can make him uneasy.

This narrative is not meant to describe one's *being-in* as some psychological condition. It does not persist as some property or state in my mind from a long trauma. People in therapy or engaging in a Twelve-Step program have brought this issue out in the open for years. In Alateen or Alanon, the family members of alcoholics attempt to master their moods of discomfort, alienation, and life generally affected by alcohol. They do so by proposing a counter-mood: acceptance, detachment, and love. This can only come about from a prior world that discloses itself over to those attempting to master it. From one mood or to another, the mood has disclosed itself already and "makes it possible for us to be directed towards something."<sup>185</sup> However, it is difficult to understand what being directed towards something means exactly, even beyond the circumspective concern outlined below.

Though attunement through mood is disclosure and disclosure is *being-in-the-world*, Heidegger denies that moods can mark out, or have an affect/effect on things or persons.

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<sup>184</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 176/136.

<sup>185</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 176/136.

As Heidegger puts it, “Having a mood is not...itself an inner condition that reaches forth in an enigmatical way and *puts its mark on Things and persons*.”<sup>186</sup> This highlights my first observation about Heidegger. Heidegger thinks that being directed towards something is given only in circumspective concern.

...the world which has already been disclosed beforehand permits what is within-the-world to Being-in and is partly constituted by one’s attunement. Letting something be encountered is primarily circumspective; it is not just sensing something, or staring at it. It implies circumspective concern, and has the character of becoming affected in some way; we can see this more precisely from the standpoint of attunement. But to be affected by the unserviceable, resistant or threatening character of that which is ready-to-hand, becomes practically ontologically possible only in so far as Being-in as such has been determined existentially beforehand in such a manner that what it encounters within-the-world—as something by which it can be threatened, for instance. Only something which is in the attunement of fearing (or fearlessness) can discover that what is environmentally ready-to-hand is threatening. *The attunedness of attunement constitutes existentially the world openness of Dasein. [Die Gestimmtheit der Befindlichkeit konstituiert existenzial die Weltoffenheit des Daseins]*.<sup>187</sup>

In circumspective concern, I encounter the world in the field of my practical activities. When I am hammering, I do not encounter the hammer as an object of epistemic significance—though the entire tradition of Anglo-American analytic philosophy would have us believe that the epistemic point-of-view is primitively-basic to all subsequent experiences. Dasein and its engagement in the world “have been represented exclusively by a single exemplar—knowing the world.”<sup>188</sup> The hammer is not an object to be known, but an object that acquires significance in a nexus of referential implications.<sup>189</sup> The hammer is for nailing the wood in place. The wood is to be worked into a structure. The structure is

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<sup>186</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 176/137.

<sup>187</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 176/137. [End of this quote is my translation].

<sup>188</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 86/60.

<sup>189</sup> For Heidegger’s introduction of circumspection and his hammering example, see *BT*, 98/69.

for housing and so forth. These significant meanings form a referential totality or what can be called the “totality of involvements.” Within this referential totality, the threatening character of an object is conditioned by the prior existential disclosure of the object’s significance, and yet Heidegger denied in a previous passage that attunement can reach out of itself and leave its mark on things or persons. Moods are seemingly divorced from goods in Scheler’s terms.

Heidegger does not offer us a picture as to how it is that attunement existentially determines prior to circumspection such that things can “matter” to us. He is silent on how attunement through mood can do this, and we are only told that it can! Heidegger is held back by his interpretation of attunement as co-operative with other elements in the structure of care, but attunement is not a decisively autonomous logic of its own. The heart has its own reasons apart from the existential-analytic thus proposed.

Again, it might not add anything to contrast Scheler’s autonomous phenomenological logic of value-feelings to Heidegger’s attunement and moods. However, there is phenomenological evidence to suggest the primordially of value-feeling. When I encounter an object for the first time, when I taste savory and sweet things, I am naturally drawn to savory things. This does not come about because of some genetic variance in how I am constructed. Instead, I experience the food as savory over sweet. The act of preference manifests as one over the other. Similarly, in situational-contexts, I experience things given a certain way *in* feeling. This emotional tonality and feeling permeates my entire context in which I find myself inasmuch as Heideggerian moods suggest. However, in Heidegger, there can be no differentiation between moods and insight into value-rankings. Moods are inattentive to the value-feeling present in the various value-rankings. Anxiety is only



experienced in the vital sphere.<sup>190</sup> In this way, Scheler's value-modalities pay attention to the specific ways and contexts in which moods arise as I experience their content. The fundamental mood of anxiety can only offer us insight into one modality, the vital sphere. Heidegger's account of *Befindlichkeit* is incomplete without attention to the order of preferencing by which I find myself in a world: I find myself in the world drawn to *this* rather than *that*, and this order of preferencing is what Scheler means by value. Values are not enduring essences or entities, as Heidegger claims moods, e.g. anxiety, are relative to their respective orders of preferencing, to values.

## **2.7 The Limitations of Heidegger's Attunement to Scheler**

What little Heidegger does say about attunement through mood bespeaks a fundamental orientation against values. I will articulate reasons for this judgment later in this chapter in more detail. However, for now, it is important to keep this essential difference in mind that divides Scheler and Heidegger. While Scheler's phenomenological accounts make a place for the givenness of values, Heidegger's does not.

Heidegger regarded assertions about the value of a particular thing as a close cousin to the efforts to describe the world through Thing-ontology. In Scheler's terms, the concretization of value in a thing is a good, or assemblage of goods called a value-complex. Today, such a thing-ontology might be described as a form of materialism (with subsequent implications for philosophy of mind), or to treat values themselves as things. For Heidegger, a thing-ontology takes for granted the disclosive character of experience and presupposes the meaning of the world is independent of our comportment to the world. Such reifications occur primarily since the objectification of things posits a split between

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<sup>190</sup> Recall this point in section "1.7 Stratification of Feeling" where I explained vital feeling.

subjectivity and things in the world, and ignore the constitutive sense bestowed through our intentional relation with things in the world. As he puts it, "Taking up relationships towards the world is possible only because Dasein, as *Being-in-the-world*, is as it is. This state of being does not arise just because some other entity is present-at-hand outside of Dasein and meets up with it."<sup>191</sup> Likewise, some *thing* is not valuable because it possesses the mind-independent property of value expressed in a moral judgment as a value-predicate.

Adding on value predicates cannot tell us anything at all new about the Being of goods, *but would merely presuppose again that goods have pure present-at-hand as their kind of Being*. Values would then be present-at-hand. They would have their sole ultimate ontological source in our previously laying down the actuality of Things as the fundamental stratum.<sup>192</sup>

For Heidegger, values can only be present-at-hand. In this way, Heidegger did not differ from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century British moral philosophers. For these thinkers, the dialectic about the ontology of value turned on the exact metaphysical nature of value-predicates and how they functioned in moral propositions.<sup>193</sup>

Above, I find Heidegger puzzling. He simply leaves value-talk alone. He disposes of ethics and the subsequent talk of value to the level of an ontic science without leaving the possibility open for a deeper phenomenological understanding of values. Directly after the above passage about values, Heidegger states,

But even pre-phenomenological experience shows that in an entity which is supposedly a thing, there is something that will not become fully intelligible through Thinghood alone. Thus the Being of beings has to be rounded out. What, then does the Being of values or their 'validity' really amount to

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<sup>191</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 84/57.

<sup>192</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 132/99.

<sup>193</sup> This point about the emotivist tradition will be elucidated in the next chapter.

ontologically? And what does it signify ontologically for Things to be invested with values in this way?<sup>194</sup>

While Heidegger is critical of a present-at-hand interpretation of nature and value, he can see no other way to interpret value apart from the reifying discourses of value-predication. Again, this is why ethics is an ontic science for him. Heidegger does not offer any account of the phenomenological underpinning of value. He sees no compatibility with how values have been historically understood to reconcile them within the structure of care. There is no primordial depth to value-talk, and ethics is an ontic science, not an elucidation of the fundamental ontological structures constitutive of our everydayness. This emphasis of value as an ontic science is the ultimate textual reason why Heidegger never bothered to connect his analysis of a thoroughly-mooded care structure with values. Furthermore, it also explains the separation of ethics from ontology in his *Letter on Humanism*.

Though the *Letter on Humanism* occurs well after the classic “turn” [*Kehre*] in which Heidegger abandoned a fundamental ontology, his reflection on *Being and Time* is telling. Heidegger explains a question someone had for him surrounding the completion of *Being and Time*.

Soon after *Being and Time* appeared a young friend asked me “When are you going to write an ethics?” Where the essence of man is thought so essentially, i.e., solely from the question concerning the truth of Being, but still without elevating man to the center of beings, a longing necessarily awakens for a peremptory directive and for rules that say how man, experienced from eksistence toward Being, ought to live in a fitting manner.<sup>195</sup>

In other words, Heidegger observed the question about an ethics as one of comportment. He refuses an answer, however, along the traditional lines of an ethics of rules or directives,

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<sup>194</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 132/99.

<sup>195</sup> Martin Heidegger, “Letter on Humanism” in *Basic Writings*. ed. David Krell (Harper: New York, 1993): 215-265. Here I am citing 255.

even if it were possible to have an ethics that did not “elevate man to the center of being.” Instead, ethics is sharply removed from ontology. As Heidegger indicates in the following question:

Before we attempt to determine more precisely the relationship between “ontology” and “ethics” we must ask what “ontology” and “ethics” themselves are. It becomes necessary to ponder whether what can be designated by both terms still remains near and proper to what is assigned to thinking, which as such has to think above the truth of all Being.<sup>196</sup>

In the above passage and for the rest of the *Letter*, ethics is as it was before—an ontic science. It does not go far enough as ontology does, and while the later Heidegger abandons a fundamental ontology altogether, the separation between ethics and ontology still remains. According to Heidegger, the proper role of thinking is to move beyond the ontic. Hence, the only real reason to mention the *Letter on Humanism* is to indicate Heidegger’s reflecting back upon his own awareness that ethics and ontology remained far apart in *Being and Time* persists throughout his thinking.<sup>197</sup> This pulling apart is important to keep in mind. It signifies the limit to which we can apply Heidegger’s thought to Scheler. At this point, Heidegger is unaware or makes no conscious notice of the distinction between value and goods in Scheler’s thought. Values are realized in goods. Had Heidegger made the

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<sup>196</sup> Heidegger, *Letter*, 255.

<sup>197</sup> I should say a few things about Heidegger’s rendering of Heraclitus’ fragment *Ethos athropo daimon* as “Man dwells in the nearness of God” instead of the more traditional “A man’s character is his fate.” Heidegger attempted to show with his translation of *ethos* a type of dwelling or comportment we maintain towards Being. The fact is that if “*ethics ponders the abode [or dwelling] of man, then that thinking which thinks the truth of Being as the primordial element, as one who ek-sists, is in itself the original ethics. However this thinking is not ethics in the first instance, because it is ontology*” (*Letter*, 258). Thus, even if one interpreted later Heidegger as offering an ethics of comportment, it is an ontological concern that drives the inquiry though for this Heidegger “*neither ethics or ontology*” facilitate “*thinking that inquires into the truth of Being and so defines man’s essential abode from Being and toward being*” (*Letter*, 259).

connection between values and goods in Scheler's thinking, his phenomenological ontology may have adopted an openness to value we find in Scheler's work.

## 2.8 Anxiety's Fundamental Role

Like Scheler, emotional life has an effect on our participation in the world. For this reason, Heidegger's phenomenological description of moods starts to open up the ontological participation of Dasein in the very same way feeling and value start to reveal ontological facets in Scheler. Anxiety is the most productive (or operative) example in Heidegger's phenomenological ontology. As such, understanding anxiety as a structure of ontological participation can help us better understand how intentional act-feeling can be at root of an ontology generally speaking. Though we take Heidegger's thought as a leading clue as to how feeling may be at root of an ontology, I do not endorse Heideggerian fundamental ontology.

*Angst* is the German word for "anxiety", but for the existentialists it carries also a sense of "dread" and "anguish." Kierkegaard has paid particular attention to anxiety and its connection to sin in his brilliant *The Concept of Anxiety*. Sartre's character Antoine Roquentin in the short story *Nausea* finds he is anxious about everything. The namesake of the work is Sartre's word for anxiety. It may be stretched that Nietzsche's attempt to overcome nihilism is rooted in the expectant anxiety that would result from living in a nihilistic world. In these thinkers, none of these philosophies allows anxiety to come into full relief as a basic feature of our *ability to be* (*Seinkönnen*) other than in Heidegger's work. Despite the literary explorations on anxiety in existential literature, only a phenomenological description can penetrate anxiety's ontological depth.<sup>198</sup>

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<sup>198</sup> I should also mention some dissatisfaction with Sartre's account.

Heidegger introduces falling (*Verfallen*) as a way into anxiety in § 40. Let me start with a candidate passage:

...we shall take as our point of departure the concrete analyses of falling...Dasein's absorption manifest something like fleeing of Dasein in the face of itself—of itself as an authentic potentiality-for-Being-its-Self.<sup>199</sup>

In other words, when we are faced in an honest and stark realization of what and whom we are, we must encounter the frankness of human life. This is not just any human life, however. It is within the confines of *our* life that is at issue. When we are alone and withdrawn into ourselves, when the weight of life crushes upon us, we are brought face-to-face with our own being. In my own life, I have been brought face-to-face with my wife's personal health complications. It has been so devastating at the time of writing this work that I often fold into myself quivering. I cannot face the anxiety. I want my wife better; I want an actual diagnosis; I want to provide for her. She presses me on and sometimes I have wanted to quit my PhD, find a job and provide for her. In the wake of fear, she pulls me out of it. She reminds me of her sacrifice to work and support me while I carry on, fragile and vulnerable. While she pushes forward, that is not often what I want to do. Heidegger anticipated this fleeing, "But to bring itself face to face with itself, is precisely what Dasein does not do when it thus flees. It turns away from itself in accordance with its ownmost inertia of falling."<sup>200</sup> For Heidegger, fallenness represents the average everyday immersion in the world of others where we let the public attitudes and impersonal anonymity of Being decide our ownmost possibilities.

Heidegger's point should be clear. We do not want to confront the primordial and fundamental attunement to our own existence. In doing so, we are truly anxious, but we

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<sup>199</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 229/184.

<sup>200</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 229/184.

would rather ignore it. We do not grasp what we flee, nor do we truly experience it—this is Heidegger’s central phenomenological point about *falling*. It simply lurks behind the surface of things. Instead, we take up more common public interpretations of our being. In my fleeing from my own decisiveness to pursue more husbandly roles, I abandon the resolve I have taken up time and time again to be a philosopher.

Heidegger reminds us that while we are put face to face with ourselves and our own existence is brought before us, we must be careful to tend to the proper existential-ontological interpretation. For instance, I can be very self-serving in the example and substitute one role for another. I could say that being a husband is the possibility I have truly taken up and that pursuing scholarly work is what others think I ought to be concerned about. The “turning-away” can easily be resolved if I let others take over what ought to be at issue for myself. For example, an easily impressionable friend or relative, will do whatever she is told. Perhaps, she will fall in line with the expectations to continue the family business or some other such thing. Perhaps, the same friend or relative is a gifted artist, and she abandons that for the expectations of others. Now, this is not to suggest that taking up the expectations of others could not be done in a resolutely decisive and authentic manner. It does, however, gesture to the too often tendency of people to let the burden of Being decide *for them*.

Moreover, Heidegger once again brings up the connection between this fleeing, fear and its connection to anxiety. For Heidegger, “it still remains obscure how this [anxiety] is connected ontologically with fear...This is betokened by the fact they have not been distinguished from one another.”<sup>201</sup> Fear is an everyday mood. And as an everyday mood,

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<sup>201</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 230/185.

we can deal with it by the removal of the object that causes a disruption in us. Even more to the point, there is some consensus as to what we may find fearful. Height generates fear, since to fall involves the prospect of bodily danger. Some fears are common, but not deadly. My fear of spiders is lessened or eliminated when my wife comes to the rescue. The more primordial and therefore fundamental mood is more unsettling and pervasive. The fundamental mood concerns “everything and nothing” all at once, and fear is derivative of anxiety. As Heidegger put it, “Fear is anxiety, fallen into the ‘world’, inauthentic, and, as such, hidden from itself.”<sup>202</sup> Fleeing and fear come together causing us to shrink back from ourselves. Heidegger writes,

Shrinking back in the face of what fear discloses—in the face of something threatening—is founded upon fear; and this shrinking back has the character of fleeing. Our interpretation of fear as [attunement] has shown that in each case that in the face of which we fear is detrimental entity within the world which comes from some definite region but is close by and is bringing itself close, and it might stay away.<sup>203</sup>

The phenomenological implication of Heidegger’s analysis of anxiety is that we do not face the fundamental mood of human existence—anxiety. Heidegger thinks that anxiety plays the pivotal role of returning ourselves face to face with our ownmost being. It individualizes us in its primordially and it is so fundamental that anxiety is what explains the coming together of fallenness, and the fear Dasein experiences. In Heidegger’s own words, “*The turning-away of falling is grounded rather in anxiety, which in turn is what first makes fear possible.*”<sup>204</sup> According to Heidegger, “*That in the face of which one has anxiety is*

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<sup>202</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 234/190.

<sup>203</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 230/186. I have replaced “state of mind” with “attunement” in the Macquarrie and Robinson translation as indicated by my earlier explication of *Befindlichkeit*.

<sup>204</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 230/185. Heidegger’s italics.



*Being-in-the-world as such.*"<sup>205</sup> We are brought before ourselves as Dasein is as such. There is no object between myself and my own being—what Heidegger also calls "involvement". In this way, anxiety is more fundamental and primordially constitutive of Dasein itself. It is a completely indefinite experience and it is the most fundamental attunement we can have towards our own being. Dasein's involvements with the world collapse into insignificance.

That in face of which one is anxious is completely indefinite. Not only does this indefiniteness leave factually undecided which entity within-the-world is threatening to us, but it also tells us that entities within-the-world are not 'relevant' at all. Nothing which is ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand within the world functions as that in the face of which anxiety is anxious. Here the totality of involvements of the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand discovered within-the-world, is, as such, of no consequence; it collapses into itself; the world has the character of completely lacking significance.<sup>206</sup>

Not only do our relations to the world, the involvements Heidegger mentions, lose meaning. They lose their luster and appeal. The ready-to-hand tools that occur in a nexus of in-order-to relationships no longer relate to me in the same way. Even the presence-to-hand of a metaphysical absolute like God loses His glory. For anxiety seeps into everything, tainting and diffusing through all concerns I have about myself and life more generally.

This "everything" into which anxiety has seeped is not a specific mode of epistemic knowing about my concerns. Rather, the structure of care is more primordial than any epistemic orientation to the world. As Heidegger put it,

Anxiety 'does not know' what that in the face of which it is anxious is. 'Nowhere', however, does not signify nothing: this is where any region lies, and there too lies any disclosedness of the world for essentially spatial Being-in. Therefore that which threatens cannot bring itself close from a definite direction within what is close by; it is already 'there', and yet nowhere; it is so close that it is oppressive and stifles one's breath, and yet it is nowhere.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>205</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 230/186. Heidegger's italics.

<sup>206</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 231/186.

<sup>207</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 231/186.

The phenomenological appeal of Heidegger's approach is best revealed by the phrase "everywhere and nowhere" all at the same time. Anxiety is not nothingness, yet it does affect us greatly to the point that it cannot be dealt with in the same way that we can deal with fear. It "stifles one's breath." Like ink dropped into water, it diffuses throughout all matters of my existence.

Although indefinite in its phenomenological revelation to Dasein, anxiety does have an "about something" dimension, and that about-something concerns only us, the revealing individualizing nature of anxiety. In Heidegger's words, "Anxiety individualizes Dasein for its ownmost Being-in-the-world."<sup>208</sup> Anxiety puts one into contact with one's own being. It highlights the radical openness of my presence to myself, the "*Da*" being the present *thereness* of possibility to which I must remain open in relation to *my* being (*Sein*). Yet, we should be clear. This anxiety is not "a clear possibility for" Dasein anymore than folding back upon oneself "into the 'at-home' of publicness" that we often find comforting.<sup>209</sup> For Heidegger, anxiety is still a threat; its indefinite nature is just never made concrete into a specific object as in fear, or that from which we flee. Anxiety robs us of the specific nature of what we find threatening or a concrete possibility. Instead, "anxiety throws Dasein back upon that which it is anxious about—its authentic potentiality-for-being-in-the-world."<sup>210</sup> In other words, anxiety's radically individualizing function manifests "in Dasein as *Being-towards* its ownmost potentiality-for-being—that is, its *Being-free* for the freedom of

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<sup>208</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 232/188.

<sup>209</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 234/190.

<sup>210</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 232/188.

choosing itself and taking hold of itself.”<sup>211</sup> Anxiety throws us back upon the indeterminacy inherent in how openly I could relate to my own existence.

In Scheler, the spiritual feeling of despair comes closest to the role played by existential anxiety. Spiritual feelings stream forth from the spiritual act-center of the person. Scheler describes these feelings as taking “possession of the whole person.” They do not take an object. In this way, they are directly like Heideggerian *Angst*, and in taking possession of the whole person, one can only *be* “blissful or in despair.” These feelings, then, fill out the entire field of the person and its ontological participation with the world and others. We are thrown back upon ourselves in the very same way that anxiety individualizes us in Heidegger. As Scheler put it, the spiritual feelings “are given when we are given as absolute: ‘we are ourselves as selves.’”<sup>212</sup> This absolute givenness occurs in the individualization of these spiritual feelings. There is an important feature in spiritual feelings missed by Heidegger’s analysis. In Scheler’s text, he speaks about bliss and despair. We can only be blissful, and these spiritual feelings emanate outward from our participation in the world. They reveal the value of our whole personal being. Scheler describes anxiety as relative to the experience of vital values. Daniel Dahlstrom citing Scheler about Heidegger writes, “Scheler argues that, contrary to claims made for them in Heidegger’s existential analysis, anxiety and care are derivative, not fundamental phenomena.”<sup>213</sup> In Chapter 1, I described the structure of vital feeling and how they intend

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<sup>211</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 232/188.

<sup>212</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 343.

<sup>213</sup> Daniel O Dahlstrom, “Scheler’s Critique of Heidegger’s Ontology” in *Max Scheler’s Acting Persons: New Perspectives* ed., Stephen Schneck. (New York: Rodopi B.V., 2002): 67-92. Dahlstrom, *Critique*, 80.

values of the environment. This makes more sense than Heidegger's notion of anxiety as ultimately revealing ourselves as thrown back upon ourselves.

When one is anxious, one might not be aware of the object intended. However, there is a sense of becoming tuned into my situation, my environment in a very organic and holistic manner. Years ago, I became anxious about transitioning from high school to college. I had been an art student in high school and decided to pursue art as a major. From the returning freshman and sophomores visiting our high school, I had heard horror stories about the demandingness of being an art major. I had fixated on the demandingness of a process I could not really understand or imagine. Is my work good enough? In that sense, my anxiety did not take an object, but yet filled out the prospects of an indeterminate future. These anxious moments were well warranted. For a time before philosophy, I had locked myself away into the studio to draw still lifes for Drawing 1. In that course, I found the anxiety about the time demanded of my instructors and the constant critique sessions of our work in which all finished pieces and works in progress were lined up next to each other and judged. The instructor and other art students then would critique all the other works. My anxiety took shape and became about something and ultimately revealed the tenuous impatience I had with the process of becoming an artist.

Anxiety illuminates the vulnerable situatedness we maintain towards the world in a very concrete way. It is not only about possibilities and my freedom, but in a deeper sense I feel it deep down in my bodily orientation toward the worldly environment. Thinking about some future vulnerable prospect makes my stomach churn. These prospects weigh heavily on me. The expression "to weigh heavily" is a bodily metaphor to signify thoughts that constantly awaken in us our whole vulnerability. In this way, anxiety is circular; it

references ourselves as selves. It is self-relational, but within the relational aspect of anxiety's revelatory power, it illuminates the field of givenness that comes from behind, but it is not a givenness in any horizontal sense. Anxiety opens us up to a world in a way that concerns only ourselves. Heidegger is right about that. On another level, however, Heidegger confused the movement about what we are anxious about with horizontal givenness. This confusion made him interpret only two disparate possibilities for Dasein inauthenticity and authenticity. I explain these in the next section.

## **2.9 The Movement Between Inauthenticity and Authenticity**

In Heidegger, anxiety reveals a radical sense of responsibility and freedom, and this responsibility and freedom can only be revealed to us in the affective life constituted by anxiety.<sup>214</sup> We are disclosed as *Being-possible*. Choosing and holding steadfast to our own possibilities what we will project can become mired in the expectation or publicness of what others might expect. I might worry about what my father thinks of me. I want his approval, and if, given that my father proudly boasts of his life accomplishments in a military career, I might come to think through his own possibilities and that they ought to be mine. In this way, I do not take on the responsibility for what it means to serve in the military. In an inauthentic existence, I lack ever being thrown back upon myself. Within inauthentic living, we substitute and confuse our potentiality-for-being with other things. Anxiety, in throwing us back upon ourselves, reveals that we are sheer possibility shorn from any determination by the world. In this way, we encounter the radical responsibility of our own existence and realize the inherent thrownness to life which being free demands.

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<sup>214</sup> It would not be wrong to read into this sense of radical responsibility into a rendering of *Eigenlichkeit* as either "ownmost possibility" or "responsibility," though I choose to stick with "authentic."

Inauthentic individuals comport themselves in an “everyday publicness of the ‘they’, which brings tranquilized self-assurance—‘Being-at-home’, with all its obviousness—into the average everydayness of Dasein.”<sup>215</sup>

According to Heidegger, the inauthentic relation to one’s potentiality-for-being can be sought either within the radical freedom inherent to us alone, or grounded in some other possibility outside us. In this way, the inauthentic relation makes us comfortable, puts us at ease within ourselves, or what Heidegger has called “Being-at-home.” By contrast, anxiety reveals itself as *Unheimlich*, or what appears translated as “uncanny.” Literally, it means “un-homelike.” Anxiety’s throwing us back upon an awareness of Being-in-the-world as pure possible freedom makes us aware of how we reside or dwell within ourselves. This *residing* is put ill-at-ease. It is, therefore, “uncanny.” In anxiety, we feel uncanny, ill-at-ease or not-at-home and delivered over to ourselves in radical freedom. In the home-like comfort of inauthenticity, we flee from ourselves towards objects that we let determine our own Being-possible.

Heidegger never really claims anywhere that there is some method to achieve permanent authenticity nor that authenticity is valued more than inauthenticity. At most, Heidegger observes that authenticity must be wrestled from inauthenticity. Anxiety, as uncanniness, is “a threat to [Dasein’s] lostness in the ‘they’, though not explicitly.”<sup>216</sup> The uncanniness needs to be drawn out of human life from its implicit background, and we must be delivered over to it through anxiety. Moreover, although anxiety seems

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<sup>215</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 233/188. One should not walk away thinking that I insist all political possibilities are inauthentic. The descriptions of Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* might be differentiated between having an inauthentic mode of faith and an authentic one that wrestles with what exactly it means to have faith in the absurd.

<sup>216</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 234/189.

primordially-basic to Dasein, it is rarely felt, and “arises in the most innocuous situations.”<sup>217</sup> Thus, within Heidegger there can be no procedural way to establish authenticity over and against the co-dependency required of inauthentic existence and the moods that would persist within inauthenticity. Instead, we must understand that the description of anxiety as a fundamental mood exemplifying attunement has not been adequately treated in any empirical, theological or philosophical investigation. In addition, the neglect of anxiety and attunement proves just how rare of an experience it is and finally its neglect attests to the most fundamental truth concerning Heidegger’s structure of care—we are rarely in a position to truly know ourselves.

Let me draw this analogy to a close. Anxiety reveals a way to conceive how intentional feeling acts participate ontologically in relation to value. Yet, anxiety is self-relational and therefore appears fundamental in Heidegger’s phenomenological description. However, anxiety is not fundamental, but vital. Anxiety occurs in two movements that concern me and only me—authenticity and inauthenticity and how comported I am to the enviroing world. While a specific criticism of Heidegger would take us away from the aim of this dissertation, I suspect that all philosophies that fetishize finitude cannot glean insight into value beyond the vital value-ranking in Scheler’s thought.

## **2.10 Heidegger’s Critique of Schelerian Acts**

Heidegger is helpful in offering support to the initial impetus of this project.

Heidegger offers nearing the end of §29,

It has been one of the merits of phenomenological research that it has again brought these phenomena [affective life in general] more unrestrictedly into our sight. Not only that: Scheler, accepting the challenges of Augustine and Pascal, has guided the problematic to a consideration of how acts “which

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<sup>217</sup> *BT*, 234/189.

represent” and acts which “take an interest” are interconnected in their foundations. But even here the existential-ontological foundations of the phenomena of the act in general are admittedly still obscure.<sup>218</sup>

Heidegger calls attention to Scheler’s thought explicitly. It would seem that something was being brought into relief by the reference to Scheler in *Being and Time*, and yet it is left as a mystery since *Being and Time* is filled with many speckled references to Scheler, which do not clearly delineate the sense of resistance found in Dilthey or Scheler. Initially, the reaction might be to interpret the above passage as an essential tension with Scheler’s thought, and further one could press against Heidegger that he misinterprets Scheler, or that Heidegger is correct in his assessment of Scheler. However, the tone of my work is rather to Heidegger and Scheler mutual dialogue. Here, Heidegger illuminates the ambiguity in Scheler we found prominent in the *Formalism*. In other words, the passage above just highlights the initial ambiguity underlying what being-in-an-act is that animates my efforts. Little did Heidegger know, however, that he might provide a close analogy to the answer in his own right. *Being-in-the-world closely resembles being-in-an-act*.

In Scheler, values are not given as Heidegger assumed. For Heidegger, all phenomena are given within time and history. Therefore, the type of givenness under consideration is such that a phenomenon appears in constant reference to a background. A phenomenon is always a something-as-something—this is what I call ‘horizontal givenness,’ a givenness that occurs within mediation. The impetus of hermeneutic phenomenology never allows for a givenness that transcends historicity and finitude. Yet, the fullness of the person, its inexhaustible transcendence, is incapable of being given as an object. For this reason, the person is non-objectifiable, and every attempt to articulate values and feeling,

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<sup>218</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 178/139.



even the implicit connection in Heideggerian moods, is incapable of articulating their depth and height of values and persons. This follows from the simple fact that values, and persons occupy a different type of givenness altogether. They are given vertically, or to put it another way, they are non-horizonal. Horizontal givenness occurs in the phenomenological articulation of perception and interpretations against the backdrop of history and context. Thus, if we take kindly to the interpretation that we should broaden our phenomenological conception of the *given* to include a new type of givenness, then we can easily understand how values enter into experience through acts.<sup>219</sup> As Scheler puts it,

...there is a type of experiencing whose 'objects' are completely inaccessible to reason...it is a kind of experience that leads to genuine objective objects and the eternal order among them, i.e. to values...And the order of and laws contained in this experience are as exact and evident as those of logic and mathematics; that is, there are evident interconnections and oppositions among value and value-attitudes among acts of preferring, etc. which are built upon them and the basis of these genuine grounding of moral decisions and laws for such decisions is both possible and necessary.<sup>220</sup>

This entire realm of value-consciousness and its primordially occupies the same fundamental status as Heidegger's care structure a la Being-in-the-world (*Sein-in-der-Welt*). However, this primordially is completely prior and constitutive of human life. All of human life is saturated with emotional tonality, and this type of givenness stands outside the horizonal givenness of Heidegger's phenomenology. Vertical givenness is completely

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<sup>219</sup> The introduction to a more primordial sphere of givenness within Schelerian phenomenology is extremely motivated by the interpretation of verticality offered in Anthony Steinbock's *Phenomenology and Mysticism: the Verticality of Religious Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007). For exceptional clarity on this concept, see the Introduction, Chapter 1 and Chapter 5. Specifically, Steinbock employs a broadened sense of givenness to account for how the order of the Holy is articulated within mystical religious experiences in the sphere of epiphany. It is not my intention to apply this mode of givenness in the religious sphere as he does. Instead, it is my purpose to insist on the givenness of values as a separate mode of givenness with its own evidence in very much the same way Steinbock articulates religious mystical experience.

<sup>220</sup> Heidegger, *Formalism*, 261.

*independent* from the phenomenological descriptions of horizontal givenness. Furthermore, this is exactly why Heidegger could never grasp values correctly. Values always *appeared* as ontic since their givenness did not share in the imposed upon them. To put it another way, this is why Heidegger observed that acts of interest remain “*admittedly still obscure.*” The question posed by the above passage is: what are existential-ontological foundations for Heidegger and what remains obscure about the interconnection between these acts—feelings and their value-correlates for him? An answer may suggest itself when we learn first what Heidegger meant by “existential-ontological foundations.” Such an answer must first recall the purposes and aims of Heidegger’s analytic of Dasein.

According to Heidegger, the *Daseinsanalytik* in *Being and Time* is an attempt to work out the question of Being (*Seinsfrage*). Dasein is that being which can pose the question of its own being to itself, and Heidegger attempts to arrive at a fundamental ontology by working out this question of Being phenomenologically. According to Heidegger, we already have a pre-reflective understanding of Being and Dasein comports itself in its everydayness presupposing the question of being in factual life. Therefore, Heidegger interprets phenomenology’s task as a clarification of our own Being, and this clarification will supply a forthcoming point of access into the task of thinking Being as such. Henceforth, the *Daseinsanalytik* takes on an existential-ontological search for those conditions under which I can wholly address how it is that I am *Being-in-the-world*. Therefore, Heidegger appropriates phenomenological method to draw out exactly how that which is concealed in the existential-ontological structure can be brought into the clear. As such, fundamental ontology is an interrogation of the entity that possesses an intimate familiarity in order to get to an understanding of Being as such.

In applying his method, Heidegger draws a distinction between the ontological foundations that make Dasein's active relation with the world intelligible, and the ontic interpretations are those notions or concepts that have not been elicited. The ontic level of experience wrongly presupposes the persistence of either consciousness or the world through time in a very naïve way. In fact, one might read Husserl's term "natural attitude" into what Heidegger here means as "ontic." Such a perspective also distorts the primary active relation we have to the world and ourselves. "Dasein is an entity which, in its very Being, comports itself understandingly towards that Being [ourselves]"<sup>221</sup> For Heidegger, *phenomenological descriptions are aimed at the most primordial and fundamental ontology of factual life, and ontic interpretations are those that must presuppose the existential-ontological foundation in order to be intelligible.* For my purposes, this is the most relevant feature to borrow from Heidegger. There is a level of phenomenological attention to irreducible elements that constitute human life and only arise in our interaction with the world, and this insight is what I have attempted to synthesize into the ontological participatory nature of Scheler's being-in-an-act.

The distinction between the ontic and ontological belies a further insight in *Being and Time* that can also suggest more about Heidegger calling both acts "admittedly still obscure" in Scheler. This obscurity can be better explained by Heidegger's prioritization of inquiry. For Heidegger, there is an ontological priority occurs in three levels of inquiry. At the most fundamental level, there is fundamental ontology that we have already discussed at length. At the next stage, there is a regional ontology. A regional ontology is an inquiry into what exactly are the beings that constitute a sphere of inquiry. For instance, the

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<sup>221</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 78/53.

positive science of biology is built upon the ontological inquiry into what is a living being. Lastly, as already indicated, there are the positive sciences that presuppose both a regional and fundamental ontology. Each positive science is an accomplishment from the point of view of Dasein.<sup>222</sup> For Heidegger, the positive sciences “all fail to give an unequivocal and ontologically adequate answer to the *kind of Being* which belongs to those entities which we ourselves are.” These sciences cannot determine any ontological adequacy since they presuppose it. “These ontological foundations can never be disclosed by subsequent hypotheses derived from empirical material, but that they are always ‘there’ already, even when that empirical material gets collected.”<sup>223</sup> We always bring our own “thereness” (*Da*) in our being (*Sein*), and, if you recall, this is the task of fundamental ontology. Not only does this ontological clarification of foundations persist for the possibility of self-understanding, but also for the world treated scientifically. Accordingly, Heidegger suggests that “one must have an insight into Dasein’s basic structures in order to treat the world-phenomenon conceptually.”<sup>224</sup>

Scheler holds the same level of priority at the root of his conception of phenomenology that Heidegger has for fundamental ontology in relation to the positive sciences. This can be seen when Scheler discusses the shortcoming of naturalistic and biological conceptions of man. “The definition of man as a biological species is itself questionable.”<sup>225</sup> Scheler is aiming at describing the “acts of a certain being and laws of acts

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<sup>222</sup> As Heidegger indicates with the example of biology: “Yet even as an a priori condition for the objects which biology takes for its theme, this structure itself can only be explained philosophically only if it has been conceived beforehand as a structure of Dasein.”

Heidegger, *BT*, 84/58.

<sup>223</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 75/50.

<sup>224</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 77/52.

<sup>225</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 287.

and values of a certain being and their interconnections come to appearance which we must first exhibit in their essential contents in order to show that they belong in principle to an order above the biological order."<sup>226</sup> In this way, phenomenology foreshadows the being of a world of values and persons that are not of biological origins.<sup>227</sup> Phenomenology attempts to arrive at how these interconnections are experienced, and from a direct description of their immediate vertical givenness Scheler draws out the phenomenological content of acts and their law-like uniformity. Hence, Scheler's phenomenology of value opens up into an ontological effort to discover the law-like uniformity inherent in being-in-an-act.

Now we have a way to proceed about the opening question and the passage with which we started: *What are existential-ontological foundations for Heidegger?* The existential-ontological foundation is the aim of phenomenological endeavor, and a resolution of a particular phenomenon requires investigation. Following Heidegger, we would want to bring a phenomenon from its concealed ontic reality into unconcealed ontological fullness. Thus, Heidegger is suggesting there is some aspect left obscure "of the phenomenon of the act." The phenomenon of the act in Scheler is nothing other than how values come-to-be felt in experience, which is another way of saying Scheler proposes that value-qualities are assessed and comprehended in intentional feeling. Within intentional feeling, "there is an original relatedness, a directedness toward something objective, namely values."<sup>228</sup> This directedness of intentional feeling is the ontological participation

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<sup>226</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 290.

<sup>227</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 290.

<sup>228</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 257.

of the person in the world just as one might interpret Dasein qua being-in-the-world through *Befindlichkeit*.

According to Heidegger, however, values remain obscure since ethics is always a present-at-hand phenomenon at the level of ontic experience. As Heidegger first mentions ethics in *Being and Time*,

Dasein's ways of behavior, its capacities, powers, possibilities, and vicissitudes, have been studied with varying extent in philosophical psychology, in anthropology, *ethics*, and 'political science', in poetry, biography and in the writing of history each in a different fashion...Only when the basic structures of Dasein have been adequately worked out with explicit orientation towards the problem of Being itself, will what we have hitherto gained in interpreting Dasein gets its existential justification.<sup>229</sup>

For Heidegger, ethics is but one example of an ontic interpretation that does not go far enough in elucidating the Being of Dasein, or what Heidegger meant by the "existential ontological foundations" mentioned in the previous passage. Heidegger thinks that various ontic interpretations of Dasein's possibilities have been overlooked and concealed.

For Heidegger, existence is steeped in feeling at the primordial and fundamental level. Scheler holds the same view. "All *primordial* comportment toward the world...is nevertheless...a *primordial emotional* comportment of *value-ception* (*Wertnehmung*)."<sup>230</sup> Accordingly, it is unclear how values manifest within the emotions, or if they can manifest at all in Heidegger's analysis. As I have already indicated, values occur in the horizon of our being in Heidegger. There is no type of givenness that could anticipate the spatial metaphors of height. "In the realm of values there are only analogies to the categories of spatial relations, such as 'higher' and 'lower' and the oppositions in relationship amongst

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<sup>229</sup> Heidegger, *BT*, 37. Italics mine.

<sup>230</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 197. Italics reprinted from the Funk and Frings translation exactly including the half-italicized term "Wertnehmung."

values are of a different order than those in the physical world such as ‘weight’ and ‘counterweight.’”<sup>231</sup> The only type of ethics possible in Heidegger’s fundamental ontology might be what Iain Thomson has suggested as an “ethics of comportment.”<sup>232</sup> Comportment occurs within the horizon of history. Yet, there is a dearth of values that never makes its way into the analysis. Thus, it is important to conclude with two thoughts. First, Heidegger’s notion of an active relation within Dasein’s reflective self-becoming suggests an important analogy to understand what being-in-an-act is and how it functions similarly to fundamental attunement. Second, in adopting this quasi-Heideggerian approach to being-in-an-act, we must be equally aware that the resources of Heidegger’s phenomenology can only anticipate horizontal phenomena. With this limit in mind, I wish to introduce some reflections on love in Scheler. Not only is love the more appropriate fundamental feeling of human life. It is not derivative, but fundamental to the experience of being human that counters the existential interpretation of human life as something finite and steeped in fundamental anxiety. Love’s movement is infinitizing and reflects the non-horizontal givenness of value. Scheler discloses in his analysis of personal acts.

This infinite movement of love-as-experienced is given and felt differently in varying value-rankings. In the *Ordo Amoris*, Scheler develops a convincing example between the sensualist and spiritual person. On the one hand, the sensualist sates his desires by going from one drink to another. In the lower spheres, value can be felt as pleasure. Pleasures are transient. We feel the thirst-quenched and the momentary elation of eating chocolate, yet in a few minutes we must sate the appetite for something sweet again. The infinity of love

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<sup>231</sup> Kelly, *Material*, 65.

<sup>232</sup> Iain Thomson, “Rethinking Levinas on Heidegger on Death” in *The Harvard Review of Philosophy* vol. XVI (Fall 2009): 23-43.

is felt in the increased variety necessary to sate the appetite and the drive-urge of life that animates us. On the other hand, the spiritual person seeks deep satisfaction in spiritual values and the works that embody spiritual values in either objects or persons. In the spiritual person, the infinite gesture of love finds expression by the increased depth and absorption of the growing object or person. This overwhelming fullness is richer than its sensualist counterpart. The sensualist values intended in pleasure are lower in value. They do not endure and are therefore lower whereas the spiritual values embody values that endure and so are higher than pleasure. Since spiritual values endure beyond the transience of pleasure, they exhibit a richer fullness.

### **2.11 The Givenness of Love and Ontological Participation**

Love is the candidate experience of value in Scheler. In several of Scheler's works thus far, I have gestured to love as an essential interconnection to value, and I ended the previous section by gesturing to a different type of givenness shared in love. Before going into an in depth analysis of Scheler's texts on love, let me begin with the brilliant demarcation of Edward Vacek's list of what love is not in Scheler. First, love is not giving pleasure to someone. Love is not the neediness in the lover, nor is it beneficence, though that is part of it. Love is not the positive feeling engendered by loving even if it is rebuffed by the loved person. In addition, love is not our ability to be alone, nor is love a set of specific feelings for the beloved.<sup>233</sup> As we will see, it is an experience rich in its phenomenological depth that issues forth in spiritual feeling. Because love, like despair, can fill out our entire personal being, it represents a unique orientation to others. At the outset, it might be best to recall the emphasis of love as participation in the *Ordo Amoris*.

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<sup>233</sup> Edward V. Vacek, "Scheler's Phenomenology of Love" in *Journal of Religion* vol 62, no. 2 (April 1982): 156-177. Vacek, *Scheler*, 158-159 here.



Scheler describes love with an active phenomenological language that supports my ontological participatory interpretation. In the *Ordo Amoris*, love is “an act that seeks to lead everything in the direction of the perfection proper to” the beloved object, no matter if it is other, impersonal other or thing.<sup>234</sup> If nothing hinders the act of love, it comes to a rich fullness. Even if hindered or left incomplete, love moves in the order of growth. In this way, love is uplifting, it is described as a movement, or enhancement into higher values. In the “Ordo Amoris”, love is “a dynamic becoming , a growing, a welling up of things in the direction of their archetype, which resides in God,”<sup>235</sup> or more directly Scheler emphasizes the participatory nature of love as a being-in-an-act. Love “*is a primal act by which a being...abandoned itself, in order to share and participate in another being as an ens intentionale.*”<sup>236</sup> Love opens us to the growth and movement of values, and “to the essence of individuality in another person.”<sup>237</sup> In this way, it also expresses a participation towards the highest values of the Holy and at least in both the “*Ordo Amoris*” and *Formalism*, God.

Now while much could be said about love from the “*Ordo Amoris*” and the accompanying *Formalism*, love receives its fullest phenomenological attention. In Scheler’s *Nature of Sympathy*, a text produced in close proximity to the *Formalism*, several passages suggest the same continuity. Let me offer some candidate passages as evidence of this continuity. First, “love is directed towards the enhancement of value...the higher value with which love is concerned is in no way previously ‘given,’ for it is only disclosed in the

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<sup>234</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

<sup>235</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 109.

<sup>236</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 110. Italics mine.

<sup>237</sup> Max Scheler, *Nature of Sympathy* trans. Peter Heath (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2011.), 160. I cite this as NoS hereafter.

movement of love.”<sup>238</sup> Second, “*love is that movement wherein every concrete individual object that possesses value achieves the highest value compatible with its nature and ideal vocation; or wherein it attains the ideal state of value intrinsic to its nature.*”<sup>239</sup> Thus, we can reference these passages, and in Scheler’s account the nature of the experience of love is continuous with the thematizations elsewhere. For the remainder of this analysis, I will stick with those passages in the *Nature of Sympathy* to articulate Scheler’s conception of love.

Love’s movement is constant. Love takes possession of our whole being – the entire person - and one can only *be* in love towards love’s noema. Love has many noemata: the personal other, my self, impersonal other, an idea, or a thing. Though love embraces many types of noemata, love is intransient. Love remains fixed, and this fixity of the experience does not change in relation to other states of feeling. “Our love for someone does not alter, for all the pain and grief the loved one may cause us, nor our hatred, for all the joy and pleasure the hated one may afford.”<sup>240</sup> What is relevant for our purposes in this passage is the unshakeable orientation love possesses in intrapersonal experience. The act structure of love (and its opposite, hatred) persists unaltered. When I bent down on one knee to propose to my wife, it never entered my head to utter the words, “I promise to love you for five years.” Likewise, the more we hate a person and suffer from a disordered heart, the more we actively seek to avoid an encounter with them or want to harm them.

Consistent with the phenomenological attitude, persons are the source of these feelings in acts. As such, it is not as if the internal core of love as an experience can best be

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<sup>238</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 158.

<sup>239</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 161.

<sup>240</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 147.

generalized from a perspective taken outside first-personal experience. Such an outside perspective on experience would study the love and hatred as the effects of emotional states, but not as their causes. In this way, we should never consider the experience from anything outside of undergoing it. Instead, love-as-experienced is capable of its own evidence, as suggested by its phenomenological analysis.<sup>241</sup> Now, the phenomenological perspective has never been lost in this entire project, but what I have contributed is an explicit focus on the nature of acts, and *love is the exemplar act in which we will found an ontology of value for Scheler*. Several things about love should be well established before I make that ontological interpretation of value.

Love is not a form of apprehension. Instead, love is always about comportment and orientation in acts. Instead, “love represents a unique attitude to objects of value.”<sup>242</sup> Love *participates* in objects of value as an orientation. “For the primary orientation of love is towards values, and towards the objects discernible, through those values, as sustaining them.”<sup>243</sup> This point is not entirely clear in the *Formalism*. Anytime the acts of love and hatred are mentioned, they are always mentioned alongside preference. In addition, the higher or lower status is given in love “requiring no such comparison of value as is always involved in preference.”<sup>244</sup> Moreover, this participation penetrates into the depths of its object such that no detachment is possible. This is why Scheler contrasts love from respect. In respect, the detachment is presupposed and precedes the onset of the value-judgment of respect itself. In love, the revelation is immediate and participates in the value-content. There is no gap or presupposition but an opening up towards the proper value of the

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<sup>241</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 150.

<sup>242</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 148.

<sup>243</sup> Scheler, *NoS* 151.

<sup>244</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 153.

person in question. If someone were to ask the reasons for why I love my wife, these reasons cannot be made without referencing the event of where this immediate revelation occurred. Even, then, the love outstrips the intelligibility of reasons offered. Every reason conceivable could not offer any reason why I love her. In this way, love has no intelligibility in the sphere of reasons one might find in how reasons become articulated in Kant. Love and hatred possess their own evidence.

Love and hatred necessarily fasten upon the individual core in things—the core of value—if I may be allowed the expression—which can never be wholly resolved into values susceptible of judgment, or even of distinct apprehension in feeling. On the contrary, our standards of appreciation of value-attributes are governed by our love or hatred of things exhibiting these values...<sup>245</sup>

Moreover, love and hatred are not intrinsically social dispositions. It is tempting to focus on phenomenology to find some point of corroboration with the social sciences, and one interpretation friendly to such a distortion might want to generalize that a specific anthropological reading of love and hatred were being offered. This anthropological reading couldn't be farther from the case, and the phenomenological evidence for this point has already been cited. The object of love can be many things, including my own self, an idea, an impersonal other and a personal other all at the same time. Love is a creative source of opening up towards persons since love is the act-feeling in which intrapersonal relations take place. This dynamic becoming felt in love should not be taken as my endorsement that valuing could not occur in moments of a landscape, a painting or religious experience. For me, I am after what within Scheler can facilitate an ontological interpretation of what values are with respect to how they are experienced in ethical

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<sup>245</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 149.

moments. This ontological interpretation requires a penetrating analysis of the act essences of love.

Love is exemplified in the ontological participatory nature I have discerned for acts in general. As evidence for this interpretation, I point to the following passage. “The ultimate essence of love and hatred, inherent in the acts, can only be *exhibited*; they cannot be defined.”<sup>246</sup> Here, the temptation is simply to read *exhibiting* as the revealing of a phenomenological insight. Yet, that exhibiting of the essence in love is revealed in that “*movement of intention* whereby, from a given value A in an object, its higher value is visualized...it is this vision of a higher value that is the essence of love.”<sup>247</sup> According to Scheler, the ultimate nature of love is, therefore, never reactive. Instead, it is imbued with an active participatory sense that lies at the basis of his ontology of value. If love is merely reactive, love would be a psychological function and not an act. Instead, love is described as supervening this movement of intention towards potentially higher values still to be realized in the sphere of acts. Therefore, love is a creative force. From love, even prior to acting an idealization of value, love’s creation may coalesce around the loved person. More generally, Scheler concludes that love’s participatory nature in the world *engenders* value. Love is a creative force out of which value increases and becomes realized in the world in all spheres of preference, willing and action.

Love, in short, is a creative of ‘existence’, relative to these spheres. Hatred, on the other hand, is in the strictest sense *destructive* since it does in fact destroy higher values (within these spheres), and has the additional effect of blunting and blinding our feeling for such values and power of discriminating them. It is only because of their destruction (within these spheres) by hatred, that they become indiscernible.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 152.

<sup>247</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 153.

<sup>248</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 154. The parentheses belong to Scheler.

In the above passage, it is important to note the brief manifest effect Scheler attributes to hatred. For acts of hatred (or love) can have *conceivable effects* on the future. It is not a striving of the will, or a choosing either. In that conceivable effect, the intersubjective constitution of the values in the field of our concrete world are elevated by loving acts or destroyed by hating acts. In this way, my ontological participatory interpretation takes full shape. *Values are real insofar as they hinder or amplify the expressive creative source of acts, that is, persons. Persons bring values into this world through the very comportment, orientation or attitude in relation to an already emotionally saturated world. They manifest on the back of goods and concretize in willing, actions and objects of our experience.* Therefore, it is from the interaction and orientation from persons either in love or hate that grip the world, seize it and diffuse the order of value throughout it. If hatred succeeds in devaluing the possibilities of persons, then a disorder of the heart can seize all of us; it can make us vulnerable to confusing or conflating higher ordered values with lower ones on a personal or more generally at the cultural level.

Specifically, Scheler has established here that love is always a simultaneous opening up towards and orientation to higher values as possibilities for us and/or the ideal person of the other. In loving the other person, we can see through the actually experienced person into the core of value – if you recall the above passage, and as the last passage confirms, hatred is a closing-off of the other person. However, it is generally acknowledged that Scheler’s notion of love is at root of all philosophy and science for him. As Eugene Kelly puts it, “love opens the spirit to all of being and essence as valuable and worthy of

reverence and for this reason it is the deepest foundation of science and philosophy.”<sup>249</sup> For Scheler, phenomenology is one of the disciplines that “seeks to bring about a renewal in the pattern of the human heart”<sup>250</sup> and phenomenology is, therefore, how we should understand his description of love. Love concerns the how and what of something’s givenness in the depth and richness of its whole being, its fullness. Love allows the given value to come unto us and receive it phenomenologically without distortion in intentional acts.

## 2.12 Love and God

What remains confusing about the phenomenological language surrounding love is that God is mentioned in the *Formalism*, and *Ordo Amoris* where the language of orientation and participation lurk. Hopefully by now, that language is a bit more clarified. Therefore, God has some measure of relevance that underlies how we can interpret the ontological implication of Scheler’s phenomenological period. In addition, spiritual feelings and the values of the Holy have lurked in much of the background of the terminology, and I have come to question what exactly this language attempts to capture phenomenologically. I did not want to elucidate the meaning of God in relation to his *Formalism* until the concept of love had been distilled.

Amongst the most confusing passages in the *Formalism*, I cite the following as a paragon of mystery:

...the idea of God and the real of persons belonging to him and their order is “God’s realm.” But with this we come to a curious result. “Man” as the being of the “highest value” among earthly beings and as a moral being becomes comprehensible and phenomenologically intuitable only on the presupposition of the idea of God and “in the light” of this idea! We can even

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<sup>249</sup> Kelly, *Material*, 217.

<sup>250</sup> Scheler, *NoS*, 95.

say that, correctly viewed, he is only this movement, the *tendency* and the *transition* to the *divine*. He is the bodily being that God intentionizes and the point at which the real of God breaks through, and he is that being in whose acts the being and value of the world is first constituted...it is in *theomorphism* of his most noble exemplars that the unique *value* of his “humanity” lies! Thus man’s intention beyond himself and all life constitutes his essence. And precisely this *is* the essential concept of “man”: He is a thing that *transcends his own life and all life*. The core of his nature—apart from all special organization—is in fact this movement, this spiritual act of transcending himself!<sup>251</sup>

And in the *Ordo Amoris*,

All that is worthy of love (*die Liebenwürdigkeiten*), from the viewpoint of God’s comprehensive love, might have been stamped and created by this act of love; man’s love does not so stamp or create its objects. Man’s love is restricted to recognizing the objective demand these objects make and to submitting to the gradation of rank in what is worthy of love. This gradation exists in itself, but in itself it exists “for” man, ordered to his *particular* essence. Loving can be characterized as correct or false only because a man’s actual inclinations and acts of love can be in harmony with or oppose the rank-ordering of what is worthy of love. In other words, man can feel and know himself to be at one with or separated and opposed to, the love with which God loved the idea of the world or its content before he created it, the love with which he preserves it at every instant. If a man in his actual loving, or in the order of his acts of love, in his preferences and depreciations, subverts the intention of the divine world-order—as it is in his power to do. And whenever he does so, his world as the possible object of knowledge, and his world as the field of willing, action, and operation, must necessarily fall as well.<sup>252</sup>

First, in the *Formalism* passage, Scheler observes the necessity of God. It is an idea as elusive as persons. As already shown, persons and God are given in a different mode than the horizon of perception. This vertical givenness acts as a “light” to which the value of persons shines through. This shining through or act of givenness is a participation, or a “transition” to the divine. This participation establishes the irreducible commingling of divine and person to such an extent that the values realized through love come to form an

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<sup>251</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 288-289.

<sup>252</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 111-112.



idealization of person, or types. The value of these types reach beyond any single person, and cannot be captured by any form of empirical inquiry.

Persons partake of the divine, and this is clear in the *Ordo Amoris* passage as well. In the *Ordo Amoris* passage, God loved the world into being as it is through the very act of love whereby we create higher values into the world. Love is a becoming and dynamic orientation that realizes value and strives for higher forms. Moreover, this language suggests that the order of values is established only with the divine conception of the world in mind. The phenomenological attention to values as a mode of givenness is possible only in an already constituted intersubjective emotive valuation. God is the source of that intersubjective constitution. God is in the world as a loving creating force that sustains and awakens within us motivation to realize higher values and establishes their objectivity simultaneously.

I am faced with a quandary. Do we really need the language of God to articulate the elemental force of value's givenness and participation? In a certain sense, we do. Love is an orientation aimed at the growth of value proper to the loved other. In this sense we could call God's love infinitizing. Love reaches beyond itself to persons and that higher possibility. In this reaching beyond, love gestures to a higher movement and ontological reality as a higher form of normative possibility. It is better to treat more people with dignity, that is, treating them as persons. In historical periods where persons are objectified, those same people are considered beneath persons. God stands in as *that which is wholly other than ourselves* and this wholly otherness is as radical a form of otherness as we find in Levinasian phenomenology.

In a certain sense, we do not need the language of God as many approaches to moral theory would insist upon, and in other ways we do. In keeping with these normative approaches, God could merely be a principle of ultimacy, the constituted direction and highest expression of our conceivable values of the person, or the implicit sense to where our values can take us whether or not we want to listen to their objective givenness through love. In this way, God becomes the impartial standpoint or ideal spectator. God is posited as a heuristic to get to the best answer to our moral quandary. However, the difficulty with the ideal spectator posited by utilitarianism is that it conceals the fact that much of the want for objectivity and universality built into that perspective equalizes all people in terms of their psychological nature or subjective faculties. Scheler's phenomenology of value actively resists thematizing individuals about their experience and instead focuses on how the modes of givenness are experienced individually by persons. In that sense, he is not guilty of expunging the individual from moral theories. Moral theories generalize about people as moral agents. In Kant, persons are rationally autonomous agents. In utilitarianism, people become moral agents with faculties to always prefer pleasure over pain and have within them the ability to determine maximal outcomes. Furthermore, by generalizing about the experience of everyone as agents, these theories offer different normative standards of how one ought to deliberate. In that capacity, they offer us different glimpses of how to achieve the view from nowhere regarding moral issues.

Clearly, Scheler would think twice about reducing moral experience to normative standards of deliberation. In so doing, values usher forward not from how they are given in experience, but as constructions of rationality or correspondence with static moral facts. In

such conceptions, the values are all pushed into one value-ranking. In utilitarianism, all vital values are lowered to be simply calculations of sensible values. Moreover, this reduction is a similar weakness found in existentialism. Existential theories urge us ever forward with the assertion of our own freedom, and as exemplified in Heidegger's anxiety, we are individualized to the point we come into awareness of our own freedom through anxiety. Such anxiety takes shape because it throws us back upon our own finitude. The "death of God" results in no direction or higher possibility for this freedom to achieve.<sup>253</sup> There is no infinitude. Therefore, even if the existential theory, deontological or consequentialist theory pinpoint some standard of impartial standpoint achievable in human possibility, that possibility still remains within finite human experience. There is no reaching beyond in the acts of love that orient us toward values.

I think a middle answer proves more desirable than abandoning the theologically-heavy language *tout court*. God is not a theoretical posit but the ultimate givenness of the person. In the strictest sense, there is no objective universality to values apart from God. God's love provides a teleological direction for our participation in the world. However, in God being the ultimate expression of persons, a new understanding arises. Just as persons radiate outward in the execution of acts, so too does God radiate outward in the act of love, understood more collectively. God is, therefore, not a theological or metaphysical concept coopted by orthodox religion, apologetics, or classical Western metaphysics. Understood phenomenologically, God is given in the field of communal love or any where that values are realized through loving acts, but with a collective radiance in mind. The heart, the spiritual act-center of love itself, in all persons is "a counter-image of the cosmos of all

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<sup>253</sup> Søren Kierkegaard notwithstanding.

possible things worthy of love...it is a microcosm of the world of values.”<sup>254</sup> In this way, God becomes the ever-growing intersubjective understanding of love realized through all of our collective acts. In a sense, it is only through a collective understanding of love’s possibility that we could even form all levels of social groups.<sup>255</sup>

Scheler’s biography becomes relevant. Scheler had abandoned the Catholic Church in the later 1920s. However, the phenomenological period is rooted in his Catholic period. Therefore, much of the phenomenological investigations are in the service of revitalizing and re-enchanting the world in the very same love that is at the root of the moral experience that one finds in the Catholic Faith. Needless to say, Scheler’s concept of God’s is extremely relevant for what ontological participation means in the intentional act of love. Therefore, I want to suggest a reading of “God” in the *Formalism* that is compatible with the intersubjective communal acts of love, and avoids being co-opted by any one privileged doctrine. I propose that a postmodern conception of God in the apophatic sense can still motivate, excite and ultimately express the highest form of the person in Scheler’s thought.

In a strikingly brilliant passage, John Caputo writes,

God is not interested in religion, in cultic sacrifice and ritual, but in justice...Suppose, indeed, that “God” is stationed not on the side of the *arche* and the *principium*, or of timeless being and unchanging presence, of the true, the good and the beautiful, but on the side of the an-archaic and subversive, as the driving force—the *agens movens*—of a divine subversion? Suppose “God” is situated not inside the churches on high altars, but among the beggars with outstretched hands on the church steps? Suppose “God” is not to be conceived as the overarching governor of the *ordo universi*, of the *kosmos*, but as what disorders such orders, deworlds such worlds and subverts such universes.<sup>256</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Scheler, *Ordo*, 116.

<sup>255</sup> For Scheler, such an understanding of collective love undergirds the principle of solidarity.

<sup>256</sup> John D. Caputo, “In Search of Sacred Anarchy: An Experiment in Danish Deconstructionism” in Calvin O. Schrag and the *Task of Philosophy After Postmodernity*, ed.

According to Caputo, God is a source of constant interruption into a world given over to objectification and order. Caputo inverts the usual sense afforded to justice. Usually, justice is associated with harmony and order. We must simply recall the analogy Plato draws to the harmony of the soul and how that unity of the soul is then analogized to the various parts of the city in *The Republic*. According to Caputo, justice is a disruption, a subverting of the promised order to begin anew the promise of justice to the other. In this way, Caputo's conception of God is a constant reminder of the status that there are non-objectifiable persons or others to whom we owe the renewal of promise of otherness. Hence, God is that very love that constantly awakens in us by disrupting our tendency to accept such order. The tendency to accept some form of status-quo permits injustice to occur; it promotes indirect complacency and direct objectification of others. Now, of course, I am equating the constant disruption of Caputo's promise of justice and the awakening of love to prefer higher values over lower values in Scheler. Love's movement to constantly prefer higher values allows the loved person to come into fullness wholly on his/her own, thereby respecting the individual uniqueness of the beloved person. In this way, love is a promise of justice to respect the radical otherness of others.

Similar thoughts may be found in Levinasian phenomenology. In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas offers a similar reading about God and justice.

God rises to his supreme and ultimate presence as correlative to the justice rendered unto men. The direct comprehension of God is impossible for a look directed upon him, not because our intelligence is limited, but because the relation with infinity respects the total Transcendence of the other without being bewitched by it and because our possibility of welcoming him in man

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William McBride and Martin Beck Matušík (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2002): 226-250. Caputo, *Search*, 232 here.

goes further than the comprehension that thematizes and encompasses its object.<sup>257</sup>

In Levinas, God is the completely transcendent Other. No definitive knowledge of God is possible, as is the case with any apophatic conception. In his very transcendence, God escapes comprehension and representation. Comprehension is an epistemic act that trades in the order of representations and positive knowledge. Instead, God serves as the non-objectifiable infinitely transcendent other, that is, the ultimate expression of the person. God transcends the representational order entirely. Like Scheler, the non-objectifiable is the transcendent, and therefore persons occupy the same level of vertical givenness as Levinas's God or other. In both Levinas and Caputo, God is revealed as the promise of justice, yet this promise can only come about through a constant disruption of a representational order. For Levinas, this disruption and call to transcendence of the other arises in the very face-to-face relation with others. Here, Levinas has the same ontological participation with other persons that one finds in Scheler's thought. The possibility of God is revealed in the interhuman community between persons in the sphere of intrapersonal acts.

Caputo and Levinas provide us a sketch as to how we might conceive God in Scheler's thought without adopting the same devotion to Scheler's Catholicism at the time of his phenomenological period, which one might argue is simply Scheler's Augustinianism coming through. However, the language of justice must involve Scheler's orientation of love. In some sense, the imagery of orphan and widow are both present in the texts of Caputo and Levinas symbolizes love for them. In this way, there is some appeal to a

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<sup>257</sup> Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority* trans. Alfonso Lingis, (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2007), 78.

neighborly love found in both their works. At the same time, however, Scheler is the only phenomenologist I know that has given such concrete attention to loving acts and their realization of value. For this reason, the very talk of justice cannot be realized without an attention to the very act that engenders the realization of God as justice, and realization can only be found in the creative power of loving acts in persons and God. Finally, thinking of God in relation to the active realization of love concretizes an understanding of God that puts the divine-world order front and center in a very worldly and immanent sense. There is a connection to love and justice in Scheler. In the *Formalism*, the highest ideal community of love has no demand for reprisal. Instead, in the ideal community of love, “there exists only a demand for love and justice” which are based on “principles of forgiveness and gratitude...based on love, and the principle of moral solidarity.”<sup>258</sup> My intention is not to discuss the community types as reflecting the value-modalities Scheler describes. Instead, in that discussion with the highest form of community, the spiritual community of love, Scheler associates the pairing of love and justice together.

### **2.13 Ontological Participatory Realism and Conclusion**

All the pieces are now in place to describe the ontology of value inherent in Scheler’s phenomenology. Let us review the evidence this chapter has brought together. First, I outlined the participation and performative aspects of being-in-an-act. Secondly, I explored Scheler’s *Idealism and Realism* for textual evidence that phenomenology opened up into ontology. This opening up coincided with explaining participatory structures of the intentional relation itself. Phenomenology became ontology the moment Scheler materialized this process of intentionality in the broader ontological dimension of life. In so

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<sup>258</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 368.

doing, I analyzed some aspects of resistance in Scheler's thought before making the argument by analogy to Heidegger.

Heidegger is the perfect analogy in some respects to Scheler's thought. For Scheler, being-in-an-act is a performative relation with the world, and I have chosen to articulate this insight with the analogy to being-in-the-world and with the label "participatory realism." Heidegger's being-in-the-world divorces all philosophy from abstruse conceptions. By articulating the fundamental structure of Dasein as the unfolding everyday practical activity, Heidegger unearthed the old reversal of putting praxis before theory. Rightly so, this reversal is the impetus shared by both pragmatists and phenomenologically-inclined thinkers. We do not want to claim an ontological structure of any phenomenon that does not bear out in lived-experience.<sup>259</sup> This claim is the heart of my reading of Scheler's value ontology. *Values are real* only insofar as they are experienced as real *in concrete acts of preference*, but this is not a type of phenomenalism in which the perceived reality is illusory. My position is meant to convey a serious commitment to how values appear in experience, as they are experienced. Once we start thinking in this way, then passages from the *Formalism* make more sense than their original ontological indeterminacy first suggested. Consider the following passage,

Acts themselves can in no sense become known as objects, since their being consists solely in their pursuance and being acted out, although one can bring to reflective intuition that their different essences in pursuance of different acts.<sup>260</sup>

In one way, we could have held that Scheler's ethics is underwritten from a commitment to regard the person and its acts as issuing forth from spirit. However, this spirit

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<sup>259</sup> This is the parting of the ways between the pragmatist and phenomenologically-inclined thinker.

<sup>260</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 72.



interpretation makes little sense on its own given that Scheler developed his metaphysics out of his ethics. The non-objectifiability of acts stems first and foremost from the fact that act intentionality makes objectification of objects possible, and the absolute non-objectifiability is the reason why Scheler thinks persons are of spirit in his later thought. Knowledge, like in Husserl, is a subjective accomplishment, and that accomplishment is the participation of the intentional relation in constituting the world and experiencing the constituted as having an effect on me and what I can regard as real. In this way, we can understand that being-in-an-act is expressive of the person, but the person must participate in acts (or “execute” in Scheler’s language), *values are realized through act-essence of love*. We can reflect on the pursuance of “being acted out” and indeed, we find there are essential interconnections undergirding the intentional relation. These essences, however, arise first and foremost from the phenomenological commitment to describing value experience as it is lived.

An ontology of value cannot originate from an objectification of my role in deliberation as an agent or reifying values in some way, as one finds in the philosophical literature about practical reason. The mere mentioning of the term “agent” (as it appears in many instances of philosophers investigating the nature of practical reason or normative ethics generally) presupposes the scholastic terms “accident” and “agent” set against the backdrop of causally-determined faculties and stringent doctrines of human nature one finds in Hobbes. In Hobbes, as I find in Hume in the next chapter, a mechanistic view takes over the interpretation of human subjectivity to the point that no phenomenological insight is possible within those structures. The tyranny of the machine and the metaphors of mechanism subvert life. Agents are largely reactive to a world in which they are moved by

forces beyond their control. Moreover, this tyranny suggests itself from the point that there is no person, only agents, a mass or de-personalized body filled with appetites, aversions and likely wants to satisfy those desires. In this way, the ontological participatory view emphasizes lived-experience as a starting place rather than imposing more ontological commitments such as one finds in Hume, Hobbes or the emotivists more generally—I refrain from commenting further since this is the goal of the next chapter.

Of course, I have not commented at all about the realism inherent in my interpretation. When we say “realism” it usually means a mind-independence and is a qualification that there is some meaning or entity divorced completely from subjectivity. In these typical interpretations of realism, there is a split between the subject and the world in which no constitution or intentional relation is apparent or in play. Thus, I might say that moral facts are non-natural concepts woven into the fabric of nature, and it is only through natural reason that they can be discovered. Furthermore, the discovery of morality is likened to knowing physical properties from a critical or transcendental standpoint. Had anyone been as sufficiently rational or endowed with similar epistemic capacities, they should know that ‘X is wrong’ and ‘Y is right’ since right and wrong are objective properties! When such philosophical moves are made, whatever form of realism is in play, the assertion of value’s independence severs the connection between emotions and values, the constituting subject and the constituted object given in experience. Preserving the active relationship of being-in-an-act with the world puts us into contact with the values in the right type of way—that is, from the perspective of undergoing experience actively in the world. Without this starting point, persons do not exist. Without intentionality meant in the deeply phenomenological sense, one cannot preserve a philosophy attuned to how we

experience the world. It is in this sense that I mean what is 'real.'<sup>261</sup> There is no reification of the 'real' on either side of the constituting or constituted intentional relation, and the ontology of value in Scheler's work has its origins solely in a phenomenological interpretation of values as they are felt in intentional acts.

Let me make explicit the efforts of this chapter and to remind the reader what I have done thus far. The first claim of this chapter is that Scheler's phenomenology became ontologized in the *Idealism and Realism* essay. Two specific instances of that essay are evidence for this interpretation. First, Scheler asked the question "What is the nature of the given?" and second Scheler claimed that the experience of reality is one of resistance. These are not phenomenological claims about how noemata are given to us from the neutral position of phenomenological description. Instead, these two efforts are the first moments in which Scheler's phenomenology starts to collapse into an ontological inquiry. I claim this collapse is by design in Scheler's philosophical corpus. One need only read his later metaphysics to see that while not a phenomenological enterprise, the metaphysical speculation appropriates phenomenological terms of his early period for further exploration. In that moment, Scheler started to meditate on what participation means, and the analysis he offers therein further attests to the solution of participating in being-in-an-act is crucial for establishing what value is ontologically for the ambiguous presentation of value in Scheler's *Formalism*. In fact, Scheler identifies what performativity of acts means and how knowledge arrived at is always an ontological relation. Ontology becomes the

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<sup>261</sup> In the next chapter, I argue for the formal proposition derived from this insight. *Ontological Participatory Realism*: the ontology of value V is given insofar as person P participates properly through a loving orientation such that the P complies with axiological preferring inherent in the context in which V is given to P and P acts to realize higher forms of V based in a loving orientation.

primary focus of his work from that point on. When Scheler paid attention to the resistance of the world against the spiritual act-center of the person, Scheler revealed that the phenomenological notion of intentionality had been subsumed into ontological considerations. However, Scheler did not clarify the moment of this transition when phenomenology collapsed into ontology, and so I had to draw on Heidegger to advance this claim.

For my purpose, Heidegger offers analogous structures with a bit more clarity than Scheler's ambiguous presentation of being-in-an-act and intentional feeling of love. Being-in-an-act is analogous to being-in-the-world, and for intentional feeling, Heidegger's analysis of *Befindlichkeit* of anxiety is directly analogous to Scheler's act-feeling of love. Both these structures are described in play. Phenomenologically, anxiety and love are described in the interaction with the world in a very active and operational sense. Both structures generate meaning by participating with the world. Without thinking Scheler through Heidegger, this insight remained hidden from me. In Heidegger, Dasein is its own answer to the Being question by its very activity, and in Scheler, the loving acts are what allows for us to grasp the *ordo amoris* as an order of preferencing. Hence, the ontological status of values emerges in loving acts and being-in-an-act is the specific content in which we as persons feel value-content emerge in our dynamic realization towards the world's resistance. As the loving act takes an object, a person, deed or good are constituted in relation to the value-rankings felt in the resistance of the world. A painting as a good is given as beautiful. A religious artifact is given as offering knowledge of salvation. A person is given as wholly unique and entirely valuable before God and a deed that prefers to sacrifice for a higher ideal is better than the momentary act of preferring pleasure and

comfort. Persons, deeds and goods are only valuable through the order of preferencing *in* love. Otherwise, we could not grasp their value they possess when first experiencing them, and the modality of the intentional act transforms how we experience them. In other intentional acts, we could not even glean the status of their value, let alone determine love as the ontological cause of value's status in being-in-an-act.

Another way in which Heidegger facilitates understanding in the current project is that Heidegger offers a way to interpret what a fundamental ontology *qua* phenomenology looks like. Just as Heidegger regards moods as occupying the same level of primordial and fundamental priority Scheler's being-in-an-act in the current interpretation must be regarded with the same fundamental priority. Moods in Heidegger and act-feelings in Scheler both come from behind us without our control, and in those acts, they carry their own special phenomenological evidence revealing aspects about our the interconnection between the personal sphere of acts and the intended objects. Only in the relation between acts and objects do we even experience the world, and because of the interconnection between act and object in Scheler is meaning-content of value even generated. Heidegger's description of anxiety reveals value (albeit it differently), and accordingly I rejected the primacy Heidegger places on anxiety and opted for Scheler's act intentionality of love. Despite their similarity, Heidegger never accounted for the order of preferencing in anxiety that we find in Scheler's loving acts. Putting Heidegger into contact with Scheler reveals the limitations of Heidegger, and while my efforts do compare them, the purpose has always been to prompt the reader to consider their similarities about feeling and moods, and how an ontology of human existence can be sought in the experience of life itself.

Through this chapter, intentionality became an operational notion, and I concluded alongside my interpretation of Scheler that intentionality is a metaphysical principle. I became increasingly aware of this fact as I considered the phenomenological transition in Scheler in regards to the explicit Heideggerian appropriation of phenomenology for ontological purposes. Simply put, *the intentional act relation of love and the realization of value is a metaphysical explanation for why value experience has content*. The *ordo amoris*, the primordial affective intentionality, is the generative matrix in which value-content of an experience comes to be felt. Succinctly put, the ontological status of values in Scheler's is realized in loving acts. At the level of community, this generative affective intentionality expresses the intersubjective *ethos* of the collective person as well—though the habituated *ethos* may very well misunderstand which values ought to be realized. While I will not address Scheler's typology of communities here, the collective person realizes value in the very same metaphysical structure that individual persons do. Both individual persons and collective persons constitute and renew the efficacy of the value-hierarchy in realizing loving acts. Through realizing loving acts in a person's comportment (or what I have called "ontological participation"), more value increases in the world. In the next chapter, I want to test this metaphysical view derived from my efforts here. By outlining in propositional form what I have done here, I intend to put my account of value into contact with an analytic thesis about the ontology of value, i.e. emotivism. By doing so, I hope to show that Scheler's thought offers a provocative value ontology in its own right.

## CHAPTER 3

### Scheler and the Emotivist Tradition<sup>262</sup>

*I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—  
I took the one less traveled by  
And that has made all the difference*  
-Robert Frost, *The Road Not Taken* (1920)

After the resolution of concluding Scheler's value-ontology is realized in ontological participation of loving acts, I argue that Scheler's value ontology contributes to the current understanding of the realism/anti-realism debate. Scheler's account can be squared against other value ontologies. Before explaining this motivation, let me review what has been done thus far. The first chapter identified the ambiguous elements of Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics* and showed the indeterminacy surrounding what Scheler meant by value. When Scheler claims values are eternal, immutable and objective, I take these descriptions as resulting from phenomenology and not ontology. Scheler did not think through the ontological status of what he attached to his conception of value. This first effort is largely exegetical. Then, the second chapter problematized value's ambiguity and sought a solution in Scheler's parallel strategy of ontologizing phenomenology such that being-in-an-act could be unpacked as a leading clue to what Scheler meant by value in his *Formalism in Ethics*. After offering a solution derived from Scheler's texts, I could have stopped my efforts there. Scheler, though problematized, could furnish the resources to solve the ontological indeterminacy of value in his *Formalism in Ethics*. However, stopping there would conceal the profound depth and richness Scheler's ethics can offer those in the wider

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<sup>262</sup> I want to thank the following philosophers for having commented on previous versions of this chapter: Jason Hills, Andrew Youpa, and Carl Sachs.

circle of ethics, and in this way, I have attempted to codify Scheler's ontology of value into a formal position more developed than simply working out the hermeneutics of value in Scheler's thought. Thus, this chapter opens with the second trajectory of the dissertation: evaluating Scheler's account of value ontology as its own metaethical account against the other rival view in analytic moral philosophy that connects the emotions with value: emotivism.

In this chapter, I compare and contrast Scheler's ontology of value and the emotivist tradition. As a secondary motive, I am convinced if someone outside of phenomenology were to come upon Scheler's writings, then Scheler's ethics might be equated or subsumed under the metaethical position of emotivism. However, this interpretation would only be a surface similarity. Despite the common thread of connecting emotions and values, Scheler and the emotivists are very different. By putting Scheler into contact with the emotivists, I can show how Scheler's ontology of value challenges the most prominent metaethical position in analytic ethics to connect feelings and value in the last century. Even Scheler in the Second Preface of the *Formalism* gestures to surface similarities to the analytic tradition by appeal to G. E. Moore. In the *Formalism*, Scheler writes,

In any case I am most happy to know that my ideas and those of this excellent scholar have coincided. In England, G. E. Moore has set forth similar views on many points concerning the problem of values.<sup>263</sup>

Given this appeal, and need to strengthen Scheler's account by encountering ethics outside the Continental tradition, I will defend an account of value ontology rooted in Scheler's thought. In so doing, I can show that Scheler's thought is a contemporary rival to other prevalent theses concerning the ontology of value. As I hinted in the last chapter, I call this

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<sup>263</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, xxi.



view **participatory realism** and sharply distinguish it from prevalent realisms in contemporary ethics.<sup>264</sup> Let me introduce some thoughts that are necessary in order to transition to the later sections of this chapter.

First, I will give some brief thoughts on the weakness of moral realism and moral anti-realism. Since moral anti-realism comes in several forms but it is the emotivists that connect emotions and value, I will focus on emotivism throughout this chapter. All of the positions below reject the moral realist thesis that moral judgments are truth-apt, and that there are truthmakers that make those moral judgments truth-apt. Anti-realism comes in three forms:

1. *Moral Emotivism* is the thesis that the function of moral judgments is to elicit emotional reactions in people to correct their behavior. Emotivists hold that moral judgments express emotions, not propositions.
2. *Mackie's Error Theory* is the thesis that moral propositions aim at truth, but always fail at attaining it.
3. *Moral Subjectivism* is the thesis that the mental activity of an agent constitutes what is morally desirable. As an extreme form of moral anti-realism, one might say that moral subjectivism is only in the mental attitude of agent's desires that the agent finds what is morally desirable. It is the most extreme form of relativism since all moral propositions derive their efficacy only from one's desire and relevant mental life alone. Moral

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<sup>264</sup> The phenomenological concept of a constituting intentionality rejects realisms that privilege mind-independence of an object and its properties. Such realisms naively assume an ontological split between the subject and object. For several excellent papers on moral realism, Richard Body, "How To Be A Moral Realist" in *Essays on Moral Realism*, ed. G. Sayre-McCord (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988), 181-228, G. Sayre-McCord's "The Many Moral Realisms" in *Essays on Moral Realism*, ed. G. Sayre-McCord (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988a), 1-26 and J. Dancy, "Two Conceptions of Moral Realism" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes*, vol 60 (1986): 167-187.

subjectivism is so problematic that one might not even recognize it as a viable position in the moral landscape. Still, I mention it as a logical possibility, however, unattractive such a position might be. To positions 1, 2, and 3 correspond a complete skepticism that there is anything like “moral facts.” 1 and 3 assume that what a moral realist would call “moral facts” are better explained in terms of mind-dependent features. I will get to this in a moment.

Let me briefly describe the organization of these efforts. First, I talk about the ways in which moral realism, in the case of Moore and his Open-Question Argument, shares an affinity with phenomenology. Having seen Scheler’s reference to Moore, this connection is important to explore for two reasons. First, Moore’s realism will gesture towards a realist affinity in Scheler’s work. Second, the connection to Moore paves the way in explaining the necessary background necessary to make sense of the emotivist acceptance of the division between the normative and the descriptive. Specifically, I attempt a historical sketch of the emotivist tradition stemming in large part from Hume’s skepticism into Ayer’s positivism and Stevenson’s refinement of Ayer’s position.<sup>265</sup> After a historical sketch of this tradition, I show in each respective thinker the failure to take into account three features participatory realism provides: a) the givenness of value, b) the givenness of the person, and c) intentional act-essences constituting the experience of value itself. Without any of these features, Scheler would claim that emotivism cannot articulate how it is that persons experience value. Instead, emotivism assumes higher-ordered commitments about the experience of value rather than looking to the experiential features given

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<sup>265</sup> I recognize the controversy surrounding a non-cognitivist interpretation of Hume’s work.

phenomenologically. Rather, a proper ontology of value must be rooted and adequately developed from how it is we experience value.

### **3.1 Moral Realism**

Before discussing a long analysis of emotivism, it is important to introduce its counter view, moral realism.

Moral realism holds that moral sentences express propositions. It is a thesis and confidence about moral propositions. Moral propositions like “Ed must keep his promise to meet Ashley for lunch,” “Dennis ought to tell the truth,” or “Chris should be avoided due to his deceitful character,” are all examples of moral propositions. A moral realist is a cognitivist, and as a cognitivist, a moral realist believes that moral sentences should be taken at face value. Moral sentences report some fact that should inform our deliberations, and we should consider them true as much as empirical truths like “Ninja, my cat, weighs 8 pounds.” Thus, while acknowledging that evaluative and descriptive functions of propositions are different, moral realists can still think of moral propositions as being truth-apt in much the same way an empirical claim is thought to be truth-apt.

It is important to note that moral realism is not really “on the table” in this chapter. However, the attractive qualities of moral realism stand in opposition to the emotivist tradition. Therefore, to appreciate the dialectical ingenuity of emotivism, some elements of moral realism should be introduced.

Moral realism accepts that moral statements are truth-apt and that the ontology of value is mind-independent. This view heavily relies on the fact that there are truthmakers for moral statements. “Truthmaker” is a general term used to designate entities through which statements are made true. It is a generic label allowing me to leave open which

entities make moral statements true as there are many candidate moral realisms that propose different truthmakers for their respective positions. For example, the truthmaker might be the content of a moral intuition derived from self-evident reflection or a moral statement might be true by what God commands. Both the moral intuitionism of someone like W. D. Ross or a divine command theorist could be characterized as moral realists since each possesses a different truthmaker. For this reason, moral realists tend to support inflationary ontologies about value—often with substantive commitments to what truthmakers are. Often with appeals made to scientific description or naturalism, moral anti-realists tend to support deflationary ontologies about value derived in strict opposition to their inflationary counterparts. Thus, moral realists support an ontology of value that flies in the face of the scientific worldview of its deflationary opposite, moral anti-realism.

Finally, I should say something about my use of the word “realism.” My employment of “realism” in “participatory realism” does not suggest a static view of truth-aptness and moral propositions in which the truth-aptness corresponds to a wholly *independent* moral world order transcending one’s subjectivity. Such a view forgets *the constituting feature of our intentional relation* to the world. Instead, participatory realism suggests that the ontology of value rests on how we participate in realizing values since values are *real insofar as we experience them in acts*. In other words, this *real-ness* is first and foremost a *phenomenological relation*. My phenomenological realism is a different *sense* indicated by my usage of the term; I have a very rich conception of experience that follows from the phenomenological commitment of Scheler’s act intentionality. Hence, the intentional

relation underscores what being-in-an-act is and offers a dynamic process instead of a static truthmaker as the *explanans* for value ontology.

### **3.2 Some Advantage to Moral Realism and Emotivism**

On the other hand, moral realists are at an advantage of explaining many of our common sense convictions stemming from ways that we often experience moral values that cannot be captured by appeals to the emotive function of moral language, error theory, and subjectivism. In other words, moral realism preserves the connection of moral language to everyday-lived experience, but at the same time moral realism only preserves a tiny fraction of our moral convictions since most moral realists dismiss the role of the emotions in value experience. By contrast, moral emotivism preserves the connection between emotional life and values, but does so at great expense to itself. Emotivism reduces values to emotional functions without careful articulation of the connection between the emotions interconnection to values.

As far as I can tell, the phenomenological shortcoming of moral realism or emotivism has more to do with the starting place of inquiry than its respective contents. Higher-order commitments of a philosophical position have a way of shaping its subsequent inferences. Both moral realism and moral emotivism fail to observe the phenomenological givenness of value itself. As such, the phenomenological components of these concepts must be sketched together and their relevance brought to full givenness. Only a phenomenologically-based theory about values could account for their ontology, and for this reason, we must turn to Scheler's work and evaluate the shortcoming of the previous theories in light of it.

In the next section, I highlight how Moore's work has a phenomenological affinity with Scheler's work and what lesson we should take from the Open Question Argument in light of Scheler's brief praise of it. It should be noted that the Open Question Argument is also an impetus for emotivists to accept the fact/value distinction enshrined in Moore's motivation, but reject the conclusion of the Open Question Argument that goodness is an unanalyzable moral property for the reasons Moore so confidently argued.

### **3.3 Moore, the Open-Question Argument and its Phenomenological Affinity<sup>266</sup>**

Scheler will never elaborate on his relation to Moore to which he refers briefly in the *Formalism*, nor am I aware of any further elaboration in his corpus. Thus, it is my intention in this section to give voice to those similarities in Moore (rather than emotivism), define the scope of the problem of values and insist on the benefit of interpreting Moore as opening a way into the ontology of value phenomenologically. Before this, let me offer some brief introductory remarks concerning the scope of metaethics that underscore Moore and the emotivists.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, metaethical inquiry consisted of higher-ordered questions about justification that normative theories took for granted. By "normative theory" I mean all single and hybrid combinations between deontological, consequential and virtue theories that offer various answers to the question: "What should I do?" As such, metaethicists conceived their task as independent from the project of normative theories. Whatever followed from the problems faced in metaethics had an implication for any

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<sup>266</sup> I have to thank the following philosophers for their welcomed comments: Tom Sparrow, Robert Gall, Richard Findler and Hans Pedersen, and Phillip Honenberger of the Continental Philosophy Workshop at the Pittsburgh Area Philosophical Consortium in Fall 2011. I presented a version of this section and the next entitled *The Phenomenological Open Question Argument and the Schelerian Difference*.

normative theory, but the normative theory never implied any philosophical consequence for metaethics. In this way, a top-down approach figured prominently in these concerns along two central lines of division: metaphysical and epistemological. More precisely, I take the initial problem of value to answer the set of questions best outlined by William Frankena: “What we mainly want to know is whether the moral and value judgments we accept are justified or not; and if so, on what grounds?”<sup>267</sup>

The first line of division consists in asking questions about the fundamental metaphysical nature of what values are. Specifically, this metaphysical inquiry tries to establish the meaning of “good” according to the popular methods available to advocates of conceptual analysis. If a successful explanation could explain how it is that the term “good” has a determinate meaning, then a successful analysis of moral judgments can explain how exactly one can assign moral judgments and evaluate things in practice. Moreover, the exact metaphysical nature of how value predicates work in instances of moral judgments has a bearing directly on how moral judgments are known. For example, if Ross’s ethical intuitionism is correct in saying that moral judgments are intuitions, it follows that I can apprehend the *prima facie* moral property of a situation. The proposed metaphysical answer to what moral judgments are answers the epistemological focus of the problem as well.

It is my judgment that the problem of value faces these two moments, but also faces a depth left unexplored by these early attempts. These early attempts only define the scope of the problem of value as an object of knowledge, particularly in philosophy of language and conceptual analysis. At the time, an object of knowledge had been further limited to the

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<sup>267</sup> William K. Frankena, *Ethics* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1973), 96.

study of what could only in principle be verified following the logical positivists. Despite the affinity I identify in these approaches, this affinity does not spell out the dimension of lived-experience. For me, the problem of value can be re-stated in the following question: *How is it that values are lived-through within experience?* Moreover, it is this emphasis on lived-experience that answers the ontology of value rather than Moore or the emotivists ever could. Let me now introduce Moore's Open Question Argument.

Mary Warnock attributes the turn in analytic moral philosophy to Moore's turn of the century work *Principia Ethica*.<sup>268</sup> It was published in 1903 and significantly changed the landscape of moral philosophy, which had been held sway by the unrelenting influence of German idealism and those who in its wake grounded ethics in metaphysical principles. Thinkers like F. H. Bradley followed a version of Hegelianism in which the systematicness of Hegel consumed ethical efforts at theorizing. On the other side, the utilitarians had identified the good with happiness *qua* pleasure. In Moore's work, this identification exemplifies the naturalism Moore takes on, specifically in Mill. Moreover, Hume had insisted that practical reason could not be a source of ends for moral life. Needless to say, the state of moral philosophy had produced a ripe climate wherein someone like Moore could work.

Moore considered moral philosophy to be concerned with two central questions. "What kind of things ought to exist for their own sake? What kind of actions ought we to perform?"<sup>269</sup> For the first question, no evidence can be adduced as to what things are true and false. For Moore, only the things themselves may attest to their truth or falsity. In

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<sup>268</sup> Her first chapter in *Ethics Since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 1-29 is the best summary of Moore's work I have ever found to date.

<sup>269</sup> G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (New York: Prometheus Books, 1988), viii.



relation to the second question, there are standards of proof to bring to bear. There are physical and causal facts that bear in a situation, but beyond them they must depend on the propositions of the self-evident kind. As such, Moore's moral philosophy concentrates on these two theoretical questions and these only. In so doing, he defends these two insights by making the Open Question Argument. Let me give you a basic breakdown in my own words.<sup>270</sup>

For moral property *M*, *M* expresses the fact that there are intrinsically good things in this world like moral values. *M* is not the same as natural properties *N*. *N* is simply a descriptive state of affairs about how the world is, not how it ought to be. According to Moore, no *M* can be identified with *N*. If an *M* is identified with an *N*, then the strange thing is we can still ask if *M* is really an *N*. It is an open question whether or not, e.g., the good is identified with maximizing collective welfare. We can still ask if maximizing collective welfare is good? Thus, all determinate identifications of *M* as *N* suffer from the open indeterminacy of any predicate attributed to what is good. The inference suggested in Moore's argument is that natural properties and moral properties are an irreconcilable divide, and any future identification between facts and values, is-statements and ought-statements, or what is called the descriptive and the normative is foolish. As such, Moore calls any such identification the Naturalistic Fallacy. Instead, Moore argues that values are irreducible following that the difference between fact and value is a *difference in kind*.<sup>271</sup>

Husserl gives us good reasons to think that something like this follows from an analogy that can be drawn from his anti-psychologism to Moore's argument—that is, there is a *difference in kind* between what can be explained naturally by being reduced to its

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<sup>270</sup> This breakdown of the argument is somewhat inspired by David Copp's rendering.

<sup>271</sup> Moore, *Principia*, 7; 16-17.

causal parts and what should be explained by respecting the level of irreducible phenomena.<sup>272</sup> The first-personal standpoint is the phenomenological standpoint contrasted against the natural attitude, and maps onto this fact-value gap. According to the natural attitude, all events can appear as if they can be described in a long chain of causal relations. In this way, the antecedent conditions of the causal story result in my having chosen any decision, and one gets in the habit of positing events as *N* all the time. Among the events as *N*, subjectivity and initiated deliberation about my actions can be interpreted as events. My subjectivity, deliberation, and feeling are all features of moral experience in general. In *N*, these features are subsumed by the causal processes of nature. My status as a person and the fact that persons are the source of experience is lost in *N*. Put more directly, there is nothing like consciousness as a source of meaning-constitution in this view, and this naturalistic perspective amounts to denying the reality of a perspective that initiates, feels and acts. As a person, it is *I* that decides what to do. It is *I* that chooses to marry my wife. For moral experience, and the experience of *M* in general, the dimension of experience is the sphere of the personal acts, the very same sphere of the person under description in Scheler's phenomenology. The sphere of the personal can never be explained away as just another fact in an overall naturalistic explanation. The knowledge of naturalistic explanation itself is an accomplishment of the person's act of knowing. From this clear division behind the phenomenological and the natural, Moore and Scheler closely come together. The existence of values pertains to how different *in kind* values are from matters of description.

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<sup>272</sup> For a treatment of Moore's anti-psychologism, see David O'Connor's *The Metaphysics of G. E. Moore* (Dordrecht, The Netherlands: D. Reidel, 1982), 17-20.

If I cannot attribute any *sense* to the term “good,” then how do ethicists proceed? Well, simply because there is a wedge does not mean that I cannot recognize the good when I see it. In this way, Moore suggests that “*good* is indefinable.”<sup>273</sup> I know it when I see it and therefore one can still proceed with theorizing about the good. Good is a value, and since the good is indefinable, Moore implies that ethics has access to irreducible values, what Moore will call an “organic whole.” For Moore, “*the value of such a whole bears no regular proportion to the sum of the value of its parts.*”<sup>274</sup> In other words, if we find a particular action valuable over another, say, X brings more pleasure into this world than Y, then the simple utilitarian holds that the reason why such a judgment expresses something about what is good relies on reducing goodness to the calculation of what is most pleasurable in the action.<sup>275</sup> Instead, Moore thinks that the goodness in the act carries over into the effect. An action is not good because the action is reduced to its parts, but intrinsic value is wholly inherent in the action from the doing of it into its effect upon the world.

On its own, Moore’s Open Question Argument does not endorse phenomenological analysis of the sphere of human being or of moral experience. Yet, the Open Question Argument does not limit itself either—the Open Question Argument is merely compatible with strands of anti-positivistic interpretations of naturalism found common in Husserl and Scheler. Within Moore’s philosophy, there is a depth of phenomenological appeal to his Open Question Argument and what it implies for value. His doctrine of the organic whole of value, and the fact that we can recognize value as an emergent feature of human life,

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<sup>273</sup> Moore, *Principia*, 9.

<sup>274</sup> Moore, *Principia*, 27.

<sup>275</sup> Assuming of course Mill or Bentham’s version of value hedonism and principle of utility for the purposes of this point, I do not mean this as representative of all forms of consequential ethics.

indirectly respects the level of phenomenological analysis we find in Husserl, Heidegger and Scheler, and any who describe what is before them as it emerges within experience. What Moore's Open Question Argument achieves is a strict non-identification between the natural and the moral. That is, the same level of description necessary for phenomenological analysis, the Open Question Argument tends towards a phenomenological realism that I argue underlies Scheler's efforts. Both Moore's Open Question Argument and phenomenology share the same level of anti-reductionism. This anti-reductionist tendency contributes to the insight that we are not off-base in thinking that the content of moral experience in lived-experience will supply an answer for value ontology.

Moore and Scheler are similar with respect to the divisions drawn between experiential considerations on the one hand, and on the other hand, the descriptive sciences. We can observe this likeness between them in how Scheler defines the basic concept of the intentional act belonging to persons as contrasted against psychic being (and empirical abstraction: see below).

It belongs to the essence of the person to exist and to live solely in the execution of intentional acts. The person is therefore essentially never an "object." On the contrary, any objectifying attitude (be it perception, representation, thinking, remembering or expectation) makes the person immediately transcendent.<sup>276</sup>

The intentional act is the locus of what it is to be a person. The person is "the concrete and essential unity of being of acts" in Scheler.<sup>277</sup> Being a person precedes all empirical determination and abstraction where psychic being resides. Therefore, like Moore, Scheler accepts the irreducibility of this level of phenomenological investigation

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<sup>276</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 390.

<sup>277</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

about persons. As he puts it, in “all investigation of acts made in pure phenomenology we are concerned with genuine intuitive givenness, never with empirical abstractions.”<sup>278</sup> In this way, the person is absolute, occupying the sphere of the spirit. For spirit, according to Scheler is “the sphere of the act” which designates “all things that possess the nature of the act, intentionality, and fulfillment of meaning.”<sup>279</sup> Like Moore, the place for the phenomenology of moral experience resides in how values are given to us in felt-experience. For Scheler, values are given at the level of the person in act-feeling. The sphere of spirit as the unity of acts belongs solely to its own domain. Acts are initiated by the creatively dynamic and irreducible person. Person and value stand outside the view of the natural sciences but remain actively presentifying in our experience of the world. How does this insight relate to Moore? This insight suggests that there is more to moral experience than seeking to explain the ontology of values and how value-predicates have meaning in moral judgments. Instead, both Scheler and Moore find an irreducible complexity, a difference in kind between the moral and the descriptive that cannot be explained away by reducing the moral to some natural entity in the world. Given that Moore’s argument achieves this much, it is not a stretch to assume the possibility of a moral phenomenology that respects the *difference in kind* implied by Moore’s argument and the very difference suggested in Scheler phenomenology and its opposition to the natural attitude.

### **3.4 The Benefit of a Phenomenological Interpretation and the Co-Extensivity Objection**

Finally, in Moore’s Open Question Argument, the Co-Extensivity Objection is often introduced. The Open Question Argument has been famously attacked on the grounds that

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<sup>278</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

<sup>279</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 389.

Moore does not prevent the difference in kind observation from implying that the terms are co-extensive. Put simply, an observed lack of synonymy does not prove lack of co-extensivity. David Copp puts it another way,

Consider a moral property *M* and the corresponding *N*-based property, which we can refer to as the property *N-based-M*. Because these are necessarily co-extensive, it is necessary that anything that is *N-based-M* is *M*, and so it is not an open question whether things that are *N-based-M* are *M*.<sup>280</sup>

Moore's argument attempts to construe an open question as one that takes realism for granted. Accordingly, Moore only describes that goodness is simple and unanalyzable following from the openness of the question. He does not define the scope of this openness. Does openness mean that there is a disagreement between competent linguistic users of the English language, or is it more formal to include within an epistemic openness? What does a closed question look like?

The better way to consider the Open Question Argument is to consider it no argument at all, and in doing so, Moore avoids the charge of the co-extensivity altogether. Moore's observations work even if we think of his Open Question Argument as a phenomenological description. The co-extensivity charge is an objection to falsify Moore's Open Question Argument insofar as it explains the difference in kind between the descriptive and the normative. However, if it is considered a phenomenological description, then Moore's observation serves not to *explain* anything, but only to *describe* the intractable elusiveness of identifying goodness with nonmoral terms. As such, the phenomenological description reveals that it cannot identify goodness with nonmoral terms at all, and I think this is what Scheler had in mind by claiming that "I am most happy

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<sup>280</sup> David Copp, *Morality, Normativity and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 230.

to know that my ideas and those of this excellent scholar [G. E. Moore] have coincided.” In more phenomenologically friendly term, the phenomenon “goodness” with the world bracketed has its own sense/givenness to it and can only find meaning in analyzing the givenness of our moral experience of values in general—the very approach Scheler takes up. For now, it will suffice to say that like phenomenology, I do not think that Moore is after anything mysterious or unaccommodating to our experience with values.

Given that I have demonstrated the phenomenological compatibility between Moore and Scheler’s thought by re-reading the Open Question Argument as a phenomenological description, it is now time to transition to the emotivist story. The start of the emotivist story most certainly lies with Hume.

### **3.5 Hume as the Grandfather of Moral Emotivism**

There is considerable debate about the inspiration Hume offers to the twentieth century metaethical theory of noncognitivism, or what is also called emotivism.<sup>281</sup> I do not think it is wise to impose twentieth century metaethical views onto an eighteenth century Scottish philosopher. There are considerable historical gaps in doing so, not to mention disparate historical vocabularies. However, a historical sketch analyzing the main reasons why the emotivists were inspired by Hume adds a layer of complexity to the philosophical story about emotivism itself. Therefore, I start by explaining what the emotivists find so

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<sup>281</sup> For a particularly contemporary manifestation of the debate see Norva Y. S. Lo’s “Is Hume Inconsistent: Motivation and Morals,” in *Hume on Motivation and Virtue* ed. Charles Pidgen (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009): 57-79 and Charles Pidgen’s entry, “If Not Noncognitivism, Then What?” 80-104. These two set themselves up against Michael Smith’s “The Motivation Argument for Noncognitivism,” 105-120 in the same volume. In addition, Rachel Cohon’s article is probably the best I have seen on this topic: “Is Hume a Noncognitivist in the Motivation Argument,” in *Philosophical Studies* vol. 85 issue 2/3 (March 1997): 251-266.

convincing in Hume's work, but before I begin that story, let me pause to reflect on the terms I use and how I employ them.

Both emotivism and moral noncognitivism are the same. These terms are interchangeable, though more is revealed by the negation of "cognitivism" than "emotivism" itself. Cognitivism is a thesis that moral sentences express propositions, and in claiming that, the cognitivist is committed that moral propositions be taken at face value. In other words, moral propositions are truth-apt. On the other hand, noncognitivism is the thesis that moral sentences express non-cognitive states. Noncognitivism is an explanatory thesis. It explains the origins of morality in the function of moral language. We can find this commitment in Hume. As Michael Smith put it when discussing Hume, "moral beliefs are constituted by our desires."<sup>282</sup> In this way, all moral language is rooted in our emotions. The emotions are the birthplace of all normative terms. A moral belief is not making a claim about a moral reality apart from the agent's desires. This thesis is the main conclusion Smith and others draw from Hume's "Motivation Argument" in the *Treatise on Human Nature*. The argument from the *Treatise* is as follows,

[Morality] is supposed to influence our passions and actions, and to go beyond the calm and indolent judgments of the understanding. And this is confirm'd by common experience, which informs us, that men are often govern'd by their duties, and are deter'd from some actions by the opinion of injustice, and impell'd to others by that of obligation. Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the acitons and affections, it follows, that they cannot be deriv'd from reason; and that because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence. Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this particular. The rules of morality, therefore, are not conclusions of our reason...An active principle can never be founded on an inactive; and if reason be inactive in itself, it must remain so in all its shapes and appearances, whether it exerts itself in a natural or moral subjects, whether

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<sup>282</sup> Smith, *Motivation*, 109.



it considers the powers of external bodies, or the actions of rational beings.<sup>283</sup>

Contained in the above argument is Hume's division between two faculties that comprise human nature: understanding (reason) and the passions. Let me explain these respective faculties. The understanding is capable of the two relations commonly called "Hume's fork": relations of ideas and matters of fact. These types of relations are known either as a construction of ideas internal to the imagination without reference to the world, but only other ideas (relations of ideas), or they are reports about our sensory experience of the world (matters of fact). The former are relations of ideas and are best expressed in the examples of mathematics and logic. The latter, matters of fact, are propositions made about our experience of the world, and all matters of fact are caused and formed in a preceding impression. Every matter of fact, however, is caused by an original impression. In the case of Hume, this claim is true of our connecting one event as a cause and associating its subsequent effect with another event. For our purposes, it is important to observe that matters of fact and relation of ideas are capable of being true or false. In Hume's terms, some propositions express relations of ideas, and others express matters of fact. But note that propositions expressing matters of fact can be false. For example, the proposition "Ninjas are in my car" is false. As far as we know, we constantly think that the event of eating bread will nourish tomorrow or that fire will always be attended by heat in matters of fact, and the sum interior angles of a triangle always add up to 180 degrees.

Hume is committed to offering a different story about morals. The understanding has no capacity to influence the passions. In the above passage when he says, "reason alone,

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<sup>283</sup> David Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature* ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1978), Bk 3.1.1, p. 457. I cite this as *Treatise* hereafter and include the book and section number alongside the title and the pagination of Bigge and Nidditch edition.

as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence" on action and affection, Hume is referencing his very famous thesis regarding the slavery of reason to the passions.

As Hume famously says,

Reason is, and ought, only to be a slave to the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them.<sup>284</sup>

In other words, reason is impotent. It cannot alter the fact that when I am enraged, my "emotions have no more a reference to any other object"<sup>285</sup>; emotions do not reference the world on their own. In this way, Hume's conception of emotional life is not intentional in the same developed way Scheler understands feeling-states and intentional feeling.

Instead, the emotions rise to the level of passions. Emotions become converted into them, and the fact that we have passions is a matter of our moral psychology. For Hume, emotions and passions have a life all their own, caused by objects in the world. As Hume defines it, a passion is "an original existence, or, if you will, modification of existence, and contains not any representative quality..."<sup>286</sup> The fact that we have emotions is very visceral. Emotions do not represent anything from the fact that passions are caused by the objects and attendant pleasure or pain that they cause in us.<sup>287</sup> We are passively reactive to their activity, and these are what Hume calls direct passions, "When we take a survey of the passions, there occurs a division of them into direct and indirect."<sup>288</sup> Hume continues,

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<sup>284</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.3, 417.

<sup>285</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.3, 417.

<sup>286</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.3, 415.

<sup>287</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.2, 277. At first glance, the emotions of pride and humility do not exhibit in this page the positive and negative connotation of pleasure and pain. However, later on Bk. 2.5 (p. 286), Hume attributes a positive value of pleasure to pride and a negative value of pain to humility. In his own words, "pride is a pleasant sensation and humility a painful; and upon the removal of pleasure and pain, there is in relation no pride nor humility."

<sup>288</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.1, 276.

“Direct passions arise immediately from pleasure and pain.”<sup>289</sup> Indirect passions proceed from and share in pleasure and pain, but arise with the conjunction of other qualities as well.

Hume’s distinction between the object of the passions and their cause must be explained. First, let us stick with his example of pride and humility. Earlier, I mentioned that the passions do not take an object in the intentional sense we find in phenomenology. Instead, the object of the passions is only the self; I become aware of beauty. This self-activity is all that is meant by passion having its object as the self. Confusingly, Hume also uses the term “object” to refer to those types of things that cause in me the quality of beauty. The cause is in the “object” contemplated. For instance, a beautiful house (an object) will cause the quality of beauty in me. The qualities operate as a cause (and the subject of that quality the beautiful house). In his words, “Here the object of the passion is himself, and the cause is the beautiful house.”<sup>290</sup>

Though reason is impotent, we might find the prospect of pain or pleasure as “reasons” for what we do. Reason can only direct our judgment concerning the likely causes and effects about the world, and for Hume reason can establish the instrumental relation of my agential desires and the *means* to achieve them. Hence, Hume states that reason can only help establish this relation, and if my passions are based on a false presupposition<sup>291</sup> or insufficient information for the designated end, then reason may help realign the means to the end in question. For Hume, the realignment is only a measure of what I desired to do in the first place. This is not to say that practical reason can set ends in the way that Kant

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<sup>289</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.1, 276.

<sup>290</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.2, 279.

<sup>291</sup> Recall Bernard Williams’s example of satiating thirst but then finding out that the glass of alleged water is actually filled with petrol in *Internal and External Reasons*.

regards practical reason. For Kant, an agent's self-legislation compels the universality for other wills to abide if it conforms to the categorical imperative. Obligatoriness follows on the heels of autonomous practical reason. In Hume, however, reason does not set or establish universal ends apart from desire. Instead, reason cannot motivate no matter the belief. No belief can cause action on its own. More than that, beliefs cannot cause new desires "except desires for the means to an end already desired."<sup>292</sup> In this way, "reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will" nor can reason ever "oppose passion in the direction of the will."<sup>293</sup> We cannot derive from reason moral judgments from facts about how "the world is *independently* of an agent's desire and other attitudes regarding it."<sup>294</sup> By contrast, Kant thinks that agents can derive reasons for what we do independently of desire and attitudes. The evidence offered for a non-cognitivist interpretation of Hume is advanced on this conception that moral beliefs, judgments and principles are constituted by prior desires of the agent in question, and that these motivating desires are always caused by the prior constituting desires. In this way, the moral judgments never express a proposition about what we all must do, but are expressive of an agent's emotions more generally.

In order to arrive at the above interpretation, it is necessary to address the famous motivation argument. Let me summarize the argument:

(1) Actions are productions of agents' desires about the way things are to be and their beliefs about what can be done.

(2) People in general act in accordance with their moral views, what Hume calls "opinions of justice" and those "of obligation."

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<sup>292</sup> Pidgen, *INNC*, 85.

<sup>293</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 2.3, 413.

<sup>294</sup> James Rachels, "Naturalism" in *Ethical Theory* ed. Hugh LaFollette (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000): 74-91. Rachels, *Naturalism*, 79 here.

(3) People acting in accord with their moral views cannot be explained if possessing a moral view is akin to having beliefs about the matter. Recall that beliefs are entirely non-motivating for Hume.

(4) It is far easier to explain having a moral view as a matter of possessing desires about how things ought to be from how they are.

(5) Therefore, having a moral view is a matter of having desires.

In the Motivation Argument, humans are motivated by non-cognitive states prompted by objects external to them. In this way, moral beliefs excite the passions in the very same way that a beautiful house caused in me the quality of beauty. Here, however, Hume could be interpreted differently. Hume seemingly allows for moral beliefs, and if those moral beliefs are assessed from the “general point of view,”<sup>295</sup> in terms of whether or not they are useful, then it looks as if Hume is no longer providing an explanatory model of moral psychology, but is instead offering us a decisive normative theory with cognitivism underscoring it. However, the consequent desires still compel me to recognize duty as something desirable. In other words, desires are still constitutive of that general point of view such that, we can still maintain the non-cognitivist interpretation. I can still have “opinions of justice.” Hume thinks agents can have moral beliefs and allow themselves to be moved by them. However, it seems that moral beliefs are only about the possession of character traits and whether or not these character traits will receive approbation or disapproval from a “general point of view.” In addition, moral beliefs issue forth from sentiment of pleasure and pain and moral taste. Hume says, “The approbation of moral qualities...proceeds entirely from a moral taste and from certain sentiments of pleasure or

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<sup>295</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 3.3, 602-603: “The only point of view, in which our sentiments concur with those of others, is, when we consider any passion to the advantage or harm of those, who have any immediate connexion or intercourse with the person possess’d of it.”

disgust, which arise upon the contemplation and view of particular qualities or characters.”<sup>296</sup> We conclude our approval of moral qualities from the fact that from the position of an impartial spectator such a moral trait or characteristic is useful. We find it desirable in light of certain conditions. In this way, we can say that moral beliefs are constituted and framed *only* within the scope of an agent’s desires. Given that moral beliefs are constituted by desires, it can easily follow that at least some aspects of Hume’s thought are non-cognitivist despite the complexity truly underlying it.

Part of the appeal of emotivism/non-cognitivism is its explanatory power. First, there is a propositional function of language whereby propositions describe the world. And second, the evaluative function of language reflects how we often desire how the world ought to be *from* how it is known to be. In desiring how the world ought to be, Hume’s thesis about moral beliefs originating in an agent’s desire makes some sense, and the interpretive power of the emotivist position concerning Hume’s moral philosophy is equally compelling. In fact, we might conclude it is the only way moral language could make any *sense*. First, reason is impotent to decide anything other than how to achieve our desires. Second, the desires then are the only source of motivation, and they find themselves moved by the world of instinct.

Now, I admit the complexity of the question regarding whether it is fair to interpret Hume’s moral philosophy in light of non-cognitivism. Hume is not entirely consistent on this point. Some passages read more in line with cognitivism than non-cognitivism, and others vice versa. In drawing attention to this interpretation, Hume can be shown to directly inspire the development of emotivism in Ayer’s thought. Before transitioning to

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<sup>296</sup> Hume, *Treatise* Bk. 3.1, 581.

Ayer, let me address how Scheler might respond to Hume under the interpretation just provided.

### 3.6 Schelerian Response to Hume

First, Hume is the most decisively complex of all three thinkers to be sampled in this chapter. His thought can be pulled in different interpretive directions, and for now, let us assume Hume is committed to the desire-constitution thesis outlined by Smith. If so, how could Schelerian phenomenology respond? There are several avenues of reproach, but I will start briefly with what they have in common.

Scheler subordinates reason to the emotions. In this, Hume is very accurate, and likewise the preeminence of emotional life highlights the commonality between Scheler and the emotivists. This is, I am afraid, all they do have in common, and it is merely a surface similarity. However, Hume's moral psychology is rich with a litany of emotions (e.g. pride and humility), yet they still fail to meet Scheler's complexity for one simple reason. Hume's emotions do not take an object, and in so doing, they cannot constitute the *sense* of the world. The passions only relate to their possessor, the self. Instead, human beings become mechanisms moved by existence itself. That is, the passions are caused by the world around them and according to Scheler, Hume's "mythology of productive rational activity...is a *purely constructivist* explanation of the a priori contents of objects of experience, an explanation based on the very presupposition that only a 'disordered chaos' is given."<sup>297</sup> As a leaf cast into a babbling brook, the passions happen to us in Hume as a feature of human nature, and the phenomenological depth and evidence internal to emotional life is swept out of consideration completely. Hume is blind and assumes

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<sup>297</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 66.

wrongly that experience consists in a disordered chaos. For Hume, “custom” and “instinct” are simply words used to make sense of this disordered chaos. Let me explain.

Instead, Hume adopts a very naturalistic and mechanistic approach to human beings typical of modernity. We can see the tone of this “mechanistic talk” when Hume comments on the similarity between animals and people. Consider the following passage:

“experimental reason, which we possess in common with beasts, and on which the whole conduct of life depends, is nothing but a species of instinct or mechanical power...”<sup>298</sup> Hume considers experimental reasoning to be primitively basic. It is a natural mechanical power in which the power exercises a force on human subjectivity as if the subjectivity of our minds is just one in a series of causal events. This power is called *instinct*, and it moves and determines us just as it does animals.

If we recall the previous articulation of Scheler’s fourfold value-modalities, the Humean psychological interpretation of human life can only rise to the vital sphere and what possibly could be valued in that sphere. In the vital sphere of feeling, the feeling-states intend objects of the environment. According to Scheler, we become increasingly aware of the vitalities of health and strength, or whether something is given as threatening to us. This also follows on the heels of Hume’s devotion to the fact that all philosophical ideas derive their meaning from an original preceding impression, an attempt to bring our concepts back to how they are first given sense in experience.<sup>299</sup> The problem is, however,

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<sup>298</sup> David Hume, *Enquiry Concerning the Human Understanding* ed. L. A. Selby-Bigge and P. H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 85/108. In my citation, I include the original pagination first and the contemporary pagination second.

<sup>299</sup> This insight could be interpreted that this a proto-phenomenological moment in Hume’s philosophy. By reducing an idea to its first original impression, Hume is somewhat phenomenological. The idea’s original impression could be read as Hume stumbling upon the constitutive *sense* of an idea is found in the subject.



Hume presupposes the very physicality of experience by delimiting the scope to the vital sphere of life itself. An example might prove helpful. For instance, Hume could not interpret the classical medieval properties of God as anything other than simply being an augmentation of human capacities.

First when we analyze our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas, which, at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom.<sup>300</sup>

In our imaginations, we elevate humankind to the level of God and then propagate this idea through institutionalizing it. Of course, this augmentation interpretation makes sense if we have first delimited the scope of experience without first investigating experience's phenomenological depth.

Now, the reader may be asking what relation does Hume's skepticism regarding religion and God have to do with the emotivist interpretation of his moral philosophy? It is an example of method. As soon as the original impression that gave rise to an idea can be shown as an alternative explanation, e.g., the concept of God, the original experience that gave rise to this idea can replace the falsehood. Hume is convinced that the epistemic relation we maintain with the world is primitively basic to all human experience. This epistemic relation is simply an intake of experience interpreted naturally and therefore rendered physical. Scheler is skeptical that all behavior can be reduced to mechanical interactions amongst psychological events. In this way, Hume exemplifies the natural attitude and his impressions ignore that "all determinations of essence" in sensations are

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<sup>300</sup> Hume, *Enquiry*, 14/19.

naively regarded as appearances.<sup>301</sup> This is Hume's mistake. Hume cannot make any sense of those structures of experience beyond life or those *given* to him, and he could certainly not be open to an order of value higher than the sphere of life itself.<sup>302</sup>

Hume is devoted to reaching back to an original impression as a way to explain the origin of an idea's sense. In this way, he has attempted to identify the first moment in which an idea could be constituted, even though Hume has no concept of a constituting/constituted intentional structure that gives rise to *meaning* in the first place. If he did, he would disavow the fact that emotions are not given in a disordered chaos of life. Rather, the emotions constitute the structures of experience that orient me in this intersubjectively-charged world prior to all other intentional acts. From this primordially emotionally charged world, all other epistemic acts originate. This mistake, however, is not simply a fault of Hume, but of the emotivists in general. I now turn to A. J. Ayer's thought.

### 3.7 Ayer's Positivism

Out of the growth of the logical positivists, Alfred Jules Ayer's composed *Language, Truth and Logic* (*LTL* hereafter). In *LTL*, Ayer's thinking is very ambitious. Like the positivists, he seeks to return philosophical thinking to concrete problems consistent with some notion of science rather than repeat the mistakes in language or reason that pervade thinking. With this in mind, Ayer focused on the literal meaningfulness of statements; he called literally meaningful statements "propositions." For Ayer, all statements are declarative sentences that make some claim about the world and are accordingly true and false. For a philosopher in Ayer's view, the most basic form of inquiry is to analyze

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<sup>301</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 409.

<sup>302</sup> The same charge could be made to Hobbes as well as only offering us a form of life incapable of moving beyond the vital sphere of life.

statements, and statements are, therefore, true in two ways. First, the truth of any statement may be true in accordance with the fact that the proposition is analytic. All analytic propositions are true without being dependent on experience, and these are truths by definitions such as ‘All bachelors are unmarried males’, or the truths of mathematics. Second, there are truths that are “empirically verifiable,” and in these two ways, Ayer defines the principle of verifiability.<sup>303</sup>

The principle of verifiability and its status in logical positivism is deeply felt, and at the same time contentious. For instance, in the first edition of revised remarks, Ayer debates about how to revise its status from his younger harsher and more emphatic presentation.<sup>304</sup> Such details would lead us astray, however. Therefore, it is important to introduce the general tenor of logical positivism in order to engage Ayer’s thought about ethics. All the positivists hold to something like the principle of verifiability about statements made about the world, and this principle states that *a statement is literally meaningful if and only if the statement has empirical support*. Since there is a body of statements made about the world that cannot be empirically supported, these statements are literally meaningless. Literal meaningfulness is also applied to an example of phenomenology in Ayer’s work. Heidegger’s phenomenology is a form of metaphysics, and Ayer interprets metaphysics as meaningless. Thus, Ayer mentions Heidegger once in *LTL*,

In general, the postulation of real non-existent entities results from the superstition, just now referred to, that, to every word or phrase that can be the grammatical subject of a sentence, there must be somewhere a real entity corresponding. For as there is a no place in the empirical world for many of

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<sup>303</sup> A. J. Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1952), 9. Moreover, it is no accident that analytic statements or those statements being empirically verifiable map onto Hume’s fork very well.

<sup>304</sup> See Ayer’s distinction between weak and strong verifiability on this point in the 1952 printing of *LTL*, p. 5-16, which was originally published in 1936.

these “entities,” a special non-empirical world is invoked to house them. *To this error must be attributed, not only the utterances of a Heidegger, who bases his metaphysics on the assumption that “Nothing” is a name which is used to denote something peculiarly mysterious, but also the prevalence of such problems as those concerning the reality of propositions and universals whose senselessness, though less obvious, is no less complete.*<sup>305</sup>

Thus, we see the application. If such notions as “Nothing” are attempting to refer to something, such as the medieval scholastics paying attention to “universals,” then a good philosopher eschews the notion completely. But notice the avoidance of hermeneutical depth and penetration into *Was Ist Metaphysik? (What is Metaphysics?)*. As a phenomenologist, Heidegger, like Scheler, is after a particular experience, and if the purpose of phenomenological attention to experience remains, then Heidegger is attempting not to use language to refer to something in the world, but to uncover an experience concealed by our natural use of language. This unconcealing is the general impetus behind phenomenological thinking, and one we should preserve in the foreground of our thoughts as we proceed to read Ayer against the phenomenological themes in Scheler. Ayer’s conception of experience is narrowed due to the fact that Ayer’s thinking follows from the logical application and extension of the principle of verificationism. In this way, what is experienced never comes to givenness since Ayer will not let experience reveal more than common sense experience nor what sense data can afford. Instead, the objects that do not conform to the constrictions of epistemological experience and verifiability are avoided and labeled “meaningless.” Why is experience so restricted in Ayer and especially ethics? A telling passage reveals Ayer’s characterization of philosophy in general.

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<sup>305</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 43-44. Italics mine.

In other words, the propositions of philosophy are not factual, but linguistic in character—that is, they do not describe the behavior of physical, or even mental, objects; they express definitions, or the formal consequences of definitions. Accordingly, we may say that philosophy is a department of logic. For we shall see the characteristic mark of a purely logical enquiry is that it is concerned with the formal consequences of our definitions, not with questions of empirical fact.<sup>306</sup>

The purpose of statements made about the world is to describe the consequence of holding a certain philosophical view and to do so in the truest way. In the above passage, truth has to do with the formal consequence of our definitions. In this way, science will perform experiments, but there will be no question of the basic philosophical propositions assumed implicitly in science. For him, the ability to make clear our philosophical terms depends a lot upon when such terms will be taken over completely by a science. For example, cognitive neuroscientists regularly assume that all subjective reports are brain states. Even if this claim is philosophically contentious, the methodological naturalism inherent in scientific practice must assume that all events are open to experimentation and are likely physical. Otherwise, science would not progress in the object of its inquiry. A consequence of the philosophical proposition “All mental states are brain states” would empower the co-extensive relation between science and philosophy in Ayer’s view. Moreover, the healthy relationship with science prevents “nonsensical assertions” that proceed from “metaphysical dogmas.”<sup>307</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 57.

<sup>307</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 57.

### 3.8 Ayer's Emotivism

Ayer relegated ethical utterances to the simple "expressions of emotion which can be neither true or false."<sup>308</sup> This position can only be understood after reviewing Ayer's four classes of ethical propositions made in ethics.

For Ayer, there are four type of ethical propositions made in ethics. First, there are propositions made about the definitions of ethical terms. Second, there are propositions that describe phenomena of moral experience and their causes. Propositions about Scheler's phenomenology of value would fit into this class, yet this class of statements belongs "to the science of psychology or sociology."<sup>309</sup> In this way, the causes of moral phenomena reside only in the scientific attitude that motivates Ayer's commitment to logical positivism. This insight will become a point of criticism later on.

Third, Ayer mentions the exhortations to moral virtue, yet for him, these do not belong in philosophy at all. Ethical pronouncements about what is ethical *do not* belong in any "strictly philosophical treatise."<sup>310</sup> This attitude is quite common against those who engage in metaethics, analyzing concepts apart from their instantiation in normative theory. Finally, there are ethical judgments.<sup>311</sup> For the remainder of *LTL*, Ayer will focus on judgments.

Ayer accepts some of Moore's analysis. He accepts that ethical terms are "unanalyzable,"<sup>312</sup> but not because they are irreducible, indefinable, and intuited, but

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<sup>308</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 103.

<sup>309</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 103.

<sup>310</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 103.

<sup>311</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 103.

<sup>312</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 112.

because “ethical concepts are pseudo-concepts.”<sup>313</sup> As such, Ayer’s emotivism is a form of eliminativism about normativity and value. Values are nonsensical as independent claims of a moral order. Accordingly, there is no moral order at all to which moral propositions could be true, let alone correspond. Hence, ethical concepts do not add anything to the factual content of a proposition. The implicit premise of such a position holds that the only philosophically legitimate use of language is descriptive. Thus, according to Ayer, ethics cannot be a specific branch of knowledge but winds up being “nothing more than a department of psychology and sociology.”<sup>314</sup> Even emotivism as a thesis is a description, an explanation of the function of ethical language. Specifically, Ayer claims,

But in every case in which one would commonly be said to be making an ethical judgment, the function of the relevant ethical word is purely “emotive.” It is used to express feeling about certain objects, but not to make any assertion about them.

But also ethical terms

...are calculated also to arouse feeling and so to stimulate action. Indeed some of them are used in such a way as to give the sentences in which they occur the effect of commands.<sup>315</sup>

The above passages are the heart of the emotivist position. Moral judgments do not express anything cognitive in which one could hold true or false knowledge. Expressing something worthy of knowledge for Ayer is asserting a true statement. That is it. There is nothing more. Emotivism denies the validity of any type of ethical knowledge.

When we talk to another person in our community, there is enough common conditioning that we can trade and exchange how we feel about certain things. There are enough points of reference to talk about how we feel. Hence, a friend of mine might believe

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<sup>313</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 107.

<sup>314</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 112.

<sup>315</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 108.

in the impermissibility of abortion, and I hold the opposite. We are both simply expressing our moral sentiments about the practice of abortion. “We do this in the hope that we have only to get our opponent to agree with us about the nature of the empirical facts for him to adopt the same moral attitude towards them as we do.”<sup>316</sup> For Ayer, we can reasonably expect agreement in such exchanges with those who have the same moral education and originate in the same social order. If we disagree with someone completely different and outside our moral conditioning, then we stop arguing with them. There is no factual appeal that can be made since there can be no argument made. To explain this difference, Ayer reveals that the only way progress can be made in moral discussions is when both parties presuppose the same values. Thus, I can help reconcile the differences between my friend and me about abortion, though I cannot convince an Egyptian Imam about any moral issue that might divide us.

### **3.9 Stevenson’s Emotivism**

Stevenson accepts the division offered by Moore. Science is not adequate for ethics. In this way, Stevenson offers three criteria by which the word “good” must be defined. First, the definition must allow for genuine intellectual disagreement. Second, “good” must be “magnetic”; third, “good” must not be defined wholly by scientific method.<sup>317</sup> In the first, it is intuitively accepted that when I attempt to convince a friend not to cheat on his significant other, we are having a disagreement about what he ought to do. Moral language must be allowed to function over disagreements. Moreover, moral disagreement cannot be reduced wholly to scientific method. In this way, Stevenson allows for some autonomy to

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<sup>316</sup> Ayer, *Language*, 111.

<sup>317</sup> Stevenson, C. L. “The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms” in *Mind* vol. 46 no. 181 (Jan. 1937): 14-31. Stevenson, *Emotive*, 18 cited here.



ethical inquiry unlike Ayer insofar as the meaning of ethical terms informs normative theory. Finally, the second criterion is a bit confusing. It is often said that moral claims have a valence, or that we find some obligations “attractive” and others “repelling.” The use of “magnetic” is meant to convey this sense of obligatoriness we find in moral claims. Emotivism offers reasons why moral claims compel our assent. According to Stevenson, “how ethical terms are used” is the mechanism that would compel our assent.<sup>318</sup> On speaking about ethical terms, Stevenson claims, “Their major use is not to indicate facts, but to *create an influence*. Instead of merely describing people’s interests, they *change or intensify* them.”<sup>319</sup>

Moral language has a use-function. Stevenson will refer to ethical terms as “*instruments* used in the complicated interplay and readjustments of human interests.”<sup>320</sup> At first, this claim seems incredibly plausible. Let me return to the example of the friend contemplating cheating on his partner. Our social interests and moral attitudes constantly favor entering into personal relationships based upon fidelity. If our acquaintances no longer have an interest in fidelity to another, then we might advise that they dissolve one relationship before moving onto another. My efforts to convince my friend are nothing but an appeal to the most favorable moral attitude society has about relationships. My friend’s disregard of his partner indicates that my friend does not consider her as a *person*. He encroaches upon her dignity, and I find it ruefully wrong to maintain sexual relations with two people who do not know about the other. Moreover, we have interests in personal health, and betrayals of trust in our sexual relations may harm another psychologically. In

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<sup>318</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 20.

<sup>319</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 18.

<sup>320</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 20.

addition, Stevenson interprets past moral philosophies with the same language of interest underlying my example.

These past moral philosophies are different expressions of interest. It logically follows that the normative component of, say, Hume is that we are compelled to obey moral obligations from the impersonal sympathetic observer who would approve of our personal practices. In Hume, human interests are very regulated, but not so much in Hobbes. According to Hobbes, the definition of good is offered as satisfying one's own desired interest.<sup>321</sup>

Stevenson's acknowledges the intersubjective movement of eliciting these mutually dependent responses. "Ethical judgments propagate themselves."<sup>322</sup> The fact that we find cheating harmful in personal relationships is facilitated by ethical terms. The constant use and appropriation of the terms by others reinforces some moral attitudes and can call into question others. This proposition explains why some human interests are maintained fervently and others must be called into question. Moreover, this fact that ethical terms facilitate the propagation of different emotional preferences about interests and desires explains why there is moral disagreement. To explain the propagating nature of ethical terms, Stevenson distinguishes between a "dynamic use of language" against a descriptive use. Descriptive language merely communicates a belief to another speaker. Accordingly, Stevenson – like Moore – thinks that ethical language is dynamic. By dynamic, Stevenson maintains that "we use words to give vent to our feelings (interjections) or to create moods (poetry), or to incite people to actions or attitudes (oratory)."<sup>323</sup> Now, we may engage

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<sup>321</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 15.

<sup>322</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 20.

<sup>323</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 21.

experiences where our purposes are multi-layered and thick. If I tell you, “Hold the door” with my hands full of groceries, then I am hoping you will be incited with the attitude of kindness, *and* am communicating a belief about the necessity that the door be opened for me to enter the building since my hands are full with groceries. More than that, however, those contexts from oration to poetry are uniquely rich phenomenological experiences. To assume that the role of language gives vent to our feelings in each of them so precisely without so much as investigating and describing their contextual depth leaves us wanting.

Stevenson has a very specific species of dynamic usage in mind. His restriction to “emotive” meaning will be clarified by a helpful passage:

The emotive meaning of a word is a tendency of a word, arising through the history of its usage, to produce (result from) affective responses in people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word. Such tendencies to produce affective responses cling to words very tenaciously.<sup>324</sup>

Stevenson assumes that the emotional history of a word is enough to compel others into moral agreement or disagreement. The emotive meaning is shared in the affective responses of people, and it is here we start to witness Stevenson’s phenomenological shortcoming. For the affective responses are not simply responses to stimuli as this position insists along very behavioral lines. Instead, the logic of affective responses is an intersubjective and primordial order of givenness. Though I will reserve a full response here for the purposes of the next section, it is important to note this reasoning as we continue in the text. Stevenson almost desires emotive terms to be more than simply affective responses. The literary image of an “aura of feeling” is reminiscent of Heideggerian moods. Unfortunately, the fact that there can be no phenomenological *givenness* in emotivism is why the experiential elements in the thought experiments do not

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<sup>324</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 23.

correspond to the logic of the language imposed upon instances of ethical judgment and the meaning of “good” itself. This limitation can easily be observed in Stevenson’s thought experiment. As he puts it,

Suppose that a man is talking with a group of people which includes Miss Jones, aged 59. He refers to her, without thinking, as an “old maid.” Now even if his purposes are perfectly innocent—even if he is using the words purely descriptively—Miss Jones won’t think so. She will think he is encouraging the others to have contempt for her, and will draw in her skirts, defensively. The man might have done better if instead of saying “old maid” he had said “elderly spinster.” The latter word could have been put to the same descriptive use and would not readily have caused suspicion about the dynamic use... “Old maid” and “elderly spinster” differ, to be sure, only in emotive meaning.<sup>325</sup>

Rather than its antiquated 1937 articulation, the thought experiment betrays its insight that it is only in the reactive attitudes and responses that words elicit which matter for the emotivist. Scheler could offer an intriguing alternative. Instead, the reason why the history and context of some words possess emotive meaning follows from the primordially of *ordo amoris*. The intersubjective recognition that a slip of the tongue may hurt someone’s feelings follows from the *given* content of value in the situation as felt. Otherwise, the history of the word’s offense could not take hold. We would be unmoved to recognize the value-content inherent in the offense. Without the phenomenological givenness of feeling intending value, there would be no basis for finding the term “Old Maid” offensive. Instead, the intersubjectivity of value is built upon the primordial emotional saturation pervasive in human experience. Hence, Stevenson’s emotivism cannot explain the historicity of emotive language as it comes to shape our articulation of value-insight. The primordial *ordo amoris* encases everything.

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<sup>325</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 23.

Stevenson is blind to this primordial historicity and emotional saturation. For him, some words simply have better approximations to emotive meaning, and not every word will carry the same emotive *sense*. The variegated emotive senses are simply a product of dynamic usage. Thus, Stevenson finds “good” more conducive to denote “favorable interest” than other terms, and to his credit the English term “good” can be articulated with the language of interest.<sup>326</sup> As we have seen, he imposes this constraint on his interpretation of moral philosophy already. Furthermore, in our language, no exact word can have the same meaning. According to Stevenson, all that may be said of some moral terms is that they roughly approximate the emotive sense of other terms.

Just as much as different moral terms can have different emotive senses, Stevenson denies that in influencing someone what is meant by emotive moral meaning is identical to an imperative. By definition, imperatives command our assent whereas emotivism works in subtler fashion. As he puts it,

the ethical sentence centers the hearer’s attention not on his interests, but on the object of interest, and thereby facilitates suggestion. Because of its subtlety, moreover, an ethical sentence readily permits counter-suggestion and leads to the give and take situation which is so characteristic of arguments about values.<sup>327</sup>

In other words, when I claim something is specifically wrong, I refer specifically to the “bearer of value.” For Scheler, the bearer of value can be an object of some worth, the person or the deed committed by a person. I advocate some position regarding the bearer of value and not specifically the hearer’s interests in maintaining that position. Both Stevenson and Scheler can agree on this, yet the expression “bearer of value” recognizes the phenomenological constitution of what is valuable whereas the expression “object of

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<sup>326</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 25.

<sup>327</sup> Stevenson, *Emotive*, 26.

interest” can only explain one type of valuation, the values of the agreeable and disagreeable. Moreover, “the give and take” of deliberation is an attempt to regard how one might realize higher value in the world. Otherwise, it is only a contention of wills-to-power through which several people may converse about a particular conception. Stevenson has grossly mischaracterized this facet of moral experience to escape the fact that emotive meaning could be identified with imperatives.

The function of morality is to help realize more value in the world from efforts to refuse that dynamic movement to higher values. Thus, the earlier talk of dynamic meaning sterilizes the very normative-content it wants to help explain. The dynamism of meaning is wrongly placed on the side propositions, or more to the point the *desideratum* is put first as the problem insists in language, not how it is experienced. Both Ayer and Stevenson reify moral knowledge to explain the timeless abstraction of a moral utterance again without seeing how it is that such moments are truly experienced. I will speak more of this in the next section.

### **3.10 The Schelerian Response: Participatory Realism**

I opened the introduction to this chapter by claiming that participatory realism offers three areas of phenomenological benefit that emotivism neglects. First, emotivism assumes generally how to explain value as something other than it is experienced, and a phenomenological approach can capture how value is given to us in experience. Second, a phenomenological approach elucidates the structure of experience through persons who realize and participate within act-value intentional structure. Finally, both value and persons are revealed by being-in-an-act and the analysis unpacked so far in this work.

Particularly, it is the intentional act-essence of love that constitutes the experience of value itself.

As I said, the basic problem is emotivism's want for clarity at the expense of experiential oversimplification. Emotivism pushes Ayer and Stevenson to make some wrongful distortions about how values are experienced. The higher-ordered analysis of ethical language is more important than ensuring experiential fit between emotivism as a solution to a philosophical problem, and the mode of givenness of value itself. In fact, the givenness of value is distorted significantly. Ayer loses sight of all three facets of the phenomenology of moral experience. As I have already shown, the causes of moral experience are explainable only as phenomena in psychology and sociology. Ayer's positivism becomes symptomatic of the natural attitude such that the givenness of value can only appear to be a problem of language, and ethics becomes an implicit form of psychology and sociology. Such a perspective loses sight of the constituting/constituted structure of the intentional relation in which values come to be experienced in the first place. Through this intentional relation, all bearers of value (persons, objects, goods, and deeds) exhibit a givenness (intuitive content). In this content, values exhibit their own order of evidence, and from that we have knowledge of what we (as persons) ought to prefer.

For Ayer, relativism emerges as he pushes ethical concepts to the side and calls them "pseudo-concepts." The fact that he can only see worthiness of knowledge in descriptive propositions indicates that he constrains the importance and function of philosophizing to ahistoric problems. He is blind to values and the implicit order of evidence that is given to us in emotional intuition and the history of their instantiation.

This blindness is no surprise since Ayer is skeptical about ethical intuitionism with the likes of W. D. Ross, let alone the emotional intuitionism that grounds Scheler's overall phenomenology of value. Instead, values are only the different ways people find language capable of inciting reactions in others such that values become experienced and rendered as commands.

In Scheler's *Formalism*, Scheler shows that commands compel our assent, but love itself cannot be commanded.<sup>328</sup> Anytime we strive to realize higher values, we are comporting ourselves in a loving manner. In Scheler's terms, we are enhancing the value of its bearer. Love is this movement and tendency to realize higher forms of value against the tendencies of stagnation and hatred. If values emanate solely as commands, then there can be no movement within value. There is no loving act in such a construal, no motivation to higher forms or enhancement. Persons must only obey the authority of value, and such approaches to value – let alone human life – do not mesh with how value is experienced. When I truly love someone, I accept that person “with all my heart.” I do not attempt to remake them, modify them, or control them. Such poetic beatitudes might be lost on Ayer as only inciting a reaction in another.<sup>329</sup> However, simply inciting emotive reaction is not the core of value experience, and it is phenomenologically inadequate to oversimplify the contours of value experience. He has quartered off describing moral experience as a social science, yet that overlooks the phenomenological depth of the experience. One cannot impose a framework upon experience, but must seek out what experience reveals to us. Ayer is blind to loving act as the rich source of value experience. The same can be said about Stevenson.

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<sup>328</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 224.

<sup>329</sup> In the very same chapter, it is no mistake that Ayer targets aestheticians as well.



Stevenson differs in one degree from Ayer. Stevenson accepts that value-language motivates others whereas Ayer rejected this solution. Ayer is carried away by the promise of positivistic thinking. While Stevenson is a little closer to experience, he is still distant from it all the same. As far as we are concerned, Stevenson's proximity is still far away from the three facets of participatory realism and the phenomenological approach more generally speaking. What Stevenson and I can agree on is a rejection of Ayer's insight that emotivism results in imperatives.

Stevenson defined the function of ethical language as creating and influencing other speakers. In this way, he appeals to experience, and Stevenson is even moved to recognize pragmatic influence on his thinking. The appeal to experience is not only here but in his magnum opus *Ethics and Language* (1944), wherein Stevenson analyzes a variety of different contexts of creating an influence in others. However, values, persons and love still fall out of the picture completely. Let me explain.

When Stevenson attempts to disclose the structure of moral experience, he takes for granted what it means to experience value. In Stevenson's view, we are only prompted to affective response by the history of a specific ethical term. For instance, "good" denotes "favorable interest." The history of a specific ethical term is all the history of moral philosophy has conveyed and could convey. Moral philosophers have understood different competing ideas about what is in our interest. According to Stevenson, these are not specific ways to deliberate about moral dilemmas as normative ethicists have insisted. Instead, normative theories only measure how people respond to stimuli. A community of Kantians has a vested interest in promoting individualism with the language of "inherent dignity," or a society has an interest in general happiness distributed in the outcomes of its

decisions in the form of utilitarianism. Both Kantianism and utilitarianism therefore are only episodic measures of overall human interest. According to Stevenson, these positions are about nothing more than, perhaps, providing insight into the history of how an ethical term expresses sentiment. Stevenson's interpretive claim follows on the heels of the dominating natural attitude inherent in emotivism itself. Like Ayer, Stevenson's moral experience is almost a form of behaviorism in which all acts are interpreted as forms of behavior. Thus, the natural attitude blinds Stevenson as much as Ayer.

In thinking that value can only be understood through the history of dynamic usage, Stevenson is blind to how we experience value. Stevenson's efforts maintain cohesion with the demands of logical consistency with how the problem of emotivism first came to be understood rather than focus on the experiential aspects of value. Stevenson accepts that ethical terms cannot be reduced to non-ethical terms just like Ayer. He accepts the irreducibility of ethical concepts just as much as Ayer. However, like Ayer, Stevenson recognizes that there is another reason to explain the irreducibility, and that is the initial reason as to why experiential elements in emotivism are phenomenologically vitiated.

First and foremost, only *persons* are capable of relating to the world in multiple ways. We can take up various orientations to the world, or in Schelerian language, we can participate in different intentional acts. Taking up various intentional acts is what is meant by the emphasis on the "participatory" aspect of my position. We are persons relating to others in acts of love, and this relational aspect is what is revealed by being-in-an-act. We participate in our very own functionalization of the essence of love. Love as an act *is* at the heart of my ontological understanding of value, and this orientation serves as the best evidence against this tendency of turn of the twentieth century naturalism to explain facets

of subjectivity away and reify elements of the first-personal experience under other proposed categories. Any proposed category derived from outside experience will supplant the ways in which persons experience the world firsthand. For this reason, moral philosophy is an unwitting accomplice in the continual trend of de-personalizing human life, and the irony does not escape me. Moral philosophy is also the one place within philosophical thought where the sense of the personal is also preserved. Thus, the emotivists desire to explain the ontology of value as a consequence of language usage in eliciting and inciting emotional reactions in people is attractive in its simplicity, phenomenologically suspect. Eliciting and inciting emotional reactions in others does not explain the proper orientation and range of emotional reaction relevant to realizing value. *Realizing value can only be explained by love as a personal act.* According to Scheler, it is love that elevates us over and against the economic sphere of utility.

Moreover, people are not persons in the emotivist perspective as much as they are entities determined and affected by the speech of others. As far as emotivism is concerned with ethics, emotivism is a crude behaviorism lacking phenomenological depth, yet the most interesting facet by far is the neglect of persons and the simultaneous recognition of the intersubjective nature of meaning. Stevenson makes a lot of humdrum about how ethical terms propagate through the history of their influence, but such an impersonal characterization distorts how people have actually experienced value in history. The impersonal characterization oversimplifies the deep texture of that experience. The sheer fact that various *people* facilitate and realize values differently throughout history does not betray the fact that values exist independently from being understood differently throughout history, let alone it is *persons* that realize values in the first place. Each different

time period and its *people* can be said to participate in one form of value-modality over others. Thus, it is possible for one form of life inherent in a community to take hold. If a community promotes a conception of value to which everyone is held captive, and that value does not realize higher values, then a community can suffer from a disordered heart. In these past few years, the wake of the 2008 global recession has prompted states across the globe to enact “austerity measures.” Austerity is a clean way of thinking that the economic concerns trump all other values, since human life can only be measured according to economic capital. All life is, therefore, reduced to capital, and any other value-insight that would motivate us to recognize the person as transcending economic consideration is regarded with extreme suspicion.<sup>330</sup> Thus, when dissenters present reasons why we ought to value some forms of community that sacrifice part of their wealth for the benefit of the whole, those reasons are an articulation of value-insight that reaches higher than the economic sphere of utility.

If a community suffers a “disordered heart”, then an exemplar person can be motivate it to realize love. This is part of the appeal of Scheler’s thought and perhaps the most redeemable feature of Christianity. Such an exemplar teaches that persons can be inspired to recognize the truth of love, and it is in that unfolding to higher forms of value that we find what loving means. Love means sacrificing as much as possible lower goods for higher ones. This movement-as-experienced is completely missed if we simply consider an impersonal characterization of the process of realizing value. No behaviorist explanation in psychology or sociology could explain the given experiential elements adequately

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<sup>330</sup> This is the heart and soul of Ludwig Von Mises’ praxeology. Praxeology attempts to cast all values as depending necessarily upon the material economic capacity for their realization.

without distortion of how we first undergo experience. In sustaining awareness of how subjects experience love firsthand, we find that experience is a guide to what we should label “real.” The *real* is to be sought in the confines and texture of experience.

Scheler is not the only thinker who offers us a picture that values arise out of how we experience primordial emotional life. William James can offer us a similar insight,

Goodness, badness and obligation must be realized somewhere in order really to exist; and the first step in Ethical Philosophy is to see that no merely inorganic “nature of things” can realize them...Their only habitat can be a mind which feels them; and no world composed of merely physical facts can possibly be a world to which ethical propositions apply. The moment one sentient being, however, is made a part of the universe, there is a chance for goods and evils really to exist. Moral relations now have their status in that being’s consciousness. So far as he feels anything to be good, he makes it good. It is good, *for him*; and being good for him, is absolutely good, for he is the sole creator of values in that universe, and outside of his opinion things have no moral character at all.<sup>331</sup>

This claim is what I have strived to explain by “realism.” We must start with experiences first and derive our ontology from how they are experienced—that is, how they “must be realized.” Only an orientation to experience can capture how first goodness and badness can be felt. This is their “habitat,” the space and texture of experience in which no mere “physical fact” could be a substitute, where the “moral relations...have their status in that being’s consciousness.” By contrast, the emotivists attempt not only to reduce normative language to the emotive sense of a word, but want that explanation to substitute for what they felt were previous “dogmas.” However, such purely descriptive and explanatory aim abandons experience entirely, and in a strange twist of irony becomes a dogma itself.

At this point, someone may object that the emotivist thesis is not ontological about value, but a linguistic thesis, a way to conceptualize the proper function of normative

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<sup>331</sup> William James, “The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life” in *International Journal of Ethics* vol. 1 no. 3 (April 1891): 330-354. James, *Moral*, 335 here.

language. In addition, through such efforts, emotivism is silent on the ontology of value. However, even if I concede that such a logical objection be entertained, the linguistic thesis still has ontological implications. Such an identification of values and language does nothing to remove this fact. The emotivists are offering an allegedly self-contained thesis about value talk with how language functions, regardless if experience clearly shows otherwise. Now, someone might find this constant appeal to phenomenological experience not so convincing. To the emotivist's credit, she has attempted to explain normative language, but she cannot render her commitments consistent with how she lives and participates in personal acts. By contrasting the emotivism and the perils of the natural attitude regarding moral experience, and a phenomenological understanding emerges in what we experience provides a basis for theorizing about the world. In contemporary ethics, I selected the emotivists as one example of a position that would be called into question by Scheler's phenomenological orientation to experience. On a personal level, I have found it frustrating that the emotivists picked up on the connection between values and emotion but could not penetrate the depth of that insight adequately.

Just like Scheler, James in the above passage locates the capacity to realize the reality of value insofar as we experience them in feeling. A completely descriptive system of thought cannot encapsulate what it means to have feelings or experience them. Physical facts can only explain. The moment we are aware of the universe in relation to our emotions is the moment goods and evils really exist. This moment, however, is the starting place of experience for a person. This is why Jamesian pragmatism and Schelerian phenomenology have the same view. They both start *with* experience without presupposing a formal abstraction to which that experience must conform. In James, the

neutral monism of pure experience is that “there is no thought-stuff different from thing-stuff.” Instead, the “thoughts and things are absolutely homogeneous as to their material (*material prima*).”<sup>332</sup> We treat thought-stuff or thing-stuff depending on how we classify the phenomena for human purposes, and purposes are measured in how they illuminate life. Heidegger’s *being-in-the-world* is similarly committed to articulating insights derived from lived-experience our systematic comportment/orientation towards the world. Similarly in Scheler being-in-an-act is articulated with experience in view. I have called this “ontological participation” throughout this work. The differences in these thinkers aside, each one of them *starts with experience* and *experience* is where the ontology of value can be found. The emotivists did not start with experience, nor does any non-cognitive tradition in moral thought start with experience. Instead, the emotivists imposed upon experience constraints from the third-personal natural attitude to which phenomenology is opposed. This opposition is not fundamental. Phenomenology only opposes the natural attitude when the natural attitude oversteps its boundaries and its proponents think it provides the *sense* of the world without looking to those modes of givenness that disclose how it is we experience the world’s sense in the first place. In other words, before dividing up phenomena into categories – such as the ontology of value – we must seek the experiential limits of how we experience value.

From all the efforts herein, let me formally state my position given its sufficient development both in interpreting Scheler and the contrasting relief provided by the

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<sup>332</sup> William James, “The Place of Affectional Facts in a World of Pure Experience” in *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Method* vol 2 no. 11 (May 1905): 281-287. James, *Place*, 281 here.

emotivists. Thus, the following definition may provide the clearest statement of my position.

*Ontological Participatory Realism (OPR):* the ontology of value V is given insofar as person P participates properly through a loving orientation such that the P complies with axiological preferring inherent in the context in which V is given to P and P acts to realize higher forms of V based in a loving orientation.

V is given by the person's participation, that is, at the level of the person being-in-an-act. To experience the possibility of value and its enhancement to higher forms, the particular being-in-an-act must be a loving orientation. By a loving orientation, we mean something akin to Heideggerian being-in-the-world. Orientation is a phenomenological comportment of how we are faring and being within the experience itself, yet in love we are oriented to a vertical form of experience. Within a loving orientation, P complies with the laws of axiological preference established at the very beginning of the *Formalism*. What we ought to prefer is given to P. The givenness of V is contextually mitigated by the movement and where such movement starts in a value-modality between a higher and lower value. Hence, P attempts to realize this intuitively given movement of insight in a loving orientation. By participating in the higher act-feeling of love, P grasps the higher value in question over the lower one present in the situation.

In order to define OPR, it has been necessary to forestall its introduction. Many elements had to be brought together. In Chapter 1, it was necessary to show that Blosser's charge is an accurate interpretation underscored by my interpretation that ontological indeterminacy plagues the articulation of value's givenness in Scheler's *Formalism*. In addition, Chapter 2 showed that phenomenology becomes phenomenological ontology such that connections can be made between several themes problematized by Scheler's



inadequately developed ontology of value. The model of fundamental moods in Heidegger and his being-in-the-world opened us up to the unique character and givenness that value maintains in Scheler's work—even despite Heidegger's own inability to account for value in his fundamental ontology. Finally, in Chapter 3, enough of the position had been articulated such that a contrasting view against emotivism provides a way to reorient our theoretical approach to value and develop participatory realism as a serious contender in the problem of value ontology. My interpretation of Scheler offers a unique contribution to the problem of value ontology and establishes the truth of ontological participatory realism. Finally, the phenomenological approach to moral experience more generally can answer questions that have plagued both Continental and analytic moral philosophy.

The treatment of value ontology offered herein only touched upon value in the *Formalism*. Left equally unexplained is an appropriate account of agency and persons in Scheler's thought. Persons and his metaphysics of spirit will need to be addressed in a subsequent work.

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