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Sociology of the Heart

Max Scheler's Epistemology of Love

Frédéric Vandenberghe

Mein Kind, ich hab es gut gemacht,
ich habe nicht über das Denken gedacht.

(J.W. Goethe)

YEARS AGO, when I moved to Paris, I found a little flat in the 13th arrondissement, within walking distance of the headquarters of UNESCO. A couple of days after moving in, I met for the first time the concierge of the building, an elderly Portuguese woman. Curious as ever, she asked me what I was doing. When I answered that I was working on a doctorate in sociology, she exclaimed: 'So, you're a sociologist of the heart', and started to mention some of her physical ailments. It's a bit of a *non sequitur* for starters, but I fancy the expression *sociologue du coeur* and would like to apply it to Max Scheler (1874–1928), the renowned and controversial Catholic philosopher and sociologist who developed a personalist ethics of goodness, grounded in a phenomenology of moral values and feelings.¹

Influenced by Edmund Husserl and influencing Martin Heidegger, who praised him as 'the greatest philosophical force in Europe, if not in contemporary philosophy altogether' (Heidegger, 1975: 9), Scheler was generally considered by his contemporaries as a philosophical virtuoso and a genius. In spite of this, his fame faded rapidly, 'like the brief sight of a comet' (Frings, 1997: 11). Standing in the midst of an intellectual current that connects the historical philosophies of life of Dilthey, Simmel and Bergson with the phenomenologies of Husserl, Heidegger and Gadamer, his writings have significantly influenced those of Nicolai Hartmann, Edith Stein (Theresia Benedicta a Cruce), Arnold Gehlen, Helmut Plessner, Karl Mannheim and Alfred Schütz. Even if faithful devotees, like Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II, who wrote quite an interesting habilitation thesis

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on Scheler's personalism, are still attracted to and inspired by his writings, Scheler is now generally considered, like Meinong and Brentano, an intriguing but minor figure in the landscape of Weimar.

Scheler deserves better, however. I would not hesitate to recommend his work to any philosopher or sociologist who is working in the phenomenological tradition or is interested in the exploration of the connections between emotions, values and alterity. Indeed, his phenomenology is not only more intently focused on social life than is Edmund Husserl's, but it also probes the depths of emotional life and firmly grounds the possibility of society in the encounter of the *socius* as a concrete and incomparable other that is mediated by the Other. Scheler's systematic theory of intersubjectivity has some notable affinities with the ethics of solicitude of Emmanuel Levinas. If sociologists have meanwhile discovered Levinas (see Zygmunt Bauman and Axel Honneth, for instance), they might as well re-discover his Catholic counterpart and probe his work to find philosophical answers to such fundamental sociological questions as the problem of intersubjectivity (how can I have access to the mind of others?), interaction (how can we coordinate our actions and intentionally act together?) and the constitution of society (how are our interactions mediated by and institutionalized into a common world?).

Unlike other strands in social theory, phenomenology does not take the existence of the other for granted, but analyses in detail how we can have access to the heart and mind of the others, constitute the social link as a connection between souls that is mediated by the spirit (*Geist*), and (re)produce society as a meaningful world we share in common. In my reflections on the phenomenological presuppositions of sociology, which is a part of a larger project on the philosophical foundations of a critical theory of society (Vandenbergh, 1997–8), I have personally greatly benefited from the way Scheler establishes a tight connection between a phenomenological epistemology of love, a generalized ethics of care and a hermeneutical sociology of the heart.² I particularly appreciate the structure of sensibility that characterizes his ethical reflections on epistemology and the emotional response that his phenomenology of love provides to Husserl's overly cognitivist and, ultimately, solipsistic philosophy of consciousness. Scheler's insistence on the primacy of emotions over cognition, love over control, or recognition over cognition, as Honneth (2005) would say, provides a welcome antidote to the reifying tendencies that mark the contemporary human sciences. At the end of the day, I may not agree with his onto-theological positions, but I am nevertheless convinced that his attempt to combine ethics, epistemology and sociology points in the right direction. Reminding us that all knowledge – including the knowledge of nature – is ultimately grounded in emotions, and that emotions disclose the world as a meaningful and valuable world, it offers a welcome counterpoint to the contemporary infatuation with aesthetics, while correcting at the same time the cognitivism of the philosophy of mind with a due emphasis on the primacy of ethics.

In the short span of an article, it is impossible to follow in detail the development of Scheler's thought through all its phases, from his early Kantian idealism to his Catholic phenomenology and, from there, to the neo-Spinozist panentheism that marks the end of his intellectual career. In this article, I will restrict the analysis to Scheler's phenomenology of love and to his theory of intersubjectivity, as both were developed during the most creative period of his career (1913–22) in the guise of a phenomenology of feelings and values. This phenomenological investigation of the intentional acts of feeling that disclose both the natural and the social world as a spiritual world of values is conceived as an ongoing discussion with Husserl's transcendental phenomenology of the constitution of the world. Focusing on the more philosophical aspects of his proto-sociology, this article aims to provide a sociological interpretation and humanist reformulation of Scheler's epistemology of the natural and social object as creatures of God. I will start the investigation with an analysis of the constitutive role of emotions in the disclosure of reality and, moving from his epistemology of nature to his theory of intersubjectivity, I will continue the analysis with an investigation of the role played by emotional identification (*Einsfühlung*), sympathy (*Einfühlung*) and love (*Liebe*) in Scheler's theory of the constitution of the social world as a communal and, ultimately, spiritual world. Consequently, the article is divided into two main parts.

In the first part, entitled 'A Catholic Phenomenology of Love', I will present the anthropological and phenomenological foundations of his work. I will show that Scheler is indebted to the early works of Husserl and how he developed the doctrine of ideal objects, the eidetic method and the theory of evidential in-sight into a quasi-mystical theory of the 'intellectual intuition' of the 'things themselves'. Next, I will present his epistemology of love and, establishing the link with St Augustine, I will show that his theory of intellectual intuition is a theory of 'revelation' that is religiously overdetermined.

In the second part of the article, I will analyse Scheler's phenomenology of intersubjectivity, and investigate how a human being can possibly get access to the soul of another human being. Through an analysis of the critique of the theories of moral sentiments that he has presented in his classic work on sympathy, it will appear that Scheler conceives of social feelings as a kind of stairway to heaven that leads from the primal unity of all sentient beings to spiritual communion in and with God. Although the primary intent of the article is interpretative and reconstructive, I will at times criticize his absolutism and his objectivism, as well as his Catholicism, and propose, when possible, a humanist alternative that redeems his religious and moral intuitions, but tries to reformulate them in secular language.

I. A 'Catholic Phenomenology' of Love

Philosophical Anthropology and the Transcendence of Life

Max Scheler was a productive and creative, though controversial figure. More of a religious seer and a spiritual seeker than a founder of a new religion or a new science, this erratic genius nevertheless succeeded in leaving his imprint on the various fields of research of his time. He developed his own intuitive brand of phenomenology; proposed a material ethics of values as a systematic alternative to Kant's formal ethics; presented a series of subtle phenomenological investigations of emotions like shame, guilt, repentance, resentment, sympathy, love and hate; reflected on faith, belief and the essence of religion; founded the sociology of knowledge and visions of life as an autonomous discipline; laid the foundations of philosophical anthropology; and sketched out, towards the end of a his life, a pantheistic metaphysics in which God progressively becomes, manifests and realizes Himself in and through human history. Intervening in several philosophical fields and subdisciplines, and pushing all of them forward, Scheler did not, however, succeed in developing a philosophical system in which they would all be united through a cascade of transcendental deductions. In spite of this, one feels that all his phenomenological excursions into theology, metaphysics, metascience, epistemology, ethics, physics, biology, psychology, pedagogy, sociology, politics and anthropology come from the depths of life and tend towards spiritual unity. Reminding one somehow of Georg Simmel, with whom he studied in Berlin, Scheler did not propose a closed and totalizing philosophical system that aspires to encompass all that exists, but more of an open reflection on the totality of life in which the philosopher gives himself totally and tries to order the chaos of the world into a well ordered and meaningful cosmos. The meaning of the world is not invented but metaphysically induced through full immersion in the world. To the extent that he committed himself without restraint and risked losing himself in the chaos of impressions, his philosophical career, from an early pre-phenomenological via a Catholic to a pantheistic phase, can be seen as an existential struggle with himself in which he tried, almost heroically, to overcome the split between the vital and the absolute, the emotions and reason, life and spirit, *Leben und Geist*.³ Even if his attempts to overcome the antinomies in an equilibrated synthesis could not succeed, it must be conceded that his failure was nevertheless a brilliant one.

Although Scheler's scattered reflections may not add up to a system, they nevertheless find their unity in a single meta-anthropological question: *Was ist der Mensch?*⁴ What is Man?⁵ A thinking reed? A bundle of drives? A toolmaker? A symbolic animal? No, according to Scheler, the human is, first and foremost, a spiritual being, a *zoon noetikon* or *animal spirituale*. Humans are beings who are conscious of the fact that they do not know who they are but who, by virtue of this consciousness, separate themselves out from animals. Partly beast, animal, *zoon*, emotive, passionate, full of

impulses, and partly spiritual, transcendental, divine, the human is a demonic angel that seeks to transcend life. Like the animals, with whom they share the vital sphere, humans are living beings. As humans, we are endowed with a living body (*Leib*) and live in an environment (*das Milieu*) that is relative to our body. But unlike animals, we are also able to contemplate values and ideas, and realize them, transcending thereby our bodies and our environment. In so far as human beings are living beings that are able to transcend the sphere of life and thus also of the body, to partake in the sphere of the spirit, we could say, following Simmel (1989: 232), that human life is ‘more-than-life’ (*Mehr-als-Leben*), ‘Man is a thing that transcends itself, its life and all life’ (II: 293). Thanks to, and through, their spiritual acts, humans can access and disclose an autonomous realm of absolute values and ideas that exist independently of their biological constitution. This realm of ideas and values, which is typically human, is at the same time ‘more-than-human’; it is divine, not in the Nietzschean sense though, but in the Augustinian one. Defined by the tendency to transcendence, Scheler describes the human being as ‘the Godseeker’ (II: 296):

Man is the intention and the gesture of ‘transcendence itself’, is the being that prays and seeks God. Not ‘the human being that prays’ – he is the prayer of life that transcends itself; ‘he does not seek God’ – he’s the living X that seeks God. (III: 186)

Access to the Divine allows humans to see themselves, their fellow creatures and the world from the point of view of God (*sub specie divinitatis*). Seeing all that exists as partaking of the Divine is feeling it as being suffused by Divine Love. This love does not make blind but allows one to see each and every one, each and every thing, in their ideal states, that is as they should be, or rather, to avoid imperativist connotations, as they could be if they realized their innermost, intimate and most personal tendencies and capacities. As the human being shares in this unbounded love, somehow returning the love s/he received from God, to God, s/he loves God and his creatures not for the sake of God, but ‘with’ God and ‘in’ God (*amare in Deo et cum Deo*).

Profoundly influenced by *Lebensphilosophie* (Nietzsche, Dilthey and Bergson), Husserlian phenomenology and Christian theology (St Augustine and Pascal), Scheler developed a philosophical ‘anthropo-theology’ that conceived of the human being, first and foremost, as a loving being: ‘Even before he’s an *ens cogitans* or an *ens volens*, Man is an *ens amans*’ (X: 356).⁶ Following Augustine and Pascal, he argued that the primordial relation to the self, the other, the world and God is emotional, and that emotions constitute and disclose the world as a world of values. Correcting the cognitivist bias of Husserl’s phenomenology of perception (*Wahrnehmung*), Scheler went on to develop a phenomenology of ‘value-ception’ (*Wertnehmung*) that analyses the noetic-noematic structure of emotional intentionality. His main thesis is that the acts of valorization (feelings) and their noematic correlates

(values) are hierarchically and teleologically ordered so as to find their fulfilment in an a priori axiological order – the *ordo amoris*, or order of love.⁷ According to our religious phenomenologist, this order, which contains the ascending value orders of the utilitarian, the vital, the spiritual and the absolute values, is immutable and eternal. It can be intuited but not created by emotional acts.

In the age of rampant relativism, this moral objectivism might seem objectionable but, paradoxically, to the extent that it functions like an essentialized ideal type it also allows one to better measure the extant relativism and to criticize the emotional and moral disorder that marks modernity. In his writings on the transvaluation of values (III), which include his classic study of *ressentiment*, Scheler recognizes that this eternal order of values can be obscured; he even grants that it can be inverted, as happens in modern capitalism, when utilitarianism becomes the dominant ethos. When the lower instrumental values of the useful get the upper hand, the higher spiritual values are devalued, giving rise to a generalized demoralization of society. Even if Scheler does not adopt the positions of the ‘conservative revolution’ (Moeller van den Bruck, Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, etc.), his spirited ‘Nietzscheo-Catholic’ call for a renewal of the vital and the absolute values against the utilitarian ones is not only elitist and aristocratic but, at times, it also brings him dangerously close to reactionary anti-modernism.

Phenomenological Eidetics and the Intuition of Essences

Husserl and Scheler

Phenomenology is, literally, the study of phenomena. A phenomenon is anything that appears or presents itself reflexively to the stream of consciousness as it is ordinarily experienced (seen, heard, touched, felt, etc., in actual experience, in memory, in anticipation or even as fantasized) by the individual consciousness. Anything which appears in and gives itself reflexively to the stream of immanent consciousness is a legitimate area of phenomenological analysis, because phenomenology is nothing else but the careful and detailed analytic description of the essential (eidetic) structures of the experience of phenomena, of the ways (perception, fantasy, memory, etc.), the modes (actuality, potentiality, receptivity, spontaneity) and the doxic modifications (negation, neutralization, doubt, etc.) in which the things themselves appear to consciousness. According to Husserl, phenomenology is thus not a theory but a philosophical method for analysing how things appear to, and are thus intentionally constituted as meaningful objects by, consciousness.

Coming from elsewhere and going elsewhere, Max Scheler is a borderline phenomenologist.⁸ Too frivolous and undisciplined for the taste of the stern founder of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl considered him as his ‘antipode’ (cited in Spiegelberg, 1960: 230). After the publication in two instalments of Scheler’s main work, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik (Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Values,*

1913–16), in the yearbooks of phenomenological research he edited Husserl would increasingly distance himself from Scheler as the latter rose to fame. In spite of temperamental incompatibilities, the influence of Husserl on Scheler was, however, a decisive one. Just when Husserl was about to publish the second and third volumes of his *Logical Investigations*, the two met each other for the first time in Halle at a gathering of Kantian scholars organized by Hans Vaihinger. As one would expect, they discussed philosophical issues. Scheler was particularly pleased to find out that, in his analysis of the intentional constitution of categorial and other ideal objects that exist independently from the mind, Husserl (1993, II(2): 128 et seq.) had arrived at the same conclusion with respect to the necessity of widening the concepts of intuition, perception and imagination beyond sensuous intuition, so as to include ‘supersensuous’ objects such as predicates, numbers, wholes and triangles. He recalls this meeting in the following terms:

The writer had come to the conviction that the content of what is given to us through intuition is originally much richer than the content that can be covered by sense data, their genetic derivatives and logical forms of unity. When he told Husserl about his conviction and informed him that he saw in this idea a fruitful principle for the construction of theoretical philosophy, Husserl remarked immediately that in his new, soon to be published works on logics, he had proposed an analogous enlargement of the concept of intuition to ‘categorial intuition’. From that moment derives the spiritual connection that would exist in the future between Husserl and the author and would become extraordinarily fruitful. (VIII: 308)

Even if the ‘spiritual connection’ proved to be rather one-sided, Scheler fully endorsed the platonizing critique of psychologism that Husserl had presented in the ‘Prolegomena to Pure Logic’ that make up the first volume of his *Logical Investigations*. It confirmed his thesis that the spiritual sphere is autonomous and that logical, ethical and aesthetic acts cannot be reduced to mental, sensual or vital acts. Even if he had some minor misgivings about the lingering sensualism in Husserl’s analysis (X: 467), he especially appreciated the Sixth Investigation in which Husserl had defined the concepts of self-evidence and truth, before applying them with success in his phenomenological analysis of the constitution of categorial and universal objects.

In *Formalism* (II: esp. 67–98), he successfully transposed the Husserlian analysis of logics to the sphere of axiologics in an attempt to formalize Pascal’s ‘logics of the heart’ (*le coeur a ses raisons . . .*). Arguing that values form an objective a priori order that exists independently from the mind, he affirmed that they can be grasped with evident insight through intellectual intuition (*Wesensschau*). In spite of this, he would, however, never become a faithful follower of the master. Like Heidegger, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, he refused the ‘transcendental turn’, in fact a return to idealism which Husserl deemed necessary to found knowledge on secure, indubitable and apodictic foundations of the Cartesian Cogito:

This particular turn of Husserl [accomplished in the *Ideas*], according to which even after the abolition of all things an absolute consciousness would be retained, has been rejected by almost all of the researchers who are influenced by him. It constitutes the main obstacle to the constitution of metaphysics on an eidetic basis. (VII: 311)

If Scheler has always snubbed the ‘transcendental reduction’, which Husserl considered as his main contribution to philosophy, he has, however, fully accepted and made somewhat abusive use of the ‘eidetic reduction’, giving thereby phenomenology an aura of mysticism.

The Phenomenological Experience and the Intuition of Essences

According to Husserl, phenomenology is not a theory, but a method. For Scheler, however, it is not so much a method as a ‘spiritual attitude’ in which the ‘things themselves’ are unconcealed and manifest themselves as ‘facts of a special kind’ to consciousness.⁹

Phenomenology is in the first place [. . .] a spiritual attitude of spiritual vision in which one comes to see (*er-schauen*) or experience (*er-leben*) something that would remain hidden without it: namely, a realm of ‘facts’ of a special kind. (X: 389)

Freely interpreting and extending Husserl’s notions of evidence and intellectual intuition, Scheler claims that in the phenomenological attitude the ‘things themselves’ are immediately, intuitively and a priori given to immanent consciousness with evident ‘insight’.¹⁰ The things that are intentionally given to or in consciousness as phenomena can be anything: a blooming apple tree, death, a number or God himself. Regardless of whether the thing is seen, heard, felt or in any other way experienced; regardless also of whether the thing is physical or mental, actual or potential, real or imagined; whatever it is that is experienced only becomes a phenomenological fact if that which is ‘there’ and of which consciousness is ‘of’, to speak like Brentano, is immediately, adequately and intuitively ‘self-given’ (X: 433), that is given to consciousness (and not constructed by the mind, as in Kant). What is self-evidentially disclosed in the phenomenological attitude is not an empirical fact, though all empirical observations necessarily presuppose it. The ‘phenomenological fact’ that is given and gives itself to consciousness with evidence, as it is intended and as the thing that is intended to be, thus in such a way that what is intended finds complete fulfilment in the given, is the ‘phenomenon’ or the ‘thing itself’.¹¹

This mystical thing, which presents itself ‘in person’ (Husserl) to the meditating phenomenologist, is pre-logical and pre-discursive. It can be seen through ‘intellectual intuition’ (*Wesensschau*) and is the object of ‘phenomenological experience’ (*Erfahrung*). If one wants to call that empiricism or positivism, fine, provided one does not confound phenomenology with the petty and narrow-minded empiricism of the sensualists. Phenomenology is fieldwork in metaphysics. Like Wittgenstein, our speculative

philosopher intimates that the phenomenon can be shown, though hardly spoken of. As such, it cannot appear in the books that speak of it. The text, the concepts, the definitions that encircle the thing are not the thing itself; they only point to the thing – ‘till the very moment when the tautology indicates: “Here, have a look, then you’ll see it!”’ (X: 392).

The phenomenological acts that constitute and disclose the ‘phenomenological facts of a special kind’ are of a spiritual nature and presuppose a ‘conversion’; the facts that are unconcealed in the ‘phenomenological attitude’ are essences – essences of and essential connections (*Wesenheiten und Wesenszusammenhänge*) between acts, things, persons, etc., that can be disclosed a priori through intellectual intuition.¹² Essential connections can either be of a more logical nature (e.g. the law of non-contradiction) or of a more material nature (e.g. the evident connection between colour and extension). Through the procedure of ‘eidetic variation’, the phenomenologist can get a-prioristic insight into the pure nature of acts, facts and their order of foundation. By successive elimination of the variable complexions in which the phenomenon enters, s/he can, so to say, purify the data till nothing else remains but . . . ‘the phenomenon itself’.

Scheler gives the example of ‘red itself’. Red can designate different things. It can refer to the name of a colour, or to the colour of this thing, or this surface here, or to the colour which I see now, etc. Whatever red is, it appears here as the pure X which remains constant through all the variations. In the phenomenological attitude, ‘red itself’ can be experienced and intuited immediately, intuitively and a priori, as a ‘phenomenological fact’ that is independent of all sensory content. The same observations hold for the disclosure of the essence and the forms of death, shame, humility, faith or repentance, to name a few of the phenomena that our Catholic philosopher has investigated. Scheler does not exclude that the essence of a thing, a person, God or Being itself can be brought to evidence in a single act, as happened according to the legend with the Buddha. The first time he set his eyes on an old, a sick and a dying man, he immediately understood the essence of ageing, sickness and death, and concluded that the essence of life consists in suffering (‘Meditators, I teach the Truth of suffering . . .’).¹³ Scheler even grants that essences can be particular, pertaining only to a single thing, or better – as this is what really interests him as a personalist – to a single person, yet objectively true and grasped with absolute evidence.

If the ideation of the essence is independent from all sensory content and, thus, from all empirical functions through which it is perceived, the sensory data find for their part their foundation in the disclosed essence. Following Husserl, Scheler insists that foundation should not be understood here in temporal terms as if the essence preceded the appearance and caused it, but more in the sense that the essence is teleologically prior to the appearances and determines a priori the form of their succession.

The word foundation [. . .] should not be understood as an order in time – in that case foundation would be confounded with causality – but as the order

in which determined acts are, in accord with their essence, constructed on one another according to their intentional essence and the contents they aim at. (X: 449).

This clarification of the relation of foundation as an intentional relation of succession between the acts and their contents or correlates is important. Later, when we shall be looking at his noetic-noematic analysis of feelings and values, it will allow us to better understand what he means when he says that all cognitive acts are founded in emotional acts, or when he says that the empathic understanding of the other is founded in love.

As phenomenological facts, essences cannot only be grasped independently from all sensory content, but also from all symbols. In this respect, phenomenological facts differ fundamentally from 'natural facts' and 'scientific facts' (X: 377–43), which are 'signitively' and not 'intuitively' given, to speak like Husserl (1993, II(2): 79 et seq., 128 et seq.).¹⁴ Natural facts are given in 'perception' and are relative to the body and its environment. In the natural attitude, things are necessarily perceived from a certain angle (e.g. only the back of the house is seen). Yet, even if the thing is only partially seen, 'apperceived' or 'appresented', as Husserl would say, through its adumbrations, the part is nevertheless spontaneously understood and constituted as a symbol that refers to a unified whole. Scientific facts break with the natural attitude and introduce an 'epistemological rupture' in the order of things. Things are not perceived but methodically 'observed' and systematically 'constructed' as 'facts'. Scientific observations abstract from the bodily determination of natural facts and from the human milieu in which they occur in order to determine objectively what the thing is for any being whatsoever that is endowed with senses. In the scientific attitude, things are constructed as 'scientific facts' that no one has ever seen (e.g. the house as such, seen from all possible angles). As carriers of scientific facts, the observed data are symbols, which receive a particular content only by way of scientific definition and convention. In spite of the solution of continuity that separates natural perception from scientific observation, natural and scientific facts share a common feature: both are symbolic facts that refer to something else that is only mediately given and, thus, necessarily transcendent to consciousness. Phenomenological facts, on the other hand, are immanent to consciousness. Asymbolical, they point to nothing but themselves. Independent both from tradition and convention, phenomenological knowledge is pure and timeless.

As a form of philosophical knowledge, different from ordinary and scientific knowledge, phenomenological knowledge is by essence asymbolical knowledge: It looks at Being, as it is in itself, not as it presents itself as a mere moment of fulfilment for a symbol brought in from without. (X: 412)

The Functionalization of Essences

The essences that the phenomenologist discloses through intellectual intuition and ideation are not the prerogative of the phenomenologist. As they are part of the ‘stock of knowledge at hand’ (Schütz) of every individual, they structure the acts of perception of the everyday world as well. The essences of acts, things, persons, values, etc. that were once intuited by an individual or a group flare up again in practice. They are thus not lost the next moment but, stored in the memory of individuals and collectives, they function thereafter as ‘schemata’ and ‘ideal types’ that spontaneously pre-structure the experiences when the things, persons, values, etc. are encountered once again. Distinguishing the intuition of essences as such from the more ordinary case where the essences are spontaneously applied to ‘schematize’ and ‘categorize’ contingent matters of fact, Scheler calls the latter process the ‘functionalization of the essence of intuitions’.¹⁵

The knowledge of essences is functionalized into the law of mere ‘application’ of the human understanding, which, being directed toward contingent facts, analyses, interprets and judges them as ‘determined’ in accordance with the eidetic context. What was an object before now becomes a form of thinking about the object; what was an object of love turns into a form of love in which an indefinite number of objects can be loved; what was an object of the will becomes the form of willing, etc. (V: 198)

Through the ‘functionalization’ of eidetic knowledge, the original a priori becomes a subjective a priori that functions like a transcendental form in the sense of Kant (i.e. as a subjective form, it underlies our experience). Using the (Wittgensteinian) analogy between picture and frame, we could say that through functionalization of pictures, the picture itself becomes, as it were, a frame that forms the ensuing pictures that one can perceive. The particular function of this form is, however, not that of a connector but of a ‘selector’ (V: 208). The subjective a priori does not construct experience in the positive sense but negates, suppresses and deforms, selecting and retaining of reality only that which is related to, and is in accord with, the pre-given *eidos* or ideal type.

If one thinks the implications of the theory of ‘functionalization’ of eidetic knowledge in categorical forms through till the end, the conclusion can only be that the categories of understanding are not given once and for all, but that they progressively become in and through history. Against Kant, Scheler explicitly draws this historicist conclusion:

We reject, therefore, the notion that there’s a certain fixed, ‘inborn’ functional apparatus of reason. (VIII: 25)

Understood as the totality of all acts, functions and forces, reason grows and decays, ‘becomes’ and ‘unbecomes’ through the functionalization of essential insights that are tied to determined places in the concrete processes of the world, and are only possible there. (V: 203)

Notwithstanding the a-priority, eternity and indestructibility of essential asymbolic knowledge, the possible knowledge of the realm of essences depends, at all times and in all places, upon the contingent facts of the environmental situation of the subject or the group. As knowledge is always necessarily dependent on the socio-historical location of the individual or the group, knowledge of the absolute is always conditioned and, thus, also necessarily conditional and relative. It can very well happen that at certain times in history determined groups are able to gain partial knowledge of the realm of essences, whereas other groups at the same time, or the same group at another time, are not. In truly oecumenical spirit, Scheler launches a call for universal cooperation of all coexisting individuals and groups, as well as of all preceding ones that belong to certain cultural traditions, in order to unify and complete the knowledge of all possible essences: 'It is of the essence of reason and knowledge themselves that complete knowledge of the world of essences can only be obtained through the cooperation of humanity in all the highest activities of the mind' (V: 202, see also IX: 145–70).

Even if Scheler clearly recognizes that the knowledge of essences is always existentially conditioned by history and society, and thus necessarily relative, he will nevertheless remain convinced till the end that phenomenological knowledge is asymbolical and that it can reveal, with evidential insight, essential contents that transcend all possible contexts of determination and are thus absolute. Even if the theory of the 'functionalization' of essences points to a radical historicization of the essences, Scheler still restricts the relativization to the discovery of the essences and exempts the essences themselves from any existential determination. The essences themselves are supposed to be unaffected by culture, history and society. This tension between his absolutism and his relativism reveals a deeper tension between his ontology and his sociology. Although I cannot explore the issue here, I would like to indicate that a functional sociology of essences would have to humanize, historicize and relativize the absolute. Dissolved into history and society, the essences would be diluted and, like God, they would eventually be understood not only as a human construct but also and more importantly as an assignment.¹⁶

Although I tend to agree with Husserl that the mind is capable of grasping essences through eidetic variation and would not like to question the possibility of eidetic sciences as such that precede and found empirical sciences, sociology included, I think, however, that Scheler's 'cinema' of essences is rather problematic. First, like Lewis Coser (1961: 13), I am not entirely convinced that our phenomenologist has not confused 'real experience' in the sphere of essences with 'experiences of something real'. In an early article on 'The Idols of Self-Knowledge', Scheler himself recognizes the existence of illusions of evidence: a subject can erroneously think that he or she has evidence where there's none; something can be intuitively 'given' which is not there (III: 216). But having seen the thing itself, he never doubted that his essences could, in fact, very well be subjective

phenomena. Second, for those of us who have taken the ‘linguistic turn’, be it with Wittgenstein, Gadamer, Ricoeur or Habermas, his theory of asymbolic knowledge seems rather unconvincing. For the others, who have followed the lead of Heidegger’s destruction and Derrida’s deconstruction of the metaphysics of presence, the idea that intellectual intuition can ‘presentify’ the thing itself without any sign-substitutions seems rather implausible. Finally, we could ask if Scheler’s phenomenology is really ‘without presuppositions’. Is it not steeped in a particular tradition of thought? Has he not smuggled some doctrinal content into his procedure of intellectual intuition? That this is the case and that his phenomenology is not as pure and untainted as he claims, but that it rather represents a kind of Christian phenomenology (a *contradictio in terminis*, as far as I am concerned) that is heavily indebted to St Augustine and Pascal, that is what I want to show now by presenting the intuition of essences as a ‘revelation’ (*Offenbarung*).

Love’s Knowledge

The Primacy of Love

Unlike Husserl’s transcendental phenomenology, which slides back into idealism, Scheler’s existential phenomenology has a strong ontological (realist and objectivist) ring to it. The essences are *there* and do not need the constituting activities of the transcendental Ego to exist. Being precedes and grounds knowledge; knowledge is steeped in Life and partakes in Being. Phenomenological knowledge is receptive and participative, not constructive, as in Kant, nor manipulative, as in Peirce. The ‘phenomenon’ is perceived, intuited and received with evident in-sight as ‘self-given’. The phenomenological attitude is a mimetic one of ‘loving attunement’ and ‘surrender’ in which the ‘phenomenon’ discloses and reveals itself in its truth as what it *is*.¹⁷ Transforming the noetic-noematic principle of phenomenology that stipulates a necessary relation between the intentional acts and their meaning into an ontological principle that connects the spirit with the world (X: 396), Scheler conceives of knowledge as an ontological relation of ‘participation’ in which a Being transcends itself to participate in the self-evident ‘whatness’ or ‘quiddity’ of another Being. This self-transcendence in which a Being opens itself towards another Being in order to partake in its Being is what is called Love.¹⁸

Love is essentially an ascending relation that lightens up things and persons alike so that the highest value that is compatible with their nature is revealed and shines through.¹⁹ This higher value towards which love is oriented and to which it ascends is not given but is disclosed and revealed in the ascent itself.²⁰ It emerges ‘like an island out of the sea of being’ (X: 357). In the eye of love, all beings are lovely and valuable. Disclosing the world and opening it thereby up to perception, volition and judgement, love is the ‘primal act’ (*Urakt*) on which all other acts are ultimately founded (X: 357). As ‘the objects that are presented to the senses and judged by reason first manifest themselves in proceedings and processes of love’ (VI: 77), love

grounds reason and precedes knowledge like a scout. ‘Everywhere, the lover precedes the knower’ (V: 81). Somewhat pathetically, our epistemologist says that ‘love is always the one that awakens knowledge and willing – yes, she is the mother of the spirit and of reason itself’ (X: 356).

Without love and without passion, there’s no perception, no volition, no cognition, and thus no world either. For a phenomenology of perception, the primacy of love over knowledge has important implications. Even before the object is perceived, it is valued; one could even go further and say that the object is perceived because and as it is valued. In any case, emotions constitute and structure the world as a world that is imbued with values.

Correcting the cognitivist bias that characterizes the phenomenology of perception from Husserl to Merleau-Ponty and Waldenfels, Scheler rightly insists that ‘*Wertnehmung* precedes *Wahrnehmung* in the order of the foundation of the given’ (VII: 41). As the perception of values always already precedes and structures the field of *Wahrnehmung*, literally, the perception of the truth, we can say that true perception is grounded in love. But if that is the case, then it also follows that the Weberian doctrine of value-freedom is ill conceived. If natural perception is always necessarily and inevitably value-laden, then it does not make sense to ground the plea for axiological neutrality in the claim that values are arbitrarily superimposed on facts. Science breaks (and breaks with) natural perception. Instead of taking the world as it finds it, it abstracts from emotions and values and ‘disaffects’ perception only to replace it by impassionate observation. Having stripped the world of all its value-predicates, it forgets the abstraction that presides over it, bans all valuations and posits the value-indifferent remainder of things as nature that is originally given in perception. Following Axel Honneth’s (2005) recent attempt to reformulate the theory of reification in terms of a theory of recognition, we could say that reification occurs when we systematically forget to acknowledge that our knowledge of the world is grounded in love and care. Cognition always already presupposes recognition of, and participation in, the world, not as a world of mere things, but as a world of values that is intentionally disclosed by the emotions.

If love is a form of positive and affirmative thinking that encounters the world each time anew with the ‘wide-eyed gaze of wonder’ as if it were the first time, its opposite, hatred, is a form of negative and critical thinking that seeks to construct and control the world. Instead of naively facing the world ‘with the outstretched gesture of the open hand’ (III: 325), it approaches the world like a gardener who considers the wild plants on his plot ‘as an enemy’ that needs to be weeded out. ‘In the garden of reason, sentiments are weeds’ (Bauman, 1995: 54).²¹ Building further on Hume’s empiricist conception of the world as a ‘buzzing and booming’ disorderly manifold of sense data that must be ordered through the intervention of reason, Kant has rationalized his dread of contingency and his hatred of the world, according to Scheler, in a philosophy that epitomizes the modern will to control it: “‘The world without and nature within’ – this is Kant’s attitude towards the world’ (II: 86). Nature, human nature included, represents chaos

for Kant, and as chaos is threatening the order of nature, nature has to be formed, organized, transformed and dominated, if necessary by force. Nature without and nature within cannot be trusted, nor can one trust one's fellows; and given that they cannot be trusted, they have to be controlled: 'In short, just as Humean nature needed Kantian pure reason to exist, the Hobbesian man needed Kantian practical reason to recover the facts of the natural attitude' (II: 85). Animated by fear of the unknown and fright in the face of the unpredictable, the critical intellect wants to control, regulate and dominate what escapes control. Paraphrasing Scheler and Bergson or Klages, we could say with Adorno and Horkheimer (1981: 32) that 'the Enlightenment is mythic fear turned radical' and that positivist science, its ultimate product, is no more than a 'universal taboo'.

Organizing and systematizing the world so as to control, steer and dominate it, the practical knowledge that the positive sciences produce is animated by a pragmatic interest that is systematically geared towards the domination of nature (and, by extension, also society). Linking explicitly the positive sciences to domination and control, Scheler calls scientific knowledge *Herrschafts- und Leistungswissen*, and he opposes it both to metaphysical knowledge, which seeks to grasp essences and is oriented to wisdom (*Wesen- und Bildungswissen*), and to religious knowledge, which is oriented to the absolute and aims to dispense personal salvation (*Heils- und Erlösungswissen*).²² Although the intuition of essences is seemingly linked to metaphysics, and thus to wisdom, a second look at love's knowledge will suffice, however, to show that his distinction between philosophy and religion is far from watertight. As his metaphysics are, in fact, intimately tied to religion, his phenomenological intuition of essences is – 'like a good girl' (V: 13) – put at the service of the knowledge of salvation.

Revealing the World as a Gift

Thanks to love, the object is 'unconcealed' and the world 'reveals' itself, presents itself, gives itself to its humble admirer. Love is humble and 'reveals' the world as a world in which nothing is deserved, but everything is given, presumably by the good God.²³ *Revelation*, the word has fallen and it is not without theological implications. In *Liebe and Erkenntnis* (VI: 77–98), Scheler presents a quick overview of the relations between love and knowledge, from the *Mahābhārata* to Plato's *Banquet*, and from Augustine to Pascal. His discussion of St Augustine is particularly interesting and allows us to better understand the religious nature of his 'epistemology of the open hand'. Better than anyone else before him, Augustine understood the primacy of love. He showed that it is only if the mind takes 'interest into' something and addresses the thing with love that it can grasp it. Without 'interest for' and 'love towards' the thing, no sensation, no representation, let alone judgement of any thing, is possible. Love is productive and, thanks to love, the thing comes into full existence and our vision of the world is enlarged and deepened. As the world was created by God in an act of infinite love, it now turns out that the love that reveals reality to God's

creatures should, in fact, be understood as an answer and a response to the act of creative love out of which everything and everyone emerges. Paraphrasing Marcel Mauss's classic analysis of the triple obligation of the gift – 'giving, accepting and returning the gift' – we could say that love is always a form of 'counter-love' in which the object 'gives' itself:

[Love is] not just an activity of the knowing subject that penetrates into the ready given object. It is at the same time an answer of the object itself: a 'giving', an 'opening' and an 'opening up' of the object itself, i.e. a genuine revelation of the object. It is a 'questioning' of 'love' to which the world 'answers', in which it opens itself and comes thereby itself into full being and value. In this way, the concept of 'natural revelation' joins up with the positive religious revelation of Christ. This 'natural revelation' is in the last instance also a revelation of a God who is determined in essence by eternal love. Thus, the Augustinian system of thoughts concerning love and knowledge comes to closure with wonderful effect. (VI: 91)

The love towards all things that characterizes the epistemic attitude translates and expresses thus a religious consciousness of the origin of all things in the grace of God. If the theory of divine love and counter-love is most purely formulated in St Augustine, the practice that corresponds to it has found its most illustrious application in the life of Francis of Assisi, as described in the *Fiorituri*. In a few truly wonderful pages, Scheler (VII: 97–103) gives an unsurpassed account of St Francis's *agape*.²⁴ In each of the creatures he encounters, his loving soul discovers the invisible hand of the unbounded love of the Father. Extending the love that the faithful Christian addresses to the Father, as it were in return for his divine love, to the whole universe, Francis addresses all creatures – the moon and the sun, the earth and the sky, the plants, the animals and all his fellow human beings – as 'brothers' and 'sisters'. Universalizing the love of God, 'the troubadour of God' embraces the divine presence in each and every one of his creatures. He so intensively loves the world 'with God and in God' that, eventually, the whole cosmos is bathing in the supernatural light of divine love, while the love of God becomes more earthly as it penetrates, incorporates and rejuvenates nature. In a masterly turn, Scheler interprets the acosmic love of St Francis as a 'functionalization' of the idea of earthly love (*eros*), which, applied to nature, becomes thoroughly spiritualized at the same time as the idea of spiritual love (*agape*) becomes eroticized in turn.²⁵

Love and Peace

Now that the affinities between the phenomenological and the religious attitude clearly come to the fore, the mystery of the 'thing itself' can be pierced. The 'phenomenological experience' in which the phenomenon reveals itself in all its glory to the meditative and contemplating phenomenologist is, ultimately, a religious experience.²⁶ The difficulty of phenomenological prose can hardly conceal that our Catholic philosopher has forged a 'holy alliance' between phenomenology and theology. This

sacralization of phenomenology renders his Catholic phenomenology ‘slightly suspect, because engaged’ (Dupuy, 1959, I: 107).²⁷ By transforming the *Wesensschau* into an epiphany of God, Scheler has, willingly and knowingly, used phenomenology as the willing handmaiden of theology. Confusing the *noumenon* with the *numen* and the *eidos* with the *eidolon*, he has projected his religious beliefs into phenomenology and reduced phenomenology to a kind of applied research into theology. As a result, his phenomenology is neither pure, nor without presuppositions. In his embattled struggle against the intellectualism of neo-Thomist philosophy, he has provided a phenomenological gloss of St Augustine and a theological one of Husserl and Bergson.²⁸ That this move has allowed him to divest theology from its intellectualism and to liberate phenomenology from its cognitivism is certainly to his credit. Continuously transgressing the frontier that separates phenomenology from religion and metaphysics, Scheler has, however, not respected the limits of the phenomenological method. If a phenomenology of religion makes sense and deserves to be pursued alongside a phenomenology of values and beliefs, a ‘religious phenomenology’ is a non-starter. By giving phenomenology a religious twist, Scheler has used and abused phenomenology to promote a particular *Weltanschauung*.

This irreligious critique of Scheler’s lovely epistemology is not meant to detract from the important contributions he made to epistemology. The idea that the knower should be ‘humble’ and knowledge ‘mimetic’, that it should partake in the concreteness of the object of knowledge and respect it as it is rather than excise the incommensurable to force it into the conceptual mold of abstract identity-thinking, has been formulated before by Theodor W. Adorno (cf. Vandenberghe, 1997–8, II: 73–7). What Scheler calls Love, Adorno calls Peace. In a central passage of his *Aesthetic Theory*, he defines it as ‘the non-violent synthesis of scattered elements that maintains and conserves them as they are with their differences and their contradictions’ (Adorno, 1970: 216). As an intuitive mode of knowledge, in which the object is not subsumed under the general concept, as happens with science, but contemplated in such a way that the particularities spontaneously enter into a non-conceptual constellation that messianically reveals the object from the point of view of redemption, Peace is not only a utopian mode of knowing, but also and at the same time a mode of knowledge that reveals utopia. Although the ethical implications of the situation of Peace are evident, the fact remains that Adorno conceived of the ideal epistemic relation between the subject and the object first and foremost as an aesthetic relation, and not as an ethical one.

Scheler has conceptualized the epistemic relation as an ethical one, but to the extent that his ethics is overdetermined by faith, the relation between the subject and its object remains ambiguous. We know that the subject and the object are related to each other through relations of ‘participation’ in a self-perpetuating acosmic cycle of love and counter-love in which the object ‘gives itself’ in return to the subject that contemplates it

and approaches it with due respect and love. In this cycle of reciprocity, the subject and the object continuously exchange positions, with the result that the subject position remains always ambiguous: is it nature, a human being, or is it perhaps God who addresses his love to each and every one of his creatures? As in Rosenzweig, Buber and Levinas, his Jewish counterparts, the identity is shifting. Now it's the other, then it's the Other, then again it's all possible creatures as they are contemplated *sub specie divinitatis*.

Adopting a humanist perspective, I think that the ethical intuitions of our 'Catholic Buber' can be redeemed, provided that they are consistently translated in secular terms. Taking up some of Adorno's aesthetic intuitions, Jürgen Habermas has not only reformulated them in the language of intersubjective communication as a form of 'intact intersubjectivity that is only established and maintained in the reciprocity of mutual understanding based on free recognition' (Habermas, 1984, I: 390), but by doing so he has also unwittingly recovered some of Scheler's ethical intuitions, while divesting them of their religious overtones. Passing from an epistemology of nature that does not properly distinguish between the subject and the object, but conceives ideally of all possible relations of knowledge as mimetic relations of communication between a subject and a quasi-subject, I now turn to the human sciences and Scheler's phenomenology of intersubjectivity.

II. The Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

The Original Position

One can be in good company with oneself, but, strictly speaking, one cannot be in interaction or form a society with oneself. To form a society, it takes at least two – me and you, *Ich und Du* (Buber, 1979). Interaction, not action, is the basic unit of sociology. As long as I am not sure that I am not alone in the world and that you're not a mere figment of my imagination, there can be no sociology. From a philosophical point of view, the problem of solipsism constitutes the fundamental 'metasociological' problem that has to be solved if sociology is to exist as an autonomous discipline. Although the problem of solipsism has always already found a solution in everyday life and can only appear as a far fetched and ridiculous question to the ordinary person – pinch in the arm, punch on the nose! – the answer to the question of how I can possibly get access to other minds and souls is, literally, fundamental for sociology – it philosophically founds sociology.

In the last part of his famous book on sympathy (VII: 209–58), Scheler tackles the question of 'the other' head on.²⁹ Going against the grain of all forms of individualism and contractualism, he affirms the priority of the other and the community over the self. In order to demonstrate that the existence of the other and of the community is always already given as an indubitable fact of consciousness, Scheler (VII: 228–32; see also V: 511) starts with an experiment of thought – let's call it the 'Robinson Crusoe experiment', and let's place that solitary islander in some kind of 'original position' à la Rawls. Even if Robinson Crusoe has never encountered in his

life a being of his own kind, on the grounds of certain acts of reciprocity that are essentially social acts, such as those of love and hate, sympathy and fellow-feeling, responsibility and duty, and also presumably, though Scheler doesn't explicitly mention them, giving and returning the gift, he would nevertheless know for sure that somewhere and somehow a 'Thou' exists as a counterfactual member of a social community.³⁰ The mere fact that those essentially social acts cannot find any actual fulfilment does not contradict the intuited a priori of communality. To the contrary, the experienced lack of fulfilment, and the felt absence of the other who does not reciprocate and answer to his acts, suffices to establish the 'most positive intuition and idea of the presence of something like a sphere of the Thou – of which he only happens to know no exemplar' (VII: 230). Speaking like Heidegger, we could say that the *Dasein* of our lonely Being is, by definition, a *Mitsein*.³¹

Empathy and Intersubjectivity

The experienced absence of 'the other' not only establishes the counterfactual existence of the other as a fact of consciousness, it also shows that other minds and souls can be given regardless of any physical presence. Criticizing the commonly accepted psychological theories of his time that hold that 'the other' is given in terms of 'associations', 'assimilations', 'analogical inferences', 'transfers' and 'empathy' of one's own ego 'into' that of others, Scheler indicts those theories for seriously 'underestimating the difficulties of self-perception and overestimating the difficulties of the perception of the other' (VII: 245).³² Arguing that we first experience a stream of undifferentiated intersubjective thoughts and feelings, which contains indiscriminately our own feelings and thoughts as well as those of others, our phenomenologist seeks to refute two fallacious assumptions of those theories: first, the supposition that the experience of the self is primary and, second, the assumption that the other is first given to us through bodily appearances and that, through a whole series of spontaneous inferences, we conclude that the other is an *alter ego* and, thus, someone like us. Like Theodor Lipps and Husserl, Scheler thinks that the notion of empathy (*Einfühlung*) has a central role to play in the establishment of intersubjectivity. Against Husserl, however, whose *Cartesian Meditations* were first published in 1931, three years after Scheler's death, he affirms the priority of an undifferentiated trans-subjective stream of anonymous thought and rejects the egological assumption that a 'transcendental intersubjectivity' could account for the other as being constituted in such an ego.³³

Scheler starts from the common experience that often we think thoughts and feel feelings whose origins are rather obscure.³⁴ Is this feeling really mine, or am I perhaps feeling the feeling of and with someone else? Is the thought that you are reading mine, thine or Scheler's? Even before we think our thoughts or those of the others, even before we feel our feelings or those of others, we experience an infra-individual and trans-subjective stream of anonymous thoughts and feelings that, like an archaic murmuring that comes from the depths of life itself, is indifferent in respect to the

distinction between mine and thine. Drawing on child psychology and ethnology, Scheler argues that the ‘outdifferentiation’ of the infra-individual ‘I’ from the collective ‘We’ that suffuses it, and the concomitant ‘decentration’ (Piaget) of the self, are secondary phenomena that emerge only later in life or history when the individual is able to distance him- or herself from the group and have their own thoughts and feelings. As he says in a rather clumsy passage:

At first, the human being lives more in the other than in itself; more in the community than in its own individual self. [. . .] Ecstatically lost and hypnotized as it were by the ideas and the feelings of its concrete surroundings, the only experiences which succeed in crossing the threshold of his inner awareness are those that fit in the sociologically determined schemata that form a kind of bedding of the psychic stream that forms its psychic environment. Only very slowly does the child lift its own spiritual head out of those fleeting streams that traverse it and discovers itself as a being that has, at times, its own feelings, ideas and strivings. This, however, only happens to the extent that the child objectifies the experiences of its surroundings ‘in’ which it at first lives and co-experiences them ‘with’ others, and achieves thereby ‘detachment’ from them. (VII: 241)

‘No I without a We, and the We genetically always precedes the I’ (VIII: 53). Being at first a ‘dividual’ (Deleuze) that does not make a distinction between inner and outer experience, and empathizes, feels, thinks, strives and wills indiscriminately ‘in’ and ‘with’ the others, the human being only becomes a proper ‘individual’ with feelings, thoughts, strivings and volitions of its own as it is able to distinguish between inner and outer, mine and thine. This emergence of an individual self out of the primal unity of communal life is accomplished when the distinction between the ‘self’ and the ‘other’ is finally acquired. As the sphere of ‘ownness’ only emerges out of indistinction at the same time as ‘otherness’ comes to clear consciousness, those individualist theories of empathy, like Husserl’s, for instance, that seek to found social life in the apodicticity of a constituting ego do not see that the ego itself is, in fact, founded in the community and that all social life ultimately finds its ground in the primacy of the community. Privileging the cold feelings of empathy and sympathy over the heat of effervescent fusion, such theories do not see that fellow-feeling (*Einfühlung*) necessarily presupposes the emotive identification with the community (*Einsfühlung*) as its material condition of possibility.³⁵

As to the body, according to Scheler, it does not play the mediating role in the perception of the other that is usually ascribed to it either. When I apperceive the body of the other, I immediately experience the other as an *alter ego*. I do not see his or her body as a material body (*Körper*) and arrive then, somehow, through spontaneous ‘pairing’ or ‘copulation’ (Husserl) of my living body with his or her material body over there, to the insight that s/he’s a living being like me. No, in fact I do not see the body as such, but I immediately perceive a concrete totality (or *Gestalt*) that

encompasses both body and inner feelings. Of course, I do not and cannot feel how the other experiences his body. I cannot feel his toothache, as Wittgenstein rightly observed, but when I see him grinding his teeth I immediately feel and understand his rage, and when I notice the tears or the smile on her face, without any empathy and without any inference by analogy, I directly perceive her sorrow or her joy. It is only if I distrust or misunderstand the other, or suspect that s/he's insane, that empathic understanding breaks down and that I start to seek a causal explanation for the behaviour of my fellow. Conversely, if after another sleepless night I am so tired that my self spreads, as it were, through my body, I cannot reach out to the other. Completely knackered, I am thrown back on my self and become a 'momentary solipsist' (VII: 253). Scheler concludes from all this that it is only when we leave the vital sphere of the sensuous body to reach out to the spiritual sphere of the person that we can directly gain experience of the other.

Stairway to Heaven

The regressive tendencies towards the archaic that mark Scheler's phenomenology of intersubjectivity and community are undeniable, but they are partly compensated (or should I perhaps say exacerbated?) by an ascending tendency toward the spiritual realm. Although one feels that our philosopher is torn between the irrationalism of life and the serenity of contemplation, he nevertheless tries the impossible: to combine a vitalist and, ultimately, pagan and pantheist conception of cosmic unity with a theist vision of a personal God. Through a progressive 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*) of the metaphysics of life by the metaphysics of the spirit, the chasm between Life and Spirit is dialectically overcome, so that, at the end, the *arche* and the *telos* are, seemingly, joined once again. *Les extrêmes se touchent*.

In an attempt to re-evaluate both the vitalist theories of emotive identification (Bergson) and the spiritualist theories of divine love (St Augustine), while devaluing the theories of empathy and sympathy (Adam Smith, Ferguson, Hutcheson) that privilege fellow-feelings over effervescent fusion and mystical union, Scheler hierarchically orders the whole gamut of feelings in such a way that the vital, almost animal feelings of immediacy and unity (*Einsföhlung*) with and in the other only form the starting point of an ascending onto-theo-teleological stairway (Augustine's *ascensus*) that leads, via the protracted plateau of the psychic feelings of empathy and sympathy (*Einföhlung*), to spiritual love of the other in and with God. From the depths of animal life, via the self-consciousness of the Ego, the stairway leads almost straight to Heaven:

In the series of forms of sympathy and sorts of love, the cosmic-vital feeling of oneness and the acosmic love of the person, grounded in the love of God, stand thus at opposite poles. All the other forms of the series lie between them like the stairs of a case. The one who would like to climb up the stairs will fall when he wants to take the second step before the first one. (VII: 137)

At the lowest level, the vital feeling of ‘mimetic unity’ (Adorno) and ‘cosmic sympathy’ (Bergson) with all living beings (humans, animals, plants and even minerals) is grounded in instinct and is constitutive of all living beings. The feeling of ecstatic oneness whereby one psychic being automatically identifies itself and vibrates in unison with another can be found in primitive thinking, religious mystery cults, dreaming, hypnosis, good sex and, paradigmatically, also in the symbiotic relation between mother and child. Allegedly, it even occurs in animals (e.g. the spider that anesthetizes its prey without killing it, in order to lay its eggs in it). Unlike empathy and love, the experience of unspecified unity is non-intentional. It presupposes that both the middle sphere of the psychic functions and the higher sphere of the spiritual acts are deactivated. Nostalgically, Scheler claims that modern civilizations have become so rational and intellectual that they have almost lost the capacity to feel the depths of cosmo-vital unity. ‘Development’, he laments, ‘is never sheer progress, but always also decadence’ (VII: 43). Although I really don’t share Scheler’s reactionary anti-modernism, I think, however, that his spirited call for a ‘re-(or retro-)sublimation’ of the West (IX: 155–8), in fact a desublimation that releases and reinstates the force of vital values against the predominance of the intellect, might have a point. The extinction of the instinct of cosmo-vital sympathy is indeed a loss, not only because emotive identification is at the root of all higher forms of emotional life, but also because the mimetic capacity to identify and feel at one with nature can temper and limit the *hubris* of the human species. In spite of its latent misanthropy and its manifest irrationalism, this is, no doubt, the truth of ‘deep ecology’. In the absence of cosmo-vital sympathy, nature is reduced to a ‘standing reserve’ of dead material that can be exploited and dominated at will. In an attempt to revitalize the romantic undercurrents of the philosophy of nature, from St Francis to Goethe and Novalis, Scheler (VII: 112–13) consequently pleads for a pedagogy of nature that would teach modern men and women once again, through ‘in-tuition’ of the internal teacher as it were, how to experience cosmo-vital unity.

Moving up a step on the stairway of feelings, we arrive at the protracted plateau of moral sentiments of benevolence and fellow-feeling that are at the centre of the ‘ethics of sympathy’ (see Vetlesen, 1994) – from the Cambridge Platonists and the Scottish moralists (Hume, Hutcheson, but above all the Adam Smith of *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*) to Rousseau, Schopenhauer, John Rawls, Anne Rawls and Carol Gilligan. Scheler deals at length and in detail with the different theories of sympathy, but one senses that he does not really sympathize with them. His heart is elsewhere. Distinguishing between psychological ‘functions’ that are accomplished by the empirical ego and spiritual ‘acts’ that belong to the Person, the hidden mystical kernel that shines through in the acts, but cannot be observed and objectivated as such,³⁶ he conceives of sympathy as a mere function of the Ego and lumps it together with the other functions, such as seeing, hearing, tasting, etc., that imply the body. What love is to Kant, sympathy is to Scheler, to wit a ‘pathological affectation of the senses’. Too psychological

and ‘too human, all too human’ for his taste, too closely linked to the Ego-functions of the psyche, they also smack of humanism and its degenerate form, humanitarianism, which substitutes the abstract love of mankind for the concrete love of God. For Scheler, the humane feelings of sympathy can only serve as a transitory stage or a passage between the cosmo-vital and the spiritual realm that links the beasts to God.³⁷ This intermediary position explains perhaps why he can say, without contradiction, that sympathy is founded at the same time in cosmo-vital sympathy (VII: 105–6) and in divine love (VII: 147). Grounded in the instinct of panentheistic unity, it is onto-teleologically founded in divine love to the extent that it aspires to, and is aspired by, the mystic reunion with God, the Person of Persons. The implication of this order of foundation is that sympathy can only exist in so far as love already exists and elevates sympathy to a higher spiritual plane.³⁸

Compared with the cosmo-vital feelings of unity, the psychic feelings of sympathy are more indirect, more conscious and more reflexive. Founded in emotive identification, but clearly distinct from it, sympathy can be considered as its adult form: ‘*Einfühlung* is for the adult what *Einsfühlung* is for the child’ (VII: 35). What adults feel when they sympathize with the joy or the grief of their fellows is the joy or the grief of the concrete other; unlike children, they understand, but do not necessarily grieve or rejoice with the other. What remains of *Einsfühlung* at a stage of further development is *Nachfühlung* (VII: 107), the reproductive capacity of the observer to grasp and understand the emotional life of the other that conditions all possible forms of empathy and sympathy, from joint feeling and fellow-feeling to pity.

Joint feeling (*Mit-einanderfühlen*) occurs when two persons actually feel the same feeling, but do not intentionally share it. Scheler gives the example of grief-ridden parents standing side by side in front of their deceased, beloved only child. Fellow-feeling (*Mitgefühl*) differs phenomenologically from joint feeling in that the feeling of the other is now the intentional object of the feeling. Fellow-feeling occurs when a friend of the parents that are conjoined in grief sympathizes with them and vicariously feels their grief in order to share it with them. The torturer who intentionally feels with his victim in order to maximize the infliction of pain offers another, more perverse example of fellow-feeling. Pity or compassion (*Mitleid*) is a mixed type in which suffering is reproduced and shared with the other in order to alleviate it. In a devious analysis of Schopenhauer’s theory of pity, Scheler accuses the latter of cruelty: only seeking solace for his own suffering, his sharing in the suffering of the other does not so much aim to alleviate as to increase general suffering, so that, convinced that life is suffering without end, he can accept it with resignation.

The Epiphany of the Other

Although Scheler reluctantly recognizes the ethical value of ‘genuine sympathy’, he nevertheless makes it clear that if sympathy is to be more than a mere ‘feeling with’, it has to be embedded in, and sublated by, love. The

fact that we can very well sympathize with someone we don't love, while it is excluded that we don't sympathize with the one we love, shows the superficiality of moral sentiments that are based on the mere reproduction of the emotions of the other. 'We can only feel in depth with the other to the extent that we love' (VII: 147–8); and to the extent that we love the other, we also love him or her as a unique, exceptional and irreplaceable Person. Unlike sympathy, which is always directed to the other in so far as he or she is like me, love never reduces alterity to identity, but always recognizes and reveals the other as someone who is essentially different and unspeakably other.³⁹ Love thus has nothing whatsoever to do with the idiopathic identification whereby one loses oneself in the other and becomes one with him or her. To the contrary, in and through love, two persons encounter and discover one another – and, presumably, also themselves through the other – as intimate others and, perhaps, even as 'intimate strangers', to borrow a felicitous phrase of Zygmunt Bauman. Moreover, unlike sympathy, which is always directed towards the empirical other, love addresses the 'ideal other', that is the other as s/he could be if s/he realized his or her entire potential and accomplished his or her destiny:

'Become (empirically) what you are according to your individual essence', that is what the acosmic love of the person says to each person, and in the act of its movement, it projects at the same time a particular destination – and not a generally valid one – as an 'Ideal' that only belongs to this person. (VII: 136)

Paraphrasing Nietzsche, Scheler has given an ironic twist to Pindar's Pythian injunction to authenticity ('Become what thou art'). The destiny that properly belongs to each individual is the one that God has foreseen, for all eternity, for each and every one of us. Properly conceived, His plan represents our individual 'calling' (X, 351). Just as we can know and realize it, we can also ignore it, and fail to realize it. It's up to us, and to the others who love us. As they often know our most individual destiny better than we do ourselves, they can help us to see and to become who we really are. They are co-responsible for us as we are for them. If we really love the other, we see him or her as God, with his unlimited love, sees each and everyone of his creatures. And given that God is the only one who completely knows the other as s/he is, human love always has to pass through God and accomplish the act of love with Him to reach the other. 'The acosmic love of the person is not thinkable and cannot be upheld without this theistic presupposition' (VII: 136). But if that's the case, then *Verstehen* is, by implication, always a kind of biblical hermeneutics. When I love the other and say 'You' to him, the Other lights up in the face of the other and reveals the other as God's child. To understand the other as a Person, I have to grasp his innermost core and get access to his heart. When I understand his heart, I see and see through the Person. I grasp the quintessence of his being and attain, as Scheler says, his order of love.⁴⁰

Whoever has the *ordo amoris* of man, has man himself. He has for man as a moral subject what the crystallization formula is for crystal. He sees through him as far as one possibly can. He sees before him the constantly simple and basic lines of his heart (*Gemüt*) running beneath all empirical many-sidedness and complexity. And heart deserves to be called the core of man as a spiritual being much more so than knowing and willing. He has a spiritual model of the primary source which secretly nourishes everything issuing forth from this man. Even more, he possesses the primary determinant of what always keeps on settling itself around him: in space, his moral milieu; in time, his fate; that is, to become the quintessence of what possibly can happen to him and *to him alone*. (X: 348)

To get access to the heart of the other and his order of love, I have to accomplish the acts with him or her. I have to love what she loves and love it with her. Then and only then, the personal core of the other is unconcealed and the other is revealed as that incomparable Person that is essentially different from me. This personal core cannot be reached through induction. The person *qua* person cannot be objectivated or understood through observation; they can only be disclosed through understanding that is based in love and, ultimately, through the co-accomplishment of the acts of love. But like God, the other can also decide to conceal her acts, or to remain silent. A person can only be known if she decides to let herself be known and to give herself to the other in return for his love. Moreover, in and through love, we discover the absolute intimate self of the other and, thus, presumably, also the limits of human understanding. Only God can see adequately and fully through the heart of the person. To us humans, the absolute intimate Person of the other has to remain ‘essentially transintelligible’ (VII: 77) and ‘eternally transcendent’ (II: 556). The Person of the other does not appear. It is not a phenomenon; it is an epiphany.

Towards a Mundane Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity

Where does that leave us? In Husserl, the other is always reduced to a version of myself. S/he is, literally, an *alter ego*, someone like me, whose alterity necessarily escapes me. Conversely, in Scheler, the other is uplifted to the face of God. S/he is literally an *alter ego* who’s so unlike me that I cannot possibly grasp her identity. Between the other as oneself and the self as another, common understanding has to steer its course between identity and alterity (Ricoeur, 1990: 367–93). Perhaps our understanding of the other will improve when we accept and assert our common humanity. I would like to suggest, in conclusion, that we abandon the hegemony of the I and the supremacy of the Other. When the human being is no longer conceived as a ‘rope between the infra- and the superhuman’, but as a human and, therefore, as a social being that reaches out to the other human being, understanding is properly understood as a process and an assignment (without metaphysical props or religious guarantees). Every attempt to understand the other is fallible, but language is the medium whereas communication is the mediation that spans the gap between I and Thou. Between the exaltation

of God and the humiliation of Man, communication intervenes as the agent of humanization. Communication is not a communion with the other through God, or vice versa. It presupposes conflict and misunderstanding and can be conceived as a reflexive, though fallible, attempt to overcome those through the construction of a common world that mediates the relations between persons, providing thereby a 'bridge from individual to individual' (Cassirer, 1973: 264). Between us, no God should intervene. In a post-metaphysical age like ours, the absolute spirit descends from the cross and, de-transcendentalized, it converts into objective spirit and becomes culture. It is only if we accept to reach out to the other and conceive of communication as a mundane attempt to explore our commonalities and overcome our differences that we can come to understand the constitution of a 'We'. In the process of constitution, in fact, a reactivation of culture through language, both I and You are transformed. Understanding is receptive to the other and, in the same breath as it were, it is productive of the other and myself. I and the other are not givens, but together, through communication, we create a common world that is constitutive of who we are. Between I and You, not He, but We intervene as authors, narrators and translators of our own life. Spinning the webs of meaning that connect us, culture is the third term that mediates and performs the relation from person to person. But culture is an eminently human product: produced by humans, it is reproduced and transformed by humans in and through communication. Phenomenological understanding is only possible on a hermeneutic basis, as Ricoeur (1986) has shown, but nowadays, hermeneutics has to emancipate itself from biblical interpretations, whereas phenomenology has to renounce the transcendental as well as the transcendent in order to become purely mundane.

Notes

Earlier versions of this text were presented at the mid-term conference of the research committee on sociological theory of the ISA in Rio de Janeiro in 2004, and at the workshop of the Center for Cultural Sociology at Yale University in 2005. I would like to thank Jeffrey Alexander, Don Levine, Elisa Reis, Mauricio Domingues, Cynthia Hamlin, Bernd Giesen, Ron Eyerman and Fernando Suárez Müller for discussions and encouragement.

1. In spite of his contributions in the field of the sociology of knowledge, Scheler is more of a philosopher than a sociologist. Although his name sometimes figures amongst the 'classics' of sociological thought, Scheler does not belong to the canon. Among the few practising sociologists who have intensively studied his work, we can mention Albion Small, Wilhelm Jerusalem, Karl Mannheim, Georges Gurwitsch, Alfred Schütz, Peter Berger, Robert K. Merton, Kurt Wolff, Lewis Coser, Harold Bershady, Werner Stark, Klaus Lichtblau and Hans Joas. As I was in Brazil at the time of writing, access to the secondary literature was rather limited. I found the books by Dupuy (1959), Frings (1997) and Leonardy (1976) particularly useful, while Lambertino (1996) is well informed about the secondary literature. Please note that all translations are my own. In the following, when I quote Scheler (e.g.

VII: 13), the first number refers to the volume of the *Gesammelte Werke*, edited by Manfred Frings and Maria Scheler, the second to the page from which the quote is excerpted.

2. Meanwhile, I have continued this study of the phenomenological foundations of sociology with a critical study of Scheler's material ethics, as they are presented in *Formalism* (see Vandenberghe, 2006). I intend to round off the cycle of publications at a later stage with an investigation of his Nietzscheo-Catholic critique of modernity and the anti-utilitarian politics that ensue from it.

3. During his life, Scheler was involved in a multiplicity of sexual scandals (Staude, 1967). He married three times and, due to his notorious incapacity to resist his lustful inclinations, he lost his academic position twice. The more he sinned, the more he became attracted to ethics and religion, and the more he insisted on the importance of spiritual values and the necessity to sublimate.

4. The German expression *der Mensch* refers to the generic human being. Until recently it was translated as 'Man'. Although I am aware of the phallogocentric overtones, I wonder, however, if an old-fashioned translation wouldn't be more adequate when one is dealing with a Catholic, slightly reactionary philosopher like Scheler. His 'all too human' observations on the gendered nature of the human being are rather 'un-pc' (e.g. III: 194–5) – not to mention his eidetic observations on the essence of the female as 'the being that is closer to earth and closer to plants, whose experiences are more unified and more led by instinct, feeling and love than is the case with the male, and who's therefore also naturally the more *conservative* being' (III: 203 – I translated 'von Hause aus' as naturally; literally, it refers to the house as origin and destination of the woman). Furthermore, his occasional references to 'negroes' and 'primitives' are really offensive, while his polygenetic or polyphyletic theory of evolution, which suggests that the different races represent in fact different species, is simply unacceptable. ('If negroes and Caucasians were snails, zoologists would consider them as two different species' [II: 294, n] – nowadays, this phrase would automatically disqualify any author and suffice to put him or her on a black list.)

5. Meta-sciences are philosophical sciences that deal with the foundational questions of the sciences in order to delimit their respective object domains. What is life? What is a number? What is a text? What is society? Such foundational questions cannot be answered by the disciplines themselves; they are treated respectively by meta-biology, meta-mathematics, meta-literature and meta-sociology. As all the meta-sciences are supposed to find their eventual unity in the being that asks the meta-questions, meta-anthropology is considered by Scheler as the discipline of disciplines. Of the four basic questions of pure philosophy that Kant mentions – 'What can I know?' (metaphysics), 'What should I do?' (ethics), 'What can I hope for?' (religion), which should be followed by a fourth one: 'What is Man?' – meta-anthropology deals with the last one.

6. It is somewhat ironic that in real life Scheler was, apparently, not really capable of giving love. In spite of the fact that his whole philosophy is ultimately founded in love that reveals the particular essence of the concrete other, 'in practice, he did not really empathize with the other and did not search the deep contact with the singularity of his or her essence' (Dupuy, 1959, II: 736).

7. In an overview of the moral philosophy of his time, Scheler has provided the following description of his material ethics: 'The attempt to build ethics on the idea

of an a priori lawfulness of the intentional acts of feeling and preferring and the objective order of values that correspond to it has been pursued at length by Scheler' (I: 384). For an outstanding explication of the underlying logic of the order of love in its relation to Scheler's material ethics and his theory of *ressentiment*, see Frings (1966).

8. For a discussion of Scheler's place within the 'phenomenological movement', see Spiegelberg (1960, I: 228–79) and Lambertino (1996: 31–71).

9. Scheler has outlined his conception of phenomenology in two early texts that were published posthumously. See 'Lehre von den drei Tatsachen' (X: 377–430) and 'Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie' (X: 431–502). The beautiful text on the philosophy of life of Nietzsche, Dilthey and Bergson (III: 311–39), which dates from the same period, is also relevant. It shows that his phenomenology represents, in fact, a phenomenological reinterpretation of Bergson's vitalism. Without explicitly saying so, Scheler has fused Husserl's categorial intuition and Bergson's intuition of the All-One into his notion of the intuition of essences. For a helpful exploration of Scheler's concept of intellectual intuition and asymbolic knowledge, see Good (1998: 63–79).

10. Evident insight is attained, according to Husserl, when the intentional representation of the object finds its complete fulfilment in the object: 'Where a presentative intention has achieved its last fulfillment, the genuine *adaequatio rei et intellectus* has been brought about. *The object is actually "present" or "given", and present as just what we have intended it*; no partial intention remains implicit and still lacking fulfillment' (Husserl, 1993, II(2): 113, emphasis in original). Compare with Scheler: 'In the *unity* of the congruence as such, the factual *itself* is given in the most rigorous sense, and not in the least as a mere "image", "representation" or "sign" of it' (V: 17).

11. 'The phenomenon simply refers to what is immediately given in the living act [of intuition]; to what stands in front of me as self-given; to what is as it is intended' (III: 274, note 1).

12. In his later work, Scheler (VIII: 138 et seq., IX: 42 et seq.) will define the 'eidetic reduction', which gives direct access to the essences, as a method that purifies the life-world from its relation to life and nullifies the vital impulses and the libidinous impulsions in order to retain only what is purely spiritual. Interpreted in such a way, the eidetic reduction purifies reality and discloses the spirit, revealing thereby the essence of the human being. Through this anthropological reinterpretation of the eidetic method as an ascetic act of ideation, the latter is transformed into a 'spiritual technique', that is, into a method of formation and transformation of the self. In his comparative analysis of worldviews, Scheler (VIII: 135–57) claims that the West has systematically privileged external techniques (mastery of the external world) and neglected internal ones (mastery of the self), while the converse is true for the East. It would be worthwhile to compare Scheler's analysis of the oriental techniques of the self with Hadot's (1981) interpretation of ancient philosophy as a 'way of life', but this can obviously not be done here.

13. For a phenomenological analysis of Theravada Buddhism, see my 'uncartesian meditations' on the subject (Vandenberghé, 2002a).

14. 'The sign has in general no community of content with the thing it signifies. [...] Signitive representation institutes a contingent, external relation between

matter and representative content, whereas intuitive representation institutes one that is essential, internal' (Husserl, 1993, II(2): 92).

15. The clearest formulation of the theory of the functionalization of eidetic knowledge appears almost as an aside in a protracted article on the problems of religion and religious renewal (V: 195–210).

16. In his sociology of knowledge, written during the second period of productivity, Scheler distinguishes between 'ideal' and 'real factors' of knowledge. Whereas the former refer to a realm of eternal truths, ideas and values, the latter refer to the material basis of drives of procreation, power and wealth that are socially determined and historically variable. According to Scheler, the spirit is powerless (*Ohnmacht des Geistes*); the ideal factors cannot realize themselves. The realization of the spiritual contents is contingent and conditional. It is only when the spirit enters into contact and interaction with the forces of the material base that the spiritual contents can be released in history. In a famous passage, Scheler (VIII: 22) uses the image of 'sluice-gates' which open and close to varying degrees, allowing spiritual contents to flow, to indicate how possibilities can become real. Under certain historical circumstances, the real factors can stream through the sluices of historical becoming and realize some of the ideal contents, which direct or redirect the course of history – 'like switchtracks', as Weber would say. A reading against the grain of Scheler's sociology of knowledge would have to 'functionalize' the essences, ideas and values to such an extent that they are not only released and discovered, but also created and invented in and through history. What I am thinking of is some kind of a cross-reading of Scheler's sociology of ideal and real factors with Castoriadis's (1975) theory of creative institution of imaginary significations. Out of nowhere, ideas, values and beliefs (like God in the axial age or democracy in Athens) emerge in history, but though 'functionalization' the ideas, values and beliefs that emerge out of the blue are seized upon by different carrier strata and become a material force that can change the course of history (from creation *ex nihilo* to realization *in rebus*).

17. Scheler's 'lovely epistemology' is most concisely presented in 'Liebe und Erkenntnis' (VI: 77–98), 'Ordo Amoris' (X: 345–6, esp. 355–7) and 'Vom Wesen der Philosophie' (V: 61–99). Once again, the early article on *Lebensphilosophie* (III: 311–39, esp. 324–29) clearly shows the decisive influence of Bergson, who is credited for bringing the new, more intuitive and receptive attitude of loving 'surrender' to the things themselves, into philosophy.

18. 'Love is the tendency, or, as the case may be, the act that seeks to bring every thing to proper value perfection' (X: 355, cf. also VII: 155–64).

19. Love can be directed towards persons as well as things. It is only when it is aimed at a person, however, that its power is fully revealed. In line with Scheler's distinction between the person, the psyche and the body, Gurvitch (1930: 112) has correctly observed that love will always elevate the individual to the highest degree of perfection that is compatible with a given order of values:

When love addresses itself towards the personality [of, say, a robber], it tends towards the highest spiritual and moral order that this individual could achieve; if this love is directed towards his psychic self, it will be concerned with his highest spiritual values; in case of sexual love, it will tend towards the highest vital values of the malefactor, but the love that is oriented towards him will never lead to sympathy with his negative qualities.

20. The ontological status of values in Scheler is rather ambiguous. Do values exist as independent entities, or is their inexistence a functional one (*existentia cum rebus*), meaning that values exist only when they enter into a functional relationship with persons, things and states of affairs? In other words, does love discover or create values? Although I think that only the second option makes sense, Scheler systematically goes for the first one and denies that values can be created. Insisting that they are eternal, he not only neglects the creation of values but also the values of creation.

21. For Bauman, who borrows the metaphor of the gardener from Ernest Gellner, the modern age is the age of gardening. See Bauman (1987: ch. 4, 'Gamekeepers Turned Gardeners').

22. Critically engaging American pragmatism, Scheler extensively analysed the relation between the sciences and the domination of nature in 'Erkenntnis und Arbeit' (Cognition and Work) of 1926 (VIII: 191–382), which constitutes a long and late counterpart to his earlier short article on 'Love and Knowledge' (VI: 77–98). The triad of the forms of knowledge, which shows clear affinities with Apel's and Habermas's early anthropological studies on knowledge and interests, is summarized in a short critique of Comte's positivistic philosophy of history and its so-called 'law of three stages' (VI: 27–35).

23. Like Alasdair MacIntyre, Scheler goes against the current of his time and pleads for a 'rehabilitation of the virtues'. He singles out humility (*humilitas* as against *superbia*) as a cardinal virtue and, at one point, he establishes a connection between the phenomenological attitude of loving surrender and the virtue of humility: 'This way, whereby one loses oneself entirely in order to "regain oneself in God" – that is morally speaking humility and intellectually speaking pure "intuition"' (III: 23). The connection between love as an epistemic attitude and humility as a moral one is intriguing and suggests not only that the contemplation or intuition of essences has a moral quality, but also that phenomenological practice can contribute to the forging of an ethical disposition towards the world of things and persons.

24. On *agape*, see Outka (1972); for a more biological account see Boltanski (1990: part 2).

25. Scheler's later theory of the interpenetration of the life and spirit, in fact a theory of sublimation, appears as a generalization of the chiasm of eros and agape. In *Man's Place in Nature* (IX: 45–56), the spirit is seen as powerless. To realize ideas, the spirit needs the energizing force of life. As the daemonic forces of life are released, sublimated and redirected towards the intentional realization of ideas, the ideas are charged with energy and thereby progressively brought to life and realized in history.

26. Levinas will draw the same conclusion: 'Absolute experience is not a disclosure, but a revelation (*L'expérience absolue n'est pas dévoilement, mais révélation*)' (Levinas, 1961: 61).

27. We find a similar conjunction of religion and phenomenology in Jean-Luc Marion's analysis of 'donation' and, differently, also in Martin Buber's and Emmanuel Levinas's analyses of the Other. See Marion (1997), Buber (1979) and Levinas (1961); for a critique of the theological turn in French phenomenology, see Janicaud (1991). Dupuy (1959, I: 104–8, 200–5, 293–4, II, 540–1) insists that the alliance of phenomenology and religion is not the result of a more or less conscious submission of a scientific method to a moral option, but that it proceeds from an 'overlap' between the phenomenological and the theological intuitions.

28. In the preface to *On the Eternal in Man*, a collection of more religious and engaged writings, Scheler pleads for a renewal of ‘natural theology’ based on Augustine and phenomenology:

This [renewal] will only be accomplished if the core of Augustinism is liberated from its historical shells and grounded anew and more deeply thanks to the intellectual tools of phenomenological philosophy. [. . .] Only then the immediate contact of the soul with God, which Augustine could feel, thanks to the tools of neo-Platonism, in his big heart and which he was trying to express in words, will manifest itself more clearly. (V: 8–9).

29. Michael Theunissen’s (1984) great book on *The Other* offers a comprehensive overview of the phenomenological theories of intersubjectivity, from Husserl, Scheler and Heidegger to Jaspers, Buber and Löwith, that analyse the ‘encounter’ of the concrete other as dialogue, communication or even communion. For an excellent presentation and critique of Scheler’s theory of intersubjectivity, see Schütz (1962) and also Frings (1997: 81–97).

30. Interestingly, Scheler observes in passing that animals are also capable of social acts, such as giving, helping and reconciling (IX: 30, XII: 187). Whether a stray dog on a solitary island would therefore know that it is part of a canine community remains, however, a moot question.

31. *Being and Time* shows clear influences of Scheler, who read and annotated Heidegger’s famous book. To Heidegger’s existential philosophy of the everyday, Scheler counterposes his ‘philosophy of Sunday’. Instead of fear, which lightens up the finitude and loneliness of *Dasein* before death, he proposes love as the fundamental emotion that discloses the world as an infra-, inter- and supra-individual world that is bathing in the light of God. In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt (1958), one of Heidegger’s former students and lovers, will displace being-unto-death with natality. As the isolated *Dasein* of death is replaced by the togetherness of birth, action becomes authentic interaction.

32. In an early article of 1911 on the ‘Idols of Self-knowledge’, Scheler (III: 213–92, esp. 253–4, 277–9, 284–9) has analysed at length the delusions in self-perception that occur when one erroneously assumes that self-perception (*Selbstwahrnehmung*) is more sure and secure than perception of the other (*Fremdwahrnehmung*) and, consequently, substitutes the observation of the self for the observation of the other. ‘The natural direction of delusion is not the one that consists in taking one’s proper experiences for those of another or of empathizing with the other, but rather the other direction of taking the experiences of the other for those of oneself’ (III: 265).

33. Husserl considered Scheler’s theory of empathy as ‘a counterexample of a real phenomenological theory’ (1973, XIV: 335). The term ‘transcendental intersubjectivity’ implies the transcendental constitution of the other in my transcendental ego as an *alter ego*. How can the transcendental ego in its sphere of ownness ‘go beyond itself’ (Husserl, 1950: 125) and constitute the transcendental ego of the other, that is the central question that Husserl pursues monomaniacally in the fifth of the *Cartesian Meditations* (1950) and, subsequently, in the three volumes on the *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity* (1973). For an analysis, see Vandenberghé (2002b).

34. *Cogito, ergo sumus*. In an interesting take on the Cartesian Cogito, Randall Collins has recently given a more sociological refutation of solipsism:

Thinking exists. This thinking which is irrefutably proven takes place in language; it constitutes a kind of conversation, myself saying something to myself. [. . .] We are always in *medias res*. In *medias res* means that our thinking is always preceded by other thinking, our own and other people's. (Collins, 1998: 858–60)

35. The insistence on emotional identification (*Einsfühlung*) characterizes the second edition of the book on sympathy. Added in 1923, those passages mark and announce the transition to the philosophy of life of the third and last phase of his life.

36. Scheler's notion of the Person (II: 370 et seq.) as a transempirical substance that gives unity to all the acts of the subject and manifests itself in its actuality only in and through the execution of spiritual acts, is rather obscure. For an influential interpretation of the notion, see the book of Pope John Paul II that appeared in the famous blue collection of the phenomenological library (cf. Wojtyła, 1979).

37. Scheler's vicious critique of humanism and humanitarianism, 'which transforms the world into a big hospital' (Goethe), is not occasional (cf. III: 96–115, 194–5, V: 365–71, VII, 108–11, 188–90), but structural and symptomatic of his Nietzschean Catholicism. In his essay on the 'Essence of Man', he defines the human being as a mediocre and mediating being that has no real essence of itself:

There is no impulsion and no 'law' either that is not located under his nature or above him in the realm of God, in Heaven: Only as a 'passover' from one realm to the other, as 'bridge' and movement between them, does the human being have an existence. [. . .] The fire, the passion to transcend himself and to reach the 'Overman' or 'God' – that is the only real humanity. (III: 195)

38. Onto-topologically speaking, shame occupies the same intermediary position as sympathy (though it does not move in a spiral, but is caught in a loop). According to Scheler, shame is nothing but the experience of a disharmony between the animal needs and the spiritual aspirations of the human being.

[Shame] finds its general background in the fact that the human being feels and knows himself as a 'bridge' and a 'transition' between two essential orders of being in which he is simultaneously grounded, none of which he can abandon for a second without losing his humanity. (X: 69)

It occurs when the individual who is mindlessly engaged in bodily activities catches himself in the act as it were and looks upon himself and his body from the higher plane of the spirit.

39. *Individuum ineffabilis*: like God, the individual is unspeakable, not because there's nothing to say, but, to the contrary, because one could always say more. The existence of the other is so mysterious and marvellous that it cannot be captured by words. In other words: 'The unspeakable cannot be expressed, because it is infinitely expressible' (Jankélévitch, quoted by Le Breton, 1997: 200).

40. As an a priori of all possible experience, the order of love functions a kind of personal schema (in the Kantian sense of the term). For a more aesthetic account of the innermost personal expression of experience, see Lukács (1974: 7–41, esp. 28 et seq.).

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