

MAX SCHELER'S CRITICAL THEORY:  
THE IDEA OF CRITICAL PHENOMENOLOGY

A Dissertation

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By

Eric J. Mohr

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By

Eric J. Mohr

Approved July 11, 2014

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Dr. James Swindal  
Professor of Philosophy  
Advisor

---

Dr. Eugene Kelly  
Professor of Philosophy  
Reader

---

Dr. Tom Rockmore  
Professor of Philosophy  
Reader

---

Dr. James Swindal  
Dean, McNulty Graduate School  
Professor of Philosophy

---

Dr. Ronald Polansky  
Chair, Department of Philosophy  
Professor of Philosophy

ABSTRACT

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This work explores the way core elements of phenomenology map on to the critical theory program in order to demonstrate phenomenology's relevance for ideology critique. "Critical phenomenology" means putting the findings of phenomenology to work for the sake of social critique. I argue that phenomenology gains a critical edge precisely where many critical theorists suggest phenomenology withdraws from a critical function: on the basis of their theory of intuition. While Adorno takes phenomenological intuition to be another version of identity philosophy, he overlooks the significance of the way in which phenomenological givenness is incommensurable with, and at best only symbolized by, conceptual articulation. An awareness of the tension between *logos* (concept) and phenomenon

(intuition) offers an opportunity for the phenomenologist to critique the substitution of lived-experience for conceptual variations of that experience, a tendency central to ideology.

This is seen clearly in Scheler's phenomenology. With the three concurrent components of his theory of intuition—the givenness of the intentional object; the givenness of reality; and the givenness of value—Scheler addresses all the main objections Frankfurt School critical theorists traditionally pose against phenomenology. And he insists on phenomenology's importance for sociology and the sociology of knowledge. The fact that Scheler's theories of intentionality and value are, as I argue, taken into an existential and social context, adds social relevance to his value theory. This is significant for the question of ideology and for emphasizing certain shortcomings of critical theory's approach to this question.

I suggest that phenomenology elucidates prior grounds for the possibility of emancipatory critique. The domain of the moral (love and the values the act discloses) is the common root of both theory and practice. The way a society thinks and acts is an outgrowth of attitudinal factors suggestive of certain patterns of valuation. Ideology is, in this case, an intellectual outcome of improper valuing. According to Scheler, rationality is in large part an expression of patterns of valuation, so a critique of rationality in its instrumental form, for example, has to be framed in terms of a moral critique of the trends of social valuation.

DEDICATION

To John R. White,  
for personally introducing me to Max Scheler

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My engagement with, and interest in, Scheler's philosophy began while I was an undergraduate, under the auspices of John White at Franciscan University of Steubenville. This work is dedicated to John for being so influential for my professional path and my research of Scheler. A word of thanks also to John Crosby and J. J. Sanford for their support and assistance at Franciscan University. At Duquesne, the encouragement and support from my director, James Swindal, to move ahead with a dissertation project on Scheler and critical theory that had such little academic precedent, was invaluable. I am also grateful for the cooperation of the Duquesne University Philosophy Department as well as the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts. The offer of the 2012-13 McAnulty Dissertation Fellowship was an enormous assistance toward the timely completion of this work.

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## INTRODUCTION

### NONCONCEPTUALITY IN PHENOMENOLOGY AND DIALECTICS

The idea of critical phenomenology begins by designating phenomenological experience as a *critical experience*. By “critical experience,” I do not mean something overly problematic nor something very new. It refers to a level of incongruence or incommensurability between our lived-experience throughout the course of our daily, worldly interaction and the ability to think and articulate that experience conceptually. Arguably, this kind of experience is as old as philosophical inquiry, for it is behind Socrates’ admission that he knows that he doesn’t know, as well as his attempts to make the reputedly wise in Athens admit this as well. The idea is likely to have gained momentum in the modern period with Hegel; radicalized with Nietzsche and *Lebensphilosophie*; equally important, I suggest, to both phenomenology and critical theory; and continues in various forms within the Anglo-American philosophical tradition, especially under Wittgenstein-influenced philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Within a phenomenological context, this idea pertains to a type of meaning that early phenomenologists, and in particular Max Scheler, called “*materiale*,” i.e., a nonformal domain of meaning that does not submit to conceptual verifiability, nor is it reducible to sensible content. The concept “art” (or related concepts), for example, cannot exhaust the magnificence of *this* Botticelli or the brilliance of *that* Matisse.

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<sup>1</sup> Although much of this idea has its roots in Hegelian philosophy, it is an idea that is being phased out in certain sectors of analytic philosophy ironically because of the “Neo-Hegeliansim” of Robert Brandom and John McDowell. Following Wilfrid Sellars’s attack on the notion of the Given, they advocate making concepts and rationality pervasive in all perception and natural experience.

The concept “friendship” does not contain the nuances of meaning of individual friendships nor the meaningful differences among friendships with specific people. The concept of “family” is relatively empty in comparison to the meaning of one’s own; the conceptual classification of my home as just another house cannot account for the incongruence between the meaning of my house and those of strangers. The conceptual form “happiness” or “sadness” cannot express the varieties of joy or sorrow felt at the occurrence of this event or of that one.

Such experiences may not yield content reducible to conceptual cognition, but they do yield an intuitive meaning content nevertheless. Critical experience includes, therefore, what is more traditionally formulated in various ways as the relation between “concept and intuition,” “scheme and content,” “subject and object,” etc. This relation becomes critical when it includes both awareness of its incommensurability as well as utilizing this awareness for the sake of critique: a critique of concepts as well as of the social and historical conditions upon which they in part depend. This awareness begins, I suggest, in the lived-experience (*Erlebnis*) of the formal limitation of the concept to express or reflect the material content of experience. That is to say, when, at the conceptual precipice, we try to say the unsayable and come up empty. In those moments, one might feel that the best conveyance is simply the suggestion that one “experiences it for oneself.”

The idea of critical experience corresponds with what Adorno means by dialectics. He claims that “Dialectics is the consistent sense of nonidentity. ... It says no more...than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a

remainder.”<sup>2</sup> An object is always “more” than the concepts employed to understand it: “What it is,” he says “is more than it is. This ‘more’ is not imposed upon it but remains immanent to it.”<sup>3</sup> It is therefore “up to dialectical cognition to pursue the inadequacy of thought and thing, to experience it in the thing.”<sup>4</sup>

Adorno’s reinterpretation of dialectics is the cornerstone of his conception of philosophical experience. His view of experience has recently received some attention, most notably, from Brian O’Connor<sup>5</sup> and Roger Foster.<sup>6</sup> Foster’s book, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience*, is an examination of Adorno’s “theory of spiritual experience” (*geistig Erfahrung*) which was the title that the introduction of *Negative Dialectics* had originally carried.<sup>7</sup> Foster explains that “This experience that there is something we want to say, something we wish to express but which cannot be said with our concepts, is what philosophy as negative dialectic strives continually to reproduce.”<sup>8</sup> And further, “It is precisely these moments, experiences of the failure of concepts...that Adorno is attempting to describe with the term ‘spiritual experience’.”<sup>9</sup>

The experience of the inadequacy of concepts to capture all that we might wish

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<sup>2</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, E. B. Ashton, trans. (New York: Continuum, 1973), 5

<sup>3</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 161.

<sup>4</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 153.

<sup>5</sup> Brian O’Connor, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic: Philosophy and the Possibility of Critical Rationality* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Roger Foster, *Adorno: The Recovery of Experience* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2007).

<sup>7</sup> “Spiritual experience” is his own preferred rendering in contrast to the more common translation of *geistig* as “intellectual.” He explains that his “dissatisfaction with this translation is that it seems to reinforce precisely that model of the role of the subject in experience that Adorno wants to oppose with the idea of *geistige Erfahrung*.” Foster, *Adorno*, 4.

<sup>8</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.

<sup>9</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.

to express is just as accurate of a depiction of phenomenology as it is of dialectics. The idea is already there in Husserl's call to return *zu den Sachen selbst*, which has been interpreted by later phenomenologists to mean a retrieval of intelligible content tainted and unmatched by thinking. Phenomenology's method would be nullified if concepts were to reflect experience perfectly since, if this were the case, it would be senseless to return to experience in order to awaken its content by means of fresh description. Heidegger, of course, made the distinction between *phaenomenon* and *logos*, taking language or discourse (*logos*) as a way of making that which shows itself (*phaenomenon*) be seen.<sup>10</sup> But over a decade before the publication of *Being and Time*, Max Scheler wrote that the only "possible sense of a phenomenological discussion" is bringing someone "to see that which, by its essence, can only be 'seen'" (GW X, 391).<sup>11</sup> He adds (referring in part to Husserl's phenomenology) that:

all the propositions..., all the conclusions, all the provisional definitions that are introduced as they are needed, all the provisional descriptions, all the chains of argument and proof, have simply the function of a "pointer," pointing to what is to be brought to sight (Husserl). However, what is to be brought to sight can never be present in any of the judgments, concepts, or definitions.... (GW X, 391-2).<sup>12</sup>

Scheler makes a rather bold claim, one that is arguably even more radical than Heidegger's distinction between phenomenon and logos. Scheler claims that the essence "can never be present" in concepts or definitions. The concept alone cannot

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<sup>10</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), ¶7, 49-63.

<sup>11</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 152. Parenthetical citation refers to the Scheler's *Gesammelte Werke* with volume number and page number.

<sup>12</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 153.

bring about insight. Concepts contribute to intuition or “seeing” only by illuminating something that can only be seen in a lived-experience. He therefore characterizes phenomenology as the “antithesis of all rapidly produced talk-philosophy [*Redephilosophie*]” (GW X, 393);<sup>13</sup> he rejects the idea that the “the world exists in order to be designated with univocal [conceptual] symbols and...that it is *nothing* before it enters into this talk” (GW X, 393).<sup>14</sup> Instead the phenomenologist “talks less, is silent more, and sees more, perhaps that aspect of the world which can no longer be discussed” (GW X, 393).<sup>15</sup>

Phenomenology rejects in principle the idea that an object “must first cross the hurdle of symbolic [i.e., linguistic and conceptual] identifiability in order to prove that it is indeed an object” (GW X, 392-3).<sup>16</sup> Concepts and language constitute symbolic copies that approximate the meaning content given in intuitive experience. Concepts necessarily bear reference to the nonconceptual. The material or nonconceptual content, i.e., content irreducible to the structure of thinking, is a *critical content* because it indirectly contains within itself a reference to the limits of conceptual thinking.

I argue that if this content is irreducible to the structure of thinking, then there must be a domain of meaningful experience independent from formal or conceptually-constituted meaning structures. So, at least to start, I suggest the

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<sup>13</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 153.

<sup>14</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 154.

<sup>15</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 154. A hallmark of Scheler’s epistemology (and critique of Kant) refers to the fact that a datum of experience need not be universalized in order to be intelligible. It is possible in principle, he thinks, for a single individual to see a truth or value that no one else sees. Equating intelligibility with universality would effectively restrict the domain of intelligibility and meaning tremendously.

<sup>16</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 154.

following distinctions have to apply for a critical phenomenology to succeed:

1. *The difference between the intentional and the conceptual.* According to the phenomenological idea of intentionality, objects do not require concepts in order to appear as objects.<sup>17</sup> If they did, then language would be a necessary requirement for intuition. But consciousness does not rely on concepts to *intend* things even if concepts are shown to be formative of our *cognition* of the things consciousness intends.<sup>18</sup>
2. *The difference between conceptual (formal) meaning and intuitive (nonformal) meaning.* According to the phenomenological idea of intuition, objects do not require concepts in order for intuited objects to bear meaning (or value). In other words, concepts are not originally the source of the meaning of experience, rather, intuitive experience is the original source of the meaning of concepts.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> There is a recent debate as to whether phenomenological relations with things are conceptual or mostly nonconceptual. The debate is a spin-off from the Dreyfus-McDowell debate about the extent concepts factor into expertise and everyday coping skills. The debate has for the most part been centered upon Husserl. Walter Hopp endorses a nonconceptual reading of Husserl in *Perception and Knowledge: A Phenomenological Account* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), and Michael Barber has recently written a rebuttal aligning Husserlian intentionality with McDowell's conceptualism in *The Intentional Spectrum and Intersubjectivity: Phenomenology and the Pittsburgh Neo-Hegelians* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2012).

<sup>18</sup> Scheler's theory of concept formation, that he calls "functionalization," will be examined in detail through the work. I will underscore how concepts, for Scheler, are a relatively late occurrence in relation to the total process of their formation. Human beings are practically and emotionally oriented toward their "environment" (*Umwelt*) well before they are conceptually oriented toward a "world" (*Welt*).

<sup>19</sup> The meaning and value that things have, first refer to our drive-based striving and practical comportment (e.g., things edible or drinkable) before the meanings of things take on a theoretical or spiritual dimension.

Language, then, is an approximate signification of intuitive experience, a linguistic employment of concepts in order to express the experiences that require and call for expression. The cognitive goal of phenomenology is to utilize those approximations in order to return to content given within the more adept intuitive standpoint. It seeks to uncover the experience to which the concept is supposed to refer, but which the concept cannot wholly contain. This is a *critical* reference according to the usual meaning of the term. The critical capacity of phenomenology is, then, a kind of “dialectical phenomenology” as long as the meaning of “dialectical” is taken generally, according to Adorno’s understanding, as a sense of nonidentity between concept and the object. But one fundamental difference endangers any further dialogue between critical theory and phenomenology: dialectics is not a “standpoint” in the way phenomenologists classify intuition. Let’s now consider this difference.

### **The Trouble with Intuition**

If phenomenology and critical theory agree with respect to the incongruence of the conceptual and nonconceptual, as I suggest, the two philosophies disagree concerning whether there is some other alternative or more adept standpoint beyond the space of concepts. Adorno’s insistence that “dialectics is not a standpoint” makes intuition a nonviable epistemic alternative. Concepts may indeed be fractured and incapable of achieving the identity for which they strive, but this does not change the fact that they are the only equipment available by which to achieve understanding as well as to fashion a critique of those very concepts. The



critical theorist insists that there is nowhere else to turn for a more unified relation to the object. Adorno writes that “Only in traces and ruins is [reason] prepared to hope that it will ever come across correct and just reality.”<sup>20</sup> Hence his insistent focus on the “negative,” and refusal to use philosophy for positive exposition.

While phenomenology makes conceptual nonidentity the occasion to turn their attention toward nonconceptual forms of identity in order to ground cognition, Adorno insists that our only option is to remain attentive to the nonidentity itself and find within it the impetus by which to make “a rational critique of reason.”<sup>21</sup> Even if it is impossible to grasp that which exceeds the limits of a conceptually constituted structure of experience, Foster explains that, “it is possible...to experience those limits *as* limits.”<sup>22</sup>

In contrast to Lukács’ reading of Marx, which suggests overcoming reification by achieving the “identical subject-object” among the proletariat, Adorno refuses to posit any kind of subject-object identity either conceptually (within the space of concepts) or nonconceptually (outside of that space). Forging an identity within the space of concepts amounts to *rationalism*, and the suggestion that identity is achieved beyond this conceptual space (e.g., in intuition), Adorno calls *irrationalism*. He wants to avoid both errors by forging a new kind of philosophical experience—critical rationality—that accomplishes a critique of concepts by means of those very concepts which gives way to self-reflective critique. Critical rationality does not critique a theory simply insofar as theory relies upon a conceptual framework;

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<sup>20</sup> Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O’Connor (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 24.

<sup>21</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 85.

<sup>22</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.

relying on concepts is inevitable and philosophically necessary. The critique is rather about a theory's typical lack of awareness of the historical dependence of different conceptual frameworks and the ways concepts carry and express historical experience. Adorno calls this awareness of historical dependency, *Selbstbesinnung*, usually rendered as "self-reflection" or "self-awareness." He is calling for awareness and reflection about the fact that our concepts all have a history. Foster puts the idea of self-awareness well: "It is the process in which philosophy brings to expression the historical experience that is the condition [for the] possibility of its concepts."<sup>23</sup>

Adorno is said to offer a transcendental critique insofar as historical experience is the condition for the possibility of the conceptual frameworks we come to endorse and employ. O'Connor suggests that Adorno's immanent critique is a transcendental critique whereby the way concepts are sometimes employed are antinomical, internally, to the fundamental conditions that make conceptual experience possible.<sup>24</sup> While this idea is promising, I find that the historical component is often lacking in O'Connor's explanations. Immanent critique is meant to point out specifically the contradiction between a conceptual framework and the history of both that framework and the objects to which concepts refer. The lack of awareness of the socio-historical dependence of theories (namely, the ahistorical element of theory) disrupts that which a philosophy is attempting to claim.

When interpreted with respect to the dimension of social and historical factors,

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<sup>23</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 21.

<sup>24</sup> O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectic*, 25-8.

critical rationality offers a view into what Adorno means by nonconceptuality.<sup>25</sup> The “nonconceptualities” to which Adorno says all concepts refer are extremely difficult to pin down precisely because they are outside the domain of concepts. Since concepts are required for knowledge, little, if anything, can be said about the nonconceptual domain. Furthermore, even if we can refer to a nonconceptual sphere, it is not possible, by Adorno’s account, to refer to the nonconceptual in terms of determinate *content* insofar as determinate content indicates something knowable. The sphere of the nonconceptual is little more than a kind of epistemic emptiness (indeed, a realm of unknowing) that can be mobilized, by way of critique, against ideological and totalizing claims. The Socratic lineage to critical theory is apparent here, but not often emphasized.

Strictly speaking, nothing is *knowable* beyond the space of concepts, according to Adorno, but the space of nonconceptuality still implies something *experienceable*,<sup>26</sup> even if only in terms of conceptual limitation. He says that nonconceptuality refers to *the reality that the formation of concepts requires*, namely, those parts of human experience that concepts are meant to reflect or express, but which are not contained in the *abstract* content of the concept. In other words, the sphere of the nonconceptual is that part of reality that is lost or goes missing in the process of conceptual abstraction. If this characterization is accurate, the nonconceptual is a

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<sup>25</sup> See, Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 11-15.

<sup>26</sup> The difference between something *knowable* and something *experienceable* is employed also by Scheler, as we will see. However, while for Adorno there is a rough distinction between conceptual knowing and nonconceptual (non-epistemic) experience, Scheler maintains a difference between three different spheres instead of only two: conceptual knowing (cognition), non-conceptual knowing (intuition), and non-conscious (ecstatic) experience. Consciousness, for Scheler, does not operate only on the basis of categorial demarcations since intentionality is broader than conceptuality.

domain including more than simply one kind of thing or a single determinate part of reality; it is composed of anything and everything that ends up failing to make the cut, so to speak, in the process of concept formation.

Of course, Adorno is rather reluctant to spell out all that the nonconceptual would or could include because that would involve reducing that part of experience to concepts in its very articulation. Yet we can surmise, by a process of negation, of course, that it would include what abstract concepts do not include, such things as empirical qualities, physical properties, contingent characteristics, sensible particularities, etc. But over and above these elements—and by far the most significant element—Adorno insists that the nonconceptual refers to the “historical sedimentation” or “implicit history” of the object. Foster writes that the essential idea of the nonconceptual is an understanding of the object “as a site that accumulates meanings in its movement through historical time.”<sup>27</sup> Foster continues:

Those meanings are not accessible in it as though they were static properties. ... They are rather the features of the thing as reflected through its relationship to its social and temporal context, features that require the concrete elucidation of the way they are subjectively experienced in order to be brought to the surface. ... It is nothing less than the experiential conditions of philosophical concepts and, as such, the disclosure of their full historical truth.<sup>28</sup>

The idea, it seems, is that when ideas are abstracted from their historical conditions, there is a kind of subtraction that takes place whereby the idea or concept loses the (nonconceptual) socio-historical particularity upon which the formation of concepts depends. He is indicating that on the occasion of perceiving objects, for example, a door, a house, a neighborhood, a city, etc., we encounter the

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<sup>27</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 22.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 22.

historical features those objects bear. The door is worn from constant slamming; the house is decrepit and perhaps abandoned; the city is under populated, but with a noticeable repetitive routine, and perhaps run down. On the one hand, such characterizing historical features are not included in the *abstract* concept of a door, house, neighborhood, or city. But on the other hand, the concepts are also abstract expressions of the objects that find expression precisely on account of the objective historical sedimentation. Adorno thinks we should be understanding things according to their historical position and process: “The history locked in the object can only be delivered by a knowledge mindful of the historic positional value of the object in its relation to other objects.... Cognition of the object in its constellation is cognition of the process stored in the object.”<sup>29</sup> Since it is out of this history that concepts of things arise, it is possible to unlock, like a “well-guarded safe-deposit box,”<sup>30</sup> the accumulated historical meaning of the concept.

On the one hand, I acknowledge that an object contains an historical meaning not identical (rather nonidentical) to the concept’s abstract meaning. The “history locked in the object” is disclosed by means of a cognitive process of reflection on those concepts in light of the “historic positional value of the object in its relation to other objects.” But how we are supposed to be aware that there is in fact more to an object than what the abstract conceptual meaning indicates if the “knowledge mindful of the historic positional value” of the object is not possible outside the space of the concept? How is our knowledge supposed to look beyond the concepts that knowledge itself requires? My response is that such historical experiences—of

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<sup>29</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 163.

<sup>30</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 163.

the door, the house, the neighborhood and city—are a quality of things given, phenomenologically, in the course of our environmental interaction: using the door of the house, residing and living in the neighborhood and city. By investigating objects according to historical experience, provided historical experience is a dimension of intuitive experience, Adorno is unwittingly relying on phenomenological investigation of those objects.

But, of course, my response is not the one Adorno gives. Adorno's answer refers to the concept's own "longing" toward identity along with the (invariable) failure of the concept to achieve this identity. The concept refers beyond itself, so we need not look beyond the concept since the concept holds its own history and the reality that its formation requires. Adorno thinks that concepts have within themselves an inclination toward expressing or reflecting the object. The failure of conceptual articulation to fully reflect the object in its social, historical context is, again, the sense of nonidentity by which Adorno characterizes dialectics. As he puts it, "living in the rebuke that the thing is not identical is the concept's longing to become identical with the thing."<sup>31</sup>

The so-called "longing" of the concept for identity underscores Adorno's thinking about the task of philosophy. In his words, "What the philosophical concept will not abandon is the yearning that animates the nonconceptual side.... Philosophy...must strive by way of the concept to transcend the concept."<sup>32</sup> The antagonism between the conceptual and nonconceptual (identity and nonidentity) is the requirement for critical philosophy. This is why Adorno is so guarded against any philosophy that

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<sup>31</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 148.

<sup>32</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 15.

claims to achieve or be grounded upon some form of identity. This is, according to Adorno, the foremost problem of phenomenology in all of its forms: Hegelian phenomenology claims identity as a rational end-point resolution of the dialectic of history and early twentieth-century phenomenology, generally, claims identity as an intuitive starting-point.

On the one hand, Adorno regrets the way Hegel's moments of nonidentity progress beyond the antagonism, toward resolution, which effectively leaves the dialectic behind. The fact that, according to Adorno, the stages of nonidentity and the mediation of subject and object are, for Hegel, on a teleological trajectory toward resolution means for Adorno only that we see in Hegel's philosophy both the expression of "a profound insight and the collapse of that insight."<sup>33</sup>

On the other hand, Adorno's critique of Heidegger centers upon the immediacy that the pre-epistemological structure of ontology suggests. "Being-in-the-world" is a description that points precisely toward a pre-conceptual unity and to the disintegration of the subject-object distinction. Adorno thinks that the context of pre-conceptual or pre-reflective immersion threatens a mediated structure of experience, and when mediation is gone so is the possibility of critique.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 160. There are, of course, those who interpret Hegel's dialectical trajectory of history differently. Spirit may come to greater self-awareness over time by coming to terms with the irrational current of history, but whether consciousness of objects will ultimately ever entirely be ingathered into self-consciousness (in such a way that achieves absolute knowing) remains a point of debate.

<sup>34</sup> Arguably, this represents a rather one-sided interpretation of Heidegger, even if we restrict the discussion only to *Being and Time*. One could get this overly pre-epistemological picture of Heidegger if focusing only on Division 1. However, in Division 2, we notice how the care-structure (and other fore-structures) attain an authentic expression in anticipatory resoluteness (or an inauthentic expression) which comes with greater emphasis on conscious and self-conscious comportment.

The problem is not that Heidegger's analysis of being-in-the-world is false, or that it lacks sufficient evidence, or even that at this stage of experience, it is unjustified to speak of immediacy. After all, Adorno acknowledges that "the immediacy of insight as such is not deniable,"<sup>35</sup> and that without immediacy "Hegel's line that the particular is the universal would remain pure avowal."<sup>36</sup> The problem, rather, is that Heidegger's portrayal is misleading. Adorno resists philosophies that turn immediacy into a legitimizing and synthesizing "standpoint" for some kind of nonconceptual form of knowing. Heidegger is thereby, as Adorno puts it, "usurping a standpoint beyond the difference of subject and object.... [But] we cannot, by thinking, assume any position in which the separation of subject and object will directly vanish, for the separation is inherent in each thought; it is inherent in thinking itself."<sup>37</sup> He thinks that Heidegger's philosophy has a tendency to remain in this undifferentiated state. If it does, if Adorno's right, then it makes sense that all objects, their time, their history, even the world as such, are merely different modes of Dasein. And Adorno thinks this is idealistic, or at least "unsuccessful realism."

Philosophies that incorporate, or better, rely upon, phases of identity, which Adorno thinks Hegel's and Heidegger's phenomenologies incorporate, lack potentiality for critique. Neither rationalism (conceptual identity) nor irrationalism (nonconceptual identity) have "the potential for a critique of our conceptual experience," as Foster puts it.<sup>38</sup> O'Connor makes a similar point: Heidegger's eschewal of a mediated subject-object relation "deprives him of an account of a

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<sup>35</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 81.

<sup>36</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 82.

<sup>37</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 85.

<sup>38</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.



critical [moment]...in which the subject can critically differentiate itself from its environment by subjecting it to critical evaluation.”<sup>39</sup> I take this criticism to be Adorno’s most important to which a critical phenomenology has to respond. It has to be shown that phenomenology has the potential to be critical of conceptual cognition, at least. Before I turn to phenomenology’s critical potential, I would like to suggest a critique of the critical pathways Adorno proposes.

### **Nonconceptuality**

Adorno frames his conception of philosophical experience upon a “second Copernican turn”: a reversal of the Kantian view that reduces or restricts the object of experience to subjective constituting conditions. In contrast to Kant’s view, Adorno promises to allow for the priority of the object by exposing the way concepts carry determinate content according to their dependence upon the historical process. Instead of framing the object in terms of its dependence upon subjective, conceptual conditions, he wants to reframe the concept in terms of its dependence upon objective, historical conditions. Adorno’s reversal of Kant, of course, mirrors Marx’s critique of Hegel. He takes this reversal to be the required platform for a “full, unreduced experience in the medium of conceptual reflection.”<sup>40</sup> To be clear, Adorno considers a *reduced* experience not only one, like Kant’s, that collapses all the conditions of knowing into the subject (idealism), but also one that naively underestimates the transcendental or subjective conditions for the possibility of knowledge (“naïve realism”). An *unreduced* conception of experience

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<sup>39</sup> O’Connor, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic*, 159.

<sup>40</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 13.

must account for both sides of the process of knowing.

Although Adorno suggests a conception of experience in reaction to the Kantian one, there is a part of the Kantian project that Adorno remains wholeheartedly committed. It is the idea that nonconceptuality (in Kant's case, empirical intuition and in Adorno's case, historical experience) without concepts is *blind*. The view assumes that the knowing subject is most characterized by a bundle of concepts. This means that if the subject is to have any role at all in the process of knowledge, that role must invariably be a *conceptual* role. This Kantian presupposition that Adorno seems to take over uncritically from Kant (and Hegel) ignores the phenomenological view that consciousness is characterized foremost by intentionality rather than conceptuality, and that the intentionality of consciousness is not dependent upon concepts.

Adorno reaches for a "full, unreduced experience," but because of what he says next: "in the medium of conceptual reflection," he loses the kind of experience for which he reaches. Although the nonconceptual is played up as that which can negate conceptual identity and supply a critical component, it turns out to be a rather thin, indeterminate placeholder for everything that the concept cannot contain, and to which we can only have access indirectly by means of concepts themselves. I am suggesting that it is a problem for Adorno to deny any kind of knowing proper to nonconceptual experience. The nonconceptual side of the concepts are blind without those very concepts, but if so, by Adorno's account, the nonconceptual side loses verifiability. Yet all of Adorno's critical capacity comes from this nonconceptual domain. If its verifiability is unsuccessful, Adorno's critique of

phenomenology would turn against himself and jeopardize the critical potential of Adorno's own project.

I do not mean that nonconceptuality cannot at all be verified. I mean only that I do not see how it can by Adorno's account. The concept alone cannot account for the kind of nonconceptuality that Adorno has in mind. Furthermore, it seems there is, indeed, more than the concept alone that is at work in justifying Adorno's claims about nonconceptuality. There are any number of immediate intuitive experiences that play an unacknowledged role, in the background, that serve to fill out what Adorno says happens by means of an immanent conceptual framework.

Recall that Adorno's response to the problem of accounting for nonconceptuality refers to "the 'more' which the concept is equally desirous and incapable of being."<sup>41</sup> In other words, the concept's own inclination toward expression, and the concomitant failure of that expression, is supposed to account for the "sense of nonidentity." This is one of Adorno's bases for the notion of immanent critique: a demonstration of the failure of concepts to reflect experience *immanently*, i.e., by means of reflecting on the concept. Indeed, this is the basis for the very idea of *Selbstbesinnung*. But how are we supposed to establish conceptual evidence for the "experience of the failure of concepts"?<sup>42</sup> Are we to admit that this experience is itself part of the concept? I think it is worth considering whether this experience of conceptual inadequacy is noticed *indirectly* (i.e., something that is mediated by the concept), or whether it is something given *directly* in the act of expressing (or in trying to express) an experience, or in other intentional acts? The more fundamental

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<sup>41</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 162.

<sup>42</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.

question, then, is whether the experiences of longing and failing are conceptual or intentional. If the experiences or the meaning of such experiences (for example, of longing or failing) are mediated, then a concept is required in order for these experiences to be meaningful. However, if that were the case, Adorno could no longer claim that concepts have a dependency upon these experiences (or any other socio-historical experience), but that is the idea at the very basis of Adorno's "reversal" of Kant's Copernican turn. Put in a slightly different way: if all meaning is mediated, it is mediated by means of concepts; therefore the concept has to prepare the way for the meaning of (historical) experience. In effect, not only is there no longer any way to account for nonconceptuality, but the subject (the concept or constellation of concepts) is that which provides the meaning of (historical) experience. The reversal of Kant is thereby unsuccessful.

For Adorno, there is never a time when the subject-object relation is not encumbered by conceptual determination: mediation all the way down. O'Connor says that, "the subject must thereby always be in a conceptual relation to the object. Subject and object do not melt into some kind of nonconceptual unity."<sup>43</sup> Indeed, *nonconceptuality without concepts is blind*. However, if my interpretation of Adorno's view of perception is accurate, the evidence does not support the Kantian presupposition, especially insofar as one admits, as Adorno does, that there is often a discrepancy between what I want to express and what I am able to express conceptually. If there is something I want to express that is conceptually inexpressible, that something, whatever it is, has to be *meaningful* to me even if it's

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<sup>43</sup> O'Connor, *Adorno's Negative Dialectic*, 7.

not something conceptualizable. Or if it is conceptualizable, it has to have meaning prior to its conceptualization. There has to be content that I can “see” (intuit) and is given as at least significant enough that I would want to express it, rather than a mere empty reference to particularities that abstract concepts lack. Why indeed would I be longing or yearning to express this so-called “excess” if, even though inexpressible, it is not terribly important and given *as* important (i.e., as something of value)?

Foster explains that immanent critique discloses “the excess of what strives for expression over what concepts are able to say. ...[and] the excess of what we want to say over what they bring to language is made possible by a longing *intrinsic to the concept*, by its yearning to put experience into words.”<sup>44</sup> But whatever it is that concepts do, it does not include striving, longing, yearning, or anything that involves emotional and/or intentional comportment. A concept cannot be “desirous.” These are metaphors of intentionality that Adorno is attributing to concepts. But this is not a minor point, because it means that if the metaphor breaks down, this longing may not actually be immanent to the concept at all, threatening the very source of negation. It is one thing to claim that conceptual content holds within itself some reference to nonconceptual experience, but it is another thing to say that the concept is its own impetus toward that content. With the latter, I cannot agree. Longing is not a feature of a concept; it is a feature of a person<sup>45</sup>—of people struggling, among other things, to conceptualize their own experiences. If longing is

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<sup>44</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29-30.

<sup>45</sup> I use “person” here both colloquially and technically. Scheler’s philosophy of the person is based ontologically on the being of spirit, and spirit is most basically the center of intentionality (or “act-center”) of a human being.

something intrinsic to the concept, how would this longing be distinguishable from the (formal) meaning content of the concept? Perhaps this is a question that only a phenomenology of longing can disclose.

As a lived (i.e., personal) experience, longing is neither formal (because it is personal), nor conceptual (because one need not conceptualize longing in order to long [for conceptual expression]). It appears conceptual, however, when the sphere of the person is excluded from consideration. I worry that Adorno tends toward the depersonalization of knowing (by means of the full exclusion of the realm of intentionality) for the sake of the success of the immanent dimension of critique. That is to say, he is adopting what Husserl calls the “natural attitude,” which considers matters from a third-personal standpoint, removed from personal involvement. The natural attitude alienates the intentional sphere of the person from the person’s own experience.

Far from being intrinsic to concepts or in some way dependent upon them, longing is not only external to the concept—grounded in the intentional acts of persons—but is also not conceptual. I argue it is part of an entire constellation of nonconceptual, intuitive experiences relevant to the sphere of intentionality. I mentioned before that even if it is impossible to grasp that which exceeds the limits of a conceptually constituted structure of experience, “it is possible to experience those limits *as* limits.”<sup>46</sup> What my argument amounts to is a claim that this experience of the limitation of the concept is not itself a conceptual experience, that is to say, mediated by concepts. It may be an experience that refers to the experience

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<sup>46</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 29.

of thinking, but it refers to something immediately given in thinking as an intentional act and one that depends for its meaning at least upon the prior intuitive experiences of longing and failing.

Longing and failing are only two intuitive experiences of potentially many that underlie and prevent the collapse of Adorno's analysis, but they are experiences whose possibility he explicitly rejects. These are experiences of the intentional structure of persons rather than features imbedded within concepts. Longing and failing can be employed metaphorically only insofar as we experience them in a lived manner, and having the lived-experience of longing and failing is the normal way one comes to understand what longing and failing are, that is to say, by intuiting essence of those phenomena in the execution (*Vollzug*) of the intentional acts.

### **Phenomenology's Critical Potential**

While Adorno needs to account for the possibility of critique, I am urging that it does not follow that the only possible space for the negation of conceptual identity comes by means of the concept's own immanent reference (i.e., to nonconceptualities). To be sure, the phenomenologist is able to follow Adorno's claim that concepts have a reference beyond their formal content. Foster explains that "Rather than simply subsuming experience as dismembered conceptual contents, the concept [according to Adorno] becomes a riddle the deciphering of which *points* to the historical world."<sup>47</sup> So far this is phenomenologically acceptable.

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<sup>47</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 90.

However, he goes on to say that it is the concept alone that “discloses the world in the form of spiritual experience.”<sup>48</sup> The phenomenologist cannot follow Adorno down this exclusively conceptual road. Rather, the concept provides a different form of expression—a universalized expression—of a world previously disclosed intuitively.

David Held’s *Introduction to Critical Theory*, expresses Adorno’s position succinctly: “Without conceptuality we could not grasp [objects]. But objects do not therefore dissolve into concepts.”<sup>49</sup> While I appreciate what Adorno is attempting to achieve, not only is this a rather thin line to tread as well as a difficult position to maintain, but it ignores the phenomenological insight that intentionality, and not conceptuality, is first required to “grasp” objects. The issue, therefore, is not about whether objects do not dissolve into concepts, but about whether concepts are the only way to account for the meaning of objects. So Adorno has to claim that objects do not dissolve into concepts, *despite the fact* that concepts are required for the meaning of objects, leaving the burden of proof (and a rather difficult one) upon the concept itself. In contrast, the (non-Hegelian) phenomenologist can affirm that objects do not dissolve into concepts, and that they do not, precisely *because of the fact* that concepts are not required for objects to be meaningful. Phenomenology can point to the non-cognitive meaning of objects as *evidence* for nonidentity, rather than an obstacle to overcome.

I will argue that without pre-theoretical experience, this elusive “sense” that the

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<sup>48</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 90.

<sup>49</sup> David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 213.



concept carries more than formal meaning by containing an experiential reference is unexplainable. That is to say, the sense of nonidentity is unexplainable by means of concepts alone. It is precisely the intuitive, phenomenological experience, and precisely because of its immediacy, that provides a gauge or measure for how accurately or inaccurately our concepts and thinking refer to objects. Adorno even seems to acknowledge this briefly when he writes that “the datum [i.e., the Given], the irremovable *skandalon* of idealism, will demonstrate time and again the failure of the hypostasis.”<sup>50</sup> (SO 142). Without a different source of meaning *outside* of, and *prior* to, the concept, the leverage of negation and critique against the formal dominance of the concept remains weak and largely insignificant.

A demonstration that meaning does not depend upon concepts, that not all knowledge is equivalent to conceptual cognition is the most central aim of this work. More specifically, I hope to show that phenomenological intuition does not make phenomenology just another kind of identity-thinking, but that, insofar as it is nonconceptual (and more specifically *preconceptual*), intuition is in fact a robust source of nonidentity which can be brought to bear critically upon the formal expression of concepts, making possible a phenomenological critique of the tendency to prioritize conceptual identity into ideology.

One of the main reasons phenomenology contains this critical dimension is because, as Adorno correctly claims, philosophy must inevitably operate by means of concepts. In an outstanding passage, Adorno writes, “Necessity compels philosophy to operate with concepts, but this necessity must not be turned into the

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<sup>50</sup> Theodor Adorno, “Subject and Object,” in *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O’Connor (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 142.

virtue of their priority—no more than, conversely, criticism of that virtue can be turned into a summary verdict against philosophy.”<sup>51</sup> Adorno rejects the phenomenological rendition of intuition because it serves as a form of identity, but if it is an identity at all, it is a *nonconceptual one* that cannot force its way into a form of identity-thinking.

Insofar as phenomenology is philosophy, it must consistently deal with the sphere of the given, conceptually, by bringing intuition to cognition. And since the intuitive sphere is constituted by its own domain of meaning, the intuitive domain of meaning is consistently incommensurable with its conceptual approximation thereby maintaining a consistent sense of nonidentity. The phenomenologist is consistently forced up against that part of his or her thinking that thought cannot contain since the intuitive backdrop of thinking is constantly there both calling for recognition and on the verge of slipping away due to the failure of recognition.

This is the “dialectical” space of phenomenology: the interplay between intuitive content and the inevitable conceptual (and inadequate) way of expressing that content. The phenomenologist consistently seeks to return to the intuitive given but finds the return hindered by the limitations of the conceptual framework as the only possible way of returning, philosophically. I will go so far as to say that the source of conceptual negation is more robust than the nonconceptual space for which Adorno allows. We can intuit much more about the nonconceptual than Adorno is willing to admit. The nonconceptual contained within the space of concepts renders nonconceptuality unopposing. In a sense, I suppose that I am using Adorno’s most

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<sup>51</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 11.

famous critical tool, immanent critique, against him. I am suggesting that some of Adorno's philosophical commitments are inconsistent with his philosophical aims. He supports a paradigm that does not properly serve his own interests and rejects one that I think can be of great assistance.

To be sure, I am not suggesting that phenomenologists always, or even primarily, use their investigations critically, and to be fair to Adorno's critique, phenomenologists have typically viewed their philosophical endeavor as more expository than critical, insofar as phenomenology is understood as a method of description. Phenomenology is a kind of philosophy that maintains a focus on simply what shows itself by means of the certain attitudes by which phenomena are presented. The phenomenological attitude is not inherently a critical attitude. However, they are not mutually exclusive either. I do not claim that phenomenology is itself a "critical theory" in the strict Frankfurt School sense of the project, but that it has a critical capacity. The argument of this work lends itself to the suggestion that considering phenomena phenomenologically is able to improve social criticism inasmuch as it is possible to maintain a critical attitude within, or at least alongside of, the phenomenological attitude.

There is a sense in which, for Adorno, the upshot of immanent critique is the ability to avoid the reduction of experience to which, he thinks, the description of phenomena will inevitably amount. He thinks that describing experience conceptually, the way phenomenology does, degrades the experience. Foster states, according to Adorno's objection to phenomenology, that "the attempt to *describe* what is outside of causal-mechanical thinking *with* classificatory concepts will end

up with the empty husk of the concept in its possession, not the richness of the nonconceptual.”<sup>52</sup> Interestingly, this statement is an apt summation of my objection to Adorno’s critical theory, since, in his view, nonconceptuality must be framed entirely within the context of classificatory concepts. In fact, I argue that this statement pertains to Adorno all the more because while phenomenology fixes the nonconceptual within an intuitive form of knowing, making it accessible (even if not entirely cognizable), Adorno is unclear how, by means of the concept alone, a reference to the nonconceptual can even survive. Of the two, I find phenomenology more capable of offering the “richness of the nonconceptual,” including the historical features of the object, by which it can reveal the limits of conceptual determinations.

Foster’s claim that phenomenological description is left with the “empty husk of the concept” cannot hold up against what phenomenological description has shown to be capable of bringing to sight. In fact, one reason for phenomenology’s success is due to the same reason Adorno gives for the possibility of immanent critique: that concepts hold within their content an experiential reference. As long as one in fact remains—as much as possible—within the phenomenological attitude, and as long as a phenomenology is understood as a portrayal of an experience irreducible to the description, then an experiential recognition, rather than simply a conceptual understanding, is not only possible but likely.

On the other hand, as Foster again explains, “The true dialectician must be aware of [the] betrayal by her language, and must force language to work against its

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<sup>52</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 94.

tendency to emasculate experience.”<sup>53</sup> Again, it is no doubt the case that this awareness—the critical dimension phenomenology, or “critical experience”—is often lacking in “pure” phenomenologies. However, the very phenomenological endeavor (i.e., to bypass for a time the concept and return to the nonconceptual) bears its own admission to the fact that the discursive part of their philosophical task cannot serve as a substitute, nor ought to stand in, for the experience itself. The language employed is meant to be evocative, serving as a “pointer,” as Scheler says, in order to enable another “to see what can only be seen.” There must therefore be either an implicit or explicit acknowledgment of a character of nonidentity in the articulation of phenomena.

### **Why Scheler?**

My choice to use Scheler’s philosophy as a paradigm for the project of working out a critical phenomenology is not to suggest that only Scheler’s phenomenology can be conducive for this project. However, my choice to use Scheler is not arbitrary either. To be sure, there are plenty of French phenomenologists who, because of their Marxist influences (e.g., Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, etc.) or their explicit turn from subjective priority (e.g., Levinas, Marion, etc.), would be great candidates and worth exploring. But among the early (German) phenomenologists, and those whose philosophies are more true in comparison to the original phenomenological vision, Scheler’s philosophy is of particular importance for making a connection between phenomenology and critical theory. In addition to the two reasons I will soon

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<sup>53</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 90.

provide, it is worth mentioning a largely unknown historical connection that makes the Frankfurt School relation with Scheler particularly worth exploring.

### *Historical Considerations*

The early 1920s was a period of significant new horizons for social theory in Germany. In fact, 1923 specifically was a decisive year, witnessing three important events. First, Georg Lukács' *History and Class Consciousness* and Karl Korsch's *Marxism and Philosophy* were both published, which are known for their critical (and controversial) reinterpretation of orthodox, or "scientific," Marxism.<sup>54</sup> Next, the *Institut für Sozialforschung* was founded.<sup>55</sup> The Institute, whose research Max Horkheimer later called "critical theory of society," became the (unofficial) school for the advancement of the new Western Marxist tradition. And finally, in the same year, Max Scheler embarked on a social research project at the University of Cologne which he called the "sociology of knowledge."<sup>56</sup> Scheler and the Frankfurt School

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<sup>54</sup> Leon Bailey, *Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Comparative Study in the Theory of Ideology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 7-8.

<sup>55</sup> See Martin Jay, *Dialectical Imagination: A History of the Frankfurt School and the Institute for Social Research, 1923-1950* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) and David Held, *Introduction to Critical Theory: From Horkheimer to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).

<sup>56</sup> By 1923, Scheler already had two trial essays published on the sociology of knowledge: (1) Max Scheler, "Die positivistische Geschichtsphilosophie des Wissens und die Aufgabe einer Soziologie der Erkenntnis," *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie*, vol. 1, no. 1, 1921. (2) Max Scheler, "Weltanschauungslehre und Wissenssoziologie," *Kölner Vierteljahreshefte für Soziologie*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1922. Both essays were reprinted in the two-volume collection of essays *Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre*, Leipzig 1923/24 (GW, VI). This collection of essays was one of two collections which initiated the attempt to develop the sociology of knowledge in detail. The second is Scheler's edited collection *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens*, published in 1924. And in 1926, Scheler published his major work on the sociology of knowledge, *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* (GW, VIII), which includes his *Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens* ("Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge," trans. Manfred Frings (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul,

held the common goal to steer social theory away from a positivist approach toward a philosophically-grounded interdisciplinary approach.

The social research institute in Cologne, the *Forschungsinstitut für Sozialwissenschaft*, had opened four years before the one in Frankfurt. It was originally under the direction of Christian Eckert when the school in Cologne was converted from the status of a local academy to a university in 1919.<sup>57</sup> Scheler was hired that same year by an invitation from the Cologne's Catholic mayor, Konrad Adenauer, who led the university's reestablishment. The mayor's Catholicism is important because the new university in the Rhineland was founded in part with the intent of being amenable to the Catholic faith.<sup>58</sup> Toward that end, Adenauer invited Scheler to assist as director of the sociology department specifically to represent the Catholic intellectual tradition at the university.<sup>59</sup> Both Adenauer and Scheler were prominent members of the Catholic Centre Party. The other two co-directors of the Sociological Institute besides Scheler were the liberal German Democrat, Leopold von Wiese, and the Social Democrat, Hugo Lindemann. Selecting scholars with these Party-affiliations was deliberate because it was important that the Cologne

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1980), and *Erkenntnis und Arbeit* ("Cognition and Work," trans. Zachary Davis, forthcoming from Northwestern University Press).

<sup>57</sup> Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories, and Political Significance*, Michael Robertson, trans., (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995), 19-20.

<sup>58</sup> John Raphael Staude, *Max Scheler (1874-1928): An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 101. Staude points out that "the majority of German universities [were] dominated by a strong anti-Catholic liberal tradition." (101).

<sup>59</sup> As many commentators point out, most recently Dan Zahavi, "Shortly after taking up the position, however, Scheler publicly distanced himself from the Catholic faith. This alienated him not only from his erstwhile supporters in Cologne, but also from many of his phenomenological colleagues who, owing to his influence, had converted to Catholicism." (Dan Zahavi, "Max Scheler," in A. Schrift (ed.): *History of Continental Philosophy III* (Edinburgh: Acumen Press, 2010), 173.)

sociological institute be represented by the three parties that comprised the Weimar coalition, as the parties most committed to Germany's new democratic system.<sup>60</sup>

Since the time of his appointment to Cologne, Scheler's work gravitated toward more sociological themes. This may have been in part because of the interests and research of his students, with whom Scheler began working out the details of a sociology of knowledge. He presented a well-received paper at the Fourth German Sociological Congress of 1924 to such distinguished sociologists as Ferdinand Tönnies, Werner Sombart, Alfred Weber, Robert Michels, and Max Adler.<sup>61</sup> It has been noted that this lecture and his "ensuing publications...led to [Scheler's] selection as successor to Franz Oppenheimer as the Chair of sociology at Frankfurt in 1928."<sup>62</sup> But Scheler was not only appointed at Frankfurt to replace Oppenheimer for sociology, but also to replace Hans Cornelius as Chair of philosophy.<sup>63</sup> Scheler's appointment disappointed Cornelius, who had hoped that the position would go to Max Horkheimer. John Stuade explains the reasons the joint philosophy-sociology position would likely have appealed to Scheler:

The faculty there included some of the brightest young men in the social

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<sup>60</sup> This is important for reasons in comparison to the direction of the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt. When Horkheimer became director, he was insistent that the position have the status of a "dictator." However this fact is also very ironic given their resistance to the political dictatorship of the Nazi Party and their stance against authoritarian personalities.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher Adair-Totef, trans., *Sociological Beginnings: The First Conference for the German Society for Sociology* (Liverpool University Press, 2006), 37.

<sup>62</sup> John Scott, *Fifty Key Sociologists: The Contemporary Theorists* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 144. Franz Oppenheimer was appointed to Frankfurt in 1919 (the same year Scheler was appointed at Cologne), to the first Chair dedicated to Sociology in Germany. This was the position Scheler would have held if he was not prevented to do so by his death. Scott does not explicitly mention which of Scheler's publications were significant, but it likely pertains to the 1925 publication of Scheler's *Die Wissensformen und die Gesellschaft* which includes Scheler's "Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge," and "Cognition and Work."

<sup>63</sup> Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School*, 47.



sciences as well as many of Scheler's old friends and acquaintances. Among the younger men, Scheler anticipated assistance in his research on the sociology of knowledge from Karl Mannheim and Theodore Adorno. He also looked forward to discussing the sociology of religion with Gottfried Salomon, who had been Ernst Troeltsch's assistant in Berlin. Richard Wilhelm and Rudolf Otto sponsored an Oriental Institute that interested Scheler enormously. There he hoped to learn more about Eastern methods of meditation and self-control that had fascinated him for many years.<sup>64</sup>

Scheler died on May 19<sup>th</sup> 1928, just before taking up his new post at Frankfurt.

The post was offered to Paul Tillich in 1929. One might wonder what Scheler's philosophy would have brought to the burgeoning intellectual atmosphere there. To be sure, Scheler would have contributed a phenomenological voice, with a social philosophy and ethical theory heavily influenced by this voice. Even if phenomenologists and critical theorists could work in the same location, could it be that their philosophies work together?

### *Social and Historical Reality*

The differences between what critical theorists and phenomenologists refer by what I have been calling the space of the nonconceptual should not be downplayed. For Adorno, this most certainly does not refer to *phenomena* in the phenomenological sense insofar as an object, in this case, is indifferent to reality. Adorno's idea of the nonconceptual points to the concept's own bearing and connection to a social and historical position. It refers, that is, to *historical experience*. It would seem that this difference would amount to an insurmountable aporia that would forever exclude working out points of synthesis between phenomenology and critical theory, the phenomenological experience and historical

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<sup>64</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 249.

experience could not coincide. I grant that not all versions of phenomenology are equally able to overcome this difference. Versions of phenomenology such as Husserl's that focus primarily upon the subjective conditions for an object to appear the way it appears and that base these conditions specifically within the sphere of theoretical consciousness, could not supply the important connecting points that I argue Scheler can provide.

Scheler's commitment to phenomenology should not be downplayed, and as I will argue, his phenomenology is a mainstay throughout all of this foray into sociology and metaphysics.<sup>65</sup> He is committed to the phenomenological idea that the givenness of objects and the meaning of an object do not depend upon settling the problem as to whether that object bears reality. In fact, Scheler goes so far as to say that reality as such is not a knowable aspect of an object. According to the epistemic criteria of consciousness, whether an intentional object is real is never decipherable according to modes of consciousness alone. Scheler therefore follows Kant's thought that existence is not something that is able to be logically proven. However, although we are not able to possess cognition of an object's reality, we are able to have knowledge of the process of objectification, which is inextricably grounded within the experience of reality.

According to Scheler, we can be assured of the reality of things around us, not because their reality is knowable, but because things around us become objects of

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<sup>65</sup> Prevalent readings of Scheler's work as a whole suggest that when Scheler began to focus on metaphysics and philosophical anthropology his phenomenology diminished drastically. I will argue, in contrast, that Scheler could not have come to his metaphysical and anthropological conclusions without a heavy reliance on his phenomenology, and that because of this reliance, his phenomenology has an important place in all of his later writings. I intend to downplay the disparate "periods" in Scheler's career.

cognition necessarily by means of an experience of their existence. Even things that cannot strictly speaking be called real—whether they are ideal, or “irreal,” or illusory, or fictitious, or virtual, or spiritual, or immaterial, or perceptual appearances, such as shadows, rainbows, or colors, or even mere hallucinations—all have their original rootedness, *as intentional objects*, in the experience of reality.

Why is this possible?

Reality, for Scheler, is not given in conscious acts according to the consistent verifiability of phenomena as Husserl maintains, but rather within our active and practical comportment, and in particular, by means of the experience of resistances (*Widerstand*) within our drive-based striving played out within practical behavior. As I will show, the experience of reality and the experience of temporality are grounded within the same practical behavior. On the one hand, spatiality and temporality are given (respectively) within the experiences of the ability to move oneself and to modify oneself and one’s surroundings; reality, on the other hand, is given in the *resistances* to the efforts for movement and modification. Scheler thinks that it takes a phenomenology of these modes of behavior and what these behaviors yield in order to show the common roots of history (temporality) and reality. According to Scheler, experiences that refer to unreal things still require living within historical reality. Without encounters with real experiences to begin forming the pathways of objectification, the phenomenologist would never come to “see” anything; without resistances, individuals could objectify nothing and therefore could have no “world” of which to be conscious.

Additionally, and as I will show, the accomplishments that Scheler has

accomplished within the sphere of the sociology of knowledge suggest that the process of objectification and the conditions for the possibility of intentional objectivity also always involve social constitution. There is no asocial vantage point as some interpret Scheler to have maintained. Scheler's ability to include a robust account of history and society and the relevant factors that influence knowledge within what remains for him a phenomenological way of doing philosophy makes Scheler's philosophy tend toward what I'm calling a critical phenomenology. But it also makes Scheler a more suitable candidate than Husserl for this particular project. In short, I argue that what Adorno calls "a knowledge mindful of the historic positional value of the object in its relation to other objects" not only does not exclude phenomenological (i.e., intuitive) lived-experience but it is required in order to have any orientation toward objects and conception of history or value.

But, even if Scheler has a particular advantage over Husserl, what about with respect to Heidegger? What advantage does Scheler's philosophy have over the great existential phenomenologist for this project, who has done so much work in showing how temporality and ontology are intertwined. Heidegger lacks candidacy because of his rejection of the place that values and the comportment toward values have within the sphere of ontology. I will argue that the sphere of values and the attitude of love that discloses them are important for a successful phenomenological critique of ideology.

### *Ideology Critique*

A culminating element of the idea of critical phenomenology is establishing the

basis for the possibility of a phenomenological critique of ideology. I will do this by invoking, to some extent, Scheler's value theory, but especially the attitude Scheler suggests is important for the givenness of values. However, it is perfectly appropriate to wonder why a value framework is important since critical theorists espouse social critique without recourse to values or ethical theory. I take Scheler's value theory to be indicative not of an ethical theory as such, but of a metaethics, or the condition for the possibility of ethical theory. Arguably, Scheler's theory of values is more of an occasion to say something about the person than about principles of action and judgment, namely, the importance of loving as the basis of adequacy of both knowing and valuing.

Scheler thinks that love is a quality of intentionality that discloses the world according to the content by which we make ethical judgment, namely, values. Valuing is less indicative of formulating propositional judgments than it is indicative of a value-orientation one takes toward the world. This orientation or "attitude" (*Einstellung*) that is at the center of Scheler's conception of the person, is both conditioned by a particular set of values seen as well as that which determines the set of values that are able to be seen. Cultivating an attitude of love widens that possible disclosure of values. Love is the condition for valuing properly. Furthermore, since Scheler thinks that our cognitive and volitional comportment are largely determined by what we consider to be or not to be of value, intuitive and cognitive inadequacy is a sign of a lack of love.

Ideology, I will argue, is a theoretical outcome that is first based within improper valuing: overvaluation of some things and devaluation of others. That is to say,

ideology is the intellectual counterpart to certain psychological and emotional maladies, namely, idolatry (overvaluation) and resentment (devaluation). These kinds of inversions of value and valuing, Scheler suggests, originate within specific conditions, which include social conditions of inequality and oppression. It is largely within oppressive social conditions that individuals become sensitive to the values those conditions threaten. For example, I read Marx's theory of alienation as basically referring to a value-inversion. He condemns certain social conditions that threaten the existence of the higher values of workers as persons for the sake of lower ones. The problem is that surplus value (capital) is taken to be more important than each of the following: (1) the value of keeping the products of one's own labor, (2) the value of productive activity itself, (3) the value of higher human activities ("species-being"), and (4) the value of human interaction.<sup>66</sup>

Scheler characterizes a capitalistic mindset this way, as the structuring of society according to the privileging of lower values such as utility above higher personal values. However, he would also insist that the way to see social problems more clearly is not by means of a hatred of the social structure itself or by a revolution against the upper classes that are perpetuating that structure, but by orienting oneself to values properly, which can only be accomplished by means of love, rather than by hatred and violence.

Love however does not exclude the possibility of social criticism, but in fact it allows for it all the more. Love, rather than a different form of rationality, is that which allows us to see the values threatened within the way society is structured

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<sup>66</sup> Cf. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. Martin Milligan (New York: Dover, 2012), 67ff.

and to respond to their call, given within social experience. Scheler endorses a philosophy of openness and love which I suggest is a path that can provide a potent critique.

However, I also want to suggest that a reference to attitude discloses another, and perhaps more important, form of nonidentity. Scheler thinks that the adequacy of intuition requires both lived-experience as well as a loving attitude. This is significant because, even though it has been assumed that phenomenological intuition constitutes a moment of identity, for Scheler, intuition cannot contain an identity unless a person is orientated to values in the right way through love. But such a proper orientation requires a moral perfection that no human being is capable of achieving perfectly. This means that although we can have greater adequacy in intuition than we can with conceptual cognition, we cannot claim anymore the adequacy of identity.

One reason why our own individual value-orientations (what Scheler calls, "*ordo amoris*") will invariably be imperfect is because they will consistently reflect the value-preferences and the value-inversions that are embedded within society as a whole, the way society is structured and our own individual experiences in society, for example, our moments of *ressentiment* perpetuated by individual and social inequalities. If this is the case, I suggest that a more profound critique of society can be achieved by means of a reflection on our attitudes and value-orientations than that which can be achieved by means of a reflection upon our concepts. Self-reflection has to be more than about the way we think, its about the way we are oriented and attuned to the world. Instrumental rationality is itself a reflection of

the way society values things. Critical rationality can counter this trend by bringing out a better way of valuing by opposing the current valuations of society.

The two forms of self-reflection (attitudinal and conceptual) are not mutually exclusive. Just as our concepts, according to Adorno, have a history and reflect society, so do our attitudes and the way we value. The important point is that concepts are twice removed from society. The missing piece is in the acknowledgement that concepts not only reflect socio-historical conditions, but they reflect the valuing immanent to a particular history and society. This means that I am ultimately proposing a new form of and new meaning to immanent critique. A critique of a particular rationality of society is secondary; I am pointing to a more fundamental critique of the particular valuation of society that lends itself to a particular form of rationality as an expression of a change in valuation. These aspects of society are disclosed not first by a reflection upon our own concepts, but more originally by means of a reflection upon our own ways of valuing.

Phenomenology makes us reflect on our attitude: how is the way I fail to love reflected in the way society fails to love? In this way, Scheler's philosophy calls for a renewal of our hearts as a way to affect a renewal of society.



# 1

## THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL CRITIQUE OF PHENOMENOLOGY

### Immanence and Transcendence

Adorno had been preoccupied with phenomenology since his early dissertation work with Hans Cornelius, an avowed transcendental idealist. His critique of phenomenology evolved through three distinct stages throughout his career: first, during the period of his dissertation on Husserl (1924); second, just after he had joined the Institute for Social Research in 1938 with his essay "Husserl and the Problem of Idealism" (1940), and third, his culminating effort in his *Metacritique of Epistemology* (1956). All of these works turn largely on the issue of Husserl's idealism. Adorno means by idealism "a philosophy which tries to base such notions as reality or truth on an analysis of consciousness."<sup>1</sup> But Husserl's philosophy is not a straightforward idealism, even by Adorno's own admission. It is perhaps better characterized as an unsuccessful realism. Husserl's philosophy approaches idealism the more he attempts "to destroy idealism from within."<sup>2</sup> The phenomenological effort to return to the transcendent, objective domain of "the things themselves" ultimately amounts to another transcendental analysis of phenomena by an investigation of the immanent facts of consciousness. What bothered Adorno initially is what seemed to him to be a fundamental incompatibility between Husserl's notions of immanence and transcendence. In Adorno's words:

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<sup>1</sup> Theodor Adorno, "Husserl and the Problem of Idealism," *The Journal of Philosophy*, 37, no. 1 (Jan. 1940): 5.

<sup>2</sup> Adorno, "Husserl and Problem of Idealism," 6.

...on the one hand Husserl demanded the founding of all thing-like being only by going back to the immediate [immanent] facts [of consciousness]. On the other hand he considers the things as “absolute transcendentals” that might show themselves epistemologically only in their relation to the consciousness, but whose own being should in principle be independent of [i.e., transcend] consciousness.<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, Adorno pushes on a notoriously troublesome aspect of phenomenology. He is discontent with what has come to be called Husserl’s “transcendental insight.” This insight (which Husserl maintained firmly throughout his career) is best expressed in his *Cartesian Meditations*:

The Objective world, the world that exists for me, that always has and always will exist for me, the only world that ever can exist for me—this world with all its Objects...derives its whole *sense* and its *existential status*, which it has for me, from me myself, from me as the transcendental Ego.<sup>4</sup>

Adorno considers incompatible Husserl’s insistence on the very distinction between transcendence and immanence. Husserl’s notion of *noema*, or, intentional object, takes on a problematic equivocity, containing a bit of immanence and a bit of transcendence. Its hybrid characterization ultimately amounts to being “neither immanent nor transcendent, suspended so to speak in mid-air.”<sup>5</sup> What remains perplexing on this account is how to salvage the world of transcendent things when “the world of transcendent things is entirely dependent upon immanent being (as absolute being), and when immanent being needs no other thing to exist (“*nulla*

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<sup>3</sup> Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* I, 375. Quoted in and translated by Ernst Wolff, “From Phenomenology to Critical Theory: The Genesis of Adorno’s Critical Theory from his Reading of Husserl,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 32, no. 5 (2006): 558.

<sup>4</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1999), 26.

<sup>5</sup> Adorno. Quoted but not cited, in Fred Dallmayr, “Phenomenology and Critical Theory: Adorno,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 3 (Jan. 1976): 371.

're' indigent ad existendum").<sup>6</sup>

Adorno presents a rather standard objection against idealism. The critique is sufficient as far as it goes, but it does not deal with all that it needs to in order to be successful. There is a standard reply to this objection that is arguably a convincing way out, which concerns the careful way that Husserl characterizes the different sense of givenness. Husserl's notion of transcendence is hinged on the distinction between the presentation of something and its "presentification," or "presentiation" (*Vergegenwärtigung*). A phenomenon takes its transcendence not on account of that which is *presented* to consciousness, but that which is "presentified." While we only directly are presented with a single side of any given object of perception, we do not assume that the back-side of an object is not there. On the contrary, the back-side is presentified to consciousness, even in its absence.

Presentified phenomena do not refer to aspects of objects that are simply not given (as opposed to the aspects that are given, or presented), because, if so, the presentified portions of an object would not contribute to the overall intuitive sense of the object. Rather, the difference refers to different degrees of givenness. Presented phenomena indicates a presence that is given *as present*. Presentified phenomena indicates an absence that is given, *as absent*. In short, presentification is presented absence. Consciousness is aware of the transcendence of objects because intuitive acts do not fully disclose the entirety of any given object, and because objects are given as only partially disclosed (presented).

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<sup>6</sup> Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy, First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology*, trans. F. Kersten (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1983), 110, §49. Henceforth: *Ideas I*.

Incorporating a temporal dimension, the intentional structure that is indicated here is the interplay between *absence* and *anticipation*. Our expectation of objects coincides with the fact that many objects are familiar objects, and that we at least expect some coherence to our perceptual experience. We expect that an object is going to appear in similar ways every time I encounter it. But even if we encounter something that is unfamiliar, we still would have some expectation about the aspects of it that are absent from our gaze.

Husserl speaks of this dynamic also as the *horizontal* context of intuition, both with respect to the thing itself (which always has an “inner horizon”) and with respect to its context (“outer horizon”). Or, he speaks of objects always being given intentionally as “adumbrated”: one-sided and incomplete. While on the noematic pole, phenomena have an *adumbrated* character, on the noetic pole, consciousness has an *apperceptive* character. Apperception refers to the way consciousness is both presented with something definite and presented with something indefinite with respect to a single objective appearance. Consciousness is intentionally *aware* of the adumbrated characteristic of presentations. We are always consciously aware that every object is always more than what is given in intuition. As Husserl puts it,

Consciousness is at every moment a meaning of what is meant, but that at any moment, this something meant is more than what is meant at that moment explicitly. ... Each phase of perception was a mere side of the object, as what was perceptually meant. This *intending-beyond-itself* which is implicit in any consciousness, must be considered an essential moment of it.<sup>7</sup>

Recall Adorno’s initial description of dialectics as a “consistent sense of

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<sup>7</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 46

nonidentity.”<sup>8</sup> Is Husserl’s notion of adumbrated phenomena not harnessing a similar sense of nonidentity? Husserl says that even every act of intending, and at every moment “something meant is more than what is meant.” Likewise, Adorno insists that an object is always “more” than the concepts employed to understand it: “What it is,” he says “is more than it is.”<sup>9</sup> This reference to a kind of objective surplus, which is more than consciousness grasps is central to Adorno’s understanding of dialectics, which “says no more...than that objects do not go into their concepts without leaving a remainder.”<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Husserl says that “intending-beyond-itself” is an essential moment of intentional consciousness.

Perhaps it is possible to say that Husserl points to a dialectical pattern of consciousness that Adorno did not acknowledge. In any case, this kind of pattern is the very essence of what I am calling a “critical experience,” which is the condition for the possibility of a critique of consciousness. It is not just the incommensurability of intuition and conceptual articulation, but the self-awareness of this incommensurability within one’s own thinking and perceiving. It is clear that, in Husserl’s theory of perception, we are always consciously aware of the remainder, the horizon, the adumbration of the object. This awareness is evidence of the difference between *noesis* and *noema*.

My claim, however, is that this critical experience is an intuitive, and therefore, phenomenological experience (in a broad sense of the term “phenomenological,” as an investigation of the givenness of phenomena). The sense of nonidentity is not an

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<sup>8</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 161.

<sup>10</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 5.

outcome of reflection, it is given immediately in the intentional acts. Furthermore, the nonidentification of thought and thing, concepts and objects, cannot be disclosed simply by a reflection upon concepts unless reflection pulls from the domain of experience, whether this is a simple perceptual experience, or a historical or social experience. The concept alone cannot contain its own point of negation. But Adorno's insistence that "we should begin with the concept,"<sup>11</sup> instead of intuition (the "mere datum") is both unnecessary and not conducive for his own philosophical aims.

If in attempting to uncover a "full and unreduced experience," the critical theorist must do so only "in the medium of conceptual reflection," and immanent critique, the theorist lacks a point of reference to a nonconceptual experiential context by which to draw out the patterns of nonidentity between the object and the concept. Adorno indeed does offer a notion of the nonconceptual, but its status is more of a logical inference with respect to the particularity that all concepts, as concepts, cannot contain. By discounting intuition as a viable source of knowable content, which is also nonconceptual, his notion of the nonconceptual remains a logical necessity, but materially vacant. I suggest that a critical theorist must bypass the concept to start and first deal with the patterns of givenness that give content to concepts, and use the material intuition to consider critically the formal structures derived from the intuitions.

But there is no doubt that Adorno implies an experiential context, even if he does not elucidate it. In fact, the absence of elucidation of the nonconceptual domain is a

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<sup>11</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 153.

key point, since the materiality and particularity of things is undermined by the very elucidation. Conceptualization rescinds nonconceptuality; the concept crowds out the object. And Adorno sees the reification as a mark of immediacy, which “epistemological tradition places...on the subject’s side.”<sup>12</sup> He writes that “philosophy...forgot the mediation in the mediating subject...[and] As though to punish it, the subject will be overcome by what it has forgotten.”<sup>13</sup> In short, the subject has lost awareness of the way it is mediated by the object. Husserl, in contrast, ends up with a constituted transcendence. The transcendence of the intentional object is marked out by a set of criteria that requires subjective constitution. Husserl is very clear that the absolute status of consciousness and immanent being means that transcendent being depends upon consciousness, and consciousness depends upon nothing.<sup>14</sup> For Adorno, mediation means that constitution goes both ways, from the object to the subject, and the subject to the object.<sup>15</sup> However, it also means that amidst these paths of constitution, neither is reducible to the other. Adorno’s critical rationality is for the sake of bringing the point of mediation back to light, and offering the preponderance of the object, specifically with respect to the historical dependence of the subject. It is the domain of the real (historical and social reality) that philosophy forgot, and he is rightly suspicious of relying on consciousness for the disclosure of this domain.

Adorno uses the ambiguity between transcendence and immanence (his early critique) to cast a wider critical net, laying charges of the myth of *autonome ratio*

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<sup>12</sup> *Negative Dialectics*, 186.

<sup>13</sup> *Negative Dialectics*, 176.

<sup>14</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, §49.

<sup>15</sup> See, Brian O’Connor’s, *Adorno’s Negative Dialectic*.

(middle critique) and *prima philosophia* (metacritique). The central problem of Adorno's metacritique of Husserl is the antinomies that follow on account of the absolute status of transcendental subjectivity. According to Adorno, the crisis of phenomenology is the "crisis of idealism," which "comes at the same time as a crisis in philosophy's pretensions to totality."<sup>16</sup> Phenomenology, according to Adorno, asserts a transcendental first principle out of which everything should arise.<sup>17</sup> There is a relativity of all being to consciousness, but no relativity of consciousness to other beings. *Prima Philosophia* maintains the equivalence of beings with the foundational being, and as a result eliminates whatever is incongruent with the foundation. Adorno calls this the "original sin" of *prima philosophia*.

However, subjective reflection simply cannot offer an immediate foundation, first, because "subjectivity can never hope to absorb non-identical elements," and because the very notion of reflection indicates mediation. Adorno suggests that any such principle that is deemed foundational and first, is universal, and as universal, contains abstraction, as abstract it is conceptual, and finally, as conceptual it is necessarily mediated "and thus not the first."<sup>18</sup> Such a philosophy of a foundation, with which it makes all reality equivalent with the foundation, also has a propensity toward the construction of philosophical system—an identity without contradiction. But the system is a theoretical system, and a theoretical system is antinomical because it attempts to totalize the infinity; it puts into perpetual stasis, the dynamic; and it confines the unconfined. A system is necessarily a closed system, and

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<sup>16</sup> Adorno, "The Actuality of Philosophy," 25.

<sup>17</sup> Adorno, "Metacritique of Epistemology," *The Adorno Reader*, ed. Brian O'Connor (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2000), 117.

<sup>18</sup> Adorno, "Metacritique of Epistemology," 117.



anything closed is without movement.<sup>19</sup> But reality is historical—in perpetual movement—and as such, is incongruent with its subjective ground.

It is this kind of stasis that Horkheimer, earlier, characterized a traditional theory, in contrast to a critical theory. A critical theory is able, he says, to take society itself as an object. Rather than turning social and historical reality into an interconnected set of concepts, a critical theory critiques concepts on account of the lack of adequation with the historical and social reality of the objects, as well as a lack of awareness of this inadequation. It is attempt to bring to light that which has been hastily overlooked. But the possibility of a critical theory, is on account of the presupposition that concepts and objects do not entirely match. Unless we disclose the critical experience—a phenomenology of the discrepancy of concept and object—then it remains a presupposition, and the basis of the theory remain uncritical of its own presuppositions.

Husserl was aware that we may see things inadequately or that we judge incorrectly. Intentionality bears a spectrum of approximation, and Adorno fails to appreciate this. Adorno still seems to interpret Husserl's subjectivity along the lines of the old Kantian paradigm of that which Husserl was in the midst of reinterpreting. That is to say, he still takes the subject to be a bundle of concepts, and that the issue is still about the degree to which concepts and objects align and how we can tell. Certainly, conceptualization is a part of consciousness, but primarily consciousness *intends* objects, even before the formation of concepts sets in. So to interpret Husserl's phenomenology as essentially a Kantian idealist mistake whereby sensible

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<sup>19</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 26-28.

things are given meaning bestowed by the concepts of the understanding is disingenuous. Objects are not problematic for phenomenology: consciousness essentially intends, and whatever it intends is an object. This so-called “totality” that Adorno insists Husserl lays claim to is not a *conceptual* totality. If there is a totality at all, it must pertain to the “world,” which is the objects and their meanings are correlates of consciousness. It is an *objective* totality—but one that depends upon consciousness for its objectivity.

While, on the one hand, the *transcendence* of objects are not problematic for phenomenology, on the other hand, the *reality* of objects is problematic. “Object” is simply a relative term. Things require objectification by some a subject to become objects. It is not out of the realm of phenomenological possibility that there may be a sphere of real things that are not necessarily objective (have not become objectified). In fact, we will see that Scheler explains the matter basically in these terms. However, there is no such thing—strictly speaking—as an “object” that is not intended by consciousness. However, Husserl suggests that objects not only get their sense from consciousness, but also their *existential status*. Husserl’s phenomenology invariably *idealizes reality*. On account of the epoché and the ground of consciousness, the only way for Husserl to talk about reality is as an idea. While consciousness for Husserl is more dynamic than a bundle of concepts, in this case, Husserl is inclined to consider reality as a concept. Thus, Adorno’s critique that unequal things are forced within a kind of equivalence to consciousness is, in this case, perfectly on the mark. Again, reality is historical—in perpetual movement—and as such, is incongruent with its subjective ground.

## Reality and Its Idea

An object (*Gegenstand*, lit. “standing-against”) in the phenomenological sense is of course not equivalent with what is real (*wirklich*), and Husserl is careful not to fall into the fallacy that one must first be certain of something’s reality before we can be certain of something’s objectivity and meaning. All sorts of intentional objects are not real, but bear great cultural meaning and value: Achilles, Goethe’s Faust, dreams, and Santa Claus, etc. The ability to engage a world of sense and meaning independent from reality is the strength of phenomenology. But its strength is also its weakness because it poses a problem for the phenomenologist to take up reality itself as an object of investigation. If transcendental reflection operates precisely by disengaging from the “real” world, how does the question of reality (*Wirklichkeit*)<sup>20</sup> ever have an occasion to arise?

The question arises from the fact that “reality” is a *concept* that has meaning for us, and so something can only be counted as real if “it matches up to what reality *means* to us.”<sup>21</sup> Consider Adorno’s insistence that reality will always be unable to match up with a concept of reality. There will always be a remainder or a surplus that a concept cannot contain, and especially of the concept of reality. According to Husserl’s transcendental insight that states that the objective world derives the sense and status that it has for consciousness, from consciousness itself, two things are evident:

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<sup>20</sup> It is important to note that Husserl is referring to the term *wirklich*, real (or often translated as “actual”).

<sup>21</sup> A. D. Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, Routledge Philosophy Guidebooks (New York: Routledge, 2003), 159.

1. Something that has meaning for us is constituted in consciousness as having meaning for us.<sup>22</sup>
2. Something that has the status of actually existing (for us) is constituted in consciousness as existing.

These two go hand-in-hand since again whatever has the status of real gets that status from the degree that it matches up to the concept of what reality means. Two more questions arise: What does reality mean? And what sort of experience provides the meaning of reality and unreality?

In the *Cartesian Meditations*, Husserl refers to perceptual intuition, or “originary” perceptual experience, as the basis of the experience of reality. But the meaning of reality is not merely the thing perceived as perceived; this may be a relation of intentionality, not yet of reality. Reality is put out of play with the epoché not because it is not important, nor because it should be doubted, but because it can have, initially, no greater assurance for us than a mere belief, and beliefs qua beliefs do not qualify as appropriate premises for philosophical thinking. Reality, initially, carries only a meaning as something believed, and it is for that reason outside philosophical justification.

This provides the impetus for phenomenological thinking about reality, because it turns out that believing that an object that is given is also real varies in justification. These beliefs, as intentional acts, have more or less adequacy. Claims about reality have greater adequacy on account of the degree of “evident verification.” Verification refers to establishing evidence; reason is that by which we

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<sup>22</sup> A. D. Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 159.

verify or nullify. Therefore, it must be by means of *reason* that we *verify* the *truth* of being and non-being (*existence*). Husserl writes:

...we can be sure something is [real] only by virtue of a synthesis of evident verification... It is clear that the [truth of the reality] of objects is to be obtained only from evidence, and that it is evidence alone by virtue of which an 'actually' existing, true, rightly accepted object of whatever form or kind has *sense for us*.<sup>23</sup>

A "synthesis of evident verification" is, on the one hand, *intentional*: it refers to something toward which consciousness is directed, and on the other hand, it is *horizontal*: it refers to a set of fulfilled and unfulfilled (empty) intentions. That is to say, it refers to the intentional apperceptive structure of "intending-beyond-itself," described earlier. Furthermore, it seeks verification of those intentions that are less fulfilled—that which is more adumbrated or more in doubt. But all of this is already included in every act of perception: all perception as perception is intentional, apperceptive, and seeks verification of empty intentions. Perception of reality has greater justification the less contains the intentional ambiguity of empty intentions.

Verification is the transition from empty to fulfilled intention in evidential experience (self-evidence) and in this transition, reality is given.<sup>24</sup> As A. D. Smith explains, "to believe that something is real is just to rule out all possible forms of deception, illusion, misapprehension, hallucination, and so forth."<sup>25</sup> Thus, verification does not merely ascertain the reality of things, but ascertains the non-unreality of a thing, which thereby gives us the meaning and sense of reality. In other words, it is when perceptual experience breaks down, becomes ambiguous

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<sup>23</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 60.

<sup>24</sup> Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 161.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 164.

and inconsistent that one begins questioning the reality of the things perceived. Suppose upon waking, I walk out of my bedroom, and instead of entering the hallway, I find that that I am standing in the Amazon Rain Forest. It is the inconsistency of the perceptual experience that I begin to consider the unreality of what I perceive, perhaps that it is a dream. However, Husserl is not only concerned with eradicating suspicions of unreality, but with raising the status of the belief of reality to apodicticity (even those instances when we are not suspicious of reality of a situation).

Is apodictic certainty of reality possible, or is it invariably belief? Aspects of Husserl's own philosophy make apodicticity problematic. If, for example, "consciousness is at every moment a meaning of what is meant, but that at any moment, this something meant is more than what is meant at that moment explicitly,"<sup>26</sup> then perception will never be without some ambiguity. When there is a interplay of empty and fulfilled intentions, perceptual experience will fluctuate, sometimes noticing these aspects, other times noticing different ones. Furthermore, anticipation and expectation will invariably carry irreconcilable adumbration and emptiness of intention. Indeed, the very efforts of verification imply that something is initially empty and unverified. Husserl explains:

The evidence pertaining to Objects in a real Objective world...has an essential 'one-sidedness'—stated more precisely: a multiform horizon of unfulfilled anticipations (which, however, are in need of fulfillment) and, accordingly, contents of a mere meaning [of reality], which refer us to corresponding potential evidences.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 46.

<sup>27</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 61.

In other words, all remaining unfulfilled intentions refer us the potential verification of everything unfulfilled. As we proceed from evidence to evidence “This imperfect evidence becomes more nearly perfect..., but necessarily in such a manner that no imaginable synthesis of this kind is completed as an adequate evidence.”<sup>28</sup> The concept of adequacy for Husserl refers to evidence “in which there are no unfulfilled components. In such cases an object is not merely self-given but completely given. Everything that pertains to it would be given together all at once.”<sup>29</sup> But there is never a case where something given in the sphere of natural reality will have adequacy. We may find things to form a synthesis with relative consistency, but fulfillment in perfect, complete evidence is ruled out. Again, Husserl explains:

Any such synthesis of evidence must always involve unfulfilled, expectant, and accompanying meanings. At the same time, there always remains the open possibility that the belief in being will not be fulfilled.<sup>30</sup>

The inevitability of unfulfilled intentions disrupts the degree to which the evidence of real things can match up to the conceptual meaning of reality. Again, the sense of reality is put into perspective by means of a sense of something to be unreal, namely, when intentional inconsistencies of anticipations and unfulfilled intentions arise in the course of experience. However, to be certain of the reality of some object is to be certain that no such inconsistencies or unfilled intentions, not only will not, but cannot arise.<sup>31</sup> An object can be called a real object with certainty if and only if it is such a unity infinitely holding-good, standing up, proving itself experientially, *ad infinitum*, and where the object's not holding-good is

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<sup>28</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 61-2.

<sup>29</sup> Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 52.

<sup>30</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 62.

<sup>31</sup> Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 172-73.

unthinkable.<sup>32</sup> But, external evidence does not extend to the apodictic—to the impossibility of disconfirmation. Thus, reality is something that has meaning for us (logically) but a meaning that cannot be verified experientially. The logical meaning of reality provides the idea of reality: a complete synthesis of harmonious infinities of possible experience.<sup>33</sup> The modes of verification indicate simultaneously that such a complete degree of self-evidence is impossible; reality, therefore, can only have certainty as an *idea*:

...an *actual* object belonging to a world...is an *infinite idea*, related to *infinities of harmoniously combinable experiences*—an *idea that is the correlate of the idea of a perfect experiential evidence*, a complete synthesis of possible experiences.<sup>34</sup>

We arrive at a rather ironic situation: Adorno states that idealism is defined by “a philosophy which tries to base notions of reality...on an analysis of consciousness.”<sup>35</sup> This fact is not disputed. However, the same aspects of Husserl’s thought that were used earlier as an objection to Adorno’s critique of Husserl’s idealism and phenomenological totalization—the *transcendence* of the object on account of the adumbration of phenomena and the apperceptive character of intuition—are also those which confirm Husserl’s idealism on account of their role in revealing reality to be an idea. In other words, the very incompleteness of perception and intuition both confirms and challenges Husserl’s idealism. On the one hand, Husserl’s idealism is challenged insofar as adumbrated phenomena and unfulfilled intentions are evidence of the transcendent character of objects. But, on

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<sup>32</sup> Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 173.

<sup>33</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 62.

<sup>34</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 62.

<sup>35</sup> Adorno, “Husserl and the Problem of Idealism,” 5.



the other hand, idealism is confirmed insofar as that adumbrated phenomena and unfulfilled intentions make it so that the intentional objects cannot be verified to the degree required to be compatible with the meaning of reality. Although the adumbration of phenomena verifies the *transcendence of objects*, it also prevents the verification of the *reality of the objects*. When the meaning that reality has for us refers to the level of intentional fulfillment, then the inevitable imperfection of perceptual fulfillment (empty intention) prompts us to question the level of reality that is grasped. So, reality is invariably, at best, only believed. But this demonstrates all the more the importance of the transcendental reduction: that the only method that is justifiably philosophical—that can achieve apodictic verification of objects—is the one that disconnects with that which cannot itself have a status greater than belief, such as reality.

We have come to the core of the phenomenological problematic for the question of a critical phenomenology. A critical theory must be existentially concretized; it must refer to an objective social and historical reality without a problem. However, Husserl's analyses show that at the very point that a perceived thing matches up with the concept of reality (which thereby verifies reality) is also the very point that consciousness loses verification of the thing as transcendent. Additionally, the point that we verify the transcendence of the thing is also precisely the point that the reality of the object breaks down and loses verification. Whenever we verify reality, we cannot verify transcendence, and whenever we can verify transcendence, we can no longer verify reality. While Husserl's phenomenology can have a critical experience pertaining to the intentional object on account of its transcendence, it

cannot show—simply by the consciousness of transcendence—that those objects are real. To be sure, Husserl’s phenomenology does account for critical experience, which Adorno did not acknowledge. Even the most noetic kind phenomenology is not a philosophy of pure equivalence or identity between subject and object. Insofar as transcendence is verified, which Husserl verifies successfully, there is a degree of incommensurability between the intention (the subject) and the given (the object).

However, the kind of critical experience that Husserl is able to accommodate is limited insofar as it does not extend to the sphere of reality. Even if it is, in fact, on account of the reality of external objects that they are presentified and adumbrated, such a claim can only at best be a matter of belief since, insofar as there is adumbrated inconsistencies in the phenomena, their reality cannot be verified. The verification of their reality depends upon the extent to which they align with the concept. But the thing that is far more telling about the lack of critical experience in Husserl’s phenomenology is that throughout Husserl’s discussion of reality, the *concept* of reality seems to serve as the unquestioned measure of the *evidence* of reality. Perhaps it would have been fitting to submit the concept to critique. It is seemingly out of the question that the concept could itself be inadequate.

To be sure, the concept of reality does arise from evidence (i.e., of unfulfilled intentions) which, for him, is the kind of experience in which things are given as unreal. The idea of reality is formulated from this kind of experience. However, from the way I am interpreting phenomenology, as a critical phenomenology, it should never become the case where a concept is not submitted to critique or revision since there is always the chance phenomenological experience may reveal something new

about the phenomenon to which the concept refers. And furthermore, as it will become clearer in the second chapter, a concept cannot ever serve as a substitute for an experience because the concept is always only a more or less adequate symbolic approximation of intuitive experience. It is phenomenologically consistent that philosophical justification never be gained by how well intuition aligns with a concept. This means that Husserl's discussion of reality is phenomenologically inconsistent when it attempts to verify the experience of reality or unreality by the extent to which it aligns with a concept. This mistakes the derivative for the original.

Critical phenomenology constantly holds the concept in suspicion with respect to how well it approximates the experience. For example, the phenomenologist might consider whether there are other intuitions or additional kinds of experience by which things are given as real. We will take up the problem of reality again in the third chapter where we will consider Scheler's phenomenological evidence for the revised idea of reality.

### **Traditional and Critical Theory**

Phenomenological idealism is a symptom of a deeper ailment that is carried over into phenomenology from traditional scientific methods, or what Horkheimer first called "traditional theory." Descartes—the paradigmatic traditional theorist—retreats into the mind and attempts organize the spheres of being on account of the clarity of his own ideas. Phenomenological logic, Horkheimer thought, follows the traditional Cartesian, scientific view of theory, i.e., the sum-total of systematically linked propositions. Horkheimer suggests that Husserl's *Formal and Transcendental*

*Logic* refers to a view of theory as a self-enclosed set of logically connected propositions, which Horkheimer takes to be indicative of the phenomenological method in general. Phenomenology operates along the conventional lines of traditional theory, thereby eliminating its candidacy to be considered critical theory.

Horkheimer's brief remarks about Husserl's phenomenology have a variety of problems. Most importantly, by saying so little, he ultimately says nothing about phenomenology. Horkheimer might have established what Husserl's understanding of *theory* is, but not yet what *phenomenology* is. And the connection between phenomenology and Husserl's view of theory is left unexplained. On the other hand, there are no immediate reasons to disbelieve Horkheimer that phenomenology as pure logic follows the traditional and scientific model of theory. In fact, Husserl's transcendental logic, even if not strictly speaking an empirical-analytic scientific theory, is itself nothing less than the ultimate theory of science, and as such, is a "theory of theory." Husserl states that "only [transcendental logic] can be an ultimate, deepest, and most universal theory of principles and of norms of all sciences, and at the same time transform them into clarificatory and intelligible sciences."<sup>36</sup>

The charge against traditional theory is what I take to be the common root of all of the Frankfurt School criticisms of phenomenology, namely, the attempt to separate or disconnect theory from nature, or knowledge from interests. And this is a particular problem for Husserl's phenomenology because this separation is the most prominent feature of its most central doctrine: the transcendental reduction.

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<sup>36</sup> Husserl, *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis: Lectures on Transcendental Logic*, trans. Anthony Steinbock (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2001), 6.

The very phenomenological method operates by *disconnecting* meanings from things, or at least by taking hold of the meaning or sense (*Sinn*) and pushing aside the thing or entity. The residual outcome of the reduction is justified according to its purity. Husserl's phenomenological attitude takes its impetus from the fact that it is not part of the natural attitude. Within the phenomenological attitude, the phenomenologist thematizes an entire network of meaningful interconnections and relations, not between natural subjects and natural objects, but as an intentional network of consciousness, between *noesis* and *noemata* and the various noetic and noematic conditions of constitution. Indeed, this is phenomenology's strength—and we would be remiss not to acknowledge this. But, as I said before, its strength is also its weakness, and critical theorists find its weakness greater than its strength. Phenomenology is indeed traditional theory when considered when taken exclusively on the basis of the phenomenological reduction. In fact, it is traditional theory *par excellence* insofar as the “bracketing” or putting philosophically out of play from the natural attitude and belief about reality is its defining characteristic. This follows perfectly Horkheimer's critique of theory where “intellectual processes are detached from their matrix in the total activity of society.”<sup>37</sup>

Whereas critical theory takes seriously the connection between theory and the social life process and the way this connection historically constitutes knowledge and perception, traditional theory, Horkheimer notes,

corresponds to the activity of the scholar which takes place alongside all the other activities of a society, but in no immediately clear connection with them. In this view of theory...the real social function of science is not made

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<sup>37</sup> Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” in *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Continuum Publishing Company, 2002), 199.

manifest; it speaks not of what theory means in human life, but only of what it means in the isolated sphere in which for historical reasons it comes into existence.<sup>38</sup>

At no point did Horkheimer's article (nor Habermas' reexamination of Horkheimer's distinction nearly thirty years later) consider that the problem of phenomenology as they saw it, was not specifically a phenomenological problem, but rather a Cartesian problem. And at no point was it considered that the Cartesian components (in Husserl's structuring of phenomenology) may not in fact be part of phenomenological philosophy as such.<sup>39</sup>

In "Knowledge and Human Interests: A General Perspective," an essay that was the basis of Habermas' inaugural lecture at the University of Frankfurt (1965),<sup>40</sup> Habermas argues that a traditional theory is one that, on the one hand, attempts to free knowledge from the nexus of motivating interests (to "emancipate" reason from nature), and is, on the other hand, a theory that dupes itself into believing that the very enterprise of freeing knowledge from interests is possible, that is to say, traditional theory has an ideological character.

All theory tends toward emancipation, that is, toward a freedom or autonomy of some sort. In fact, *theoria* (θεωρία) not only means contemplation, but more basically, the *seeing of things*. The seeing of things requires a *theoros* (θεωρός), a seer or spectator. The word comes from *thea* (θέα) "a view" + *horan* (ὁρᾶν) "to see."

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<sup>38</sup> Horkheimer, "Traditional and Critical Theory," 197.

<sup>39</sup> It could be generalized that the shifts in the way phenomenology is practiced, and its specific domain of investigation, may be related to subsequent phenomenologists' rejection of the Cartesian framework upon which Husserl built phenomenological philosophy. Ironically, the Cartesian influence may have had greater appeal to German phenomenologists than French phenomenologists (e.g., Ricoeur).

<sup>40</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 301-317.

The ancients took the seeing of things to require a vantage point from which to see (“a view to see”). For example, in the *Phaedo*, Plato suggests that the philosopher (the spectator) must practice dying, i.e., to engage in a life of purification, in order to attain a position to see. This kind of life Plato proposes (the life of dying) is a life that emancipates the philosopher (in this case, the *theoros*, or spectator) from the bombardment of perceptual hindrances (the senses) and distractions (desires) of the body by means of the struggle to separate the soul from the body. Such separation is the meaning of both death and purification, and also guarantees the greater viewpoint in order to witness the *Logos* behind appearances.

Habermas points out that *theoria* pertains to the seeing of the cosmos. Not to its mutability (*doxa*), but to the immutable logic (*logos*) of the cosmos.<sup>41</sup> And just as in the case of *theoros*, the spectator, who, upon seeing the Olympian festival, abandons himself to the celebration and engages the spectacle—that is, just as theory tends toward action—so the philosopher is to engage the cosmic logos in order to internalize it, and reproduce it within his or her soul. “Through the soul’s likening itself to the ordered motion of the cosmos, theory enters the conduct of life.”<sup>42</sup>

Habermas interprets this traditional view of theory within a Husserlian context as one where knowledge is based upon a theoretical attitude. He quotes a passage from Schelling who maintains that “only Ideas provide action with energy and ethical significance.”<sup>43</sup> Husserl’s phenomenology, he thinks, is consistent with the attitude that “the only knowledge that can truly orient action is knowledge that

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<sup>41</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 301.

<sup>42</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 302.

<sup>43</sup> Friedrich von Schelling, *Werke*, (Munich: Beck, 1958-59), 3:299. Quoted in Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 301.

frees itself from mere human interests.”<sup>44</sup> Phenomenology as the condition for the possibility of scientific theory is not only an explanation of why science can know what it knows, but also a critique of the explanation the empirical sciences give for why it can know what it knows. Phenomenology as transcendental is therefore a critique of the “objectivism of the sciences,” namely, the presupposition that the cause of the knowledge of the world is simply on the part of a universe of objective facts with its own lawlike connections.<sup>45</sup> By not ascending to the phenomenological attitude, i.e., a transcendental one, the sciences furthermore fail to free their findings from interests rooted in the life-world.<sup>46</sup> Only phenomenology, which makes operative a transcendental logic, is the “science” to finally free knowledge from interest, thereby identifying “transcendental reflection, to which he accords the name of phenomenological description, with theory in the traditional sense.”<sup>47</sup>

However, Habermas notes Husserl’s insistence that the separation of theory from empirical interests does not cut theory off from practical life; phenomenology is said to have what Habermas calls a “therapeutic power.” According to Habermas, Husserl proposes that the purer the theory, the greater its veridicality, and therefore the greater its transformative potential for a new humanity. However, Habermas thinks this transformative potential is unfounded, primarily because a theory does not have normativity simply on account of its purity and veridicality. That is to say, truths by themselves need not contain value-judgments for the good life.

In fact, a theory loses its normative influence on human life the more knowledge

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<sup>44</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 301.

<sup>45</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 304.

<sup>46</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 305.

<sup>47</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 305.



is freed from interests, not on account of its purity. Habermas thinks that with the phenomenological disclosure of the constitution of objects, it discloses in turn the fact that every previous theory that missed the transcendental insight are invariably bound to their own concealed interests despite their attempts to free knowledge from these interests. In other words, phenomenology is the first to accomplish the kind of value-neutrality that the positive sciences only merely claim.

Phenomenology is therefore the best attempt so far to effect this separation between knowledge and interests precisely because it unlocks the constitutional elements of consciousness, and therefore more effectively avoids “objectivism.” The traditional theories of the classical tradition that try to do just that are in fact more relevant to life precisely in their failure to effect the separation adequately. And the reason the separation could not be adequately effected is because theory in the classical tradition was always bound up with cosmology, and the theory of cosmology is bound up with self-knowledge and the improvement of the soul by means of the imitation (*mimesis*) of the *logos* of the *kosmos*. Ancient philosophies have a practical orientation precisely because they do not accomplish a level of purity that the philosophers wanted. Thus, “Only as cosmology was *theoria* capable of orienting human action.”<sup>48</sup> Husserl, on the contrary, takes the traditional view of theory and purifies it of its cosmological contents, and by doing so, of its normativity, or, as Habermas puts it, of its “pseudonormative power from the concealment of its actual interest.”<sup>49</sup>

Pure description does not, by means of its purity, lead to proscriptive

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<sup>48</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 306.

<sup>49</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 306.

statements. However, we note that a statement does not lose a proscriptive or even critical orientation on account of its status as *description*. Herbert Marcuse makes a point to stress that the classical apophantic logic does not lose a critical function by its form “S is p.” To say that “man is free,” if the proposition is true, the copula “is” indicates an “ought.” Apophantic logic is the logic of judgment. In this case, it judges conditions in which persons are not free:<sup>50</sup> The proposition “S is p” not only contains a logical opposition to “S is not p,” but a normative opposition. This point assists Habermas’ argument because it is surmisable that classical *apophantos* remains normative and practically oriented because of the connection between theory and nature. Apophantic logic does not have the same orientation in phenomenology, but to be sure, not because of its status as description. Apophantic phenomenology loses a critical component because of the invariable purity of predication. Phenomenology purifies predicative judgments from the content of the world, even if the meaning of such judgments refer to the world; these judgments invariably refer to the world in the phenomenological attitude, after the performance of the reduction.

So according to Habermas, in freeing knowledge from interests, Husserl effectively denudes theory of practical significance the more that he is able to accomplish this freeing (just as classical traditional theories have practical significance on account of their inability to accomplish this task). This is also because the concept of value necessarily pertains to interest, and freeing knowledge from interests is also freeing theory from value. With Husserl’s phenomenology, Habermas thinks we arrive at a theory with ethical neutrality that is ultimately

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<sup>50</sup> Herbert Marcuse, *One-Dimensional Man*, trans. Douglas Kellner (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 131-33.

characteristic of the very positivism (“scientific [i.e., value-free] objectivism”) Husserl critiques.<sup>51</sup>

The second aspect of Habermas’ critique is that phenomenology, in more effectively freeing knowledge from interests, it still does not free itself from the ideology of theory. Phenomenology may have affected this separation more adequately than previous theory, but even phenomenology does not completely free knowledge from interests. There remains an interest in the purity of theory itself, an emancipatory interest, Habermas thinks, that has its psychological source in purification from the passions: *theoria* is *katharsis*. In Habermas’ words,

...the illusion of pure theory served as a protection against regression to an earlier stage that had been surpassed. Had it been possible to detect that the identity of pure Being was an objectivistic illusion, ego identity would not have been able to take shape on its basis. The repression of interest appertained to the interest itself.<sup>52</sup>

All theory, despite the traditional attitude of the theoretician, has knowledge-constitutive interests, even if these interests usually go unacknowledged. Recall the statement of Marcuse’s example mentioned earlier, “man is free.” The meaning not only implies that persons are free, but that persons seek to be free. Husserl’s critique of the objectivism of the sciences as having fallen from the status of true theory by not effectively freeing knowledge from interest, is hereby turned against Husserl’s own philosophy.<sup>53</sup> Husserl’s phenomenology succumbs to the same critique not because it abandons the traditional concept of theory, but because it does not abandon it. It holds the same emancipatory intent for theory, but, in

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<sup>51</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 303, 305, 306.

<sup>52</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 307.

<sup>53</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 302, 307.

bypassing cosmology, this intent loses practical efficacy. It turns out that genuine emancipation is not what past ages thought that it was: it is not primarily in freeing (separating) knowledge from interest. The kind of knowledge that is most freeing, most emancipatory, and the kind of emancipation that critical theory proposes, is the knowledge that every knowledge will invariably be grounded in interest. Emancipation is not in being free of interest, but in coming to a self-awareness of the interest behind the pursuit of knowledge. Critical theory shares with traditional philosophical theory an emancipatory cognitive interest, but with a very different way of framing this interest. In Habermas' words, it is "to determine when theoretical statements grasp invariant regularities of social action as such and when these [invariant regularities] express ideologically frozen relations of dependence that can in principle be transformed."<sup>54</sup>

Critical theory, then, is critique of ideology, where ideology refers to a state of unreflected consciousness about invariant social regularities to the point of perpetuating illusion and relations of dependence. Critical theory means a heightened process of critical reflection not concerning knowledge of laws ("nomological knowledge") whether objective laws or subjective (transcendental) ones, but concerning "those whom the laws are about."<sup>55</sup> For Habermas, the meaning-validity of critical propositions are determined essentially by "self-reflection," which could also be understood as self-critique, that is, by acknowledging its dependence on interest and turning against itself—"its own illusion of pure theory."

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<sup>54</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 310.

<sup>55</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 310.

With Husserl, this would mean to direct also against phenomenology “the very critique it directs against the objectivism of the sciences.” This, Habermas maintains, is the *only way* in which phenomenology can “acquire the [critical] power that it vainly claims for itself in virtue of its seeming freedom from presuppositions.”<sup>56</sup>

Habermas is calling for a phenomenological *self*-reflection, but of a slightly different sort than the kind of self-reflection Adorno urges. As such, Habermas points toward an additional path for a critical phenomenology. I have spoken so far only of critical phenomenology as awareness of the nonidentity of subject and object, which I suggest is accomplished phenomenologically by careful consideration of intuitive experience, rather than by omitting intuition from the equation. In the next chapter, I will refer in detail to the ways Scheler’s phenomenology highlights a critical experience of conceptual inadequacy. This chapter will also respond to Adorno’s concerns about transcendence and immanence that we saw were the earliest of Adorno’s concerns about Husserl’s phenomenology. In the third chapter, I will address at length Scheler’s phenomenology of the experience of reality and the clearing into the domain of the unconscious, which as at the time uncharted phenomenological territory. It will start to become clear that far from being separated from the interests and nature, the conscious and theoretical domain—the domain of intentionality—is inextricably connected to the drives, interests and goals.

This is key for when, in the fourth chapter, I take up specifically the debate about value-neutrality in philosophy and science, to which Habermas refers. The details of

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<sup>56</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 311.

Scheler's phenomenology will present a clear contrast to the way Habermas characterizes phenomenology in this essay as doing better than the sciences in accomplishing the freedom from interests. Scheler demonstrates that human beings are most essentially value-oriented beings, and phenomenologists are not an exception. If Habermas' assessment of Husserl's phenomenology is largely correct, then, as I hope to show, Scheler assists in bringing phenomenology to an awareness of the domain of values and interests that underlie its epistemic claims. The core of the person, Scheler thinks, is love—and this love is prior to all thought and action, theory and practice, for it is love which discloses the values that theoretical and volitional acts intend in their own way. The way Scheler's phenomenology discloses the connection between values and knowledge, whose separation Habermas considers essential to phenomenological methodology, also discloses the way phenomenology, historically, started to achieve a critical capacity.

## 2

### THE ATTITUDE AND OBJECT OF PHENOMENOLOGY

The Frankfurt School critique of phenomenology attempts to show that, on account of its methodology, phenomenology establishes for philosophy, on the one hand, a kind of identity and, on the other hand, a kind of separation. The identity arises, according to Adorno, by means of an absence of mediation (i.e., a two-way constitution) between the subject and the object. The subject reigns supreme over the object, fashioning the object in the subject's own image. Two features of the object that usually suggest a way out of idealism, namely, the transcendence of the object and the reality of the object, are for Husserl both conditions of the constituting activity of consciousness.<sup>1</sup>

Horkheimer and Habermas criticize phenomenology not because of a non-mediated conception of experience, but for following—and perfecting—a presupposition of traditional theory that theory has greater validity the more it achieves separation from interests. In this view, theory has greater purity the more it removes certain material or psychological conditions from the equation. Horkheimer notes that with this model of theory, “the activity of the scholar takes place alongside all the other activities of a society, but in no immediately clear connection with them.”<sup>2</sup> Consequently, “the real social function of [theory] is not

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<sup>1</sup> The phenomenological problem of reality (the differences of Scheler's view from Husserl's and a response to Adorno's objection) will be taken up in detail beginning in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” 197.

made manifest.”<sup>3</sup>

A critical phenomenology must demonstrate phenomenology’s ability to manifest a social function, and manifesting this social function, by Horkheimer’s implication, pertains on some level to the “activity of the scholar.”

Phenomenologists consider the activity of the scholar in the context of an “attitude” (*Einstellung*) or, a *view* by which something is able to be *seen* (intuited). This highlights the ancient paradigm of theory: *thea* “a view” + *horan* “to see.” According to Scheler, the *seeing* of something (*theoria*) depends directly upon the proximity and the engagement or participation from the *theoros*, the “seer.” But the seer, in the phenomenological attitude, cannot simply be a spectator, but must be a participant in the spectacle (the phenomenon) in order to see the spectacle most fully.

If an attitude pertains to a view by which to see, then the concomitant element of attitude is intuition (*Anschauung*). Indeed, much of this work is an effort to redeem the notion of intuition from contemporary scorn, led in part by critical theory on account of the immediacy that it requires. For Adorno, immediacy is equivalent with identity, and therefore equivalent with a conception of experience that “forgets” mediation. However, I argue that immediacy is not in fact equivalent with the kind of identity that Adorno thinks generates ideology, namely, *conceptual* identity. In fact intuitive immediacy is needed in order to have an awareness of the inadequacy of one’s conceptual experience. This chapter is meant to give a fuller clarification of how what I call “critical experience” is central to phenomenology, and how Scheler’s phenomenology explicitly highlights this kind of experience. More generally, this

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<sup>3</sup> Horkheimer, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” 197.



chapter, along with the next two, will concentrate on elucidating Scheler's concept of intuition, according to a tripartite structure of intuitive experience that he indicates in one of his early essays, "Phänomenologie und Erkenntnistheorie" (1915). He writes,

In principle, the world [*Welt*] is given [*gegeben*] in lived-experience [*Erleben*] as the 'bearer of value' [*Wertträger*] and as 'resistance' [*Widerstand*] as immediately [*unmittelbar*] as it is given as an object [*Gegenstand*] (GW X, 384).<sup>4</sup>

Scheler claims that there are three aspects that are given "immediately," or directly in every intuition of an object: as objective, as real, as valuable. This chapter will focus on the immediacy of objective givenness.

### **An Attitude of Phenomenology**

Phenomenology is philosophically unavoidable. For Scheler, phenomenology is not one method of philosophy among others. In fact, it is not originally a method at all. Not all philosophy, after it gets started, is phenomenology, but every philosophy must get started phenomenologically, if it hopes to begin with an authentic philosophical orientation to the world. And every philosophy does, to some degree, begin phenomenologically, regardless of whether the philosopher acknowledges it. This is because phenomenology is most basically an encounter with a world, even before it is reflection about the objects encountered, *as* objects. It does not matter yet what the world is. The only matter is that there is one presented, indeed, the only world that the philosopher has to talk about: the one that shows up. This is the

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<sup>4</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 143. Henceforth: "Phenomenology."

world in every context: the natural world, the social world, or the “world of God” (in religious experience); it is the world of utility or economy, the world in which we work, play, become wealthy or fall into poverty; it is the world into which we are born, and away from which we will pass. But making such distinctions about the different senses of world arises by conceptual reflection, but phenomenology begins before reflection does, in the pre-conceptual.

Phenomenology is the view of the world of the *beginning* philosopher. Everyone begins the course of their lives in a natural way, with a natural orientation; phenomenology, in contrast, is the *philosophical* way to begin, but a way that is not originally removed from the natural or social world. And every philosopher, even the most advanced, is in some state of beginning, alongside periods of progress and advancement. This is because the philosopher must consistently return to the world. She must always return there for confirmation—the only world that can provide confirmation: her own.

However, unlike Husserl, Scheler does not identify any specific methodological way of beginning phenomenologically. Husserl proposes that phenomenology must begin methodologically if it is to be scientific, yielding apodicticity that is verifiable to consciousness. Therefore, the phenomenological method must bracket whatever is problematic for confirmation and achieve a ground for continued phenomenological analysis. On the other hand, for Scheler, there is already so much of phenomenological significance given even before the philosopher arrives at questions of method or ground. Before adopting a method, the phenomenologist must adopt a particular kind of “attitude” (*Ein-stellung*, literally, “a place,” “a

position,” or “an orientation”), according to which the world is initially encountered, prior to attempts to organize its contents logically and linguistically.

On account of his neo-Cartesian preoccupation toward theoretical certainty, Husserl’s interest is primarily in elucidating that which phenomenology must exclude in order for phenomenology to proceed properly. The epoché reduces phenomenological investigation to a very specific realm (the transcendental realm), leaving behind all that is irrelevant to the investigation. Scheler emphasizes extension or expansion of the phenomenological domain rather than reduction. The initial requirement of phenomenology is simply to be with that which shows itself. The phenomenologist rests his or her

reflective gaze...only on that place where lived experience and its object, the world, touch one another. He is quite unconcerned whether what is involved here is the physical or the mental, numbers or God, or anything else. The ‘ray’ of reflection should try to touch only what is ‘*there*’ in this closest and most living contact and only so far as it is there (GW X, 380-81).<sup>5</sup>

That the phenomenologist is “unconcerned” with what is involved, could mean that nothing is left out; everything is “fair game,” phenomenologically-speaking. Or it could mean that the phenomenologist is unconcerned with the status of the things involved, namely, indifferent initially to the reality of these things, and especially of their metaphysical foundation. Scheler means both simultaneously. He and Husserl are in one sense making the same point, and in another sense proposing contrasting approaches. They agree that the object of phenomenology is simply the object that shows up, in experience, in whatever way it shows up. Indeed, that is the only “place” where any philosopher can begin. To say that Husserl excludes certain kinds

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<sup>5</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

of objects from phenomenological view is mistaken. The reduction does not consider some things and push away other things; what is put out of play is the more vague senses by which objects are naturally characterized.

But Scheler does not agree that a theoretical technique or logical procedure is required to get to this “place,” this *Stellung*: the place of phenomenological contact between experience and the world. He maintains, rather, that phenomenology is not a procedure of logic, but rather a “procedure of seeing” (*Schauverfahren*): the seeing of “new facts themselves, before they have been fixed by logic” (GW X, 380).<sup>6</sup> There is a sense in which Husserl conflates the givenness of things (by means of an *Einstellung*) with conceptual thinking about things (by means of a method). If that which is thought about is already there in the first place, what, then, is a phenomenological method supposed to do?<sup>7</sup> On this phenomenological attitude, a lengthy passage from A. R. Luther is fitting:

What is unique about Scheler's phenomenological approach is that it constitutes an attitude of “openness towards...,” which permits what is revealing itself to reveal itself as it is *in* itself. The significance of this approach, or attitude, is that the openness it cultivates excludes reductionism of any sort. It is an openness which is ready for revelation in its fullness. More specifically, the openness here is the implicit affirmation that what appears is precisely what it is (*Wesen*) and not something else, hence, cannot be reduced to something else. The approach is not so much determined by an applied methodology as it is by how what appears is, in fact, appearing in the openness who is man. The effort, then, in Scheler's phenomenology is not to reduce something to something else, or to explain something away, or to demonstrate the proof of something, but to account for “everything” as it discloses itself in concrete experiencing...Phenomena are everywhere apparent, referring to one another, in a dynamism of appearing that indicates an inexhaustible richness of potential meaning-fulfillment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 136.

<sup>7</sup> Manfred Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler*, 124.

<sup>8</sup> A. R. Luther, “The Articulated Unity of Being in Scheler’s Phenomenology,” in *Max Scheler: Centennial Essays*, ed. Manfred Frings (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1974), 4.

Just as Husserl initiates a so-called “Great Reversal” against Descartes,<sup>9</sup> thereby inaugurating a transcendental philosophy as the proper philosophy for the science of the subject, Scheler has his own Great Reversal against Husserl’s notion of “phenomenological attitude.” The attitude particular to Scheler’s phenomenology is not a disinterested theoretical one, which is itself the result or outcome of a methodological reduction, as a pure “phenomenological *residuum*,” achieved from the conscious and deliberate bracketing of natural contingencies that do not qualify for phenomenological inspection. For Scheler, the phenomenological attitude is the point-of-departure prior to all procedural techniques, and is one of wide-open, active interest in a grandiose world.<sup>10</sup> It does not *bracket*, it *embraces* all that is given in the way it is given. And whatever is “seen” is not initially given under the rubrics of, or to be submitted to, logical scrutiny. It is seen, rather, “only in the seeing and experiencing act itself—in *its being acted out* [*Vollzug*],” or better, in the very *execution* of the act. In fact, Scheler adds, “it does not matter how one comes to see it” (GW X, 380), provided we notice that the *seeing* of something is not the same thing as the *thinking* about it. This kind of experience is what Scheler calls “self-givenness” (*Selbstgegebenheit*).

### **Immediacy and Symbol**

If Scheler’s “Great Reversal” does indeed pertain to Husserl as I suggest, Husserl at least has a sufficiently critical starting point that better avoids the uncritical

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<sup>9</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> In this way, Scheler attempts to harness the energy of the philosophical novelty in the ancient Greek attitude of ‘wonder’ within a phenomenological context.

criteria-laden philosophies and sciences by which Scheler convicts most forms of empiricism, rationalism, and neo-Kantianism. He has in mind the tendency for any given discipline to inquire first about the criteria that customarily guides the discipline, before the researcher can begin work in that field. This tendency, he thinks, is far too common even for philosophy, where philosophers tend to begin not with what is given, but with conceptual presuppositions concerning, for example, the reality or unreality of an object, the truth or falsity of a judgment, or the good or evil of an act.<sup>11</sup> When others were insisting that philosophy go “back to Kant,” German phenomenologists were critical enough to insist instead that philosophy should go back to experience, “*die Sache selbst*”; a maneuver probably inspired by Kant and of which Kant would have approved.

Scheler contends that empiricism, for example, restricts that which would count as given according to a predetermined (and narrow) concept of experience. If their concept of experience (sense impression) is too narrow, then whatever might possibly be given in experience, but which cannot be made to coincide with an impression, is suppressed or explained away.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the *concepts* “experience” and “sensation” cannot themselves coincide with an impression. Phenomenology insists that such underlying concepts themselves require phenomenological clarification. Self-givenness is not the same as something “necessarily true” since this kind of experience pertains to the seeing of something even prior to predetermined categories of truth and falsity.<sup>13</sup> What qualifies

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<sup>11</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 139.

<sup>12</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 141.

<sup>13</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 140.

genuinely as true cannot itself presuppose a conceptual symbol, “truth,” as the criterion of its investigation, and then qualify other statements as true if and only if they match the pre-established criterion. This is because the criterion itself always already presupposes some more basic experience which has built up the conceptual-criterion in question. The symbol should fulfill the experience, not vice versa. A concept or form of thinking (category) is a symbol inasmuch as its formal structure indicates its removal from a direct experience, and depends on experience for its meaning. The idea of a “symbol” is antithetical to anything self-given.

Are there “criteria” for self-givenness? Perhaps the criterion is a special feeling “which will always automatically recur like a minor miracle when something is evident in this way” (GW X, 382).<sup>14</sup> Scheler answers that such criteria are impossible because it would be inconsistent with its own status as pertaining to the thing itself. “All questions about criteria make sense only when a symbol is given in place of the thing-itself which it symbolizes” (GW X, 382).<sup>15</sup>

Phenomenology is often ridiculed by claiming to be “presuppositionless” on this point. Habermas, for example, says that phenomenology “vainly claims for itself...freedom from presuppositions.”<sup>16</sup> Everything that this could be referring to cannot be investigated in this chapter. However, it should at least be mentioned that the phenomenologist is critical of at least those identifiable presuppositions (concepts that we make as criteria for experience and truth), and that this will open a path for a fresh philosophical beginning.

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<sup>14</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 140.

<sup>15</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 140.

<sup>16</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 311.

Part of what I call Scheler's Great Reversal includes a divergence from the Husserlian idea that the phenomenologist is a "disinterested onlooker"—indeed, a spectator—who excludes him or herself from the object of investigation. This leads to the phenomenological separation of knowledge and interest which is reminiscent of traditional epistemology. However, such a separation is not as central to phenomenology as Habermas thinks. The problem of criteria constitutes, for Scheler, a critique of an epistemological prejudice that attempts to classify or define "problems" or "spheres of relevance," more than to identify "the type of *person* who possesses genuine competence in that sphere and for that problem" (GW V, 70-1).<sup>17</sup> And the person who has greater competence with respect to a certain sphere of relevance is the one who has some experience or participation with it. He writes in his essay, "The Nature of Philosophy":

If one were to say that art is what the true artist produces, that religion is what [the truly holy person lives, performs] and preaches, *and* that philosophy is likewise the true philosopher's relationship to things and his [or her] manner of regarding them, I am afraid that many people would laugh one to scorn. Yet I am convinced that...this [way] of determining a sphere of relevance to the type of person is both more certain and less equivocal in its results than any other procedure (GW V, 64).<sup>18</sup>

Scheler asks us to consider how much easier it is for us to decide whether a person is truly an artist or truly holy than to decide what art is or what religion is. The one who does not possess an adequate level of competence, for example, concerning the authenticity of art, or the truth of a religion or a scientific domain, is the one who, insisting on criteria, ultimately stands outside the problem, and who,

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<sup>17</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," in *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. Bernard Noble (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), 70.

<sup>18</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 71.



therefore, “has no *direct* [unmittelbaren] contact with any work of art, any religion, any scientific domain. He who has not *labored* on some domain of facts is the one who starts off by asking for the criteria of the domain.”<sup>19</sup>

This is the meaning of Scheler’s notion of *Unmittelbarkeit* (immediacy). It is perhaps better captured by speaking of what is given “*directly*,” or of “direct experience.” There is nothing mysterious about direct experience. Something is not mediated in givenness whenever there is some direct contact with it; whenever we work or labor “on some domain of facts.” One experiences art directly by creating art; religion directly by living it; science directly by doing it. And one who is in this place or position (*Stellung*) has a better view to see it for what it is. This position is not a physical location, but an intentional orientation: the orientation simply to see it for what it is. And this laboring, or performing which brings us in direct contact requires what Scheler calls “an act of experience” which yields self-givenness in the very execution of the act, “in its being acted out (*Vollzug*).”<sup>20</sup> The notion *Vollzug*, then, seems to carry with it some participatory reference, and thus to what Scheler later calls an “ontological relation” (*Seinsverhältnis*) or participation between one being and another. Knowledge, he says, is this ontological relation on account of participation.<sup>21</sup>

But most importantly, it is love and interest that motivates the participation, which is knowledge. That experience (*Erfahrung*) is required for knowledge has been a widely accepted tenet of epistemology in German philosophy since Kant read

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<sup>19</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 139.

<sup>20</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Max Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 292.

Hume. Husserl is of course committed to this idea. But one of Scheler's key phenomenological revisions of this tradition is the idea that knowledge requires more than empirical observation—it requires the kind of experience (*Erlebnis*, “lived-experience”) that brought about by love and taking-interest. We simply will not know whatever we do not love or have an interest in knowing, and that the degree of knowledge is in proportion to the level of our interest. This is because knowing requires an abandoning of oneself. Love he says is the “primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself in order to share and participate in another being as an *ens intentionale*.”<sup>22</sup> The kind of knowing that Scheler has in mind here is intuitive knowing (*Wissen*) more than conceptual cognition (*Erkenntnis*).

Scheler's understanding of immediacy is intuitive, not conceptual. Therefore, immediacy does not refer to the identity between concept and object. It refers to a *mode of experience* or mode of givenness. Experience is direct or immediate inasmuch as it can get beyond (or, more accurately, has priority to) these criteria-presuppositions, and predetermined conceptual symbols. When it does, Scheler calls this experience “asymbolic.” Mediated experience is symbolic insofar as it substitutes a pre-established symbol of a thing, for the thing itself. Scheler thinks that science is plagued by this most of all. The domains of science each symbolize phenomena in different ways, according the particular domain of research, and in ways that are existentially relative to the natural domain and meaningful to those investigating within that domain. Scheler writes:

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<sup>22</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 110.

In physics, colors become signs of the motions of a particular substratum on which science also bases the light ray and its refraction by certain substances. In physiology, colors are signs of the chemical processes in the optical nerve; in psychology, they are signs of so-called sensations. The color itself is not contained in these [determinations]... The color red, for example, is the *x* which corresponds [respectively] to this motion, this nervous process, this sensation.<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, it is only after the fact of the experience of the *x* that we attempt to organize logically and explain the experience in linguistic symbols. Thus, phenomenological writing is not ultimately about making logical inferences, but bringing something to sight, but which is done only by *pointing to it* through symbols.<sup>24</sup> There had to have been some experience, though, which gives the occasion for symbols to arise in the first place. If a conceptual symbol can exist only on account of pre-conceptual experience “of facts, before they have been fixed by logic” (for the condition of possibility of concepts), then the existence of the symbol itself discloses the experience of immediate self-givenness, and itself generates an awareness of the antinomy between concept and experience that provides a critical space in relation to conceptual experience.

Is Scheler here changing the meaning of philosophy, which is traditionally conceptual analysis, by speaking of phenomenological philosophy as pre-conceptual? First, philosophy is always a kind of knowing, as is phenomenology. One would go too far to suggest phenomenology is itself pre-conceptual. However, phenomenology is essentially oriented toward recovering and elucidating the

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<sup>23</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 144-5.

<sup>24</sup> This was the subject of controversy, sparked by Wilhelm Wundt’s 1910 critique of Husserl’s *Logical Investigations*, which, in his view, stresses what things are not, at the expense of saying anything, positively, that is also non-tautological: “Judgment is—just judgment.” See the section, “Phenomenological Controversy,” in Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 152-155.

original direct experiences which have been symbolized in some way or another, but which has also more or less come to conceal that original experience. To take again the example of the color red: employing an analogy of finance, “draft after draft is drawn on red, so to speak.”<sup>25</sup> The bank draft, of course, is only a *symbol* (a place holder) of the money being transferred, just as the color red is symbolized scientifically in the above examples. “So long as we remain within science these drafts are negotiated in infinitely varied ways against other drafts..., but they are never definitively redeemed.”<sup>26</sup> Phenomenology is the kind of philosophy which has the task of retracing, “step by step, the process of this complicated negotiation”<sup>27</sup> and is orientated toward redeeming all the drafts by uncovering the experiential origin of the variegated conceptual symbols. Phenomenology has this task, not only with respect to the drafts drawn by science, but “all those, too, which the complicated existence and life of every civilization and its symbolism draw on human existence.”<sup>28</sup> Phenomenology then is conceptual analysis of pre-conceptual experience in attempting to recover that on which the drafts were drawn.

Adorno’s critique of immediacy in effect constitutes a critique of the *a priori*. The notion of *prima philosophia* refers to a concept or set of concepts that are taken, sometimes without question, to be an absolute foundation for subsequent logical inferences.<sup>29</sup> Those basic concepts assume the role of an unmediated first, which is the role the *a priori* has traditionally taken. He explains that empiricism, for

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<sup>25</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 145.

<sup>26</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 145.

<sup>27</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 145.

<sup>28</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 145.

<sup>29</sup> Adorno, “Metacritique of Epistemology,” *Adorno Reader*, 117.

example, has a claim to the individual factual entities “here and now” only by means of the factual in general.<sup>30</sup> Scheler’s comments on empiricism stated earlier are similar to Adorno’s: empiricism requires a concept of experience in order to even make sense of the data of experience. It presupposes, in a sense, the concept of impression which, on account of its own terms, cannot itself be accounted for by an impression. It imposes the symbol on the experience, rather than allowing the experience to clarify the symbol. However, the “starting-point” of the phenomenological attitude is not conceptual, and so (at least initially) slips under the radar of Adorno’s critique. In fact, to presuppose uncritically a variety of concepts as foundational is itself a suitable description of what Scheler is saying about those who do *not* begin phenomenologically. Adorno calls *prima philosophia* what Scheler insists is the error of those who begin by asking about criteria, in order to begin. Doing philosophy phenomenologically seems to better ensure that a philosopher is letting experience speak for itself, critical as the phenomenologist is that the conceptual symbols will be adequate substitutes for the objects of experience. This is simply a restatement of the critical experience that I suggest phenomenology holds within its philosophical approach.

Adorno states that “the first, and immediate, is always, as a concept, mediated, and thus not the first.”<sup>31</sup> He seems by this at least to imply agreement with Scheler that concepts are symbols, and as symbolic, are mediated. What is “first” then, is—phenomenologically—not a concept at all, put simply a domain of objects and their givenness. However, Adorno seems not to have anticipated a nonconceptual

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<sup>30</sup> Adorno, “Metacritique of Epistemology,” 117.

<sup>31</sup> Adorno, “Metacritique of Epistemology,” 117.

understanding of the *a priori*, with respect to immediate, *non-formal*, intuitive content. Forms are not intuited, even if they arise on account of intuition. What is intuited is always the material “stuff,” the *Sache*. Adorno continues: “every principle which philosophy can reflect upon as its first must be universal, unless philosophy wants to be exposed to its contingency. And every universal principle of a first...contains abstraction within it.”<sup>32</sup> However, it does not follow that universal concepts are the only way of avoiding contingent particulars. Scheler’s central phenomenological project insists that experience yields a “material *a priori*,” that is say, content that is neither universal nor contingent. On this material *a priori*, Scheler writes:

In addition to the so-called *formal a priori* of the basic intuitive facts of pure logic, every discipline, number theory, set theory, group theory, geometry (including the geometry of colors and tones), mechanics, physics, chemistry, biology, psychology—each reveals, upon a closer inspection, a whole body of *material a priori* propositions which rest on essential insight.<sup>33</sup>

Adorno’s own words on Scheler’s project, which are too brief and sweeping to constitute a worthwhile critique, follows the prevalent run-of-the-mill remarks about starting with “eternal” things, from a background of “closed, Catholic theory,” then imposing them into a material context, at which point they become “confused and disintegrated.”<sup>34</sup> These disingenuous remarks, which do not even offer a sustained argument, do little more than betray Adorno’s own confusion about the details of Scheler’s “material phenomenology.”

When Scheler speaks of the “*Selbstgegebenheit in unmittelbarer*

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<sup>32</sup> Adorno, “Metacritique of Epistemology,” 117.

<sup>33</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 142.

<sup>34</sup> Adorno, “The Actuality of Philosophy,” *Adorno Reader*, 27.

*Anschauungsevidenz*” (self-givenness in immediate evidence of intuition), he refers to the *materiale*, the non-formal content, that is given immediately on account of *Vollzug*, the execution of intentional acts. From what was said above about this concept, and by what will be explained later, we can perhaps speak of *Vollzug* more broadly as the participatory engagement with something through the performance of acts. Concepts—categories of thinking—are constructed, mediated through a process Scheler calls functionalization.<sup>35</sup> Essences are not universal concepts; “conceptual structures must be built up out of essences.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Demystifying “Essence”**

In the prefatory remarks to one of his earliest works on phenomenology entitled *Ressentiment*, Scheler makes a distinction between two psychological procedures for treating the data of experience. On the one hand, an observer may “sift the data of inner observation conceptually and set them up as compounds, then decompose these into ultimate ‘simple’ elements and study, through artificial variation..., the conditions and results of such combinations.”<sup>37</sup> This empirical approach is very different, Scheler thinks, from a Gestalt approach that describes and understands “the units of experience and meaning which are contained in the totality of man’s life itself.”<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> This notion will be taken up in detail in Chapter 6.

<sup>36</sup> Eugene Kelly, *Structure and Diversity: Studies in the Phenomenological Philosophy of Max Scheler* (Dordrecht: Kulwer, 1997), 58.

<sup>37</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Lewis Coser (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1994), 19.

<sup>38</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 19. It seems Scheler is referring here to Gestalt methods of psychology. He also cites Karl Jaspers’ distinction between “causal connections” and “understandable context.” See, Karl Jaspers, *Allgemeine Psychopathologie* (Berlin, 1913).

The distinction shows that any unit of experience can be broken down or disintegrated into a complex of heterogeneous partial contents, where each of these component parts “pertain to completely different acts of experience.”<sup>39</sup> However, the artificial disintegration of experiential units presupposes a single integrated experience from which each of these partial units receives their meaning and unity.<sup>40</sup> “Data which is extremely complex in terms of the [procedure of separation and synthesis] may nevertheless be phenomenally *simple*, for they may be given in *one act of experience*.”<sup>41</sup> For example, in the experience of “a friendship, a love, an insult,” etc.

The empiricist view of experience (*Erfahrung*)<sup>42</sup> as a process of separable, repeated perceptual observations characterizes what Scheler calls the “scientific *Weltanschauung*.” The one who views the world scientifically stands like a spectator, “taking a step back,” as it were, and viewing an object by means of logical procedures of organization: taking it apart, putting it back together, recording empirical data along the way. Here, the modes of experience relate exclusively with particular sensory content that receive different profiles at different time. Objects in this sense are given as disintegrated, both spatially, from place to place, and

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<sup>39</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 20.

<sup>41</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 20.

<sup>42</sup> Scheler often uses the term *Erfahrung* as a general term for all experience, of which *Erlebnis* is one form. However, whenever he makes the distinction, Scheler tends to use the term *Erfahrung* to pertain to the empirical mode of experience. He writes, for example, about empiricism and positivism, “Die philosophischen Lehren, die sich so nannten, prüften faktisch gar nicht schlicht und rein, was im Erleben gegeben ist, sondern erklärten, nachdem sie einen ganz engen Begriff von Erfahrung, nämlich den Begriff «Erfahrung durch Sinne» zugrunde gelegt hatten, es müsse alles, was als gegeben gelten wolle, auf «Erfahrung» zurückgeführt werden” (GW X, 382, my underlining). See, Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 140.



temporally, from time to time. It is therefore incumbent upon consciousness, as Kant maintained, to organize the disintegrated sensuous or empirical elements, by means of mental categories. The first problem that arises with the Kantian solution is that there is no way to explain where the concepts come from, so one is forced to say they were already structurally present, and that their evidence is found by a transcendental argument (deduction): evidence for the subject as the unity of apperception is the fact that it is the condition for the possibility of unified experience. The second problem, which Hegel championed, is that if the mind is organizing particulars by means of universals (categories of the understanding), then there is no longer any way to tell the difference between particulars and universals. Objects are indistinguishable from concepts. As a result, what the noumenon is indistinguishable from the phenomenon.

In contrast to the experience of procedural observation, Scheler maintains that what is taken as something observable must already have been given as an intentional object. It is a condition of the “*essentialness* of a given content that it must be *intuited* [with a phenomenological orientation] in the attempt to ‘*observe*’ it [with an empirical orientation], in order to give the observation the desired or presupposed *direction*” (GW II, 70).<sup>43</sup> Phenomenological experience gives the world as an integral whole, which is the way something is given throughout the course of *living through* it. Scheler calls this *Erlebnis* (lived-experience). Lived-experience takes the thing as it shows itself, whenever and wherever we just happen to *see* it;

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<sup>43</sup> Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. Manfred Frings (Northwestern University Press, 1973), 50. Henceforth: *Formalism*.

and it shows itself originally as a composite, not *in sensu diviso*. This is a pre-logical experience, and therefore, asymbolic.

If we take the example of friendship along with the element of *Vollzug* (when the friendship is one that is my own, of which I am a participant by the performance of all the acts involved in being a friend) then that which has been explained above as merely phenomenally simple becomes “phenomenologically simple.” That which was described as a Gestalt psychological procedure becomes phenomenological. And it is in the participation (the execution of the acts) that we are able to encounter the essence (*Wesen*), i.e., the material *a priori*.

As material, and as *a priori*, essence is located somewhere in the middle, between universality and contingency, but which is neither universal nor contingent. An essence is not contingent because the content is *ideal* (not “real”), and it is ideal content that is not universal; it pertains to a *singular, lived-experience*. An essence can be given in the universal concept as well as in the experience of the particular. But, what is more, the concepts “universal” and “particular” (the *concept* “particular” is itself “universal”) have meaning only with respect to some original essential experience, not vice versa. There is an essence of what becomes conceived as “universal” (given in the experience of sameness) and “particular” (given in the experience of difference). An essence can come to the fore in the experience of only one thing, so there can be an “individual essence,” such as, for example, the essence of this individual friendship—the friendship that Mary has with John. But an essence is necessarily different from a concept insofar as any attempt to define an essence gets entangled in a circular definition (*circulus in definiendo*) and any attempt to

*prove* it traps one in a circular argument (*circulus in demonstrando*), since the content for proof and definition “presuppose the pregiven as a law in accordance with which the proof is carried out.”<sup>44</sup> Concepts find their fulfillment in the self-giveness of the essence.

The essence of a friendship appears in the acts of experiencing that friendship and only in their execution or performance, i.e., by actively participating in that friendship, in whatever way it is experienced. But in the experience, we do not experience the universal form, “friendship,” as such, but only the ones I am in. The concept of an essence can be described then as an *integral experiential unity of meaning that is given in a single experience and which gives meaning to all of the partial (contingent) content of that same experience*. All the “sensations, representations, conclusions, judgments, acts of love and hatred, feelings, moods,...some [or other] event or situation, a particular look or smile..., etc.”<sup>45</sup> all of the components of that particular friendship are given meaning from the self-giveness of the friendship as a “whole.”<sup>46</sup> It is according to the essence of that friendship that all the particular components *mean* something. This avoids the so-called fallacies of division and composition, whereby (respectively) what is true of a whole is also true of a part, and what is true of a part is also true of a whole. Meaningful givenness is not equivalent with propositional truth, even if they are not also mutually exclusive. To confirm or deny the logical validity of experiential

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<sup>44</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 158; *Formalism*, 50.

<sup>45</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 20.

<sup>46</sup> To speak of a composite “whole” is a rather misleading because the idea presupposes parts. A whole is the whole of the parts. Rather, Scheler thinks that the thing is given first (intentionally) as a whole, and only in relation to the thing, do we decompose it, analytically.

givenness puts the cart before the horse, so to speak; even a logically valid proposition means something only on account of some givenness. The essential “whole” therefore should not necessarily be interpreted as a composite of a variety of “parts” that are therefore analytically distinguished from the whole, nor is the whole something that is achieved through repeated experiences of each of its parts. Such an idea of a “whole” would necessarily be logical-formal. Rather, the essential “whole” can be given in any one particular component “partial” experience, even if the essence is not reducible to that particular experience. Furthermore, the essential whole also does not mean the whole of all friendships, their common purpose, function, or final cause as friendship, but the “whole” of *this* friendship. The concept “friendship” must necessarily be derived (i.e., functionalized) on account of the essence of one or more friendships, personally experienced.

So the essence of *this* friendship is not equivalent with the contingent factors (the day-to-day variegated experiences with the friend) because the integrated experience is that which provides the meaning for the contingent factors. Neither is it equivalent with the universal concept of friendship, that pertains to all friendships, with various people. This is because the essence is given in the experience of this friendship, and more importantly, being *a part of*, or involved with this friendship (and only this one) in the day to day events and situations. However, despite the essence’s relation to a single experiential given, its independence from contingent factors allows the possibility for the phenomenologist to explicate something universally true about all friendships, on account of this single experience. This is because the givenness of the essence of

friendship is that which is the basis for the building of the universal conception of friendship. The critical function of phenomenology is underscored by this fact. Again the phenomenologist does not integrate or “look for” the symbol within in the experience, but uses the experience to change the symbol; the phenomenology allows for an awareness of the discrepancy or nonidentity between the concept and the given. All formal concepts are derived from material givenness in the first place: part of the task of a critical phenomenology is to critique and reinterpret inadequate conceptual articulations by means of the adequacy of nonconceptual experience.

But there are some interesting implications of this idea of knowledge as participation. Is it possible in Scheler’s view for someone who is not, for example, Chinese, or at least someone who has never been to China, to have an adequate understanding Chinese culture? Would it therefore be impossible to critique that culture? Or for someone not religious to understand religion, and therefore to critique it? It is important to reiterate that this chapter does not attempt to investigate cognition proper, but focuses on the sphere of givenness, and the conditions for essential or self-givenness. For there to be any givenness, there must necessarily be some direct experience. It is possible, on some level, for an American to understand Chinese culture by means of a direct experience, first, if the American visits China and therefore has his or her own intuitive lived-experience of the place and way of life. Second, insofar as an American and an Chinese person might have a common cultural experience, at least inasmuch as both are types of a human way of life. However, an understanding of Chinese culture by someone who is not Chinese, or American culture by someone not American contains some level of remoteness

(and possible inadequacy) if there is no direct experience. In these cases, the givenness of an essence of Chinese or American culture is off limits. Without direct experience, a researcher could only investigate a foreign culture by means of an overlay of symbols and linguistic representation. Understanding is achieved in this way only by piecing together symbolic elements, and so any understanding will at best be partial. The givenness of an essential whole is hidden.

For a more concrete example, John Medina recently began a research project which he calls “Brain Rules.” He attempts to use molecular biological explanations of neuroscience in order to isolate specific “rules” which he claims can educate parents “on how to raise smart and happy children.” The question arises: what can scientists who are not parents (supposing for argument’s sake they are not) say to parents about parenting? Science can say a number of accurate and very specific things about certain parts of a child that may be useful for parents to know. However, science is necessarily unable to replace the experience and intuition of parenting with its investigation, even if its data is perhaps more empirically accurate. Scientific data must always relate back to the parent/child relationship in order to “have sense,” i.e., to make sense and be meaningful. Indeed, John Medina states that “as a dad, I think few things are more important than how we raise our kids.” He refers to his direct experience of parenting (a phenomenal component) as a context which provides an additional significance for his research. He also assumes that his experience as a dad is a common enough experience for his scientific research to be significant for other parents. There is something about his own lived-experience as a dad that is also not contingent only to his experience. In this sense, his scientific

research depends for its significance on the essential content of the parent/child relationship.

But how is it possible for a concept of experience be considered *a priori*, if the very term indicates a content prior to experience? Scheler distances the meaning of *a priori* from its Kantian heritage who accounts for the *a priori* with respect to the categories of the understanding as transcendental structures of synthetic experience. “The human mind has no such world-constructing gift (GW V, 196),”<sup>47</sup> Scheler insists. “Our mere thought and cognition are incapable of ‘creating,’ ‘producing,’ ‘forming’ anything—unless it be figments and cyphers” (GW V, 195).<sup>48</sup> However, Scheler thinks that the distinction between the *a priori* and *a posteriori* “must still be jealously guarded” (GW V, 196). He reformulates the meaning of the *a priori* to include, primarily, a non-formal [*materiale*] component. The non-formal (essential) aspect is primary because it is from the *non-formal* content that formal (conceptual) categories are derived.<sup>49</sup> “In these cases, *a priori* in the *logical* [formal] sense is always a *consequence* of the *a priori* [in the *intuitive* (material) sense] which

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<sup>47</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 200.

<sup>48</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 199. It is interesting to note Scheler’s remarks on the Kantian tradition: “If we look more closely at our Kantians, Fichteans, etc.—at any of those who would have it that cognition ‘forms,’ ‘shapes,’ ‘produces,’—we soon notice that these are people who for the most part lack all practical contact with the world. No wonder! What need have they to will, act, form or shape, since they believe they can—or must—perform by dint of mere cognition things which are exclusively the province of will and action? Their epistemological voluntarism leads to atrophy of the will proper” (GW V, 196/*On the Eternal in Man*, 200. fn. 1)

<sup>49</sup> Scheler does, at times, use the term “*Wesen*” to indicate both formal and material *a priori* (or, “pure facts” in the broader sense and the narrower sense, respectively. See, Scheler, “Theory of the Three Facts,” 220/GW X, 447-48). However, since his usage not always consistent, I will use the term “essence” to refer to the material *a priori* and “concept, or conceptual category” to refer to formal *a priori*. The reason is because material *a priori* are experienced, and formal *a priori* are only derived from experience, likewise, essences are experienced phenomenologically, and concepts are derived.

constitutes the objects of judgments and propositions.”<sup>50</sup> And this is where we find an answer to the question: as pre-logical, asymbolic, and intuitive content, the material *a priori* “is not altogether independent of the experience and perception of objects, but only of the quantity of experience,”<sup>51</sup> namely, from the variegated homogenous partial experiences, or the different, repeated experiences of induction. A *single, unified* experience, on account of a lived interaction with something, is required for immediate intuition of essence. This experience qualifies as *a priori* because it is independent from *sense* experience or *inductive* experience. The material *a priori* (essence) is the experiential content of *Erlebnis*, but, in keeping with the tradition, it has independence from *Erfahrung*. Furthermore, Scheler adds, “*a priori* contents can only be exhibited (*aufgewiesen*). There is no enchanted procedure, not even that of bracketing, which “can ‘prove’ or ‘deduce’ [material] *a priori* contents in any form whatsoever” (GW II, 70-1).<sup>52</sup>

### **Immanence and Transcendence**

Scheler’s phenomenology was not exactly orthodox phenomenology in his day. Husserl had written to Roman Ingarden naming Scheler and Heidegger his two “philosophical antipodes.”<sup>53</sup> The tension with Husserl is rather difficult to detect in Scheler’s writing, first, because for whatever reason, Scheler often veils his

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<sup>50</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 142.

<sup>51</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 200, fn. 2.

<sup>52</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 50. Scheler speaks similarly about our knowledge of God, who can only be *pointed to* (*aufweis*) on account of religious phenomenological experience, and not strictly speaking, proven or demonstrated. As such, any evidence of God that is possible is only available for the one with religious experience, and is entirely unavailable to those without this experience of God.

<sup>53</sup> Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement. A historical introduction vol. I* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 283.



statements that clearly would (also) pertain to Husserl, as criticisms of others. For example, Scheler's criticisms of both the empathic and the analogical arguments for the "perception of other minds," which I will explicate later in more detail, pertain to a large extent to Husserl, though Scheler speaks explicitly only of Theodor Lipps and Erich Becher, respectively.<sup>54</sup> Second, Scheler uses Husserlian language, but not uncommonly with a different meaning than Husserl has in mind. Scheler and Husserl agree, for example, that there is "immediate" intuition; that there is "immanent" and "transcendent" intuitive content; that immanent experience is "*Erlebnis*"; and that one kind of intuition "finds" another kind. All of these central terms carry sometimes radically different meanings between the two thinkers.

One of the central distinguishing features of Husserl's and Scheler's phenomenological approaches pertains to the issue of "foundation" (*Fundierung*). Scheler and Husserl agree that in every act of perception there is both empirical, sense content (the thing in its component parts) and an essential, or meaning, content (the thing as a whole). However they disagree on which content is more "originarily" given, or foundational. Scheler accuses Husserl of falling into the same false premise (his term: "*proton pseudos*") of empiricism, namely, "the presupposition that sensory contents *furnish the foundation* of every other content of intuition."<sup>55</sup> Husserl maintains that sensuous intuition is the founding act for all pure categorial intuition. Sensuous perception is characterized as "straightforward,"

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<sup>54</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 238.

<sup>55</sup> Scheler, "The Theory of Three Facts," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 221.

as that through which one grasps the whole object directly and immediately.<sup>56</sup> In contrast, Scheler's own position maintains that "the pure fact [*reine Tatsache*, i.e., essential meaning content] must have the character of an ultimate foundation of the merely sensory components of natural facts."<sup>57</sup>

It was said before that empiricism embodies a contradiction on account of its inability to explain the *concept* of impression by means of an impression. When empiricism makes sensations the foundation for concepts, there is nothing to provide intelligibility and organization to sense content. Scheler is closer to Kant on this problem, than he is to Husserl. Kant establishes "the law of the formation of natural perceptual givenness...in part correctly, in part falsely."<sup>58</sup> Scheler agrees with Kant, on the one hand, that "the 'structure' of experience precedes all sensory contents,"<sup>59</sup> and that the range of possible sensory data is circumscribed by this structure. But, on the other hand, Scheler disagrees that this priority is owed to conceptual (formal) content specifically. According to Scheler, phenomenological experience (*Erlebnis*) provides the structure of all other forms of experience and their content; the "structure" is itself the self-given essential (material) content. Essential meaning content is that by which we *select* for observation whatever sense content enters within the field of perception.<sup>60</sup>

"Foundation" here is therefore not interpreted according to the order of

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<sup>56</sup> Husserl, *Logical Investigations II*, trans. J. N. Findlay, ed. Dermot Moran (New York: Routledge, 2001), 286-89.

<sup>57</sup> Scheler, "Three Facts," 219.

<sup>58</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 183.

<sup>59</sup> Scheler, "Three Facts," 223.

<sup>60</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 183. The essential meaning content in question pertains to essence, but also as we will see in a later chapter, to values, which are also counted among the domain of the material *a priori*.

temporality. Otherwise, founding becomes confused with causing.<sup>61</sup>

Phenomenologically, “to found” is understood according to the order of intentionality, which is to say, the relational order of meaning. Essence is the meaning of the whole which determines which parts about the whole will be (later) selected for further investigation. There is an “order of foundation” whereby intuitive contents are *ihrem Wesen nach aufeinander aufbauen* (GW X, 449) (“built upon one another according to their essence”).<sup>62</sup> Certain essential intuitions, as principles and forms of selection, must have taken place in order for other related content to be intuitively given, including related empirical intuitions or “sensuous intentions.”

For example, “Spatiality,” Scheler writes, “is given prior to, and independently of, figures in space, the place and position of anything whatever, and more than anything else, the qualities these things have.”<sup>63</sup> The phenomenon of spatiality fulfills conceptual symbols or propositions about spatiality (i.e., “redeems the drafts”). Concepts or propositions do not fulfill the phenomenon. Indeed, spatiality must be given in intuition to be able even to cognize some empirical thing *as* spatial. In this way, every act of sense perception presupposes a host of intuitions in order for the perceptions to make sense. There must already be in play, for example, intuitions of sensibility, materiality and corporeality; subjectivity and objectivity; contingency and necessity, relationality and vitality, unity and plurality, similarity and equality, not to mention even prior intuitions of spatiality and temporality;

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<sup>61</sup> Scheler, “Three Facts,” 222.

<sup>62</sup> Scheler, “Three Facts,” 222.

<sup>63</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 183.

motion, change, and alteration, etc., which are foundational to sense of sensory intuition and its content, and which are given meaning by being embedded in this pre-given integrated experience.

Even if Scheler is right that Husserl makes a similar error about foundation as empiricists do, Husserl does not have the same problem issuing from the error, as empiricists do. This is because, for Husserl, the transcendental structure of consciousness accounts for coherent perceptual experience. The problem the error causes for Husserl resides elsewhere. Since sense perception is said to furnish the foundation of the “pure” content of phenomenological (categorical and eidetic) intuition, then something immanent and something transcendent, phenomenologically, would have to be distinguished by means of contingent variations or fluctuations within sense content. We saw in the previous chapter that, for Husserl this is the case. And since sense content can furnish only various side perspectives, then for Husserl transcendence and immanence are ultimately distinguished according to perceptual indeterminacy, namely, on account of the degree of adumbration in the perception. The problem is not that immanence and transcendence are indistinguishable, like Adorno thought, but the way they are distinguished. Scheler calls into question the procedure of determining adequacy merely on account of perceptual features.

Scheler and Husserl both hold that the logical form of immanence consists in the intentional experience which yields a given that is *congruent* with the intention, namely, when what is meant (the intention) is fulfilled by what is given, and when what is given is fulfilled by what is meant. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind

that immanence and transcendence first of all designate a level of intentional adequacy. But only a specific interpretation of immanence and transcendence suggests that transcendence necessarily pertains to “external” phenomena and immanence to internal phenomena.

According to Husserl, something immanent is characterized by perfect and lasting *perceptual* congruence, in which there are no unfulfilled or adumbrated components. This adequacy cannot be achieved with the perception of *something external* because of the object’s changing modes of appearance, in the case, for example, of something with sides or tonal fluctuations. Recall this is what gives Husserl problems about the reality of objects. “we can be sure something is [real] only by virtue of a synthesis of evident verification,”<sup>64</sup> but not only is this kind of verification of external (sided) objects impossible, but so is the expectation that such external objects would remain fulfilled by the intention, infinitely.

Transcendence, then, necessarily pertains to external perception, because, as Husserl writes, “of necessity a physical thing can be given only ‘one-sidedly.’”<sup>65</sup> Thus, a noematic perceptual core “of what is actually presented is surrounded by a horizon of ‘*co-givenness*,’ which is not givenness proper, and more or less vague indeterminateness.”<sup>66</sup> In contrast, the perception of something internal does not suffer from this ambiguity and variation in appearance. Internal perception (of subjective, mental things or states of consciousness, namely *Erlebnisse*: “mental processes”) yields adequate fulfillment, and its contents are therefore for Husserl

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<sup>64</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 60.

<sup>65</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, 94.

<sup>66</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, 94.

deemed immanent. What is immanent “has no sides that could be presented sometimes in one mode and sometimes in another.”<sup>67</sup>

Scheler suggests that we cannot simply equate transcendence with external perception and immanence with internal perception; it will take more to justify immanent givenness.<sup>68</sup> Since Husserl takes sense perception as foundational, transcendence means when *givenness exceeds the intention*, and that, therefore, something transcendent indicates a situation where what is given is something more than what is intended. Since an extended physical thing cannot be empirically given all at once (because apperceptive or horizontal co-givenness “is not givenness proper”), the presentified givenness exceeds what is presented in the intention. Transcendence happens, then, on account of an excess with respect to the perceptual characteristics of the intentional object (e.g., having sides, tonal fluctuations).

Scheler makes a surprising revision to this interpretation, and one that I take to be a decisive difference that lends toward a phenomenological view of ideology. Immanence and transcendence pertain more to the quality of the act or intention than to the perceptual characteristics of the object. Transcendence not only indicates a situation when givenness exceeds intention, but when *intention exceeds givenness*. Rather than excess on the part of the intentional object, inadequacy is also explained by excess, or better, overreaching, on the part of the intention itself. And

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<sup>67</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, 96.

<sup>68</sup> Scheler writes with respect to this point that “perhaps nothing distinguishes [my] view of phenomenology so fundamentally from prevailing views, even from theories which in other respects stand quite close to phenomenology, e.g., the theory of ‘Gestalt-qualities’ ....” Scheler, “Three Facts,” 221.

this overreaching occurs primarily when intentions are framed according to concepts without reference to essential intuition. What is intended is always more than what is given *when what is intended is intended with a predetermined set of symbols that intentionality is looking to be fulfilled by the given, in the intention.* When we take the world simply in the way that others have symbolized it and we adapt our perception and intuitions according to these symbols, rather than allow our experience to speak for itself, or to (phenomenologically) “redeem the drafts” drawn from these experiences, then our perceptions and intuitions are transcendent. “This meaning-something-more and meaning-something-beyond what is phenomenologically immanent is what we call the transcendence of the act.”<sup>69</sup>

Recall that Scheler takes the singular experience of *Erlebnis* to be intentionally more foundational than the different experiences of (sided) empirical perception. Empirical perception does the work of observing in its parts something that is already, originally given. And it observes the thing as disintegrated, or composed of parts that have been artificially decomposed from the basic experience of the thing as a whole. But more importantly, this mode of perception ultimately takes the attitude of the one “who stands outside, who has no *direct* contact with any” of the things themselves. This seems to align with what Husserl proposes for the phenomenological attitude when he sets up as critically eminent the “*disinterested onlooker*, above the naïvely interested Ego.”<sup>70</sup> The latter, he says, as “‘*interested*’ in

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<sup>69</sup> Scheler, “Three Facts,” 231.

<sup>70</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 35.

the world,” is thereby “naturally immersed in the world,”<sup>71</sup> which he takes as an impoverished form of givenness.

If we dismiss the attitude of a disinterested onlooker and take instead the one interested and actively immersed in the world, as Scheler does, the contents of the world reveal themselves differently, and not inadequately. They seem not to be given one-sidedly, but given as integrated units of meaning, and intentionally independent from the empirical contents of observation. Scheler maintains that something immanent and something transcendent cannot be distinguished on account of varying modes of appearance alone, according to the direction of perception (either internally or externally). Rather, if we adopt what Scheler calls the phenomenological attitude, as opposed to the scientific one, then the contents of all experience (beyond the categories of internal or external) can be given either as immanent or transcendent (interpreted as degrees of adequacy). In this case something “external” can be given adequately (when it is not given *as* external, but *in* the act of experiencing) and something “internal” can just as well be given inadequately. Immanence and transcendence is not a condition of the kind of object (mental or physical), or the place of the object (internal or external); it is a condition of the way any and every object is seen according to the mode it is experienced. Adequacy of cognition depends, once again, on some active engagement with it, already independent from the attempt to observe it.

A telling example is found in Scheler’s response to the so-called problem of the “perception of other minds.” Scheler challenges the position that what is given in the

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<sup>71</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 35.



perception of others is first and foremost their body. Husserl, for example, claims that such perception is accorded to a series of apperceptive (not deductive) transfers, or stages of “analogical apperception.” Through a connection of the consciousness of our own ego, we come to an awareness of our own lived body (*Leib*) as that through which consciousness can perform. One’s own lived body is analogically transferred to the material body (*Körper*) of another. It is by means of the *appearance of the body* of another that further apperceptive transfers build up the awareness, first, of that body as a lived body, and then from a lived body, to the awareness of an “*alter ego*.”<sup>72</sup>

Scheler maintains, in contrast, that the very question of the perception of other minds is misposed. Our foundational perception of others is neither with respect to their bodies, nor with respect to their “selves,” “minds” or “souls.” What we perceive is an expressive unity as an integral whole, that is to say, “a unity belonging to the whole of this living organism as an individual *whole*.”<sup>73</sup> A person’s joy is given in laughter, one’s sorrow in her tears, one’s love in a look of affection, and one’s rage in the gnashing of teeth.<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, even before I notice another person’s eyes, “I see that ‘he is looking at me’ and that ‘he is looking at me as though he wished to avoid my seeing that he is looking at me.’”<sup>75</sup> It is impossible to reduce such expressive unities, or “patterns of wholeness,” into a sum of partial sensory appearances in the mode of an “external perception,” without doing damage to the

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<sup>72</sup> Cf. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 89-100.

<sup>73</sup> Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), 262.

<sup>74</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 260.

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 261.

original wholeness. "Sensory appearances are given only insofar as they function as the basis of these patterns, or can take upon the further office of signifying or representing such wholes."<sup>76</sup> Colors, sounds, shapes are not merely sensations but qualities appearing in conjunction with sensations. And if we are to take such complex of sensations without their qualitative arrangement, then, Scheler adds, "we reach the remarkable conclusion that we can perceive the bodies of other people but not their selves."<sup>77</sup>

These so-called qualitative patterns of wholeness are given within the context of mutual interaction and togetherness with others, not as some "onlooker" who takes the other as an object of perception rather than as a friend or enemy, a brother or sister. It is only by disengaging from the more original context of personal interaction, which is the normal way people are perceived, that we even become an onlooker at all: that I am a subject and you are an object (or, objectively, another subject). For Scheler, the "attitude of internal or external perception" happens derivatively, "in the second place."<sup>78</sup>

Furthermore, acts of internal and external empirical perception have a symbolizing function; they will invariably symbolize stimuli in the field of perception *as* something, for example, as an individual's body or the individual's self. The congruence between intention and givenness is primarily disrupted when a "researcher" reflectively retreats from the world, turns the world into an "object" of research, and is out to fulfill various criteria by means of the world. In this case, "the

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<sup>76</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 264.

<sup>77</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 263.

<sup>78</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 261.

object is present as 'only intended,' merely as what is required to fulfill a sign or a symbol."<sup>79</sup> The congruence of intention and givenness is disrupted by the observation itself insofar as empirical observation relates to the world by dint of conceptual *distance* from the world.

As already stated, Husserl takes the perception of something immanent as necessarily belonging to internal perception. It is therefore necessary that internal perception precede external perception (immanence precede transcendence) since the essential laws of consciousness are the laws of the objects of consciousness.<sup>80</sup> The resulting claim, which Descartes champions, is that our own self is that which is *immediately* given. But what is more "self-evident" than the fact that I think my own thoughts, or that I cannot feel any other feelings than my own?

Scheler suggests that metaphysical theories have created unnecessary complications to these questions. For example, once we postulate a "real substratum" for the experiences which one may happen to have, then one is unable to have any other thoughts or feelings that do not belong to this real substratum. Two real substrata, or two "souls," Scheler writes, "certainly cannot enter into one another or switch from one to another."<sup>81</sup> According to phenomenological evidence, however, there is great certainty also that "we can think the thoughts of others as

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<sup>79</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 170.

<sup>80</sup> To which Scheler remarks as "the form which Kant's Copernican revolution acquires in Husserl." This conclusion, however, "in no way follows from the procedure of the reduction. It is an epistemological standpoint which comes from elsewhere and follows from the well-known principle, first expressed by Descartes, that every given is originally immanent to consciousness." Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 317.

<sup>81</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 245.

well as our own, and can feel their feelings (in sympathy) as we do our own.”<sup>82</sup> We tend to distinguish our own thoughts from the characters in stories we have read or heard. We distinguish our own feelings from those of a group or those we can later tell have been unconsciously contracted from that group. However, in all of these cases, sometimes our own thoughts and other’s thoughts are not easily distinguishable. One could be in doubt as to whether some thought or feeling is one’s own or another’s, and therefore they may be indistinguishable. For example, an individual’s own thought may not be presented as his or her own, but as “ours,” namely, a prevailing idea of the community. Or, one may project one’s own thought onto another, when one “reads into” a text what he or she thinks.<sup>83</sup>

Perhaps, most commonly, one accepts the thought of others as his or her own. We can reproduce thoughts and feelings vicariously without being conscious of it. Someone, for example, may tend “to live more in the community than in his own individual self.” Scheler speaks specifically of the life of a child, though the following may pertain into adulthood:

Imbued as he is with ‘family feeling,’ his own life is at first almost completely hidden from him. Rapt, as it were, and hypnotized by the ideas and feelings of this concrete environment of his, the only experience which succeed in crossing the threshold of his inner awareness are those which fit into the sociologically conditioned patterns which form a kind of channel for the stream of his mental environment. ... What occurs is an immediate flow of experiences, *undifferentiated as between mine and thine*.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 245.

<sup>83</sup> Scheler presents the following scenarios: one might present new ideas as old, such as, the medieval reading of relatively novel Christian modes of thinking into Aristotle’s texts. Or one might present old ideas as new, such as the modern tendency “to take up ideas which have been unconsciously acquired and thought a thousand times before and put them forward as new and original.” Scheler, *Sympathy*, 245.

<sup>84</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 246, 247.

In such cases, something that is so-called “internal,” i.e., the self and his or her own experiences (*Erlebnisse*), may also be “transcendent.” A mental event is not always immanent (an adequately fulfilled intention). A phenomenology of the ego, proper, does not therefore consist in empirical (internal) perception, but in the experience of the ego’s “interwovenness” (*Ineinandersein*, lit., being-in-one-another) precisely in the lived-experience of the totality of one’s life itself: the ego is *seen* (not observed) in the lived-experience of autonomously *living as a self* (which is itself a great achievement!). It is this integrative experience of a life as a whole, Scheler maintains, that makes any of the partial contents of observation *meaningful* in the first place.

Thus it would be a great mistake to think that the mental sphere [or whatever is given in internal perception] coincides with the immediately given, which does not permit any genuine illusions.... It would be a mistake to think that inner perception has some sort of evidential advantage of ‘external’ perception.... Instead, every possible sort of [pretense-self] (*Scheinichs*) exists, for example, the “Hamlet-self” of an actor on the stage, the self of social roles, or one of the selves of a divided consciousness (schizophrenia).<sup>85</sup>

The problem therefore is not with the objects observed or the direction of intention in either external or internal perception. The problem, rather, pertains to the fact that anything given in the experience of observation, as observation, not only appears as heterogeneous partial contents that cause fluctuations as modes of appearance, but, when something is merely observed, the thing is only given to fulfill the symbols that intentionality is already out to fulfill. The problem, in other words, is precisely the problem that Adorno expresses: we take our concepts as if they identify with the object, but we are unaware of the manner by which the

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<sup>85</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 147.

concept clouds the nonidentical (nonconceptualizable) elements of the object, and how the concept will invariably articulate an object without those objective components (the nonconceptual domain) which has traction for criticizing consciousness.

This central aspect of Adorno's critical theory has an important place in Scheler's phenomenology as well, but while Adorno takes the mediation that this point suggests to be inherent to all experience, Scheler thinks that it is in *immediacy* (of a nonconceptual sort)—the direct experiential contact with the object—that provides the possibility of the kind of self-awareness Adorno wants. It is by means of a mediated distance of subject and object that makes us rely more on conceptual forms and widens the space of ideology. It is an experience of thing in a new way (with another attitude) that makes us encounter the limits of concepts more than a rationally articulated critique of them.

Scheler's point is that if observation entails distance, and distance is filled up with conceptual symbols, then observation "always gives its object more or less *symbolically*, and always as an object which *transcends* the content of perception."<sup>86</sup> Symbolism is inherent to empirical observation because it "always selects its object in advance in accordance with those features which are important for a possible explanation."<sup>87</sup> Members of political parties, for example, perceive one's political situation on account of predetermined, and unquestioned political theories that have turned into theoretically justified prejudices (ideology).<sup>88</sup> However, coming to

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<sup>86</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 148.

<sup>87</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 149.

<sup>88</sup> For more about Scheler's view on ideology, see Chapter 6.

the political situation by means of the theories detracts from the authenticity (the immediacy) of the experience of the situation itself. The concept conditions the very perception of the situation. Partisan divides are perpetuated by the difference of concepts brought to the crises, and without an awareness of the ways these concepts may fail to adequately assess the crises. Certainly this pertains beyond politics. “Evolutionists,” are out to find in advance certain features of nature that best explain the evolution of species; their critics, the “creationists,” are out to find in advance those features of nature that explain nature differently, by intelligent design, for example. Cognitive interests have a tendency of tainting the conclusions—but not necessarily by means of the *interests*, but by means of the concepts which influence the attitude according to which something is *seen*.

Every scientific investigation makes sense in the essential intuition, but the intuition increasingly breaks down and is symbolized when experiment and testing (which already presupposes the meaning of the thing tested) intends *more than what is there* (i.e., fulfilling a symbol). It is at this point that we begin *interpreting* rather than *seeing*. As such, the researcher ultimately stands at a distance from the experiencing act itself, and is not adequately *within* (i.e., immanent to) the act of experiencing. Whatever is immanent to an act of experiencing “does not simply stand there and let itself be observed so that now this feature, now that, stands out in relief without any alteration in the object.”<sup>89</sup> The disinterested onlooker, as disinterested, also remains distant from the object, standing apart from the world and, therefore, apart from the “very sources in which the contents of the world

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<sup>89</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

reveal themselves.”<sup>90</sup>

### **Interpretation and Intuition**

The question was raised earlier whether there is any criteria for self-givenness. Scheler cavalierly dismisses the claim on account of the contradiction between criteria and self-givenness and he fails to consider a defense of self-givenness in the face of the contradiction. This is a substantial objection that Scheler does not take as seriously as he should. On the one hand, the fact of self-evidence (the self-givenness of things) seems to be self-evident (indubitable). The criteria alone, as symbolic, points beyond itself to a basic experience before any criteria pertains. On the other hand, it is a significant question whether the phenomenologist is not simply looking to fulfill a symbol when out to find an “essence”; wouldn’t one merely be taking things according to the conceptual criterion “essentialness”? Phenomenology in other words, may have its own symbolizing intention that is imposed on the givenness of things. Perhaps that which is considered to be an “essence” is not something given, but something constructed to fulfill the phenomenologist’s cognitive interests. Moreover, and perhaps more significantly, we might question whether a human being can ever ultimately evade the influence of symbols enough to return to the things themselves in such an immediate way that it is independent from traditionally, and socially ingrained signs. Perhaps part the point of Adorno’s critique of immediacy to the highlight its mythical status. We are always already socially constituted, so the suggestion that we can come to experience in a way that

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<sup>90</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.



bypasses bringing certain symbols is naïve.

To put this problem in context, consider the so-called linguistic or hermeneutic turn by which Hans-Georg Gadamer and others affirm the role of tradition and language in understanding, and the consciousness of being exposed and affected by history, in which we are invariably situated. This seems to suggest that we will also invariably stand at some kind of historical and tradition-constituted distance from that toward which consciousness intends. Paul Ricoeur calls this “distanciation” alienating since, although it preserves, methodologically, the possibility of scientific objectivity (in the natural or human sciences), it nevertheless seems to destroy “the fundamental and primordial relation whereby we belong to and participate in the historical reality which we claim to construct as an object.”<sup>91</sup> Gadamer also maintains that one must ultimately choose either the alternative of a “methodological attitude” and forsake the historical density of truth, or adopt “the attitude of truth” and forsake objectivity.<sup>92</sup> Ricoeur’s “hermeneutic phenomenology” attempts to collapse the antinomial character of the alternative by unifying two elements: “belonging” and “distanciation.” Such a project, Ricoeur notes, does not ruin phenomenology as such, but only “the *idealistic* interpretation by Husserl,” and the foundation of transcendental subjectivity. If intentionality is interpreted as a consciousness of something away from self-consciousness, then intentionality is a mode of consciousness that surpasses its own subjectivity and stands outside of

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<sup>91</sup> Paul Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences: Essays on Language, Action, and Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 131.

<sup>92</sup> Ricoeur, “Distanciation,” 131.

itself, towards meaning, “before consciousness is *for itself*.”<sup>93</sup> If “the meaning of consciousness lies outside of itself,”<sup>94</sup> then the notion of belonging (*Zugehörigkeit*) has a central place in phenomenology, and without this element of belonging, “there would be no relation to the historical as such.”<sup>95</sup> The relation of belonging, Ricoeur claims, is an ontological relation, which encompasses the subject-object relation, but which reveals one’s situation in, and indebtedness to, history, which Ricoeur negatively characterizes as “finitude.”

Ricoeur’s notion of “participatory belonging” is not unlike Scheler’s characterization of the phenomenological attitude and the notion of *Vollzug*, or execution (of an intentional act), which I am loosely translating as participatory engagement. However, Ricoeur’s characterization of belonging overlooks a fundamental aspect of the phenomenological attitude. The weakness of belonging is its negative meaning which renders human beings in a necessarily inadequate cognitive situation on account of their finitude and therefore emphasizes that which it takes away, namely, the objectivity and universality in understanding. However, participatory engagement in the execution of the act does not take away, but gives us an insight into the things or set of things with which we participate.

Ricoeur misses a distinctive epistemological component to belonging; we not only belong to a historical position, but we belong to a locus of things that comprise our world, and in that belonging (for example, the artist’s belonging to her art, the

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<sup>93</sup> Ricoeur, “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 115.

<sup>94</sup> Ricoeur, “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics,” 112.

<sup>95</sup> Ricoeur, “Hermeneutics and Critique of Ideology,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 65.

friend's belonging to a friendship, etc.) something is directly given in the very participatory relation that belonging entails. Ricoeur seems to suggest the only way to hold on to phenomenology, while bypassing Husserl's idealism, is by throwing out the category of immanence in intuition all together. As a result, Ricoeur maintains that any "return to intuition" is countered by the fact that all understanding is mediated by interpretation, and that, therefore, belonging is essentially a hermeneutic experience: "we belong to an historical tradition through a relation of distance, which oscillates between remoteness and proximity."<sup>96</sup> The proximity is never proximal enough to circumvent the necessity of *Auslegung* ("exegesis, explication, interpretation"). Ricoeur pulls from Heidegger's analysis of understanding: "the *Auslegung* is the 'development of understanding' in terms of the structure of the 'as' (*Als*)."<sup>97</sup> Ricoeur refers to *Auslegung*, as the unsurpassable presupposition of the method of phenomenology.<sup>98</sup> However, all explication, the very recourse to the predicative, "as," does little more than attempt, in the very process of explication itself, to point to a pre-predicative experience by means of a symbol. As Heidegger puts it,

The 'as' makes up the structure of [explication] of something that is [already] understood. It constitutes the interpretation. In dealing with what is environmentally ready-to-hand by interpreting it circumspectively, we 'see' it *as* a table, a door, a carriage, or a bridge...; the 'world' which has already been understood comes to be interpreted.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 110-1.

<sup>97</sup> Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 107.

<sup>98</sup> Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 120.

<sup>99</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 189.

My sense is that Ricoeur conflates what for Scheler and Heidegger are two distinguishable levels of understanding or knowing—the one cognitive and the other intuitive. Intuition does not do away with interpretation, nor does interpretation do away with intuition. As communicative beings, we cannot stay on the level of intuition. Communication requires that we venture into interpretation and linguistic articulation of phenomena. However, interpretation and communication are always within in a level of proximity to a pre-linguistic intuitive dimension of knowing. As Heidegger suggests: explication is in relation to something *already understood*.

There are two points at work here capable of advancing a critical phenomenology as I see it. On the one hand, Ricoeur is correct that interpretation is inevitable. As I noted in the introduction, insofar as phenomenology is philosophy, it must consistently deal with the sphere of the given, conceptually, by bringing intuition to cognition. Phenomenology deals, after all, not only with phenomena, but *logos*. And it is precisely in the antinomical relation between phenomena and logos that critique emerges. A critical capacity within phenomenology would be lost if the sphere of intuition is treated with the same level of explication as cognition, and vice versa. The phenomenological critical function is in the difference, the *antinomy*, between intuitive having-of-something and cognitive taking-of-something *as* something.

So the phenomenological account of essence need not determine apodictically that such a content defies every and any social or cultural constituting features. Any so-called “criterion” of self-givenness need not depend on the ideal adequacy of

intuition, rather, *evidence* of self-givenness can be detected in the very difference between intuition and explication. But the evidence is not just in the mention of it, it is given in the critical experience itself, namely, in the act of attempting to articulate an experience which defies articulation, or an object's identification with concepts.

In the final chapter, we will survey ways that content of intuition can be deceptive, deluded, or even falsified. There are certain social conditions that can indeed affect the way phenomena are given. Intuition therefore does not guarantee adequacy that holds good consistently on the level of immanence. As far as I know, no phenomenologist maintains that intuitions are never illusory or perfectly fulfilled. The evidence I suggest is in the difference between *the given and the articulation*: the difference between experiencing sweetness and expressing it; the discrepancy between the joy of intimacy and talking about it. Even if the experience of sweetness and the joy of intimacy are still to some degree linguistically conditioned, this need not be a problem, just as long as we can experience a discrepancy between intuition and conceptualization (phenomena and logos).

The problem with the hermeneutical antinomy between truth and method, distanciation and belonging, is that it maintains the presupposition of traditional theory; the antinomy is an antinomy in relation to the traditional (scientific) model of theory that attempts to justify understanding in relation to methodology and universal objectivity, and therefore, to a scientific worldview. The antinomy seems to presuppose that only some distanciation and disconnection provides understanding, even if this understanding is always incomplete. Scheler's insistence that distanciation does not provide insight, but only a network of symbolization of

insights, counters this hermeneutical antinomy. The problematic converges precisely on the notion of *Auslegung*, and the identification of understanding with explication; however, explication, interpretation, and universalization are always symbolizations of a singular essential experience.

Phenomenology is not, strictly speaking, theory at all, nor does it strictly count as epistemology, in the way epistemology has been traditionally understood as a “theory of cognition” (*Erkenntnistheorie*). To be sure, Scheler’s phenomenology certainly includes, or at least points to, a theory of cognition, but broadly speaking, phenomenology cannot be theory, if theory is limited to “theoretical cognition.”<sup>100</sup> Phenomenology is partially pre-theoretical. Scheler writes,

any such theory presupposes the phenomenological investigation of essence of that which is given. Cognition and valuation are themselves particular forms of a ‘consciousness-of-something’ built up from the immediate consciousness of self-given facts. ... [Epistemology] therefore is a discipline which does not precede or ground phenomenology, but follows it.<sup>101</sup>

According to Scheler, phenomenology pertains to “the relation between conscious thought...and a world *already unified and held together by prelogically given essences and their connections.*”<sup>102</sup> This view avoids the claim that theory constructs the intelligible world, i.e., that thought is that which organizes an “unorganized *mē on.*”<sup>103</sup> Scheler maintains, in contrast to the Kantian epistemological paradigm that that thinking itself requires pre-unified “facts,” which thought organizes only logically, and symbolically. As such, Scheler’s phenomenology avoids theoretical separation from the world that shows up

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<sup>100</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 159.

<sup>101</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 159.

<sup>102</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 159.

<sup>103</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 160.

meaningfully in pre-theoretical intuition; consequently he avoids a place in the Post-Cartesian pantheon of traditional theorists.

*Theoros* sat at a distance in order to be a “spectator”—to have the suitable vantage point. But phenomenology insists that if *Theoros* wants *theoria* (θεωρία), i.e., “a view to see,” he must participate in the spectacle: “that which is seen and experienced is given only in the seeing and experiencing act itself, in the being acted out [*Vollzug*]; it appears in this act and only in it.”<sup>104</sup> Theory, in this sense, “has an ontological meaning from the start”: the ontology of person and world—of the *actor* (the person as bearer of acts [*Akträger*]) and *being* (what is simply “there”)—precedes epistemology.<sup>105</sup>

A view to see (*theoria*), in other words, does not require logical distance, but requires *immediacy* and *immanence*. Any *distance* at all will be filled with symbols, and distance is essentially linked with a disinterested standpoint. The coincidence of what is intended (in the act) and what is given (in the object) requires first and foremost, not theoretical objectivity, but “the closest and most living contact”<sup>106</sup> of what is there. *Theoria* (seeing) requires *praxis* (doing) inasmuch as doing connotes involvement. There is a sense in which one does not seek out to find essences, but that they show themselves in the very engagement with the world, provided the world is encountered with a certain attitude. The essence of friendship in the act of being and having a friend; the essence of art in artistic acts; the essence of religion in religious acts of repentance and prayer, etc. Any phenomenology of society, of

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<sup>104</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

<sup>105</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 158.

<sup>106</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

history, of reality, etc., does not distance itself from the content, theoretically. It cannot settle for predetermined conceptual symbols.

Sometimes Scheler's insistence on speaking of an essential foundation of perception seems to detract from the preponderance of the object that I am calling for phenomenologically. Scheler's point is that we only select out of a pre-given intelligible whole for closer judgment and evaluation, and we select those things that are of most interest. I suggest that intuitive experience be recast in terms of a dialectical model, rather than holding to a foundational one, but doing so in a way that preserves Scheler's insight, and that is more phenomenologically consistent.

In speaking of foundation, Scheler seeks in part to avoid allowing perceptual variations (perceiving more of a thing, in different ways, contexts, etc.) to alter the validity of the intuited essence: if a change in perception means a change in the essence then not only would they be indistinguishable, it would make an essence just as contingent as perception, thereby nullifying its status as essence. It seems however that knowledge of essences do indeed develop, and that this development is historical. Scheler writes that, with knowledge of any essence, once gained, "it cannot...be modified (negated) by any subsequent experience."<sup>107</sup> However, it is possible that "essential knowledge is enriched and developed."<sup>108</sup> Isn't this enrichment at least in part on account of subsequent experience? Whereas there is an intuitive (and intentional) basis for empirical perception, there is also a perceptual (and temporal) basis for intuition.

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<sup>107</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 201.

<sup>108</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 201.



I propose that this epistemological problem be reinterpreted by taking more seriously the temporal order of givenness, instead of privileging the intentional order of givenness at the expense of the temporal. Here we can take a point from Ricoeur on *distanciation*, which he calls the “dialectical counterpart of the notion of belonging”<sup>109</sup> due to the inevitable oscillation between remoteness and proximity. This applies also to self-givenness. Scheler often overlooks the inevitability of symbolization; we cannot be removed from conceptualization and language, nor should we. The givenness of something immanent, immediately may have its place, but such an insight lasts for a moment and in the next moment it is gone from view; it passes just as quickly as it comes.<sup>110</sup> Time takes it away, and the only way of preserving in any lasting way that which is directly given is in objectifying the thing either empirically (through observation) or symbolically (through pointing to it through linguistically). Accordingly, there is no foundation, rather a dialectical interplay (in intentionality) between intentional experience and perceptual experience. I call this an *intuitive dialectic* or dialectic of givenness, which reveals a reciprocal dynamic or mutual interchange. Subsequent perception contributes to enriching the essential meaning and the (development of) meaning content contributes to an enrichment of knowledge of perceptual content. The temporal order of givenness reveals the historical (and dialectical) process of understanding.

On the one hand, I propose a dialectical process making meaning content remain ever closer to perceptual content. And on the other hand, I suggest this does not

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<sup>109</sup> Ricoeur, “Phenomenology and Hermeneutics,” 110.

<sup>110</sup> Scheler apparently took to writing down insights on the cuffs of his sleeves which shows precisely the fleetingness of givenness.

destroy intuitive immediacy due to the fact that immediacy comes with a certain active engagement with the thing: both the sense content and the meaning content have to be given immediately, even if prior to any observation or conceptualization. Scheler is concerned with preserving the *a priori* which is given in a single experience, and independent from the repeated experiences of induction. However, it is possible to hold that whatever is given in a single experience pertains, but that this essential content can be developed (not negated) through the historical sequence of other singular experiences.

### 3

## PHENOMENOLOGY AND REALITY

Phenomenology has its first stake in a critical enterprise on account of the antinomy between phenomena and logos. Phenomenological investigation cannot strictly speaking be considered a traditional theory insofar as intuition maintains a critical relation with respect to a logical articulation of givenness. Indeed, the phenomenological attitude maintains a close connection with intentional objects vis-à-vis the intuitive domain of intentionality, and the participation in the world vis-à-vis the execution of intentional acts. Despite this critical domain, an additional issue is that objects are taken by the phenomenologist as phenomena, and as phenomena, the question of their reality is not settled. The phenomenologist (in a the Husserlian vein) can make distinctions of givenness (i.e., transcendent and immanent, contingent and non-contingent, formal and material, categorial and essential, etc.), but she cannot make distinction with respect to spheres of being. An inability to maintain and define distinctions about reality puts strain on the ability for forge phenomenologically a critique of society.

In the context of Adorno's critique of Husserl's idealism, critical experience is not a problem for Husserl on the level of transcendence of the object. Adorno fails to acknowledge this. However, the issue of the reality of the object is phenomenologically inconclusive and so cannot receive philosophical justification. Since reality for Husserl is not a point of incommensurability with respect to, for example, the concept of reality, real things cannot offer a critical space by which to

critique the concept of reality. Husserl uses the concept, according to the meaning reality has for us, as the standard of judging real being. If this Husserlian view cannot be challenged, then phenomenology must consider the *givenness* of society, but is necessarily prevented from a consideration of social *reality*.

To be sure, Scheler is dedicated to much of Husserl's phenomenology. Indeed, the difficulty Scheler faces for responding to the Frankfurt School challenge is his unwavering insistence, even until his final essays, that phenomenology always seeks to "de-realize" (*ent-wirklichen*) the world, or to "'ideate' (*ideieren*) the world" (GW IX, 43-4).<sup>1</sup> Phenomenology "disregards any positing (belief or unbelief) of the particular coefficient of reality with which the content of the act is given" (GW X, 395).<sup>2</sup> Scheler says in his late work *Erkenntnislehre und Metaphysik* that despite the benefits of *Wesensontologie* (ontology of essence) which yields evidential, adequate, *a priori*, and immanent knowledge, its disadvantage (*Nachteile*) is that it gives an existence-free essence ("*daseinsfreies Wesen*") (GW XI, 49).

However, Scheler offers a remarkably different view, on phenomenological terms, with respect to the question of reality. This difference corresponds to Scheler's shift of the phenomenological domain away from the theoretical sphere, or at least by broadening the domain to include not only pre-conceptual content, but also, as will be shown in this chapter, pre-conscious givenness—the givenness of the lived body and the ecstatic structure of drives. New types of givenness provide a sphere of historical reality which is the condition for the possibility of taking things

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<sup>1</sup> Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos*, trans. Manfred Frings (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009), 39.

<sup>2</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition," *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 156.

as objects.

### **The Question of a Phenomenology of Reality**

Scheler claims that reality (*Realität*) is given in an element of experience that he calls resistance (*Widerstand*). To return to the passage with which we began the previous chapter, Scheler claims: “the world is given in lived experience...as ‘resistance’ as immediately [i.e., with the same kind of immediacy] as it is given as an ‘object.’”<sup>3</sup> Does this experience of resistance, in which reality is given, a phenomenological givenness? If so, one may understandably wonder what it is exactly that is given. Is it phenomena *as* real, or the “essence” of reality. If an essence is given purely, which in part means it is given independently of sensory content, then it would mean also that it is given as “*de-realized*,” or with its very factor of reality “suspended.” But what could it mean for “reality” to be given with reality suspended? Such “de-realization” seems to pertain only to an idea of reality. Furthermore, if what is given in the intuition of reality is its essence (as perhaps a character of an intentional object), then it would not make sense that Scheler would bother to distinguish, in the above passage, the intuition of essences (in the immediacy of the “object”) and the intuition of reality (in the immediacy of resistance). If a phenomenological view of the world necessarily suspends the coefficient of reality, then any “phenomenology of reality” is a terminological contradiction.

There are a couple ways to qualify this problem in order for it to be addressed. It

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<sup>3</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 143. My emphasis.

is important to be cautious in speaking about procedural techniques of phenomenology as if phenomenology is simply a method of bracketing, and that it is in the bracketing that the thing itself is given. Phenomenology is an investigation of what is given in encountering something directly, that is to say, when an act “of such and such an essence” encounters “a content having such and such an essence.”<sup>4</sup> “Reality” is suspended in the givenness of essence, not on account of some problem with reality as such, but insofar as the real, contingent, or empirical factors of something, and the deliberate observation of a thing *as* these factors, disrupts the congruence of intention and givenness, causing transcendence of the act.

Consider the example of an alarm tone, phenomenology is intentionally oriented toward the tone of the alarm simply according to what it is, namely, *as* a tone. The tone in this case is given indifferently to other considerations, such as its practical significance, its empirical conditions, or its existential status. However, this congruence is disrupted when, in natural perception or in a scientific orientation, we are already intentionally engaged in taking something given *as* something which it symbolizes. This may happen, for example, in the case of a practical judgment: the tone of the alarm *as* (i.e., symbolizing) “time to get up,” or in the case of a scientific judgment: the tone of the alarm *as* (i.e., symbolized by) sound waves causing the sensation of hearing. One could also maintain that reality is transcendent on account of a judgment that posits the reality or unreality of something (i.e., an “existential judgment”): the tone of the alarm *as* real.

Scheler never claims that the phenomenological mode of philosophy disregards

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<sup>4</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 156.

experiences of reality, phenomenology merely “disregards any positing (belief or unbelief) of the particular coefficient of reality.”<sup>5</sup> The factor of reality is already given along with the other content given in intentional acts.<sup>6</sup> Scheler makes the following claim about the derivation of existential judgments:

[The] coefficient of reality itself and its essence remain the object of investigation. We do not bracket *them*, but rather the explicit or implicit judgments in which they are posited. Thus we do not bracket the possibility of positing them, but only the positing them in some one mode [namely, in the phenomenological attitude].<sup>7</sup>

Judgments about whether things are real or unreal presuppose the givenness (of the essence or meaning) of reality itself in lived experience. Reality must already be meaningful before existential judgments can be made. There is nothing at this point that is different from Husserl’s phenomenology since, for Husserl, even if the reality of something cannot be phenomenologically deciphered or posited, reality still has a meaning from a determinate set of evidence.

Scheler revisits the “paradox” of the existential proposition in his late essay *Idealismus—Realismus*. When delimiting the proper *questions* for treating the problem of reality effectively, Scheler makes clear the various questions that are *not* proper questions for uncovering the sense of reality, but with which reality has nevertheless traditionally been dealt. His primary criterion for ruling out previous ways of treating reality is whether the questions themselves presuppose, as a criterion, the very matter that is to be explained. When they beg the question in this way, these attempts inquire initially about the *conditions* required in order for

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<sup>5</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 156.

<sup>6</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 156.

<sup>7</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 156.

something to be called real. Neo-Kantian schools, Scheler remarks, tend to *begin* the investigation of reality with a definition of real being: “an object’s standing under certain lawful conditions of fact.”<sup>8</sup> Beginning from the definition, they move to demarcate, for example, what the being of reality is, and how the reality of the object comes to be. If the assessment is accurate, this procedure is a great example of what Scheler would consider transcendent givenness insofar as it starts with a set of linguistic symbols and their conceptual meanings, and, from a symbolic point of departure, seek confirmation of the experience by means of the symbols, rather than confirming the symbols by means of the experience. Such lawful conditions may coordinate certain kinds of things with the factual condition of being real, but “that there is reality and that a real world exists at all can never be inferred from any such conjunctions of ideas.”<sup>9</sup>

Husserl falls into this question-begging mistake as well. Although the meaning of reality is initially established upon conditions of evidential givenness (fulfillment and unfulfillment of intention), the concept, once determined is made inflexible and becomes the new measure for what is and is not accepted as real. When, according to the idea of reality, it is discovered that certainty of reality is not possible, the option of reconsidering the adequacy of the idea is not considered. The concept, for Husserl, does more work than is phenomenologically appropriate.

This question of first inquiring about what kinds of *conditions*, whether factual or cognitive, are required for the reality of an object to subsist or in order to ascribe

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<sup>8</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 314. Scheler cites specifically, Rudolf Hermann Lotze.

<sup>9</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 315.



reality to an object, Scheler thinks, have regrettably dominated epistemology. That is to say, epistemology operates by asking first what kind of criterion is required to accurately determine things, and in this case, the reality of things. But the very question, first, already presupposes the givenness of reality, and second, attempts to deal with the question without some direct experience with the domain, thereby asking what kinds of conditions must apply in order to establish a logical (and therefore analytical) connection between things perceived and the predetermined concept-symbol, "reality." This is what makes the so-called "existential judgment" paradoxical. At the same time, it both is and is not a synthetic judgment. It is synthetic insofar as it is a judgment about existence, and because "the predicate of existence is never contained in the subject of the judgment":<sup>10</sup> essence does not entail existence. But it is not synthetic because it is not an ampliative proposition. In the judgment, "the bird exists," the predicate does not offer anything new about the subject. "Rather, reality is predicated of the sum total of all the attributes that may [already] belong to the subject," the bird.<sup>11</sup> An existential judgment therefore makes sense if and only if there is some awareness beforehand in that which the factor of reality consists.

This applies as well to Husserl's transcendental reduction. One could claim that the bracketing of real conditions presupposes a sense of what is experienced when something is experienced as real, i.e., the conditions that apply for any real thing. But for Husserl, the epoché is implemented on account of the fact that judgments about the reality of perceivable things are only at best believed, and therefore not

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<sup>10</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 314.

<sup>11</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 314.

suitable to fulfill phenomenological apodicticity. So, on the one hand, the phenomenological reduction amounts not to the suspension of the factor of reality itself, but the suspension of mere existential judgments, which Scheler reprimands as not only insufficient, but characterizes as “child’s play” (*kinderleicht*) (GW IX, 207).<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, not only the bracketing of the judgment, but also the judgment itself (the natural belief that something is real or unreal), presupposes the givenness of reality.

The questions that Scheler insists are the correct ones in order to uncover the givenness of reality are phenomenological questions, and they must be phenomenological if one seeks to get to the lived-experience of reality itself rather than inaugurating a new discussion about reality on account of a new conceptual criterion or “theory.” Instead of presupposing symbolic criteria that rely on theories of knowledge, one must recover an original experience of reality. There are two questions that must initially be asked:

1. “what is experienced [*erlebt*], when [something] is experienced as real?”<sup>13</sup>
2. “In what sorts of acts or modes of human behavior is the factor of reality originally given?”<sup>14</sup>

These questions, he continues, are the questions of “the phenomenology of the lived-experience of reality” (*der Phänomenologie des Realitätserlebnisses*).<sup>15</sup> But the problem remains: is there an “essence of reality” that would be given in

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<sup>12</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 316.

<sup>13</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

<sup>14</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

<sup>15</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

corresponding a phenomenology of reality? If phenomenology pertains to the givenness of “pure facts,” free of some empirical (or existential) constitution, how can existence be given without existential constitution? A response can be given according to the difference between conscious and ecstatic experience.

### **Conscious and Ecstatic Experience**

The difference between two distinguishable moments of phenomenological experience was at best implied in the previous chapter because the two moments were held together in a single, unified experience. Phenomenology is a fusion between spiritual activity and vital process. Scheler calls phenomenology both “an attitude of *spiritual* seeing,”<sup>16</sup> and an “intensely *vital*...contact with the world.”<sup>17</sup> He says, that phenomenology is “reflection,” (indicating inwardness) on “the closest and most living contact” (indicating outwardness) with what is there.

Phenomenology has a reflective element as well as what he called an “ecstatic” one. The main point of this chapter is that conscious-reflection depends for its content upon an ecstatic contact. Phenomenology is the “spiritual seeing” of that is which is given directly in a “vital contact with the world.”

On the one hand, *ecstasis* means standing outside of oneself. This refer to more than merely the intentional structure of conscious acts (the consciousness-of-something). Besides, acts of reflection (which is held in contrast to *ecstasis*) are intentional acts. The ecstatic moment of phenomenological experience pertains to the love or taking-interest in something that is the occasion for our active

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<sup>16</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 137.

<sup>17</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 138.

participation in the world. It is the ecstatic moment that establishes the “ontological relation” that defines knowledge, and in which theoretical cognition is rooted. Instead of *Interesse*, Scheler more commonly uses the term *Streben*, striving or conation. When we are conatively outside ourselves, we are more immersed within the our environment. And as immersed, one experiences resistances that *stand against* (*Widerstand*) the strength of vital drives. On these occasions, reflection pulls away and stands back from those resistances in order to consider them objectively. A “subject” becomes conscious (or conscious again) of an “object” that *stands against* (*Gegenstand*) consciousness.<sup>18</sup> There are two ways then that something “stands against,” either as a force of resistance or as an object, each, as per our guiding passage,<sup>19</sup> are given immediately. A conscious subject distances itself from some resistance to an endeavor, turning it into an object, and in turn creating the very conscious distinction between itself, the subject (as itself) and the object (as not itself). Scheler states, “the kind of being...which contents possess when they are reflectively had in their givenness in conscious acts—when therefore they become reflexive—is the being of being-consciously-known.”<sup>20</sup> Anytime we are within ourselves, we remain, to some degree, standing outside of the relevant “domain of facts,”<sup>21</sup> and anytime we remain immersed in that domain, we are, to some degree, “outside” of ourselves, so to speak. More precisely, phenomenological experience is

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<sup>18</sup> The parallel between the literal meanings of *Widerstand* (resistance) and *Gegenstand* (object) is significant. A resistance is not yet an (intentional) object, but the experience of resistance is required to intend something as an object.

<sup>19</sup> “In principle, the world is given in lived-experience as the ‘bearer of value’ and as ‘resistance’ [*Wider-stand*] as immediately [*unmittelbar*] as it is given as an object [*Gegenstand*]” (Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 143).

<sup>20</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 295.

<sup>21</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 139.

conscious reflection about that with which one is engaged ecstatically.

The implicit spiritual and vital moments connect with the two explicit aspects constitutive of phenomenological experience: immediacy and immanence. Immediate or direct experience highlights the vital contact important for knowledge; ecstasis and immediacy go hand-in-hand. Immanent givenness, on the other hand, highlights the conscious component for acts of knowing. Despite the fact that any immanent givenness necessarily entails some immediate or direct contact (in intuition), it is nevertheless possible for something to be given immediately without it being given immanently (when something is given as transcendent). Immediacy is a broader category than immanence: immediate givenness pertains to both intentional beings as well as real ones, while immanent givenness pertains only to intentional objects. This will be detailed more later. The important thing at this point is that, according to Scheler, knowing is not defined as an exclusive function of consciousness. Consciousness does not have a monopoly on knowledge. Rather, knowledge is

a concept which is prior even to that of consciousness. ... Knowledge [*Wissen*] is an ultimate, unique, and underivable ontological relationship [*Seinsverhältnis*] between two things. I mean by this that any being *A* 'knows' any being *B* whenever *A* participates in the essence or [such-being (*Sosein*)] of *B*.<sup>22</sup>

And to reiterate, love, interest, and conation pertain to that ecstatic moment "by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself in order to share and participate in another being."<sup>23</sup>

Scheler expands the meaning of knowing beyond the range of consciousness,

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<sup>22</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 292.

<sup>23</sup> Scheler, "Ordo Amoris," 110.

which he takes to be a correction of the idealist starting-point of “the principle of immanence-to-consciousness.”<sup>24</sup> Cognition (*Erkenntnis*) is itself a derivative form of knowing that “comes out of its original ecstatic form of simply ‘having things,’ in which there is no knowledge of the having or of that through which and in which it is had....”<sup>25</sup> In this case, it is “highly contestable” that “a relation to the self [*Ich-Beziehung*] is an essential condition of all processes of knowledge.”<sup>26</sup> The “self” in this context is the self of the conscious subject or ego, and that which Adorno rejects as “the first.” Scheler agrees. The form of knowledge which precedes and excludes any form of being-conscious, Scheler calls “*ekstatische Wissen*” (ecstatic knowledge).<sup>27</sup> It is conceivable, for example, that a child has ecstatic knowledge of that which consciousness later comes to symbolize as “comfort,” as “security,” as “fatigue,” or as “hunger.” And it is not inconceivable that what is given in the correlating lived-experience, even at such a young age, is the *essence* of comfort,

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<sup>24</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 293.

<sup>25</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 294.

<sup>26</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 294.

<sup>27</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 294. In a footnote to a lecture, entitled “Die Formen des Wissen und die Bildung,” presented to the Lessing Institute, dated January 17<sup>th</sup>, 1925, Scheler remarks that “For seven years, I have been proposing the following ideas in my lectures, as a basis for my theory of knowledge. Consciousness is only one form of knowledge. There also exists preconscious, ecstatic knowledge.” Max Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” *Philosophical Perspectives* trans. Oscar Haac (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 134, n. 24. The note goes on to summarize his positions on resistance and reality. A couple remarks about this footnote: first, if we can trust the date of the lecture as an approximate date of composition, Scheler seems to indicate an ecstatic basis to his epistemology that was not operative in his earlier works, such as his early essays on phenomenology. However, I interpret Scheler’s later essays as containing more inclusive themes, but which do not negate and are consistent with his early essays. Second, Heidegger’s remarks on Scheler’s account of reality and resistance seems to have come solely from this single footnote and not from the further development of these themes in “*Erkenntnis und Arbeit*” and “*Idealismus—Realismus*.” This seems to be the case since the footnote is the only source Heidegger cites. I raise issues pertaining Heidegger’s treatment later in the chapter.

security, fatigue, or hunger and this is the case precisely *because* of the young age. The knowledge of very young children is almost guaranteed to be free and independent from a kind of systematic empirical perception and from approaching objects with preconceived ideas that obstruct immanence.

The epistemological criteria of phenomenology: immediacy and immanence, are given a metaphysical basis with respect to the interpenetration of spirit and life (*Geist und Leben*).<sup>28</sup> Life, in the form of vital drives (*Drang*), has an inherent ecstatic role, which maintains this living contact with the world. *Drang* is pure vital directedness or impulsion without itself being aware of its directedness. But the givenness of essences, or ideal units of meaning, pertains to the role of spirit which has an *ascetic* role instead of an *ecstatic* one, whereby that which is encountered in immediate givenness is purified or “de-realized.” Scheler writes, “the human being is a creature that, by virtue of its spirit, can take an ascetic attitude toward its fervent and vibrating life.”<sup>29</sup>

Concerning again the givenness of reality, it is given immediately in the ecstatic lived-experience of resistance, but reality itself resists the act of spirit to cognize insofar as cognition belongs to ascetic de-realization, or the suspension of reality. Reality, therefore, can never be an “object” of an immanent mode of cognition. Furthermore, reality itself is also, strictly speaking, not “known” ecstatically insofar as knowledge pertains to the participation in the “*Sosein*” or such-being of

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<sup>28</sup> Closer consideration of Scheler’s metaphysics on this point will be given in Chapter 5.

<sup>29</sup> Max Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos*, 39.

something.<sup>30</sup> Knowledge is an ontological relation, not a causal one.<sup>31</sup> However, the reality or existence (*Dasein*) of something “can never stand to the real bearer of knowledge in any but a causal relation. The *ens reale* remains, therefore, outside of every possible knowledge-relation.”<sup>32</sup> On the one hand, it is possible to have an experience of reality itself, without symbolizing it in some way, but on the other hand it is *not possible* to raise that experience to the level of cognition without in some way symbolizing reality. All knowledge of reality relies on symbols that intentionally take the place of the experience. The givenness of reality is not an essential givenness insofar as essence is always a “pure fact.” A real being cannot be “purified” of its own reality.

Immediacy and immanence are held together in a single phenomenological experience because their meaning is established upon the same condition, namely, the presence or absence of symbolic criteria. The influence of such symbolic intention both mediates intuitive givenness and causes transcendence in cognition. However, these conditions apply only in the case of the consciousness of something, namely, of *Sosein*. *Dasein*, existence, is *always* given immediately in a lived

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<sup>30</sup> The term “*Sosein*” refers on the one hand to the essence of a thing as well as to what Scheler simply calls *zufälligen* (phenomenal contingency). It might be helpful to refer this notion to the Husserlian distinction between the noematic core, which is in this case the ideal meaning content or essence, and the noematic characteristics, which vary according to phenomenal givenness. If so, the *Sosein* would refer to the complete intentional object, including both its essential meaning content as well its contingent sensory content, which were sharply distinguished in the previous chapter. Due to the fact that “essence” is not an accurate translation, and “nature” bears metaphysical references that do not apply, the term will primarily be used here untranslated. I do however translate the term “character” in certain cases.

<sup>31</sup> A knowledge-relation, as an ontological relation, can affect a qualitative alteration on the part of the knower, but cannot cause a quantitative, and therefore measurable causal effect.

<sup>32</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 293.



experience, but can *never* be given immanently; nor, for that matter can it, strictly speaking, be “transcendent” since immanence and transcendence are modes of the consciousness of something. They are logical designations of intentional objects, not of real objects (*as real*). Scheler writes:

The original experience of reality, the experience of the resistance of world, *precedes*, therefore, any and all consciousness; resistance precedes all representation and perception. Even the most invasive sensory perception is never conditioned through stimuli and ordinary nervous processes alone.<sup>33</sup>

Concerning the possibility of a phenomenology of reality, there are two things to say: first, to be sure, reality is given immediately in some form of lived-experience, but in a lived-experience that is not strictly speaking phenomenological since, in this lived-experience, there is never any givenness of a “pure fact,” or essence. “Reality,” Scheler writes, “is ‘transintelligible’ [*transintelligibel*] for every possible knowing mind. Only the what of the existing being (*Dasein*), not the being [i.e., existence] (*Dasein*) of the what, is intelligible.”<sup>34</sup> However, I mentioned earlier that, although it is possible to *experience* reality directly, (and therefore asymbolically, since symbols only pertain to consciousness), it is not possible to cognize reality (ecstatically or consciously) without symbols. We do notice, though, that Scheler does speak of reality *symbolically* (conceptually) in ways that open phenomenological investigation. For example, he speaks of reality *as* “effective causality,” and in terms of his primary symbol, *as* “resistance.” But these symbols are employed to serve as pointers for the experience, not as a deceptively simple substitute for the experience. A phenomenology of reality is in effect a phenomenology of resistance.

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<sup>33</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 38.

<sup>34</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 312.

This way of interpreting the problem is actually more true to what Scheler intends. Scheler never actually claims to embark on a “phenomenology of reality,” but rather a “phenomenology of the *experience* of reality.”<sup>35</sup>

Returning now to the questions by which Scheler claims he will proceed, he asks first, “what is experienced [*erlebt*], when [something] is experienced as real?”<sup>36</sup> The answer pertains to the experience of resistance. *Resistance* is experienced when something is experienced as real. The second question, “In what sorts of acts or modes of human behavior is the factor of reality originally given?”<sup>37</sup> is answered by the conduct of our drives and strivings (conation). The factor of reality is originally given in our *drive-based conation*. Therefore, Scheler sets out not strictly to perform a phenomenology of reality, but of a phenomenology of the two central elements that comprise any lived-experience of reality: the human drive-life and the resistance to it.

Scheler explores this matter not because reality is a problem for human experience, or that reality is inaccessible, or that it cannot be “proven.” Rather, reality has been *turned into a problem* by philosophers who wrongly presuppose the givenness of things entirely independent from their existence. And this presupposition enters into phenomenology insofar as *Erlebnis* is interpreted to pertain only to conscious experience. For Scheler, in contrast to these thinkers, reality poses no problem so long as lived-experience is interpreted to include an ecstatic context of vital drives. It is therefore imperative not to lose sight of the fact

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<sup>35</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

<sup>36</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

<sup>37</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 313.

that the very question of a “phenomenology of reality,” only makes sense from already having a sense (*Sinn*) of that in which reality consists. Reality already means something; it has already been given long before philosophers begin asking questions about knowing it. This does not indicate that there’s not anything to say about it, but when something is said, it can only be by means of symbols that consciousness employs in order to point to the *experience* of reality. This is the ultimate phenomenological task: to uncover the original experience and that which is given in the experience. In the previous chapter, it was shown how Scheler describes the phenomenological task as that which redeems all the drafts drawn from self-givenness, and that phenomenology does this by descriptively pointing to lived-experience. Reality may be “known” consciously by means of symbols, but it is already given ecstatically well before that. Conscious reflection is derived from ecstatic participation. We begin ecstatically immersed, and emerge consciously reflective.

If phenomenology begins with conscious reflection, it excludes the more originary experience that gives the occasion for reflection to arise in the first place. Reflection about reality arises in the resistance-experience of non-conscious ecstatic lived-experience, and reality becomes a *problem* for consciousness in the reflection upon, or objectification of, reality, or when consciousness takes a symbol to stand in for the thing itself. If, echoing Marx, Scheler were to have a critique of the ideology of German philosophy since Kant, it would most likely pertain to the illusion that knowledge begins and ends with consciousness or self-consciousness. A philosophy that begins with conscious experience, begins too late. It begins with derived

content and overlooks an entire pre-conscious nexus of experience. Scheler writes,

We must reject entirely the frequently encountered assertion that consciousness is a “primal fact,” that one ought not to speak of an “origin” of consciousness. The very same laws and motives in accordance with which we think of consciousness’ raising itself from one level of reflection to the next will apply when we think of consciousness itself originating out of a preconscious...condition of the being of the contents of consciousness. ... Only a very definite historical stage of overreflective bourgeois civilization could make the fact of consciousness the starting point of all theoretical philosophy....<sup>38</sup>

To begin philosophy with conscious experience makes philosophy begin precisely in the symbolization of reality. And it is in its very symbolization that reality becomes a problem for philosophy.

Furthermore, there is not any knowable “whatness” to Being *qua* being, there is only the whatness of certain experienceable beings, and every attempt to conceptualize Being *qua* being by means of, for example, “Form,” or the “Good,” or “pure act,” etc., (1) reduces being to something else, (2) symbolizes being and conceals an experience of the thing itself, and (3) may indeed pertain to the experience of form, goodness, actuality, etc., but presupposes some sense of what being already is. Scheler introduces a level of much needed honesty concerning the philosophical tradition of this question, namely, that reality must be symbolized in order to be conceptualized (indeed, the conceptualization is a symbolization). However, it is possible to say something about reality by investigating the experience in which it is revealed. Heidegger attempts to uncover the meaning of Being by means of the being that is most our own, and therefore the being closest to our own experience. But this shows that Heidegger’s existential analytic is not

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<sup>38</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 295.

strictly speaking an investigation of Being by means of an investigation of *this* specific being, called *Dasein*, but a process of pointing to Being by means of an investigation of the *experience* of this being that is closest. This is important because, in the end, Heidegger also uses a symbol, *Sorge*, that encapsulates not the *Dasein* (existence) of its *Sosein*, but the *Sosein* of *this* existing thing, he calls "*Dasein*." Heidegger may have shown masterfully how *Sosein* and *Dasein* are intertwined, but, as he admits, he cannot ultimately avoid the question concerning *what Dasein is*.

### **Transcendence and Reality**

Scheler seems to offer disturbing news. Not only is a phenomenology of reality not possible, but reality itself, strictly speaking, is *unknowable* to any and every standpoint or worldview, whether natural, scientific, or phenomenological; to metaphysics or religion; and to any conscious or ecstatic forms of knowing, etc. The domain of real being is in the furthest reaches of the domain of the nonconceptual. Unlike the sphere of the material *a priori*, the reality of beings pertains to a part of nonconceptual content that cannot be known.

Adorno similarly employs a sphere of the nonconceptual which pertains to that which can be experienced, but cannot be known, precisely because it is nonconceptual. Since all nonconceptualities, for Adorno, are not known, it is difficult to decipher what they contain, but we do know toward what they *refer*, namely, to the reality that is required for the formation of concepts.<sup>39</sup> If, in Adorno's view, it is possible even to talk of an "experience" of the "nonconceptual whole," (i.e., the

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<sup>39</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 11.

whole of historical reality), the kind of experience would still more or less pertain to a conceptual experience, because the nonconceptual comes into view from the concept itself; more specifically, from the fact that concepts “mean beyond themselves.”<sup>40</sup> Concepts have an “implicit history,” which Adorno thinks can be detected in the concept. The concepts harness features “reflected through its relationship to its social and temporal context.”<sup>41</sup> Therefore, Adorno suggests that “insight into the constitutive character of the nonconceptual in the concept would end the compulsive identification which the concept brings unless halted by such reflection.”<sup>42</sup>

Despite the similarity in Scheler’s and Adorno’s views that reality constitutes an unknowable, but experienceable domain, there seems to be something backwards about relying on the concept in order to catch a glimpse of the nonconceptual, and to ground a philosophically-relevant experience of reality. This is especially the case because concepts do in fact arise from the context of social and historical reality. Why then is it necessary to look to the concept in order to ground an experience of that which necessarily precedes the concept?

For Scheler, reality is unknowable not because it is nonconceptual; not all knowing (*Wissen*) is cognition, or conceptual understanding. Essence and value (material *a priori*) are nonconceptual, but knowable. Reality is unknowable because the reality of an object does not factor into the intentional relation between consciousness and the object. Any and everything that we can see or say about the

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<sup>40</sup> Adorno’s references Emil Lask. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Foster, *Adorno*, 22.

<sup>42</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 12.

reality of a thing will invariably fall back to the “character” or “such-being” (*Sosein*) of the real thing, and will not pertain to a thing’s existence (*Dasein*) *per se*. However, the inability to have knowledge of existence does not inhibit a conspicuous lived-experience of reality. We remain steadfast in our assurance of the reality of things around us, not because they are, as real things, objects of knowledge or cognition, but because things around us become objects of cognition by means of an experience of their existence. Any and everything that consciousness can see or say about the *Sosein* of something necessarily begins in an experience of existing things. The reality or existence of a thing does not require any elucidation; it is already presupposed in the very fact that we have a range of objects consciously in view. Even things that cannot strictly speaking be called real—whether ideal, or “irreal,” or illusory, or fictitious, or virtual, or spiritual, or immaterial, or perceptual appearances, like shadows, rainbows, or colors—all have their perceptual rootedness, as objects of consciousness, in the experience of reality.

The fact that things arise for us as intentional objects because of an experience of reality does not mean that essence entails existence, or that an ideal being is also a real being. In fact Scheler seeks to avoid both the Neo-Kantian “idealism of consciousness”<sup>43</sup> and the “critical realism” of Nicolai Hartmann and others by preserving the cognitive separability of *Sosein* and *Dasein*. Both idealism and realism

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<sup>43</sup> Scheler mentions as notable examples: Heinrich Rickert, the “Marburg logicians,” Ernst Schuppe, Hans Cornelius, and the “positivistic Idealists.” (“Idealism and Realism,” 290). Among these, it is important to notice the mention of Hans Cornelius who was influential for both Adorno and Horkheimer, but whose idealism was ultimately rejected by both critical theorists.

makes the same “formally true, but materially false” conclusion, in different ways:<sup>44</sup> idealism, on the one hand, makes the unnecessary inference that because *Sosein* can in principle be immanent to consciousness, so must also be *Dasein*. The result of this position, Scheler writes, is that “there is no existence transcendent to or independent of consciousness.”<sup>45</sup> Critical realists, on the other hand, also unnecessarily infer that because *Dasein* cannot be immanent to consciousness, *Sosein* cannot be either; they conclude that “the [*Sosein*] of an object as well must always and necessarily be independent of, detached, and separated from every...consciousness.”<sup>46</sup> In this case, consciousness tends to be conceived not as an act or intention, but as a “big box” in which contains, necessarily, only images or symbols of things.<sup>47</sup>

Scheler is not content with this all-or-nothing scenario: the immanence of *Sosein* does not entail the immanence of *Dasein*, nor does the transcendence of *Dasein* entail the transcendence of *Sosein*. Scheler suggests that although it is legitimate to speak of the immanence of the *Sosein* of something, against the critical realists’ claim that consciousness is the house of images or representations of things, it is nevertheless also legitimate to deny this kind of immanence to the existence of something, against the idealists. The crucial factor that is missing from the idealist and realist positions, which lead to their respective false conclusions, is a developed conception of intentionality. Scheler appeals to this basic feature of phenomenology

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<sup>44</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 289-90.

<sup>45</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 290.

<sup>46</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 290.

<sup>47</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 291. Scheler explains the thesis of Hartmann’s critical realism and his objections to it in more detail in the section “Cognition and Its Standards,” “Idealism and Realism,” 308-12.



as a way to underscore the distinction between an intentional relation and a real or causal relation.<sup>48</sup> Not all beings are objects, i.e., “objectifiable beings,” that submit to intentional relations. An act-being (*Aktsein*) is an example of a non-objectifiable being, which possesses its mode of being not as an object that an act intends but only *in* executing intentional acts (*Vollzug*). Real being *as* real is another non-objectifiable being, but for different reasons.

By way of illustration, Scheler notes a difference between on the one hand Leibniz’s observation, *cogitatur ergo est* (something is thought, therefore, it is) which he thinks is “no less evident than *cogito ergo sum*,”<sup>49</sup> and on the other hand Bishop Berkeley’s *esse est principii* (to be is to be perceived). Both Leibniz and Berkeley fail to make this distinction between act and object. However, Leibniz’s insight is superior because it does not contain within it an inherent reference to existence or reality; the “something thought” pertains, according to Scheler, to “being of whatever kind or form, including even ideal being, fictive being, conscious being.”<sup>50</sup> In contrast, Berkeley’s observation is erroneous because it makes any being dependent for its existence (*esse*) on the act. Scheler does not take the interpretation of these phrases far enough to demonstrate his case convincingly. But whether or not his point correctly pertains to these observations in the way he thinks they do, Scheler’s main observation still holds: it is erroneous to assume that the existence (*esse*) of an object, in order for it to exist, requires an act (Scheler’s

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<sup>48</sup> Scheler often uses the Latin, “*ens intentionale*,” “*ens reale*,” in order to credit this distinction as originally Scholastic. The Scholastic, he writes, “on the basis of this distinction, [distinguished] between an intentional act and a real relation between the knower and the thing known.” Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 293.

<sup>49</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 291.

<sup>50</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 291-2.

interpretation of Berkeley), but it is accurate to claim that an object, in order for it to be an object, requires an act (Scheler's interpretation of Leibniz).

Furthermore, Berkeley fails to recognize what Scheler calls "the transcendence of the object" (*Transzendenz des Gegenstandes*) (GW IX, 190-193). This kind of transcendence is different from what has already been discussed in the previous chapter as the givenness of "something transcendent," which Scheler sometimes refers to as "the transcendence of the act"<sup>51</sup> (*Transzendenz des Aktes*) (GW X, 457). Transcendent givenness pertains to conditions of the adequation of evidential givenness and specifically to cases when such evidential givenness, for whatever reason, is not met; these reasons differ for Husserl and Scheler, as was discussed in the previous chapter. The transcendence of the object, in contrast, refers to a principle inherent to intentionality itself: to "the consciousness of transcendence peculiar to all intentional acts."<sup>52</sup> Specifically, it reveals the feature that an intentional act always and necessarily has reference "beyond the act and the content of the act, and intends something other than the act, even when what is thought is in turn itself a thought."<sup>53</sup> It was shown also in the previous chapter that Ricoeur articulates this idea of transcendence against Husserl's reduction. Ricoeur writes that "the thesis of intentionality explicitly states that if all meaning is for consciousness, then no consciousness is self-consciousness before being conscious of something *towards which* it surpasses itself."<sup>54</sup> He goes on to ask, "is this not what

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<sup>51</sup> Scheler, "The Theory of the Three Facts," 231.

<sup>52</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 296.

<sup>53</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 296.

<sup>54</sup> Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 115.

the central discovery of phenomenology implies?"<sup>55</sup> In this statement, Ricoeur is referring specifically to the status of phenomenology at the time of the *Logical Investigations*, but overall, the discovery of phenomenology implies a number of things, and some things are arguably more central to phenomenology than this conception of intentionality. Indeed, the central discovery of phenomenology for Husserl could perhaps be placed instead upon the constituting achievement of consciousness, and therefore, upon the transcendental status of consciousness, which constitution requires. Husserl glorifies the absolute status of immanent being: "the world of transcendent things is entirely dependent upon immanent being (as absolute being), and when immanent being '*nulla "re" indigent ad existendum*,' [needs no other thing to exist]."<sup>56</sup>

We might recall that it was precisely on this point that made Adorno discontent with Husserl's phenomenology. He thought that Husserl uses transcendence and immanence not only ambivalently, but contradictorily: it is a contradiction, on the one hand, to make the meaning and existence of things dependent upon the immanent being of consciousness, and on the other hand, to consider objects in the world to be transcendent (to consciousness). If all "transcendent" things depend on immanent being for their very being then what is it that makes them transcendent?

I mentioned that Husserl's problem is not quite what Adorno has in mind, or at least Adorno applies it to where it does not pertain. On the one hand, the perception of something external (transcendence of the object) is based upon the givenness of

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<sup>55</sup> Ricoeur, "Phenomenology and Hermeneutics," 115.

<sup>56</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, §49.

something transcendent. In other words, transcendence in both senses have the same criteria: whenever the givenness of objects is more than what is meant, indicating unfulfilled intention and adumbrated perceptual features. However, on the other hand, what Scheler distinguishes as the transcendence of the act versus the transcendence of the object would, for Husserl, be indistinguishable, and this affects the extent to which Husserl is able to respond to Adorno. By Husserl's view, only some objects can therefore be considered transcendent to consciousness, namely, the ones that are given to acts of external perception one-sidedly, and with adumbration. Other objects, such as mental objects (e.g., acts of different essences), ideal objects, unreal objects, are not adumbrated in (internal) perception in the same way the other objects are, and so these are not transcendent to consciousness in the same way. This means, first of all, an object is transcendent only in the perceptual inadequacy. It is better for there not to be transcendence; hence the need for a reduction: a phenomenologically reduced intentional object can be given adequately, and therefore, *immanently*. Phenomenological investigation is thereby forced back into consciousness and its constituting features.

Secondly, Husserl maintains that consciousness and its own acts can become *objects* to acts of reflection. Or in other words, acts are also objectifiable beings. Husserl writes that "Any mental process which is an object of regard can, with respect to ideal possibility, become 'regarded;' a reflection on the part of the Ego is directed to it, it now becomes an object from the [transcendental] Ego."<sup>57</sup> In contrast, Scheler states that mental processes like intentional acts, without

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<sup>57</sup> Husserl, *Ideas I*, §77, 174.

exception, intend “something other than the act, even when what is thought is in turn itself a thought.”<sup>58</sup> A thought for Husserl certainly could be an example of “something immanent.” But for Scheler, a thought that is intended, and objectified, cannot be the same thought that intends it. The thought intended cannot be the thought that intends, and the thought intended has transcendence insofar as it is intended, even if the thought is given qualitatively as something immanent (adequately given). An act, at the moment of the execution of the act (*Vollzug*), can never be objectively represented.

Scheler’s conception of the inherent transcendence of all intentional objects (on account of the difference between transcendent givenness and transcendence to consciousness) responds to Adorno’s criticism of phenomenology with greater resolution than Husserl is able. For Scheler intentionality is necessarily in reference to objects which are, without exception, pointing beyond the “transcendental ego,” and thereby surpassing the subject or person performing the acts. There is therefore no longer any need to find “all thing-like being only by going back to the immediate [and immanent] facts [of consciousness].”<sup>59</sup> The intentionality of consciousness is, to be sure, the occasion for encountering objects in the world and in that sense, objects, in order to be objects, depend on acts; however, this can happen not by retreating back into the transcendental structure of consciousness, but precisely by “pointing beyond” or “surpassing” it.

Adorno’s more important challenge to phenomenology is with respect to the

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<sup>58</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 296.

<sup>59</sup> Adorno, *Gesammelte Schriften* I, 375. Quoted in and translated by Ernst Wolff, “From Phenomenology to Critical Theory: The Genesis of Adorno’s Critical Theory from his Reading of Husserl,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 558.

ambiguity of its claims about reality. Since for Husserl, all verification must be grounded in an intentional relation, Husserl ends up idealizing reality. As Husserl thinks is the case with acts, reality must submit to the same kind of objectification as everything else. Determinations of the real and unreal are intentional determinations concerning the way consciousness intends objects. What makes the difference, is that for Scheler, both intentional acts and the reality of objects cannot follow the paradigm of the consciousness of transcendence. For Scheler all intentional acts have an inherent transcendence toward objects, but not all experienceable things are also objectifiable in the same way. For Husserl, this is reversed: not all intentional acts refer to what is objectively transcendent (some things can be objectively immanent), but all experienceable things must be intentionally objectifiable. Recall that for Husserl, *Erlebnisse* refer to conscious experience (the experience of “objects”) because there is no other possible kind of experience; this is not the case for Scheler.

Existence, like acts, is independent from the consciousness of transcendence of objects. This means that, as Scheler explains, “the principle of the transcendence of the object is completely independent of the *existential status* of the objects themselves and, thus, independent of the question whether they are produced by us or subsist on their own.”<sup>60</sup> After listing some contemporaries who have misunderstood this, including, Wally Freytag, Edith Landmann, Paul Linke, Scheler thinks this has been misunderstood “even by Husserl himself.”<sup>61</sup> For Husserl, something that has meaning for us is constituted in consciousness as having

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<sup>60</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 296-97. My emphasis.

<sup>61</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 297.

meaning for us, and something that has the status of actually existing (for us) is constituted in consciousness as having the meaning of existence.<sup>62</sup> Whatever, therefore, has the status of real gets that status from the degree that it “matches up” to the concept of what reality means. And this matching must be based solely upon a synthesis of evident verification which pertains to intentional criteria of verification.<sup>63</sup> Husserl reneges on the distinction between intentionality and reality that gets transcendental phenomenology off the ground in the first place; he commits a category mistake by attempting to submit real relations as if they pertain to intentional relations. In other words, Husserl tries to apply criteria of verification on the level of intentionality to a domain of being that wholly resists this kind of verification. Scheler states:

...the fact of the consciousness of transcendence is not even remotely qualified to solve the problem of reality. ... If something is an intentional object, we cannot recognize from this fact alone, whether it is real or not. If the perceived cherry, the conceived triangle, a friend's visit anticipated in a dream, Little Red Riding Hood, a freely planned project, a felt value, have entirely different characteristics and predicates than do mental processes and the actual contents in which these objects appear, then the distinction between intentional and mental holds equally of both the real and the unreal. *Thus, the problem of what is real is not touched by the fact of the transcendence of the object.*<sup>64</sup>

It should be said that the transcendence of the object does not, in principle, exclude the reality of the object, but that it simply cannot by itself discriminate between the real and unreal. Intentional transcendence can bring the ecstatic givenness of reality “into ‘objective’ form, and can therefore elevate that which is

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<sup>62</sup> A. D. Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 159.

<sup>63</sup> Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, 60.

<sup>64</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 297.

given in this way as real to the status of a real 'object,'" but this is all that it can do.<sup>65</sup> We must look elsewhere, beyond the structure of consciousness in order to point to the givenness of reality in a non-contradictory way.

An additional source of verification is needed that is consistent with phenomenological verification, not necessarily with respect to the intentional verification of consciousness, but one that pertains within the sphere of *Erlebnis*. Scheler does not discriminate between suitable and unsuitable experience, but includes the whole range of human experience as lived experience, both the intentional experience of objects as well as the ecstatic experience of resistance. Ecstatic experience is not only prior to conscious activity, but, by means of resistance, is the *source* of the very emergence of conscious activity. Conscious knowledge, Scheler writes,

comes out of its original ecstatic form of simply having things..., when the act of being thrown back on the self comes into play. This act grows out of conspicuous resistances, clashes, and oppositions...in which the knowledge of the knowledge of things [conscious reflection] is added to the knowledge of things [ecstatic knowing].<sup>66</sup>

And whatever is here called "real," is anything that is given in the experience of resistance. Something is real, or exists, if and only if it can provide resistance to the strivings or drives in the practical engagement within the surrounding world, not only to human beings, but to all living creatures. It is to this experience that we have to look to solve the problem of reality.

### **Reality as Resistance**

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<sup>65</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 298.

<sup>66</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 294-95.



### *Conation and Reality*

It is important to begin with some distinctions. Everything that is ecstatic is always pre-conscious. However, not all ecstatic experience is also ecstatic *knowledge*, insofar as knowledge is that which includes some participation (*Seinsverhältnis*) in the *Sosein* of a thing. What we are after is the experience of *Dasein* (existence). But existence or reality cannot be an object of knowledge—neither conscious nor ecstatic—even if the experience of reality is later represented symbolically as *x*; for example, as “causality,” or as “resistance.” Resistance (*Widerstand*) is that by which reality has an opportunity to arise for us, and in this case, by means of an original ecstatic experience. “The experience of reality is...not an ecstatic ‘knowledge of,’ but an ecstatic ‘having of’ reality.”<sup>67</sup> But as I will show the ecstatic experience of reality relates inextricably to certain kinds of ecstatic knowledge, namely, of spatiality and temporality. The aim here is not only to propose a response to Adorno’s criticism of phenomenological idealism, but to establish the domain of *historical reality* specifically as a deeper, but important aspect of nonconceptuality in Scheler’s phenomenology.

All resistance presupposes a conative experience, belonging to the sphere of *striving*. Conation (*Steben*) refers less to the distinction between conscious and ecstatic, and more to the distinction between the “having” of something and the “striving,” or goal-directed movement, toward the having or the realization of something.<sup>68</sup> The conative striving for something is the precondition for “having” it;

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<sup>67</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 324.

<sup>68</sup> See, Scheler, *Formalism*, 30. Scheler writes: “‘Conation’ here designates the most general basis of experiences that are distinct from all having of objects.”

therefore, the “having of” reality requires conation. But what kind of conation? There are different levels of human conation, beginning from the level of a “dumb urge” (something “whelling up in us”) up to the level of intentional acts.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, it is arguably the case that every sphere of human experience contains some conative movement.<sup>70</sup> In the case of the transcendence of the object described earlier, one could say that intentionality has an inherent conative component which accounts for intentionality transcending the self. Scheler states, “*intentio* signifies a goal-directed movement toward something which one does not have oneself or has only partially and incompletely.”<sup>71</sup> The first time Scheler ever refers to the experience of resistance,<sup>72</sup> he does so in the context of the *conation* of intentional willing, which he describes as the “conation in which a content to be realized is given.”<sup>73</sup> In fact, in this early piece, he goes so far as to say that “that which [resists] is given only in an

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<sup>69</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 32-34, 135.

<sup>70</sup> Later phenomenologists, such as Merleau-Ponty, have instead tended to speak of an intentionality of the lived body, etc. in order to capture the movement of human existence. William Luijpen, in his book *Existential Phenomenology*, calls “intentionality” the “primal fact” of existence because existence means to “ec-sist,” or putting oneself outside oneself. In this view “existence” and “intentionality” are “synonymous.” Luijpen, *Existential Phenomenology* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 54, 85. Ironically, this view of “existence” is entirely devoid of factors of reality (*Realität*) when interpreted in light of the discrepancy between intentionality and the givenness of reality. But what is more, the use of the term “intentionality” is unnecessary because that which Luijpen in fact refers to is the conative or striving component in intentional relations rather than the intentional component in conation. The same critique would go for Merleau-Ponty. Whereas the whole human being, for Scheler, is *conative*, only conscious activity has the kind of conation that is *intentional*. It would be more correct to say that the primal fact of human existence is conation, of which intentionality is only one example, and an example which is not a “primal fact” at all since it is derivative of more original, vital levels of conation. Scheler’s view is more consistent with the original and specific meaning of intentionality.

<sup>71</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 296.

<sup>72</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 135ff.

<sup>73</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 123.

intentional experience and only in willing.”<sup>74</sup>

Over time, Scheler downplays the intentional (and exclusively volitional) context of resistance and begins to highlight non-intentional forms of resistance, which became far more significant for his philosophy. His later writings do not speak of resistance exclusively in the context of intentional willing, but that intentional (conscious) resistances have their *source* of movement in deeper (ecstatic) forms of conation, namely, resistances on the level of life and drives. The human drive-life is the motivating basis for the intentional acts of the spirit. However, Scheler’s main point in both intentional and vital forms of conation is the same: that resistance arises specifically in one’s practical engagement with the world, that is, in the context of goals, purposes, projects and action. The only kind of willing that is able to meet resistance is when “the willing of a project advances to the willing of a deed, to the intention and impulse for movement. In this case, however, the willing has already merged with an impulsive drive, namely, the one from which it has removed some obstruction”<sup>75</sup> in order for the action to be performed. For this reason, Scheler continues, “it cannot be ‘spiritual’ [or pure] willing [that] experiences resistance.”<sup>76</sup>

Indeed, in “Idealism and Realism,” Scheler asserts that “the factor of reality is the resistance to our continually active, spontaneous, but at the same time completely *involuntary*, impulsive life.” This statement contrasts the experience of resistance not only with conscious acts of willing, but also with a mere peripheral sensory or perceptual experience. Resistance is rather a unified and central experience

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<sup>74</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 135.

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 325. My emphasis.

<sup>76</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 325.

irreducible to kinesthetic movement; it is experienced “at the level of my ‘self’ which may be provisionally defined as the ‘center of vital drives.’”<sup>77</sup> Nor is resistance a central experience that is *mediated* by sensations; it is rather the other way around: sensory resistances are mediated by drives. The human drive-life is always that which is behind the occasion for sensations. Sensations are experienced in the course of everyday projects, and so therefore, presuppose conation. Scheler’s example of heaviness is a telling example. One experiences something as heavy in proportion not only to physical strength or sense-stimuli, but especially to the degree of exertion and deployment of force. However, he explains, exertion cannot be reduced to “sensations of tension in the muscles and sinews.” Rather, “exertion is the centrally experienced resistance offered by the heavy object in the deployment of the driving impulse [to lift].”<sup>78</sup> Sensations occur on account of the drive, not the drive on account of sensations.

It is important to note, however, that the experience of resistance does not exclude sensory or perceptual impressions, even if the experience is not reducible to them. Recently, Manfred Frings has equated Scheler’s theory of resistance with a kind of “Heraclitean *discordance among entities of the world.*” And that, therefore, “there cannot be social resistance [and an experience of (social) reality] in a completely egalitarian society which would be devoid of classes, conflict, strife, and

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<sup>77</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 321. The word translated as “self” here is “*Selbst*” (not “*Ich*”) containing some kind of self-conscious reference to what Husserl would call the transcendental ego, or what Scheler calls the person, which is the center of acts, not the center of vital impulse. Scheler does however mean to refer to the psychophysical human organization: the body (*Leib*) and soul (*Seele*) together.

<sup>78</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 322.

differences.”<sup>79</sup> However, Scheler’s notion of resistance does not require such heavy opposition or strife on the level of social injustice. There are always minimal but steady resistances in a world without discord because resistance is not only in the experience of unfulfilled drives, but also in their fulfillment, such as the fulfillment of the drive to lift in the actual lifting of the heavy object. It is in the fulfillment of the drive, the actual lifting, where the resistance is experienced. Perceptual resistances to my hand as I am, for example, giving a handshake can offer an experience of reality just as much as a punch in the face, as long as we remain aware that the experience of the former is in the fulfillment of the drive which prompts one to shake someone’s hand, and is not reduced to the peripheral sensations and kinesthetic movement. Thus, reality will still be given in the context of a perfectly harmonious social situation provided such a society is an actually existing one. The condition for encountering resistance and reality is simply the fact of existence, and does not require a state of social discord.

Resistances may also be experienced in the reality of the “internal world.” Scheler discusses the “reality of something past,” or of something *in* the past. Typically, the relation to past events is put in terms of conscious remembering, or some relation to thinking and memory. Scheler instead suggests that even before we ever bring something to mind, consciously, as a “memory,” we may experience something in the past “through a resistance and pressure exerted on my present lived-experience.”<sup>80</sup> Past experiences then are not primarily given in memory

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<sup>79</sup> Manfred Frings, *Life Time: Max Scheler's Philosophy of Time* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2003), 84.

<sup>80</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 323.

images, but as a resistance in proportion to a drive to change something that can no longer change. "Thus, even the actuality of the past makes itself felt primarily not as an 'object' but as the resistance given to my life when it is trained on the future."<sup>81</sup>

It should be emphasized however that a key element of Scheler's theory of resistance, as it would relate to this example, would maintain that it is primarily the resistances of past experiences that impose themselves against the drive to modify and the anxiety about the unmodifiable that is itself an example of the occasion for bringing a memory to mind in the first place, by means of a conscious act of remembering. Scheler explains it in the following way:

It is the...ecstatically experienced resistance that first occasions the act of reflection through which the impulsive drive can now become a matter of consciousness. Becoming a matter of consciousness (and the concomitant [reference] to a 'self' [*Ich-Bezug*]) is, in all the manifold levels and grades in which it occurs, always the result of our suffering the resistance offered by the world. Real being is, therefore, always given to us along with anything whatsoever which is immanent to consciousness. Thus, the experience of reality and the advent of the being of that which is immanent to consciousness are of at least the same degree of originality.<sup>82</sup>

A couple points concerning the passage:

(1) The last sentence is a variant of the passage that I have used as guide for this chapter and the previous one: "the world is given in lived experience...as 'resistance' as immediately as it is given as an 'object.'" However, even if real being always accompanies everything transcendent to consciousness, this does not mean that everything transcendent to consciousness is itself always real (like the point made above that essence does not entail existence). The point is that the occasion for us to turn something into an object of cognition (to objectify) which is a very deliberate

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<sup>81</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 323.

<sup>82</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 325.

effort, always presupposes a resistance that prompts us to objectify *something*, which in turn presupposes an accompanying conation or drive that is meeting resistance. Through the course of one's being and acting in the world, some of these acts are obstructed or go unfulfilled. This pertains more to drive unfulfillment than to intentional unfulfillment. The actor is, as it were, "thrown back upon the self,"<sup>83</sup> and is forced to make an object out of that which resists his or her endeavor and project. This objectification is necessary for overcoming obstacles and learning how to adapt to the world. The arrival of consciousness and self-consciousness emerges out of these "conspicuous resistances, clashes, and oppositions—in sum, out of pronounced suffering."<sup>84</sup> There is sometimes discrepancies of the reality of the object. For example, a thirsty wanderer lost in the desert, who sees before him a pond of water, even if the pond is only a mirage or hallucination, will turn the mirage into an object and see it *as* water (or better, *as* relief of thirst). However, this occurs only because of his drive for water, and on account of the resistance the wanderer meets in fulfilling the drive to quench his thirst. This scenario requires that the wanderer has had some experience with real water in the past.

(2) Consider Scheler's seemingly exaggerated verbiage of "suffering [*Erleidens*] the resistance of the world," or, as he puts it elsewhere, "suffering [*Leiden*] at the hands of real being."<sup>85</sup> We may be able to read this more tamely as "undergoing," however, after the birth of my daughter and being a witness of her first few years of life, I am now confident that the "pronounced suffering" of resistance that Scheler

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<sup>83</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 294.

<sup>84</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 294.

<sup>85</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 295.

suspects gives way to consciousness is perfectly fitting. The first years of a child are dominated by suffering at the hands of the real world: when she bites down on hard thing, or loses her step while running and crashes to the concrete, or tumbles from her chair in the process of learning how to sit on it. Even in cases where they are not left to their own devices, children are constantly being guided toward the right things and away from the wrong ones, and sometimes rather aggressively. The constant barrage of “do nots” from parents is a source of resistance. Does this suffering and constant reminder of the real world ever really cease, even into adulthood? It certainly decreases, but only after we learn to anticipate resistances and gain, through practice and strength, the ability to be in the world more easily and efficiently. We incorporate certain coping skills of that with which we have the most practice and expertise. My hypothesis, though, is that children cry so much not necessarily because they are particularly prone to crying, but because there is a real world there to which they must adapt, and without any idea about how to adapt, and even without a reflective consciousness of the world itself. Despite this, children run headlong into the world; their conation overcomes prudent restraint. Indeed, prudence and restraint is itself something that comes with “suffering at the hands of the world.” Without inhibition or warning, they throw themselves into it. Even the resistances offered to their overflowing drive energy by their own physical inabilities is a consistent givenness of the reality of their bodies.

To make a comparison here with Husserl’s conception of the verification of reality, one might be prompted to ask when the reality of something is experienced most strongly. Husserl, if he were to have his way, but which he does not get even by



his own admission, real things would be most real when they have complete intentional verification, and as such, no unfulfilled or unanticipated components. Things would present themselves as most real when there is a perfect identification of the meaning of reality (i.e., what is expected from perceptions of a real world) and the given state of affairs; when things are fully presented, and are given entirely as they are *expected* to be presented. And what we would expect in the perceptions of reality is *consistency*. But not only for things to remain constant and stable in perception, but for the opposite to be impossible.<sup>86</sup> Real things must “hold good” for me, infinitely. Husserl’s point is a good one. If I go to sleep in Pittsburgh and wake up in Yemen, I may question the reality of the state of affairs. However, I may wonder whether it is a dream until the resistance experiences impose themselves enough to convince me of the reality that I am indeed in Yemen. Furthermore, it is possible to dream perfect consistency. I could have a dream that I woke up in my bed in Pittsburgh and go through my morning routine exactly in the way I normally do. Perceptual consistency does not necessarily indicate reality.

Scheler seems to be indicating that reality is experienced most powerfully when something obstructs the path of our anticipated plans or practical pursuits; that is to say, in opposition to Husserl, when things *do not* go as expected. This is because we do not initially anticipate resistances, and if we do, it is because we’ve encountered them enough to factor them in. But my daughter does not run down the sidewalk expecting to fall, if she did, she would not run as fast, or not run at all. Therefore, it is precisely in what she is not anticipating that she experiences reality. Furthermore,

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<sup>86</sup> A. D. Smith, *Husserl and the Cartesian Meditations*, 172-73.

the resistance (and reality with it) is not experienced as strongly unless the fall is a painful one. If the world consistently follows the path of expectation, without contrast, then there wouldn't be any way of distinguishing the object from consciousness—and this is precisely Adorno's critique of Husserl. But we have the strongest sense of reality when our ideas fail to match up with our expectation in experience. Reality comes in powerfully when we are "blind-sided."

*The dialectic of resistance*

Scheler's description of the emergence of conscious acts from the "conspicuous resistances, clashes, and oppositions,"<sup>87</sup> introduces a reciprocal dynamic which Husserl had conceived as a one-sided relation between an absolute subject and a relative object. Scheler and Husserl agree that an object depends on an intentional act in order to be an object. I have already discussed Scheler's reasons for protesting against the claim that there is an intentional reference to an object's existential status. Due to the fact that Husserl makes both an object's meaning *and* existence depend on consciousness, all objects depend on acts (as the objective foundation) to be objects, but acts never depend on objects to be acts. Since Scheler does not consider the experience of reality or existence as an intentional experience, the experience of reality refers to a different kind of *Erlebnis*, namely, ecstatic experience. But the very idea of an ecstatic experience indicates some lived-experience independent of conscious experience, and therefore, some point of origin of consciousness and intentional acts. Therefore, according to Scheler, not only are

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<sup>87</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 294.

(intentional) objects dependent on (intentional) acts in order to be objects, but that also acts (consciousness) are dependent on (real, existing) “objects,” or things, in order to be acts. However, whereas the former refers to a phenomenological dependency, the latter refers to a metaphysical or causal dependency. Resistance is the occasion for the emergence of acts, in order for acts to intend those resistances *as* objects. This is but one part of what I mean by the dialectic of resistance.

Some reference should be made as well to Heidegger’s critique of resistance.<sup>88</sup> The critique is basically very simple. His main point is that if resistance occurs in the midst of our striving or endeavor for something, this presupposes the “something” for which we are already striving, willing, desiring, etc. One must necessarily already be “out for” something in the world in order for resistances to arise. Heidegger then draws two conclusions about Scheler’s theory from these remarks: (1) the things in the world, and the world itself, toward which one endeavors remains “ontologically indeterminate.” (2) The experience of resistance is ontologically possible only on the basis of a disclosed (and therefore, ontologically determinate) world.

To preface a response, it should be clear that the term “world” (*Welt*) for Scheler technically means a nexus of meaningful *objects*. Only a conscious and intentional (personal) being (*Geist*) can have a world. Human beings do not begin (as children) in a “world,” with a consciousness of objects; they begin rather within an

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<sup>88</sup> Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1962), 252-4. As I noted previously, Heidegger derives his critique solely from Scheler’s summary rendition of these ideas in the notes of “Die Formen des Wissens und die Bildung” (1925). In this citation, Heidegger mentions that Scheler has provided a more detailed account of resistance and a critique of Dilthey’s account in the sixth section of “Erkenntnis und Arbeit.” Heidegger, however, did not revise his initial critique.

“environment” (*Umwelt*), which refers to the nexus of vital and practical relations prior to the formation of an objective world. There is no distinction between a subject and object on this level, nor is there, for that matter, a so-called *solus ipse*.<sup>89</sup> All living beings have an environment; only personal beings have worlds. As such, what Heidegger means by “world,” in the sense of “being-in-the-world,” refers more closely to what Scheler means by environment. If by ontologically indeterminacy, Heidegger is referring to a problem with Scheler’s theory, which seems to be the case, then Scheler’s own words on the matter are sufficient: “to say that I have not defined the mode of being of life or that I have shored it up with some underpinnings only as an afterthought—after I have given lecture courses for years now about the mode of being of life—is, as far as I’m concerned, as false as could be.”<sup>90</sup>

The second conclusion requires more attention. It was already stated that the “having of” something, such as the having of reality in resistance, presupposes some level of conation or striving. However, it is not the case that there must be something independent from oneself in order to be inclined toward it, or to have the inclination, as if the thing causes the conation. It is clear that not only does some food not have to be there in order to get hungry, but hunger does not even presuppose that any food exists to consume. In this sense, the “object” or goal of conation is immanent to the conation. Scheler writes that “the goal lies in the very

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<sup>89</sup> This point gets significant attention by Scheler in his review of *Being and Time*. This review is the fifth part of Scheler’s *Idealismus—Realismus* (GW IX, 254-93). The review has been partially translated by Thomas Sheehan as “Reality and Resistance: On *Being and Time*, Section 43” and is contained in his book, *Heidegger: the Man and the Thinker* (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, 1981), 133-43. The translation is of GW IX, 259-68.

<sup>90</sup> Scheler, “Reality and Resistance,” 137-8.

process of conation. It is not conditioned by some act of representation, but is as immanent to the conation as 'content' is to representation."<sup>91</sup> This shows that we are always already out for things even before there is a determinate thing for which we are out: we are out for something to satisfy hunger (which Scheler calls the value-content), before we have an idea just how or with what we will satisfy it (which Scheler calls the picture-content).<sup>92</sup> A representation is not required for there to be some conation toward a goal or value. But Heidegger certainly does not mean by "world," a nexus of representations, and though this is important, it does not fully respond to the criticism. On the one hand, it is clear that the hunger-drive does not presuppose food. However, on the other hand, hunger has an inherent reference to food, which is beyond the conation itself. When we get hungry, not just anything will do. We don't want clothes, or books, or friends; we strive for food, even without knowing what food is, or where there is some to get. This shows there is an inherent referential structure within conation itself, beyond conation. Scheler would not deny this. In fact, he says something similar with respect to an individual's inherent reference to others. A lone man on an island, someone like Robinson Crusoe, but one who was never before acquainted with a community, would still feel that something is wrong, or something is missing by being alone, and this loneliness itself indicates not only that he should be in community, but even that there *is* a community to which he belongs. It is not inappropriate to relate the two analogously. Hunger does not only indicate that it should be satisfied by food, but that there should be food to satisfy it.

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<sup>91</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 33-4.

<sup>92</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 34ff.

Having granted this situation, it seems Scheler would think that such a referential totality is not enough to constitute a “world.”<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, Scheler would insist that such a nexus of references could, at best, constitute a value-world (before the value-references are represented *as* values), but of course such an idea Heidegger would adamantly deny. The main point, however, is that this world contains *no objects* and *does not exist* (which may make one wonder what exactly is disclosed about it). Even if hunger indicates that there should be food, it does not and cannot guarantee that any food exists, nor even the *reality* that there is not any food. Robinson Crusoe may feel that there is a community to which he belongs, but the community that once existed may not exist anymore. Even if conation refers to a real world, Scheler’s point remains that it cannot be given *as real* without resistance. Whatever merit Heidegger’s criticism has, it does not touch what Scheler claims resistance discloses about the world: its reality. Whatever the world means prior to the disclosure of reality can only be constituted by a rather vague conation toward values, and only toward lower (vital, pleasure, use) values.

A “world” for Scheler in the fullest sense of the term is completely constituted as simultaneously a value-world, an objective world, and a real world. Scheler claims that the things that compose the world are of value, objective, and real, simultaneously, but if they are not given this way, certain things have to be given first in order for others to be given (according to the order of givenness). This sense

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<sup>93</sup> Scheler makes the charge of indeterminacy against Heidegger concerning his notions of world and worldliness as Heidegger does against Scheler’s concept of life. At best, one would have a sense of movement, spatiality, and temporality prior to resistance, “but in no way a ‘world,’ let alone *one* world. ... The ‘referential totality of significance’ seems to me a very vague and ill-defined concept.” Scheler, “Reality and Resistance,” 138.

of “world,” however, is a reciprocal and dialectical achievement. I have been attempting to show through the opening chapters of this work the various dialectical levels in play. In the previous chapter, I wrote of an intentional dialectic in the sphere of givenness and intuition. This is not strictly speaking an historical dialectic, though a temporal component is affirmed as a factor. There, I suggest a dialectic is noticeable throughout the course of the givenness of reality. I also maintained that it is unnecessary to decide whether either Scheler or Husserl is more correct on the issue of a foundation of givenness, which is supposed to decide whether either sense content or meaning content is more “foundational.” The two positions are not mutually exclusive because *sensation and meaning always already involve each other*, and both Husserl and Scheler agree with their interrelation, even if they are unwilling to speak of their interdependence. Likewise, in contrast to both Scheler’s and Heidegger’s claims, there is no need to decide whether resistance or the conation toward the world is more “foundational.” *Conation and resistance always already involve each other*. Being “out for” something will meet resistance and the resistance discloses the reality of the things we are out for. To claim one or the other as “foundational” or is an independent variable, presupposes a subject-object polarity that the very theory, in both cases, disregards. A world can only emerge through the course of resistances, and resistances require a worldly context.

### *Temporality and History*

This worldly context, which pertains only to drive-based conation, is at best a practical world. However, it is a practical world prior to its conceptualization as a

practical world, before it is an objective world that can be an object of intentional acts. My final point is that, as a practical world, the world is not only necessarily a real world, but it is also necessarily a historical world; that is to say, all projects, as pursuits of modification are necessarily temporal. The specific things that we are able to take as paths of practical action are all contained within the general form of becoming (*Werdesein*). This form of becoming is temporality. And becoming has two aspects of variation: the variation of movement (*Bewegung*) and the variation of modification (*Veränderung*). In the tendency to move, and the experience of the power or potentiality to move, even prior to the movement itself, there is an experience of a different location to which I can move and another place to occupy. Accordingly, we come to an awareness of a general “simultaneous apartness” (*gleichzeitiges Auseinandersein*, lit. being apart at the same time), which is the essence of *spatiality*. The essence or phenomenon of spatiality is self-given only on account of the lived-experience of the essence of motion (i.e., apartness). Spatiality is the variation of motion characterized both by simultaneity and reversibility. This means that spatial movement refers to a manifold of simultaneously given places to move and the ability to return to the previously occupied places after movement (the movement can reverse its course). Furthermore, the awareness of spatiality is not reducible to perceptual awareness, but the perception is conditioned by the drive to move. Indeed, one would perceive simultaneous apartness only in relation to the tendency and power to move, not vice versa.

Spatiality has an original ecstatic givenness, which only later becomes a form of the ordering of places, and is that which turns a place (I can occupy) into a space



(that can be thought and measured independent of my occupation). But spatiality is not objectified until, through the course of movement, one encounters resistances and is thrown back upon oneself and forced to reflect upon what it is that has resisted one's movement. Scheler explains this in the following way:

If a center of impulse meets with resistance several times, the resistant *x*, *y*, *z*, etc., insofar as they are grasped in their relationship to one another, are represented in a space which affords scope to their possible effects upon and movement toward one another. We can also say that the schema of the ["surrounding experiences" (*Herumerlebnisses*)] which [were] previously related to the individual...is now *objectified*; it thereby becomes independent of the existence and characteristics of the individual man. ... The space of the surrounding world [or "environment-space" (*«Umwelt»raum*)], which is relative to the organism, now becomes a world-space [*«Welt»raum*]. ... Just as the one subjectively given space is only the sum total of our possibilities of spontaneous movement, so "objective" space is only the sum total of the possibilities of movement and changes of position on the part of the bodies themselves.<sup>94</sup>

One of Scheler's central purposes of this passage is to show that the experience of resistance or reality precedes the objectification of space or spaces and the calculation of them geometrically, or the conscious ordering of objects and the extension of objects in relation to a so-called "empty" space.<sup>95</sup>

Spatiality, then, is defined as a separation *without* succession (the simultaneous apartness of places) relative to the power of self-movement. Simultaneity, or the

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<sup>94</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 338-9.

<sup>95</sup> Scheler makes great effort to dispel what he calls the "illusion" of the theories of "empty space" (and "empty time"). I am unable to give the complete refutation here, however, his central claim is that that which is objectified about space and time as "empty" is derived from the subjective experience of the unfulfillment of drives. The "phenomenon of the void" (non-being) is an objective derivative of the "void of the heart." (Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 331-5). In fact, Scheler suggests that all our various objective determinations of different spaces (continuity, three-dimensionality, and limitlessness) are all derivatives of drive-conditions: *Continuity* of space arises from the continuity of movement. *Three-dimensionality* refers to the three possible directions of movement: right-left; up-down; backward-forward. *Limitlessness*, though unintelligible conceptually, arises from the ability to continue self-movement in a single direction as long as we like (Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 337-8).

absence of succession, entails reversibility. However, the phenomenon of apartness entails neither simultaneity nor reversibility. There is another phenomenon of variation that is also based upon the givenness of “apartness,” but which is both non-simultaneous and irreversible: this is the essence of *temporality*. Temporality is separation *with* succession; it is an “‘apartness’ of ‘*becoming*’ [*Werdensein*].”<sup>96</sup> Temporality is given in transition (*Überganges*), or better, in the power to affect a qualitative alteration or modification, in two ways: a transition from essence to existence (*von Sosein in Dasein*), or a transition from a being with such and such a character to another character (*von Sosein in Andersein*). The experience of temporality, in other words, is contained in the experience of the ability to *realize* (i.e., bring into existence) and refashion or re-*characterize* (i.e., modify qualitative conditions) aspects referring to one’s own self or circumstances, spontaneously (i.e., by oneself). All temporal variation is characterized by irreversibility. Unlike spatial movement, the modified self cannot return to the previous state from which it started.

Scheler describes the ecstatic experience of temporality in the following way: “To have or to want to do ‘first’ one thing, ‘then’ another, to have barely enough time to do it, to have ‘already taken care of it,’ this dynamically experienced ordering or projects, not objects, is the basic experience of temporality.”<sup>97</sup> Indeed, Scheler continues, “A creature that did not modify itself would have no access to time.”<sup>98</sup> Throughout the course of these practical pursuits and projects, one inevitably

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<sup>96</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 340.

<sup>97</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 340.

<sup>98</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 340.

encounters resistance by means of obstructions and obstacles in trying to complete these tasks. And in the course of these resistances, the actor begins to notice determinate characteristics or modalities of the status of his or her projects: “that which I am doing right now,” that which I am no longer able to do,” or “that which I am still able to do.” These practical modalities are later conceptualized as “present,” “past,” and “future,” respectively.

Among these practical modalities, future-time occupies a privileged position since its meaning refers to the entire field of possible realization or modification. The future is the openness of possibilities into which anticipatory conation penetrates, but which experiences with it no resistance in the anticipation of realization or modification. Future means: “that which [one] can ‘still’ manage, which [one] can ‘still’ keep under control, that for which [one] can ‘still’ care [*Sorgen*].”<sup>99</sup> The future is the possibility of spontaneous self-becoming through spontaneous self-modification. However, the modality of future, is called “future” or conceptualized this way only after the givenness of the present and the past. Resistances or obstructions to projects “throws someone back...upon the present, and, further, upon what is given as ‘already having been’ [i.e., the past].”<sup>100</sup> It is about that past that one experiences the most resistance since that which is given as past refers to “that over which we no longer have any power, that which our powerlessness runs up against.”<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 341.

<sup>100</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 341.

<sup>101</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 341.

“It is the experience of reality and of resistance to our striving for self-modification which forces this objectification of temporality as the [form of the] possibility of the modification of real things.”<sup>102</sup> There is something rather remarkable about the way Scheler frames the dynamic of time: it is in the course of the human endeavor to bring something into existence (qualitative self-modification or recharacterization) that we encounter existence. It is in the effort realization that one discovers reality, and it is found precisely as a resistance to the very attempt to bring about a new reality or a change to reality. This is the final aspect of what I call the dialectic of resistance. Through this section I have articulated three aspects; it is worthwhile to pause to summarize all three in the context of temporality.

1. The reciprocal dynamic between act and object. Along with the (phenomenological) dependency of objects upon intentional acts, there is a sense in which the very structure of acts depends (metaphysically) upon the resistances with the reality of objects. Acts and objects always already entail each other, even if in different ways. Neither acts nor objects are all-together foundational, but each have a process of becoming, and they come-to-be dialectically. This specific dialectic yields the emergence of consciousness and an objective world.
2. The reciprocal dynamic between resistance and conation. Just as it impossible to posit a “world” toward which we strive, prior to the emergence of the reality of the world through resistance, so it is impossible to posit resistance and the givenness of reality prior to the context of strivings. The

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<sup>102</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 346.

tendency toward things that are inherent to drives, and the resistances this tendency meets in the course of striving for fulfillment accounts not only for an objective world, but particularly for an objective world that is also a real world.

3. The reciprocal dynamic between reality and the process of realization. This is closely related with the previous dialectic in that it refers to a conative process meeting some resistance, but it yields the emergence of the *becoming* of the world in time and history, namely, that which is experienced in the resistances to the effort to make something come-to-be, or to make the modifications of oneself come-to-be. This aspect of the dialectic of resistance is the closest so far to a critical theorist conception dialectic as that which is imbedded in the movement of history. In Scheler, I suggest we notice a clear and similar dialectic between the attempt to change ourselves and our conditions with the status of the way the conditions are at any given time. The attempt to create a new reality meets resistance with the present reality. This has all sorts of social implications which will be a task of the succeeding chapters to work out. It is noticeable at least at this point that if we can fashion or refashion the world and society exactly as we see fit, without resistance, then the world would be indistinguishable from an imaginary world, a *u-topia* ("no place,"): a world that does not exist.

Temporality is becoming; it is the ecstatic experience of the transition between non-simultaneous happenings. Moreover, the process of life itself has the

ontological status of becoming.<sup>103</sup> Temporality, which refers to the very process of becoming, cannot therefore be *part* of this process. Or in other words, cannot be existentially relative to living things alone. As such, temporality must be the form of the life-process itself; that which encompasses the entirety of the process.

Temporality is distinguished from spatiality on this point. Only living beings can experience the ability to move between simultaneously separate places. But not all becoming is spatial. On the one hand, temporality, like spatiality, does include a reference to apartness or separation of “happenings.” However, the experience of spatiality only refers to the happenings of occupying (or the power to occupy) specific places, as opposed to other possible ones. The experience of the power to modify (to strive for modification and realization), on the other hand, does not require spatial movement, nor is it existentially relative only to the movement of living beings. Rather, it is possible for there to be non-spatial becoming, such as, but not limited to, physical or psychological healing; the development of consciousness or forms of thinking; the enrichment of culture; the realization of moral (good and evil) and non-moral (beauty and knowledge) values; the flourishing of the person, etc.

The character of the irreversibility of modification is evident in these cases. Furthermore, the content of the history of a people is not confined simply to the story of their spatial becoming, that is to say, not limited to the time of their reversible movement from place to place either of the a whole community or of each individual. Rather, history is a unique narrative of the irreversible becoming (the

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<sup>103</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 350.

development and degeneration) of persons and cultures. Insofar as history is temporal, it refers to the tale of qualitative alteration. It is not only a story of a people's *life*, but in the course of their life, it is the story, more importantly, of the becoming of *spirit* (*Geist*), with respect to individual persons or their collective person (*Gesamtperson*), where the *being* of the person is in part a spiritual being. According to this understanding of temporality, there necessarily arises a qualitative difference or difference of character in every moment of time,<sup>104</sup> a character to which an individual person or community cannot simply revert back.

Again, temporality is not *relative* to the being of life. Rather, as the *form* of the being of life, time is "absolute" with respect to life. Scheler's notion of "absolute time," however, may be initially misleading. For example, it does not indicate Scheler's agreement with Newton's theory of absolute time which is necessarily imperceptible and only measurable mathematically, nor does it indicate a rejection of Einstein's theories of relativity which demonstrate that the perception and measurement of motion and rest is necessarily relative to a specific frame of reference from which one is perceiving and measuring. Scheler admits that what he calls absolute time is in fact relative to spirit, by which a person is able to "*see* the life process itself and the form of its becoming."<sup>105</sup> He also admits that "there are as many absolute times as there are individuals, societies, and organic unities."<sup>106</sup> What, then, makes time in this manner, absolute? It is absolute because it is the fullest expression of temporality, and like temporality, refers to the entire process of

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<sup>104</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 348.

<sup>105</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 350.

<sup>106</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 349.

becoming and not only a single kind of becoming. It is also considered absolute because it is contrasted with “physical time.” That which both Newton and Einstein, as physicists, are able to say about time is not only relative to persons, or to living things, but is relative specifically to physical things, and even more specifically, to the reversible and simultaneous motion of physical things.

We can expect at least three things from a physical theory of time. First, temporality is indistinguishable from spatiality since any determination of time can only be measured according to spatial determinations, that is, with respect to the time it takes for something to *move* between different spatial locations—from where it is now, to where it will be. Second, that which the physicist calls time is necessarily devoid of a past, present, and future since these only make sense in relation to a living being, and a living present; such modalities are not as much relative to a living being’s location, but is relative to that being’s *life*. That which the physicist may call “past,” “present” and “future” only refers to a linear succession of now-points that fall “before” the now and “after” the now. Third, as a mere continual sequence of now-points, “one and the same event can, in principle, ‘recur’” in time. Not only is the motion of physical time reversible, it is repeatable. Physical time is measurable because it assumes a set of events connected only by causal relations. Consequently, there can be events or “happenings,” but these events bear no “history.”

We cannot begin to understand Scheler’s notion of absolute time until we disengage it entirely from these antithetical notions which pertain to physical-relative time. According to Scheler’s absolute time, events follow “a rhythm



immanent to the events themselves.”<sup>107</sup> As such, it is perhaps possible to understand the meaning of absolute time not only as “vital time” (in contrast to physical time) but also as *immanent* time, where the contents of history are immanent to or inseparable from their historical position. Indeed, the very meaning or essence of absolute time is a “time in which temporal positions and locations, on the one hand, and temporal contents, on the other, are necessarily connected with one another.”<sup>108</sup> Absolute time is essentially historical, and is the essence of history. Scheler writes, “It belongs to the nature of history that a past is at every moment still active and living, and that the contents of this past are variously brought into relief by the tasks belonging to the future.”<sup>109</sup>

According to what has been said with respect to the relation of reality and time, it is necessarily the case that everything that is taken as object—every object one knows or ignores, prefers or rejects, loves or hates—is an object of historical reality. All objects are both real and temporal. Even if an object of knowledge is an ideal or a theory, the very fact that it is something that has arisen for us as an object means that it has arisen from the a drive-context of modification, through the dialectic of resistance. Throughout these initial chapters, I have attempted to show the way in which Scheler’s phenomenology leads him, in a continuous way, from phenomena to an historical reality irreducible to phenomena. I have demonstrated also what I take to be the dialectical levels at play within this process. A crowning achievement of Scheler’s philosophy, as we have seen so far, is not only to arrive at an encounter

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<sup>107</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 347.

<sup>108</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 349.

<sup>109</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 348.

with history and reality that are irreducible to phenomena, but to do so in a way that is also not antithetical to phenomenology. Scheler has followed a phenomenological path the entire way through. As I take the context of this achievement and their dialectical features into the context of society, with the next chapter, it should be assumed that it will not be enough for Scheler to investigate society as a mere phenomenon, but which also does not discount or neglect the phenomenological givenness of society. Scheler will set out to investigate *social reality*, that is to say, society as an aspect of historical reality, and he will do this in this sociology of knowledge with attention to the way social reality conditions cognition.

## 4

### SCIENCE, PHILOSOPHY, AND THE DISPUTE ABOUT VALUES

From all that has been explored, it is likely that claims about phenomenological idealism and now be laid to rest. Phenomenology is not a method of logical immanence; it is a living philosophical enterprise constantly engaged in uncovering the original contents of experience and the essence of these contents. Thinking is immersed within the sphere of *life*, namely, the drive-life that receives and provides resistance in a real and historical context, for there can be no “object” without resistances to the practical projects of human life. The existence of an object is the primary condition for the possibility of something becoming an object of philosophy, even if a philosopher’s knowledge of the object is not itself limited to the object as existing.

Due to the expansiveness of the phenomenological domain, Scheler was confident that other fields of research could be renewed and revitalized if investigated phenomenologically. To investigate them phenomenologically means, among other things, to maintain a consistent regard toward what shows itself originally in the execution (*Vollzug*) of acts with regard to a specific domain of objects, and without presupposing pre-established conceptual and methodological criteria. Indeed, phenomenology, he thought, is a good way for scholars to avoid preconceived ideas and ideological thinking. This is simply to research with a phenomenological attitude. Such an “*attitude*” is a mark of the *researcher*, not the method of research; it is therefore not incompatible with any method of research.

In his work, “Erkenntnis und Arbeit” (1925), Scheler thought that philosophy was only then beginning to realize that what had been called “epistemology” in philosophy throughout the modern period relied upon methods of the positive sciences, and among them, primarily methods adapted for the mathematical natural sciences and historical research (GW VIII, 201). To the detriment of philosophy, “epistemology” had for so long recognized only a single kind of knowledge. He writes that,

What “knowledge” means in religion, art, mythology, and language and how this knowledge is to be classified in the system of all knowledge are questions that are only now beginning to be asked and suspected, now after the long dreary period when philosophy had degraded itself to be the handmaiden of this or that specialized science (GW VIII, 201).<sup>1</sup>

Scheler expressed enthusiasm that new epistemologies for all kinds of fields were beginning to develop: epistemologies of the natural worldview, of biology, of objective spirit and subjective spiritual acts, objectifying psychology, observation of the self and other (*der Selbst- und Fremdbeobachtung*), and of metaphysics itself (GW VIII, 201). Scheler’s support for the practice of tailoring particular theories of cognition for specific domains of research meant that social research should also have its own “epistemology” irreducible to methods of natural science and that it could achieve this by utilizing phenomenology in order to take a fresh look at the objects it researches. Furthermore, if it is proposed, as critical theorists do, that immanent critique or some form of self-reflection is important for social research, one can hypothesize in light of Scheler’s statements that phenomenology is not antithetical but an assistance even to these kinds of social research.

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<sup>1</sup> Translation adapted from, Scheler, *Cognition and Work*, trans. Zachary Davis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, forthcoming). Unpublished manuscript.

Indeed, sociologists had been debating the methodological approach of its discipline for some time, but especially since the end of the nineteenth century. A *Methodenstreit*, or dispute on methods, began between Gustav Schmoller from the German historical school who insisted upon an historical approach to political economy. In 1883, the Austrian School's Carl Menger criticized Schmoller's views and advocated the independence of economics from historiography. Economics became, thereafter, one of the first social disciplines to acquire independence from sociohistorical research and acquire more positivistic methods.<sup>2</sup> Carl Menger's *Principles of Economics* is best known now for its economic theory of human action, or "Praxeology," and its formative influence on the Austrian libertarianism of Friedrich Hayek and Ludwig von Mises, and more recently the "anarcho-capitalism" of Murray Rothbard and others.

The legacy of this initial dispute continued within different sociological controversies. I focus on two methodological disputes surrounding the growth and development of the social sciences in Germany in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> First, the "value judgment dispute" (*Werturteilsstreit*), initiated in 1909 by Max Weber and others at the Vienna general meeting of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*. A newer generation of sociologists made another go at Schmoller on whether the *Verein*

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Pressler and Fabio Dasilva, *Sociology and Interpretation: From Weber to Habermas* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 13.

<sup>3</sup> For references to all the major writings within these debates, see Volker Meja and Nico Stehr, ed., *Knowledge and Politics: The Sociology of Knowledge Dispute*, introduction, "On the Sociology of Knowledge Dispute" (New York: Routledge, 1990).

should remain a “forum for political evaluation and goals.”<sup>4</sup> It was affirmed that it should, but it also gave rise to another organization concerned with “value free scientific research.” The new German Sociological Association that began in 1910 was intended to have this function.

Though the issue about value judgments never ceased to be controversial, it was only again officially revisited by the German Sociological Association in Tübingen at the 1961 Congress, but now involving the Frankfurt School. The initial exchange between Karl Popper and Theodor Adorno, followed by subsequent commentators, has since been called the “positivist dispute” (*Positivismusstreit*).

For Scheler—a philosopher who had made a name for himself with his peculiar approach to a material value ethics, and now teaching in a Sociology department at Cologne—the concern that was arguably greater than the place of value was the role of philosophy; only after the scope of philosophy is settled could the question of value be raised. Scheler was hired at the University of Cologne in 1919, the year of the publication of Max Weber’s essay “Science as a Vocation” which insisted on the value neutrality of science. A year later, when Scheler’s *Vom Ewingen im Menschen* was completed, he included in this volume his essay “The Nature of Philosophy,” in which Scheler argues for the autonomy of philosophy. It is evident that Scheler was not simply writing to other philosophers but primarily to the perpetrators of the false dichotomy between *Wissenschaft* and *Weltanschauung* (science and worldview) and those wanting to align philosophy with either one. He comes down

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<sup>4</sup> Theodor Adorno, *The Postivist Dispute in German Sociology*, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby, from the “Introduction to the English Translation” by David Frisby (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), xxiii.

hardest on those who want to call philosophy science. This includes Husserl, as well as Baden School Neo-Kantians: Windelband and Rickert, and by extension Rickert's disciple, Max Weber, whose exclusion of value entails an exclusion of philosophy. But Scheler's essay also has great relevance as a response to Habermas who, as I explored in Chapter 1, suggests that phenomenology takes the value-free objectivism of science beyond science itself by perfects the task of separating knowledge from interests.

In what follows, I will explore the controversies of this methodological crisis period, highlighting Scheler's response. Finally, I will introduce the *Postivismusstreit*, the Frankfurt School concerns on the issue of philosophy and value and a comparison with Scheler's.

### **The Crisis of Philosophy**

Even with the prevalent acknowledgment of Kant's influence on subsequent philosophy, it is not often acknowledged that his *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics* had in fact accomplished precisely what it sought. Any subsequent metaphysics, every philosophy, nay, all relevant research that wanted to be taken seriously by the wider world of scholarship wouldn't dare not to acknowledge the Kantian Revolution. Kant challenges the rationalist assumption that the level of reality of an object is determined precisely by its level of intelligibility and proximity to a formal realm accessible only by the mind. While Plato, for example, took concepts to be the best approximation of reality, Kant separates concept and reality and the two find some limited approximation only in judgment. Moreover, while

Plato held intelligibility to be the measure of reality, which makes material being, because of its incessant flux, a rather poor example of the real, Kant, influenced by empiricism, equates reality with empirical content, but which “in itself” is unintelligible.

Although Kant’s separation of concept and reality and Hegel’s subsequent historicization of knowledge have had tremendous influence on the development of philosophy, they were ironically also key contributions to a crisis of philosophy. By the mid-nineteenth century, naturalist scholars (including Ludwig Büchner, Jacob Moleschott, and Karl Vogt) “argued for the end of philosophical dominance over the natural sciences. Instead, they called for the universal validity of scientific method as the only legitimate path to truth.”<sup>5</sup> The battle for prominence and legitimation between philosophy and positive science intensified surrounding the question whether philosophy is the “science of the sciences,” or whether the scientific method satisfied within itself all philosophical requirements.

It was not long until the reality and concept opposition became the grounds for an intellectual antagonism between rationalism and irrationalism. The strength of positivism in diminishing the role of philosophy by exclusivizing scientific methodology, pressured Neo-Kantians to revise the purpose of philosophy, and to do so scientifically in order to legitimate it. The two important bastions of Neo-Kantianism, in the Marburg (e.g., Cohen, Natorp, Cassirer) and Baden (e.g., Windelband and Rickert) territories of Germany, made valiant efforts of legitimizing

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<sup>5</sup> Charles Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 22. See also, Herbert Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Chap. 3.



philosophy. The Southwestern Baden School, especially, reacted by making philosophy different in stature, but the same in character, as the sciences.

Philosophy was, for them, a science; not just one science among others, but the ultimate one, the “*Wissenschaft der Wissenschaft*”<sup>6</sup>—the science which dictates to the positive sciences their logical and methodological limits.<sup>7</sup>

Likely in part a response to this late modern crisis-period, a movement of irrationalism arose distancing itself from both philosophy and science and tapping into more artistic modes of expression. Although the movement, like Romanticism, occurred largely as a literary and artistic one, some philosophers propagated the view by emphasizing non-rational dimensions of experience, such as vital urge, feeling, or will. And also like Romanticism, the irrationalist trends drew in philosophers who used the context to emphasize the movement’s philosophical dimension and as leverage to assert the difference between philosophy and science insofar as there was philosophical significance to these modes of expression. We may point to Nietzsche as a primary transmitter of this view philosophically into the twentieth century and for the succeeding *Lebensphilosophie* and psychoanalytic lines of thought. The sociology of knowledge could also not have arisen without the movement’s impetus.

Karl Mannheim identifies the origins of irrationalism sociologically as deriving from the insight that the individual mind cannot be conceived independently from the group and also from a collective unconscious. He explains that, in the past,

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<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Rickert, “Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie und Metaphysik,” *Heidelberg Manuscript.*, 59, 4-4a.

<sup>7</sup> See Schnädelbach, *Philosophy in Germany, 1831-1933*, and Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism*.

modern epistemology and psychology implemented a powerful tradition of theoretical individualism. A similar individualism also characterizes non-historical, analytic sciences. Sociology, according to Mannheim, needed to correct this tradition by insisting that “knowledge is from the beginning a co-operative process of group life...within the framework of a common fate, a common activity, and the overcoming of common difficulties.”<sup>8</sup> This insight reveals that knowledge always points to a “community of experiencing prepared for *in the subconscious*.”<sup>9</sup> He explains further:

once the fact has been perceived that the largest part of thought is erected upon a basis of collective actions, one is impelled to recognize the force of the collective unconscious. The full emergence of the sociological point of view regarding knowledge inevitably carries with it the gradual uncovering of the irrational foundation of rational knowledge.”<sup>10</sup>

It is important for social research to begin not with a single individual but within a socio-historical context, from which the modes and patterns of thought the individual takes up are already prepared by a collective unconscious. “Unmasking” these social-determining factors of thinking, ideological or otherwise, is, according to Mannheim, the task of a sociology of knowledge.

The rise of positivism forced philosophers to take sides about the purpose of philosophy: did philosophy align with the side of the concept, logic, and “objective” science, or the side of reality, life, and “subjective” *Weltanschauungen*? An aggressive campaign against Nietzsche and *Lebensphilosophie* is most clearly seen in Rickert. According to him, *Lebensphilosophie* and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* were

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<sup>8</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Mariner Books, 1955), 30.

<sup>9</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 31. My emphasis.

<sup>10</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 31.

dangerously committing philosophy to an antiphilosophical position.<sup>11</sup> Rickert states vehemently in his *Die Philosophie des Lebens*, “If it achieves dominance, it is to be feared that the misological modish philosophy of life will lead to the death of philosophy as a science. I believe, therefore, that I serve the life of philosophy when I attack this ‘philosophy of life.’”<sup>12</sup>

Rickert was an influential Freiburg colleague of his contemporary, Max Weber. In a lecture at Munich University in 1918, Weber kept with the Neo-Kantian tradition by heralding a voice against the post war anti-scientific climate, defending the rational objectivity of science. The lecture was published the following year under the title “Science as a Vocation.” Not only was it directed toward the irrationalism characteristic of the German youth, but also to “a few big children” in the professoriate. At one point, Weber hearkens back to the image of the cave in Plato’s *Republic* where the philosopher is led to the light of the sun. “The sun is the truth of science, which alone seizes not upon illusions and shadows but upon the true being.”<sup>13</sup> However, he continues:

Today youth feels rather the reverse: the intellectual constructions of science constitute an unreal realm of artificial abstractions, which with their bony hands seek to grasp the blood-and-the-sap of true life without ever catching up with it. But here in life, in what for Plato was the play of the shadows on the walls of the cave, genuine reality is pulsating; these are derivatives of life, lifeless ghosts, and nothing else.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bambach, *Heidegger, Dilthey, and the Crisis of Historicism*, 87.

<sup>12</sup> Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens*, xiv. Translated and cited in Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 87.

<sup>13</sup> Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” *From Max Weber*, ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York: Routledge, 2009), 140.

<sup>14</sup> Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 140-1. It is a mistake to presume that with this passage, Weber gives an endorsement of Plato’s view of reality, or that he takes irrationalism to be incorrect simply on the basis of its departure from Plato’s view. For his purposes, he is attempting to present the contrast in the starkest possible terms.

It is worthwhile to consider, as John Staude does, what Scheler's reaction was "to the anti-rationalist tendencies in Weimar Germany?"<sup>15</sup> My assessment interprets Scheler position to these trends differently than Staude does, who considers Scheler one of Weber's ally. As I read Scheler, he endorses the Kantian dichotomy between reason and reality that is operative in Neo-Kantianism and implied in irrationalism. This is because it is not fitting to call the totality of being, "real being" since beings that are real constitute only a single sphere of all being, nor is it fitting to suggest that only rational beings have access to reality. Reality is rather that which provides resistance to practical conation, something of which animals, arguably, have a keener experience, and human beings experience insofar as they are animals—not insofar as they are rational.

Traditionally, within the Platonic paradigm, that mode of being that can provide resistance, namely, material being, is the *least real* within the so-called "great chain of being" precisely because it is the most remote from formal reality. For Scheler, on the other hand, the formal intelligibility of being does not constitute the realness of real beings. There is nothing about the logical coherence or rational development of history (Hegel and Marx), that will by itself convince us of the *reality* of the perception of material or organic processes. Something's reality will in no way be given in experience simply on account of its logic or intelligibility. In fact, in one very important respect, Scheler's understanding of reality inverts the entire traditional view about the real. Whereas the tradition would say that the *real is the knowable*

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<sup>15</sup> John Staude, *Max Scheler (1874-1928): An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 149.

(the rational, the intelligible), Scheler insists that *the real is necessarily unknowable*.<sup>16</sup> Consciousness does not participate intellectually with the existence (*Dasein*) of a real being, but only with the being-thus (*Sosein*), the intentional correlate, of a real being. Moreover, the “being-thus” including the essence of something can be given in an hallucination or illusion just as much as in an experience of something real. The distinguishing factor is not its intelligibility but its ability to provide resistance. Nor does this indicate that reality is “irrational,” but that the very application of rationality or irrationality to existence amounts to a category mistake. The bare existence of a thing is neither intelligible nor unintelligible for it is only the being-thus or *what-ness* (*Sosein*) of a thing that can lay claim to intelligibility, not the being-there or *that-ness* of it (*Dasein*).

The aspects of Scheler’s thought presented in previous chapters that highlight the importance of vital, pre-logical, and pre-conscious modes of experience already testify to the affirmation Scheler would have given, and did give, to *Lebensphilosophie*. He also tended to highlight the thought of other non-German philosophers who elevate the importance of non-rational elements, for example, St. Augustine and Pascal, who Scheler interprets as emphasizing the autonomy of

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<sup>16</sup> Ironically, this shows both Scheler’s proximity to and distance from Kantian philosophy. It shows on the one hand that reality is separate from rational categories in its givenness. But on the other hand, to say that reality is unknowable does not mean that real beings are unknowable (for they are knowable in their *Sosein*) nor that conceptual categories are required for the intelligibility of things; only that the realness (*Dasein*) of beings is unknowable. The difference is in Scheler’s and Kant’s conceptions of reality. Kant’s conception is dealing with the spectre of Plato (and rationalism), and so it includes something like a *Ding an sich*, but Scheler does not deal with this metaphysical notion of reality as form, and so interprets reality phenomenologically as resistance-experience, and experience that non-rational beings tend to have more powerfully than rational ones.

love,<sup>17</sup> and Duns Scotus and Maine de Biran, who emphasize the autonomy of the will. Furthermore, the reason Scheler had always put great importance on the figure of St. Francis of Assisi is because of his attunement to nature that was uncharacteristic of the rationally-charged heritage of Western Christianity. This trend to expand philosophically relevant experience beyond rational categories continued until Scheler's final essays. And thus, the development of a physiologically- and vitally-charged metaphysics and philosophical anthropology only deepened.

Staide wrongly diagnoses Scheler's reaction to irrationalism. He writes, "Whereas before and during the war [Scheler] had attacked the Western scientific tradition, now [after the war] Scheler firmly repudiated the *Lebensphilosophie* of the conservative revolution."<sup>18</sup> Staide goes on to say that Scheler forsakes religion for social science,<sup>19</sup> and that he abandons his venture for solidarity for the sociology of knowledge and the systematization of the totality of viewpoints.<sup>20</sup> According to Staide, Scheler had since become a "spokesperson of rationalism,"<sup>21</sup> and an "apostle of reason."<sup>22</sup> These statements significantly overstate the case and make Scheler's

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<sup>17</sup> In his essay, "Liebe und Erkenntnis," which primarily focuses on St. Augustine's philosophy, Scheler arguably overstates just how much St. Augustine pushed for the independence of love from reason. See, Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, ed. Harold Bershady (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>18</sup> Staide, *Max Scheler*, 149.

<sup>19</sup> Staide, *Max Scheler*, 137.

<sup>20</sup> Staide, *Max Scheler*, 145.

<sup>21</sup> Staide, *Max Scheler*, 150.

<sup>22</sup> Staide, *Max Scheler*, 152. Staide's interpretation of Scheler's late philosophy stems from an older and arguably, very destructive interpretation that attempts to align reversals and crises in Scheler's intellectual life with reversals and crises in his personal life. Peter Spader treats this "psychological" interpretation of Scheler's thought very well in *Scheler's Ethical Personalism: Its Logic, Development and Promise* (New York: Fordham UP, 2002). My concern is that what has been advertised as a way to *explain* changes in Scheler's thought by

reversal (if such evidence even exists) too radical. However, it is just as inaccurate to speak of Scheler's philosophy, as Peter Hamilton does, as an "anti-positivist crusade," which wages "a war against the 'cult of science' ...[that] was responsible for the conflicts and social pathologies of modern life."<sup>23</sup>

Staupe points to two portions of Scheler's writings as evidence for his interpretation. First, in the second edition of *The Nature of Sympathy* (1922), Scheler recants part of his criticism of the modern humanitarian movement that he makes in an earlier piece on *ressentiment* and moral value-judgment before the war.<sup>24</sup> In the section that Staupe cites, Scheler writes that previously he had

put forward the opinion that the 'modern idea of benevolence' (humanitarianism, philanthropy, etc.) has been 'worked up' entirely from motives of resentment against patriotism and the Christian love of God and the person. This amounts to repudiating it as a genuine, 'autonomous' movement of love with a positive basis of its own in the fabric of the human spirit, and regarding it merely as a gesture of defiance and protest against the Christian conception of personal and divine love on the one hand, and patriotism on the other.<sup>25</sup>

Scheler then makes the admission that "it is only this *exaggeration* [and polemical employment] of the value of benevolence which proceeds from

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means of what was going on in his life, has become an *excuse* to discredit and disregard aspects of his thought as a symptom of the questionable way Scheler was living. As Spader put it, "...to claim that [Scheler's personal] turmoil [is] the *sole* reason for the change in thought does not aid us in understanding his thought. Instead, it negates the need to understand the development in his thought as a new step in his 'struggle' with the philosophical problems he was addressing" (*Ethical Personalism*, 180). In this case, due to the fact that it was around this time that Scheler divorced his second wife to marry another, it seems that, for Staupe, this event had to have some profound correlate intellectually. To the detriment of scholarship, Staupe exaggerates this so-called "reversal," which lacks sufficient evidence.

<sup>23</sup> Peter Hamilton, *Knowledge and Social Structure: An Introduction to the Classical Argument in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974), 75. Hamilton cites Staupe's *Max Scheler*.

<sup>24</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*,

<sup>25</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 99-100.

resentment, not the sentiment itself either in essence or in origin.”<sup>26</sup> Scheler’s retraction, however, gives no mention, as Staude suggests, the “he had gone too far in his repudiation of rationalism,” or that, in the face of threatening mass movements and ideologies, “the guiding light of reason must not be disparaged or snuffed out.”<sup>27</sup> I am at a complete loss how Staude manages to derive this interpretation from the passage he cites in *The Nature of Sympathy*. The words “rationalism” or even “reason” are never mentioned in that portion of the text.

Staude also points to Scheler’s later essay, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” a published address to the Lessing Institute in Berlin on 17 January, 1925, as symbolizing “this abrupt reversal in his intellectual career” toward rationalism.<sup>28</sup> For Staude, Scheler’s comments on the social and political malaise of the time are indicative of a turn in his philosophy. Scheler states that the “civilized world is in grave danger of slowly and inaudibly sinking and drowning in the gray, shapeless dawn of non-freedom and hollowness...”<sup>29</sup> It’s true that Scheler bemoans the degradation of liberal democracy into “a sullen democracy of masses, interests, and sentimentality,”<sup>30</sup> and that he proposes that the only way to prevent democracy from falling into dictatorship and “salvaging cultural and scientific values,” is by means of a kind of enlightened absolutism and “the help of a small, *highly educated elite*”<sup>31</sup> that was characteristic of early modern European politics. What is it, though,

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<sup>26</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 100.

<sup>27</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 149, 150.

<sup>28</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 151-2.

<sup>29</sup> Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, trans. Oscar Haac (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” 16.

<sup>31</sup> Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” 17.



that provides the connection from Scheler's tendency toward authoritarian politics to a change in his philosophy? The rest of the essay, which is a summary explication of his philosophy of spirit and life, where we find statements in support of love and emotional functions—a "culture of the heart"—that one versed in Scheler's early work would expect. At most, there is some discrepancy between his emotive and conative philosophy and the political picture he illustrates, but it does not indicate a shift philosophically, as Staude suggests.

It is true that Scheler's relation with *Lebensphilosophie* had always been rather ambivalent. Nietzsche was his constant companion, but also a source of agitation.<sup>32</sup> Scheler was inspired by Dilthey's stimulating lectures as a student in Berlin, and was so captivated by Bergson's writings that he made an effort to have them translated into German. Staude relates how Scheler agreed with Bergson that "intellectualization alienated man from Being. The hard cold stare of the impersonal intellect...could grasp only the external contours of being."<sup>33</sup> In fact, it remains a question whether Dilthey and Bergson were ultimately more influential for Scheler's theory of *Erlebnis* and intuition than Husserl was.

Despite this influence, there was never a sustained phase of Scheler's thought that could be considered anti-rationalistic. He had always been outspoken against Nietzsche's absolutization of vital values against cultural or religious ones; Dilthey was too much of a historicist; and Bergson, too mystical. The central place *Geist* had for Scheler's conception of the person had always been a point of contention with *Lebensphilosophie*, and even until his final essays, Scheler holds that doing

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<sup>32</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 247.

<sup>33</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 21.

philosophy, in Platonic fashion, requires an “ascetic” attitude toward the factor of reality and vital drives. He writes in his essay “The Nature of Philosophy” that if someone “is to reach the threshold of knowing the philosophical object,” it is required that that person achieve, among other things, a “self-mastery as a means of restraining and objectifying the instinctual impulses.”<sup>34</sup> The dispositions that obstruct philosophical knowledge most, for Scheler, are hatred, arrogance, and intemperance. But Scheler is not endorsing a rational mastery over base desire; it is a cultivation of a spirit of love that removes obstacles to knowledge. All of his major works, from the earliest to the latest, attempt to weave a careful balance between spirit and life and I resist interpretations that show Scheler at one time more vitalistic and another more spiritualistic (or even “rationalistic”).

Scheler would not have been a *full-fledged* advocate of the call for a “deliverance from the intellectualism of science in order to return to one’s own nature and thus to nature as such,”<sup>35</sup> which is the way Weber characterizes the goal of the German youth. Nor would he have been altogether opposed to it. Scheler initially had great hope in the youth movement “as a source of new vitality for the ‘sick, lethargic, defeated German nation’”; but he also believed that “raw enthusiasm was inadequate to meet the problems of the day.”<sup>36</sup> When Scheler met with some of the youth, he was disappointed to see them so undisciplined and irresponsible.<sup>37</sup> Also, Scheler would certainly have resisted the youth movement inasmuch as their impetus was primarily reactionary and driven by *ressentiment*.

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<sup>34</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 95.

<sup>35</sup> Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 16.

<sup>36</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 118-9.

<sup>37</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 119.

With that said, however, it is also very misleading to suggest, as Staude does, that “Scheler sided with Weber against his youthful critics.”<sup>38</sup> Erich Wittenberg, commenting on the on-going *Methodenstreit* in 1919 (calling it a *Wissenschaftskrisis*) finds Scheler’s intervention into these debates to be particularly noteworthy precisely on account of Scheler’s disagreement with Weber.<sup>39</sup> However, due to the fact that the issue that Scheler takes with Weber is one focused on value and philosophy, the critique is more relevant to the value judgment dispute. Wittenberg explains that for Scheler, the crisis of Western culture “can no longer rest solely upon a scientific basis.”<sup>40</sup> In Scheler’s estimation, Weber elevates science to the point of a detrimental subordination and neglect of philosophy, and in the process submits the domain of values to the realm of the irrational.

## **Phenomenology and the *Werturteilsstreit***

### *Science and Valuation*

The post-Hegelian crisis of philosophy divided philosophers into rivaling camps with respect to conceptions of the very purpose of their own discipline. The question of value was thought to provide legitimation to philosophy struggling to find its place. If philosophy had a stake in an explication of value, then it could be a science with an ability to evaluate and thus be distinguished from the value-free

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<sup>38</sup> Staude, *Max Scheler*, 149.

<sup>39</sup> Erich Wittenberg, “Die Wissenschaftskrisis in Deutschland im Jahre 1919. Ein Beitrag zur Wissenschaftsgeschichte,” *Theoria*, vol. 4, 1938, pp. 235-264. The paper is partially translated by Erica Carter and Christopher Turner, in Peter Lassman and Irving Velody, *Max Weber’s ‘Science as a Vocation,’* ed. Herminio Martins (Unwin Hymans, 1989), 112-121.

<sup>40</sup> Wittenberg, “Die Wissenschaftskrisis,” 254. Quoted in David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in German 1918-1933* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 176.

sciences. For Windelband and Rickert, philosophy could only achieve differentiation if it could make claims of methodological validity concerning the sciences. Taking the Kantian rational approach to values, philosophy is for them precisely the “science of values.” Bambach explains that “Kantian logic would prove a much needed anodyne for the ‘disease’ called ‘historicism.’ ... In effect [they] attempted a *supra*historical resolution to the crisis of historicism by turning away from historical experience to a transcendental theory of values.”<sup>41</sup> The Baden Neo-Kantians sought to formalize values in order to counter ethical relativism, which they thought was “destroying the foundations of post-Kantian German thought.”<sup>42</sup>

Nietzsche stands in opposition to Kant in this regard, and for this debate. The problems with relativism aside, both Windelband’s relegation of values to questions of methodological validity, and Rickert’s explanation of value as a transcendental conceptual category that “attaches” to historical objects divorce values from lived-experience. But values primarily pertain to life, not logic. In “Science as a Vocation,” Weber, citing a passage from Tolstoy, sums up what is at stake: “Science is meaningless because it gives no answer to our question, the only question important for us: ‘What shall we do and how shall we live?’”<sup>43</sup> Weber admits as “indisputable” that science does not respond to this question, but this does not make science itself meaningless or even valueless. He insists that the value of science is that it provides results *free of values*.

Weber hopes to rehabilitate the scientific “vocation” by suggesting that science

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<sup>41</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 85.

<sup>42</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 84.

<sup>43</sup> Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 143.

has some relevance precisely insofar as it does not provide answers to such subjectively murky question of life's meaning. The value-relevance (*Wertbeziehung*) of science is precisely its value-freedom (*Wertfreiheit*). That is, science provides answers to questions without presupposing the world of competitive value-frameworks—the “ethical irrationality of the world.”<sup>44</sup> Weber presupposes a contradictory irrationality to the pre-conceptual world; there can exist no harmony between the various worldviews in this world because the service of one “god” (by which is meant a single worldview) necessarily means a rejection and offense to another god or worldview. The “teacher,” as teacher, cannot be a “leader” promoting some *Weltanschauung* or code of conduct. But the teacher at least has “the intellectual integrity to see that it is one thing to state facts..., while it is another to answer questions of value of culture and its individual contents.”<sup>45</sup> Weber maintains that philosophy—“as a discipline”—merely concerns the arrangement of individual views in order for them to “subjectively make sense”<sup>46</sup> because it is impossible for them to do so objectively, i.e., universally.

Weber's position may seem strange in light of the fact that Rickert spends much of his career developing a theory of values, with a conception of the legitimation of philosophy as a science precisely by *including* values within the domain of science. Weber then responds by removing value judgments all together from scientific aims. How do we interpret this maneuver? Is Weber surrendering the sphere of values to the irrationalism of reality? Certainly, Nietzsche's influence on Weber is not to be

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<sup>44</sup> Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” *From Max Weber*, 122.

<sup>45</sup> Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 146.

<sup>46</sup> Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” 151-2.

denied. However, his position is not as antagonistic to Rickert's value theory as it may seem. First, Weber was making a careful application of the Kantian distinction between concept and reality that had taken various forms of expression through Windelband and Rickert, namely, between nomothetic and ideographic,<sup>47</sup> between being (*Sein*) and validity (*Gelten*), the "world of reality" and the "world of value,"<sup>48</sup> between *Wissenschaft* and *Weltanschauung*. This dualism was already evident.

Second, Weber was applying Rickert's own distinction between making value-judgments, or "valuing" (*Wertung*) on the one hand and value-reference, or value-relevance (*Wertbeziehung*) on the other. Rickert had made this distinction after criticisms that his value theory, which makes values central to historical science, in fact historicizes the science, diminishing its objectivity.<sup>49</sup> Rickert thought that researchers could have a theoretical assent to the value of the research, on the basis of an indisputable *interest* in the research, without committing to a practical valuation which would subjectively influence the results of that research. A theoretical judgment of the value of science does not necessitate that the sciences make value-judgments in practical and political affairs.

At the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* meeting in Vienna in 1909, Weber and other new generation sociologists had grown concerned that the Society had compromised its

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<sup>47</sup> Generally speaking, between natural sciences that deal with form and historical sciences that deal with content, respectively. Windelband, "History and Natural Science," 175.

<sup>48</sup> Cf., Wilhelm Windelband, *Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. Joseph McCabe (London: Unwin, 1921).

<sup>49</sup> Cf., Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 104-7.

scientific integrity by acting as a political advisory committee for state decisions.<sup>50</sup> As Pressler and Dasilva put it, “The conservative, “organic” conception of society found in the old historical school was not as much a method of analysis as it was a means of supporting political and ideological valuations of social phenomena. Overcoming such presuppositions meant a liberation from the political implications of historiography.”<sup>51</sup> The original *Werturteilsstreit* is a name for the dispute surrounding the controversial decision to launch a new sociological society in Germany that would keep its discussion separate from political policy and goals in a way that the *Verein* could not. These new generation sociologists (including Ferdinand Tönnies, Weber, and Werner Sombart), broke from older generation political economists (Schmoller, Philippovich, Herkner and Gottl-Ottlilienfeld) and formed the German Sociological Association in 1910.

The dispute arose on the basis of confusion between the function of science for prevailing political interests; it is the attempt to dissociate science from the state that made the dispute about the irreconcilability of science and values, and Weber’s remark about value-laden science, “a thing of the Devil.”<sup>52</sup> But there seems to be two different questions at play: first, the question concerning the scientific method and its relation to value as such, and then the question of the content of the sciences as inclusive of judgments concerning the particular values and goals of political leadership. The problem for Weber and his allies is that if scientific methodology allows for some relation to value, it becomes tremendously difficult, if not

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<sup>50</sup> Robert Proctor, *Value-Free Science? Purity and Power in Modern Knowledge* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 86.

<sup>51</sup> Pressler and Dasilva, *Sociology and Interpretation*, 19.

<sup>52</sup> Quoted in Proctor, *Value-Free Science?*, 89.

impossible, to prevent scientific results aligning with political interests. Although there are possible logical and empirical ways that a scientist, *qua* scientist, can confront the world of values,<sup>53</sup> in doing so the scientist will invariably slip into a realm of conscience and personal commitment where science cannot tread.<sup>54</sup>

It's easy to sympathize with Weber and the newer generation's arguments. Consider some contemporary examples. What is currently being called "global warming" is increasingly discussed on the level of policy rather than scientific research; thus, American citizens tend to affirm or deny the phenomenon based upon their political orientation and the policy decisions that align with them. The recent shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary has prompted yet another debate on the revision of gun laws in America, but the factual statistics of gun violence and deaths ultimately play only a minor role in the public-wide discussion. Other intense debates that have significant reference to scientific research, for example, homosexuality and the physiology of sexual attraction, abortion and the stages of fetal development, etc, are being discussed more in terms of partisan opposition than factual data. However, if science seeks to distance itself from policy, it becomes a question how much policy should be influenced by science.

Despite sympathy for the quest to emphasize the value-neutrality of scientific research in order to investigate these and other matters outside of the context of

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<sup>53</sup> Proctor notes the following three legitimate ways Weber allows, taken from Weber's recorded words from the *Verhandlung des Vereins für Sozialpolitik in Wien, 1909, Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik*, 132 (1910): 565-6. (1) A scientist "can point out the contradictions between a person's values and their interests." (2) "He can ask, empirically, what means must be used to achieve those interests." (3) "He may point out certain unintended consequences of pursuing and achieving those interests." Proctor, *Value-Free Science?*, 88-9.

<sup>54</sup> Proctor, *Value-Free Science?*, 89.



social policy, certainly we cannot expect such matters to be considered primarily outside of their moral significance. They are, after all, moral issues. Moreover, Weber and others underestimate the interpretative aspect of the factual data that are significant for questions of social and political norms and laws: what should be done in these cases and others like them? Is the value-free research not to have any bearing on policy? Weber may still underestimate the significance of the fact that science cannot provide guidance on what to do and how to live.

*Weltanschauung and the autonomy of philosophy*

As opposed to Staude's interpretation that Scheler "sides with Weber," Scheler's critique of Weber is rather sharp, and he took the time to write on Weber's "Science as a Vocation" on more occasions than one.<sup>55</sup> However, before embarking on the critique, it is important to note that Scheler does explicitly agree that the specific task of science is not the expressed affirmation of a set of values and a specific *Weltanschauung*, or worldview, insofar as *Weltanschauungen* stem from value-affirmation. Methodologically, science is indeed value free with respect to the objects of its research. It must have this status for the sake of its own validity in light of its aims, but not as Weber maintains because of the subjective and irrational status of values. Science is value free because it builds formal-deductive constructs (e.g., natural laws) out of inductive processes (e.g. natural regularities). These

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<sup>55</sup> Scheler's critique of Weber's "Science as a Vocation" appears in two places, with different emphases. First, the essay "Weltanschauungslehre, Soziologie and Welanschauungssetzung" (GW VI, 13-26), and "Max Webers Ausschaltung der Philosophie (Zur Psychologie und Soziologie der nominalistischen Denkart)" (GW VIII, 430-438). Partial translations by R. C. Speirs are included in *Max Weber's 'Science as a Vocation'* 87-91; 92-98 (respectively).

formal constructs “make it possible to investigate the pure forms of a *possible* Nature *prior* to real nature, and, with their help, to order and determine real nature.”<sup>56</sup> Inasmuch then as the sciences find and follow law-based regularities and make predictions with respect to these laws, “it must *voluntarily disregard* all values...in order to preserve its own object. This means that it investigates the world ‘as if’ there existed no *free* individuals or causes.”<sup>57</sup> The removal of values from the scientific purview, or better, the scientific *suspension* of value-affirmation, rests upon the suspension of freedom. This in effect brackets all moral phenomena. Science and ethics do not intersect.

The scientific exclusion of the domain of freedom, and with it, the exclusion of moral factors demonstrates the “absurdity of the positivist project” to provide the social and human sciences with a “scientific morality.”<sup>58</sup> If the role of science is in part to unveil the “law-governed relations that must be taken into account technically from the point of view of any system of values or *Weltanschauung*,” then it follows that “science is equally incapable of developing from within itself a system of values and ideas which would be the basis of a *Weltanschauung*. Morality, metaphysics, religion are all *transcientific*.”<sup>59</sup> It’s not surprising then that, though Scheler acknowledges the value neutrality of science, he rejects the significance science can have for social policy and social crises precisely because of its value neutrality.

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<sup>56</sup> Scheler, “Sociology and the Study and Formulation of *Weltanschauung*,” in Lassman and Velody, *Max Weber’s ‘Science as a Vocation,’* 88.

<sup>57</sup> Scheler, “Sociology and the Study and Formulation of *Weltanschauung*,” 88.

<sup>58</sup> Scheler, “Max Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy (On the Psychology and Sociology of Nominalist Thought),” in *Max Weber’s ‘Science as a Vocation,’* 92.

<sup>59</sup> Scheler, “Max Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 92-3.

Scheler not only accepts the value neutrality of science as particular to the kind of knowledge it is, but also, as if as a matter of course, rejects the possibility of a “science of values,” and would not legitimate philosophy upon the success of this project. Science is, after all, a deterministic rationality and unable to supply philosophy with an ability to make judgments about validity. If philosophy does this, it does so on its own and not from what it borrows from the positive sciences.

Moreover, to say that morality, metaphysics, and religion are not scientific is for Scheler perfectly appropriate, but Weber goes too far in characterizing these domains as “irrational” because they are not scientific and because they incorporate values and *Weltanschauung* within themselves. Needless to say, Scheler is suspicious of Weber’s “uncompromisingly dualistic separation [between] positive, value-free, specialized science and [the] unfounded, blind abandonment to irrational powers, for the formation of *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>60</sup>

This dualism is a result of a general exclusion of philosophy, according to Scheler. This is the central claim of his critique. That is to say, the very dualism reveals the exclusion of every kind of knowledge irreducible to “the logical and epistemological foundations of the specialized sciences.”<sup>61</sup> Scheler laments the prevailing tendency to treat philosophy either as an “*ancilla scientiarum*” (handmaiden of the sciences) or to shift it into the domain of “prophecy.” By “handmaiden of the sciences,” Scheler indicates both the positivist trend to bestow upon philosophy the task of organizing the results of science into an “homogeneous ‘*Weltanschauung*,’” as well as the Neo-Kantian logical task of playing the “science-

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<sup>60</sup> Scheler, “Max Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 92.

<sup>61</sup> Scheler, “Max Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 95.

police” by clarifying and elevating the exactitude of scientific methods and premises.<sup>62</sup> In the face of these trends, Scheler insists on the autonomy of philosophy.<sup>63</sup> Philosophy has “a right to decline subsumption,” and that it “really is nothing else than simply philosophy: it even possesses its own idea of ‘strictness,’ its [own] disciplines, and therefore is in no way obliged to be ruled by some ideal notion of scientific discipline, which in measuring and counting is called exactitude.”<sup>64</sup>

By means of its autonomy, philosophy has a role of “mediator” between being and value, or, according to Weber’s characterization, between the rational and irrational. If the domain of philosophy has an intermediate position between these two, then its exclusion is rather serious. Not only does it amount to a mere dualism, but it removes the very domain that provides a bridge toward unity, “binding together those things which Weber separates so severely.”<sup>65</sup> What is at stake here for Scheler is very wide-ranging with respect to his entire philosophy, but in this essay on Weber, he chooses to use the ancient beginning of philosophy as a model, namely, that which for Plato served as the philosophical connection between the knowledge of being, the consciousness of value, and “the readiness of the *will* to obey the demands of obligation which arise from the synthesis of...*being* and...*value*.”<sup>66</sup> Their connection, for the Greeks, was encapsulated in the virtue of

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<sup>62</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 79.

<sup>63</sup> Scheler’s essay “Vom Wesen der Philosophie,” though translated as “The Nature of Philosophy” concerns the essence of philosophy, namely, what philosophy is as an autonomous form of knowing without recourse to other forms.

<sup>64</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 81.

<sup>65</sup> Scheler, “Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 94.

<sup>66</sup> Scheler, “Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 94.

*wisdom*. The scientific mind, Scheler writes, rich as it is in categories, knew one category least of all: the category of wisdom.<sup>67</sup>

For Scheler, love is more philosophically significant than wisdom, or at least love is that which makes wisdom philosophically significant. But the importance of the Greek conception of wisdom is its attitudinal reference, which is missing from scientific cognition.<sup>68</sup> Wisdom is a moral quality of the *person*—not a methodological principle—enabling the person to think philosophically. It implies a particular attitude or orientation toward the world and which is itself morally significant. Furthermore, the appeal to ancient philosophy serves to show that it is not only Scheler’s own view of philosophy that is threatened by the debate, but the very basis of the Western philosophical tradition.

It is worth considering, though, whether Scheler’s endorsement of the attitude of wisdom (or something qualitatively equivalent to it) puts Scheler’s own philosophy within the so-called “*Weltanschauung* philosophy” due to the connection Husserl notes between “the old-fashioned word ‘wisdom’ ...[and] the now-beloved expressions, ‘worldview,’ ...or simply, *Weltanschauung*”?<sup>69</sup> Husserl writes that “the value of *Weltanschauung* philosophy is primarily conditioned by the value of wisdom and the striving for wisdom.”<sup>70</sup> Also, Bambach explains that “the strategy behind the philosophy of worldviews was to overcome the demands of science by synthesizing knowledge into a personalized system of wisdom, relating all experience of the

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<sup>67</sup> Scheler, “Weber’s Exclusion of Philosophy,” 94.

<sup>68</sup> Explained further in Chapter 2.

<sup>69</sup> Edmund Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1965), 131.

<sup>70</sup> Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 133.

world to the subjective life-conditions of the individual.”<sup>71</sup>

Scheler’s insistence that philosophy is not a science may be seen as another validation of worldview philosophy. According to the “wisdom” of the time—the present *Weltanschauung*—a philosophy that is not *Wissenschaft* must be a *Weltanschauung*. The dispute, again, goes back to the “objectivity” of research. There seems to be only these alternatives at play: either philosophy can grasp a truth independent from subjective, historical perspective or it cannot, and in the latter case, it must, in good Nietzschean fashion, be resigned not only to competing, but also irreconcilable, perspectives.<sup>72</sup> Husserl promotes philosophy in its scientific ideal—an ideal that he believes philosophy has never in its history achieved, namely, a philosophy that is capable of “teaching in an objectively valid manner.” Therefore, “*Weltanschauung* philosophy and scientific philosophy are sharply distinguished.”<sup>73</sup>

In the face of the alternatives, Scheler responds to Husserl in the way he does to Weber: by asserting the autonomy of philosophy in the face of attempts to reduce it to something else. Philosophy is neither simply “scientific” in the positivist or Neo-Kantian sense, nor simply a “worldview,” in the historicist sense. And because of its irreducibility, it can have relevance *for* both science and worldviews.

Scheler explains that much of the way he and Husserl conceive philosophy is in fact essentially compatible, despite a semantic difference with Husserl’s habit of calling philosophy a science. The difference is only semantic, though, because

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<sup>71</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 26.

<sup>72</sup> The influence of Nietzsche on Weber is noticeable with respect of the irreconcilability of values and perspectives.

<sup>73</sup> Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 136.

Husserl uses the term scientific in its broadest possible conception, which by Scheler's estimation is meant to include not only positive knowledge, but also the phenomenological knowledge of essence as well as the Greek understanding of *episteme* (formal knowledge). Scheler struggles with this terminology applied to philosophical knowledge because he knows no one who, upon hearing the word 'science,' would immediately think of Plato's philosophy or any philosophy for that matter.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, Weber asks, concerning the vision of True Being in Plato's cave allegory, "who considers science in that way nowadays?"<sup>75</sup>

On the other hand, Scheler states that Husserl "gives the name *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* to exactly what I call, with far more historical justification, 'scientific philosophy,' that is the attempt either (in the spirit of positivism) to shape the available 'results' of science into a 'definitive' metaphysics or *Weltanschauung*, or [following the Neo-Kantians] to reduce philosophy to scientific doctrine, i.e., theory of scientific methods and principles."<sup>76</sup> Scheler suggests that whereas "scientific philosophy," contrasts most with the philosophical tradition, worldview philosophy on the other hand is firmly within the range of possibilities for philosophical investigation.

On this matter there is more than a semantic difference. Scheler admits that, although philosophy itself is not irreducible to a worldview, and especially to the study of individual worldviews, such as the Indian, Christian, etc., nevertheless, a phenomenological study of worldviews, and especially of the so-called "natural

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<sup>74</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 81.

<sup>75</sup> Weber, "Science as a Vocation," 140.

<sup>76</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 82.

worldview” could, among other benefits, assess both “the range of possible ‘variants’” relevant for a theory of worldviews, and “the cognitive value of any given *Weltanschauung*.”<sup>77</sup> Interestingly, it is precisely on account of the range of influence of worldview that Scheler and Husserl disagree, namely, with respect to the *independence* that the positive sciences have from the prevailing worldview. Husserl believed that philosophy is scientific because “the ‘idea’ of science is a supratemporal one,” not limited to the spirit of any one time.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, the absolute, timeless values which science discovers and adds to “the treasure trove of all succeeding humanity...determines...the material content of the idea of culture, wisdom, *Weltanschauung*, as well as of *Weltanschauung* philosophy.”<sup>79</sup> Science is said here to be a determining factor for a worldview. Scheler’s view, in contrast, maintains that a worldview is a greater determining factor for the content of science than vice versa: “the structures of the prevailing *Weltanschauungen* both occasion and control the structure, character and level of science effective in a society at any given time.”<sup>80</sup> Therefore,

the *structures* of science, by which I mean prevailing systems of basic concepts, change abruptly in history when the *Weltanschauung* changes, and I conceive the possibilities of progress in a given scientific system, though they are in principle unbounded, to lie within the limiting structure of the overriding—say, the European—*Weltanschauung*.<sup>81</sup>

By way of application, a telling passage from Robert Proctor’s excellent book, *Value-Free Science?*, concerns the possible political goals of an idea such as value-

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<sup>77</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 83.

<sup>78</sup> Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 136.

<sup>79</sup> Husserl, “Philosophy as Rigorous Science,” 136.

<sup>80</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 83.

<sup>81</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 83.



freedom. The effort to formulate the value-neutrality of science is itself a choice made among the possible alternatives and goals contained within the overriding worldview. The passage is an exemplary application of Scheler's above claim.

...value-neutrality, far from being a timeless or self-evident principle, has a distinctive geography: "value-freedom" has meant different things to different people at different times. Slogans like "science must be value-free" or "all knowledge is political" must be understood in light of specific fears and goals that change over time. Value-neutrality may be a response to state or religious suppression or scientific ideas; value-neutrality may be a way to guard against personal interests obstructing scientific progress. ... Neutrality may provide a path along which one retreats or a platform from which one launches an offensive.<sup>82</sup>

Is Scheler an example then of the so-called "extreme historicist"<sup>83</sup> who Husserl identifies as the one who denies objective validity to the positive sciences due to the variations of cultural formations? Does the prevalent maxim that "what is today accepted as a proved theory is recognized tomorrow as worthless,"<sup>84</sup> prove the worthlessness of science? That would be going too far. More details of Scheler's sociology of knowledge will have to be presented in order to respond fully, but suffice it to say that a key resolution technique central to Scheler's sociology of knowledge is the claim that while, on the one hand, the *forms* of thinking are socially conditioned with respect to one's particular environment, prevailing social interests, and patterns of selections, on the other hand, the *contents* of cognition are not necessarily socially conditioned in the same way, and are more often dependent upon individual attitudinal factors. This means that one can have socially determined categories of thought but remain individually competent to have

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<sup>82</sup> Proctor, *Value-Free Science?*, x.

<sup>83</sup> Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," 124.

<sup>84</sup> Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," 124-5.

adequate cognition of the things presented within the sphere of one's own environment or related to that environment. This theory, which hinges upon his theory of functionalization, has possible problems yet to be worked out. However, as far as it goes, it is possible to say that the "objective validity" of what science claims about its results are not necessarily invalidated by the social embeddedness of scientists' thinking. For example, the various interests and goals which motivate scientific research, goals which make sense according to the prevailing worldview and which would change when the worldview changes, do not themselves invalidate the content of research even if they complicate the claim of the "objectivity" of such research.

More relevant to my argument at this point however is how this specifies what Scheler primarily means by worldview, namely, socially conditioned *form of consciousness* or way of thinking. The question about the extent the social *origin* of the forms of thinking affect the *validity* of the contents of knowledge and cognition will be of concern in the following chapter. Paramount in Scheler's conception of philosophy is that, among the alternatives between science and worldview, philosophy alone is capable of preserving the *attitudinal* factors of knowledge and thus, does not reduce them either to scientific methodology on the one hand nor to the "fate" or "daemon" (to use Weber's terms) of history and society on the other.

### *Phenomenology and value*

Weber's exclusion of philosophy means more than the exclusion of the subjective philosophical attitude; it also means the exclusion of the philosophical

object: that which a phenomenological attitude yields, namely, essence and value. The first refers to Weber's scientism ("dualism"). The second refers to his Kantianism ("nominalism"). Like the subjective attitude, the objective essence also has a role in guarding against the separation between facts and values. It is on account of the pre-logical attitudinal factors that an experience of an essence, at the very least, is an integrated and unified experience of components that are only later broken apart through methodological distinctions.

Scheler writes that according to Weber "material values have only subjective significance, and that there can be no way [of] *binding knowledge of objective phenomena and values*, goods or systems of goods beyond positive science.<sup>85</sup> The critique, however, finds itself standing before the looming Kantian edifice and in particular the "nominalism" of the Baden Neo-Kantian theory of concept formation. Weber puts forth a theory of concept formation that rests upon either the similarities of empirical characteristics or "home-made constructions" of ideal types in borderline individual cases.<sup>86</sup> Scheler chastises Weber for taking over Rickert's "uncompromising nominalism...without any profound criticism."<sup>87</sup>

The charge of nominalism may appear not only rather strange coming from a phenomenologist, since nominalism is a metaphysical assumption (even if a skeptical one) and phenomenology brackets these assumptions, but it also seems rather antiquated. Who but a strict metaphysical realist would put forth an accusation against nominalism? Suppose we take a nominalist to maintain the

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<sup>85</sup> Scheler, "Max Weber's Exclusion of Philosophy," 93-94.

<sup>86</sup> Scheler, "Max Weber's Exclusion of Philosophy," 96.

<sup>87</sup> Scheler, "Max Weber's Exclusion of Philosophy," 96.

following two propositions: (1) whatever exists is individual or particular and that (2) universal meanings (essences) are only constructions of mental activity.<sup>88</sup>

Scheler would likely be in agreement with the first because essences for Scheler are material, not formal. His reaction would be primarily directed against the second proposition because although individual existence may complicate matters for metaphysical universals, it does not follow that an existing individual thing, qua individual, would be without an essence. Nor does it follow that as soon as one does away with universals, that then, every intuitive givenness of an individual thing must of necessity be empirical. The irony of nominalism is that, although it originates in opposition to orthodox Scholasticism, it presupposes in its conclusions the Scholastic theory that matter is the principle of individuation and so what is individual is necessarily empirical. One could make a convincing case using Scheler's anthropology that the essence of an individual thing (which for human beings is bound up with the person or spirit) is the most individualizing factor; by comparison, our bodies are the most common thing about us.

Scheler thinks Weber's theory of ideal types excludes essence as a datum of givenness; he references Rickert's theory of spatially extensive and individually intensive, infinite multiplicities. Following the Kantian distinction between reality and concept, reality for Rickert is a domain of unintelligible complexities, composed as it is, extensively and intensively of infinite multiplicities. It is this complexity of reality that makes the real, in itself, unintelligible and irrational. Facts are not simply given, of course, they must first be conceptually constituted in order to be

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<sup>88</sup> Frederick Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 5.

intelligible. Concepts perform a role of the simplification of the complexity of reality. According to Bambach's description "they reduce to manageable proportions the mass of phenomenon which the mind encounters, turning the real as such into something artificially rational."<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, according to Rickert, value is a concept functioning as a category of experience that accounts for valuing different historical events differently. A man walking to a pub in England in 1649 is not of the same value in history as the beheading of King Charles I. Though the events themselves, in reality, are simply a complex of infinite multiplicities and cannot be evaluated in themselves, when rationality touches them they not only become intelligibly organized, but they become of greater or lesser importance, higher or lower value.

In Chapter 2, I described Scheler's view that the various forms of cognition, including scientific cognition, do not "precede or ground phenomenology," but follow it.<sup>90</sup> Cognition attests to the relation between conscious thought or judgment, and "a world *already unified and held together* by *prelogically* given essences and their connections."<sup>91</sup> As such, Scheler distances his philosophy from the Neo-Kantian claim that thought is that which makes intelligible the contents of intuition.<sup>92</sup> Scheler maintains, in contrast, that thinking itself requires pre-unified "facts," which thought organizes only logically and symbolically. The rationalist tradition errs in denying autonomy to the intuited content and subsumes this content under the solely autonomous logical forms of thinking. In this view, "it is only by means of

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<sup>89</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 95-6.

<sup>90</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 159.

<sup>91</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 159.

<sup>92</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 160.

unities freely devised by thought that any kind of definiteness, limits, and organization are imported from the sphere of meaning into that of intuitive being, which in itself is consistently designated 'chaos.'"93 On the other hand, the empiricist tradition reduces intuition to sensible perception and denies the autonomy of thinking. Scheler's view is that thought and intuition, subject and object, each have their own degree of autonomy, as well as a level of interdependence and reciprocity, as correlates.

Scheler criticizes Weber for not maintaining a qualitative difference between "empirical abstraction" and "ideational abstraction,"94 or in other words, between sensory and essential content. For Weber, both kinds of abstraction relate to sensory content in different ways, but according to Scheler, empirical abstraction presupposes a single integrated (ideational) experience from which each of the partial sensory content receives their meaning and unity.95

I defined essence, according to Scheler's phenomenology, as an integral experiential unity of meaning that is given in a single experience and which gives meaning to all of the partial (contingent) content of that same experience. A phenomenological experience is a direct (immediate) and asymbolic (immanent) experience that discloses "patterns of wholeness" in the world in a single experience, prior to a systematic decomposition of its contents as something readied for empirical observation and conceptual symbolization. And it is the phenomenological experience of the essence that binds an objective experience of

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93 Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 308-9.

94 Scheler, "Max Weber's Exclusion of Philosophy," 96.

95 Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Manfred Frings (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 20.

*value* to things. An objective experience, which is an experience of essence (or generally, with *Sosein*),<sup>96</sup> is also a value experience. Weber, by excluding the attitudinal dimension of knowledge, which belongs properly to philosophy, excludes the original and objective connection between facts and values prior to the distinction between something's "objective" and "subjective" content. Scheler explains it in the following way:

...the essences of the world form a necessary bridge between areas that fall apart, according to Max Weber...: the value-imperative [on the one hand,] and the existent, value-free reality [on the other]. In the essential order of being, spirit perceives a being and an order which [experientially] *precedes* the division into that which 'is' contingent, chance reality and that which it 'ought' to be and eventually become.<sup>97</sup>

Perhaps this will remind the reader of the passage chosen as a guide for the second and third chapters: "In principle, the world is given in lived-experience as the 'bearer of value' and as 'resistance' as immediately as it is given as an object (GW X, 384)."<sup>98</sup> Having examined the directness of the essential givenness of the object (Chapter 2), and the way every object as object requires some confrontation with reality in the lived-experience of resistance (Chapter 3), I arrive at the value-aspect of a thing, which Scheler insists is given with every objective experience, and which is given as originally as something's objectivity and its reality. Before exploring further the phenomenology of the matter, it may be helpful to see Scheler's metaphysical account. In one of Scheler's late and posthumously published essays, Scheler explains that *Sein*, or being as such, is subdivided into *Dasein* (existence, or being-there), *Sosein* (the being-thus, which includes essence), and *Wertsein* (the

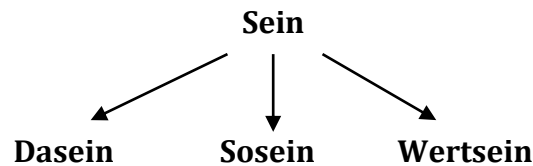
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<sup>96</sup> See my explanation for the difference between *Wesen* and *Sosein* in Chapter 3.

<sup>97</sup> Scheler, "Max Weber's Exclusion of Philosophy," 97. Translation slightly modified.

<sup>98</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 143.

value-being) and that all three are metaphysically equal (GW XI, 60)<sup>99</sup> He provides the following figure:<sup>100</sup>



With the metaphysical equiprimodality of all three elements, Scheler maintains the ontological independence of value-being from both existence and essence because the value of something has its own mode of givenness independent from the givenness of existence and the givenness of essence. This mode of givenness is an emotive one. Values, he says, are “feelable phenomena” (*fühlbare Phänomene*) (GW II, 39).<sup>101</sup> On a number of occasions Scheler expresses explicitly that existence itself is indifferent to the good and bad, the valuable and valueless (GW IX, 44; GW XI, 59-60).<sup>102</sup> This metaphysical separation of value from reality bears the obvious contrast with Greek philosophy. Scheler in effect separates ethics from metaphysics, but accounts for the unity of value and being phenomenologically (with the structures of givenness) not metaphysically. The value of something is a question for the experiential givenness of phenomena (phenomenology), not for the logical

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<sup>99</sup> The essay is included within Scheler’s incomplete manuscript on metaphysics and epistemology. The essay is titled, “Zur Wesenslehre und Typologie der metaphysischen Systeme und Weltanschauungen (Weltanschauungslehre).” It is translated by John Cutting in Max Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, trans. John Cutting (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2010), “The Essential Theory and Typology of Metaphysical Systems and *Weltanschauungen*.”

<sup>100</sup> GW XI, 60. The figure is not included in Cutting’s translation; it only appears in the original German.

<sup>101</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 16. Scheler’s *Formalism* contains a great deal concerning emotive value-givenness.

<sup>102</sup> Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos*, 40; Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 62.



articulation of actuality (metaphysics). Scheler is heavily resistant to the project of coming to the conclusion of something's value simply by means of logical deduction, and even more resistant to the deduction that something has value simply insofar as it exists.<sup>103</sup> Something's value cannot be made to rest upon an analytic proposition, it must be synthetic and supported in experience; knowledge of something's value requires a direct experiential contact with a thing or like-things.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, this proves to be a metaphysical explanation for the possibility of a value-free form of knowing that Weber wants science to be. Following Rickert's distinction between valuation and value-reference, I read Scheler as in agreement that scientists can refrain (qua scientists) from making value judgments with their research that bear on political interests and social conditions, despite their inability to refrain (qua human beings) from making judgments about the value of their research since human beings are invariably situated within unique social conditions. Scheler's metaphysics supports the possible logical (and methodological) separation of values from factual reality, but maintains that phenomenological experience indicates otherwise. The phenomenological narrative is different than the metaphysical one: Scheler writes, "in der Ordnung der *Gegebenheit*...das *Wertsein* es ist, das «vor» dem *Sosein* und *Dasein* gegeben ist" (In the order of givenness, the *Wertsein* is given "before" the *Sosein* and the *Dasein*) (GW XI, 62). Not only are the three aspects of being presented phenomenologically in a single unified being

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<sup>103</sup> Cf. Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 62-6.

<sup>104</sup> For further exposition on this matter in Scheler's philosophy and its relevance for a critique of Aristotle's ethics, see my essay, "Does Aristotle's Ethics Represent Pharisaism?: A Survey of Scheler's Critique," *Quaestiones Disputatae*, vol. 3, no. 1 (Fall 2012).

immediately<sup>105</sup> and with temporal simultaneity,<sup>106</sup> but Scheler also insists that the value-quality of being has an intentional *priority* with respect to the other two, namely, reality (resistance) and essence (object), and therefore, also to whatever science holds up as value-neutral. Scheler writes that

...in the *objective* sphere, value-qualities and value-units are received as data [intuited] *before* anything belonging to the value-free sector of the object, so that no information at all of an utterly value-free sector of the object can become the *original* content of a perception, memory or expectation—subsequently an object of thought and judgment—unless we have been given beforehand, in some way, the *value-quality* of the entity or its value-relation to some other thing.<sup>107</sup>

It would seem that the metaphysical equiprimodality of all three aspects of being account for the simultaneity of their givenness. Their simultaneity is only the case in a temporal sense. The priority of value givenness does not mean the values are given with a *temporal* priority to the other forms, but only with an *intentional* priority. This means that even if one requires a (temporally prior) perception of an object as the occasion to see the objects value, the intuition of the value is a (intentional) prerequisite for knowing the object. Referring to his use of the term “beforehand” in the above passage, Scheler explains that “here ‘beforehand’ does not necessarily imply duration of perception or chronological sequence, but refers only to the priorities of data-reception [i.e., intuition].”<sup>108</sup> However, not only does he at times speak of intentional priority of value-givenness (phenomenologically), Scheler also makes explicit that existence must be the metaphysical foundation of value-

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<sup>105</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 143.

<sup>106</sup> Scheler writes that their givenness is “simultaneous, as far as one can place any measurement of time on them.” *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 66.

<sup>107</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 85-6.

<sup>108</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 86.

givenness.<sup>109</sup> There emerges a kind of dialectical reciprocity between existence and value: *some existing thing can be given only in light of its value, but value can be given only insofar as it is the value of an existing thing, or on account of existing things.*<sup>110</sup> In Scheler's words: the value of something can only be "the value of some already existing thing,<sup>111</sup> but that "any intellectual comprehension of what something is presupposes an emotive value experience of the object. ... Value-ception [*Wertnehmung*] always precedes perception [*Wahrnehmung*]."<sup>112</sup> Though value may not have an ontological priority, "in itself," it has, "for us" an experiential priority.<sup>113</sup>

It is significant that intentional priority be put this way in part because of the problem Rickert gets himself into. According to Bambach, Rickert argues for the impossibility of a value-free observation of reality because scientific investigation, before it happens, must first "interest" the observer.<sup>114</sup> The interest in the research must precede in some way that content of research. Rickert explains that the natural scientist, for example, is interested in the value of commonality; the historical scientist, in the value of singularity.<sup>115</sup> Apart from the question whether "commonality" and "singularity" are to be properly considered values or value-modalities, the issue is how this experiential observation squares with Rickert's

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<sup>109</sup> Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 62.

<sup>110</sup> This doesn't mean something has to be real in order to be of value, however, in normal cases, whatever can be given as of value has to be an object (except for the being of the person), and something emerges as an object only on account of reality. (See Chapter 3).

<sup>111</sup> Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 65.

<sup>112</sup> Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, 116.

<sup>113</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 88.

<sup>114</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 105.

<sup>115</sup> Bambach, *Crisis of Historicism*, 105. This follows Windelband's distinction between the nomothetic sciences, which deal with universal natural laws, and the ideographic sciences, which deals with singular historical events.

theory that values are formal categories. If value is a concept that is organizing the intelligibility of experience, all valuation or value judgments could happen only after the givenness of empirical intuition and representation; there must first be some empirical content to be evaluated before any valuation of that content is possible. That is to say, perception must precede valuation; something must be known in order for it to be preferred or loved. Unless values are in some way intuitive, and intuited prior to concept formation, they cannot be said to serve as motivating factors for observation.

The question of the relation between being and value becomes a question of the relation between cognition and love, knowledge and interest. Scheler admits that “empirically one cannot love something without knowing something about the loved object,”<sup>116</sup> But, in vying for the intentional priority of value-givenness Scheler argues for the autonomy and independence of value analogously to the way that he argues for the autonomy of philosophical knowledge with respect to other forms of knowing. And when the matter is considered phenomenologically (prior to the methods of scientific observation) the priority of values is disclosed. What is the evidence for the priority of values?

There is first of all the more obvious point that people tend not to come to know something without first recognizing its importance. A student would not choose to study what is not considered of value. However, Scheler’s descriptions are perhaps more sophisticated because they are not based upon a deliberative choice. Something, for example, can show itself as pleasant or unpleasant, distressing or

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<sup>116</sup> Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 66.

serene, beautiful or ugly without knowing what it is about that thing that makes it show itself with the value-qualities it does. It's often the case that a person, work of art, a landscape or a room in a house can be given as distinguished, pleasant, beautiful, or friendly (or oppositely) without knowing which specific properties of the object bear these values.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, suppose someone has an inclination toward a benevolent or sacrificial action. The inclination (conation toward values) is already present, grounded in content given in value-feeling, without having in mind "those objects for or to which we want to do this [in action], and also without having the [determinate] contents of such sacrifices and benevolent deeds in mind."<sup>118</sup> The priority of value explains the common experience of wanting to be helpful practically in a situation but not knowing how to be, or what course of action would be helpful. The value of benevolence is not given only after determining a benevolent deed, but "beforehand." Thus, Scheler writes that "the world of 'practical objects' is *determined* by values";<sup>119</sup> not vice versa.

The importance of this point for Scheler's philosophy I think warrants a sustained quotation from his essay "The Nature of Philosophy," in which Scheler applies this principle to prominent discoveries in the history of philosophy and science.

It is true even of whole peoples and civilizations that the structure of their *value*-consciousness dictate the ultimately *formative* principle within their collective Weltanschauung. And it holds true for all progress of knowledge in history that the objects touched upon by this cognitive process must first be loved or hated before they may be intellectually known, analysed and judged. Everywhere the "amateur" precedes the "savant," and

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<sup>117</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 17; *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 66.

<sup>118</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 35.

<sup>119</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 134-5.

there is no realm of objects, whether number, stars, plants, historical reality, matters of divinity, etc., whose exploration did not pass through a phase of bias before entering the impartial phase of value-free analysis—a first phase which mostly coincided with a kind of metaphysicalization, a mistaken transposition of the object-realm into the world of “absolute meaning.” To the Pythagoreans numbers, even, were divinities.... For [Descartes] analytical geometry had an entirely metaphysical meaning, coinciding with the absolutely valid in physics.... To Leibniz differential calculus presented itself as a special case of his metaphysically conceived *lex continui*.... In the nineteenth century, it was thanks to the new, climactic interest taken in economic processes by a class which was suffering economic hardship that the embryo of economics was able to take form within the shell of the metaphysical concept of economic history. The strictly scientific investigation of nature was preceded, during the Renaissance, by a...fantastic speculation about nature, flowering into a mighty outburst of quasi-pantheistic enthusiasm. The visible heavens, too, before they were genuinely explored by exact astronomy, were for Giordano Bruno the object of a new enthusiasm...[namely], that Copernicus had discovered a new star in heaven—the Earth—and that we were “already in Heaven,” so that conversely the medieval conception of the merely “earthly” was invalidated. In the same way, alchemy preceded chemistry; botanical and zoological gardens, as objects of *enjoyment* and valuation of nature, preceded the initiation of a more exact, scientific botany and zoology. A romantic “love” for the Middle Ages preceded their strict historical exploration.... Moreover, it is wellnigh a *communis opinio* of great theologians that in the investigation of divine things all proofs of their existence are and must needs be preceded by an emotional contact with God in the love of God, a feeling of his presence as a *summum bonum*—when...the “sense of the divine” is aroused—since herein lies the ultimate source of the materials of demonstration.<sup>120</sup>

I’ll use my own recent example. Astrophysicist, Sean Carroll, appeared on the Colbert Report<sup>121</sup> to speak about his book *The Particle at the End of the Universe: How the Hunt for the Higgs Boson Leads Us to the Edge of a New World*, Stephen Colbert, asked why the Higgs Boson has been called the ‘God Particle.’” Carroll simply responds, interrogatively, but suggestively: “marketing?” When pressed, Carroll said that physicists were trying to explain the importance of the Boson because “it’s the last piece of this edifice we’ve been building for the last 2500

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<sup>120</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 86-8.

<sup>121</sup> *The Colbert Report*, November 29, 2012.

years.” We might be able to expect Scheler’s reaction to the lofty phrase, “God Particle,” as having arisen on account of its importance, its value for physicists, which itself prompts the investigation. Physicists, in this case, construct the same “metaphysicalization” or absolute transposition by likening to a supernatural value, a natural particle arising from a natural energy field.

*Values in theory and practice*

Just as philosophy is said to be an autonomous alternative to the science and *Weltanschauung* dichotomy, and is a type of knowing that has a priority to both the positive knowledge of science and the “conventional wisdom” of worldview philosophy, so the value-sphere of morality, according to Scheler, has an autonomous priority to the theory and practice dichotomy. Quentin Lauer states that, “Whether one chooses one or the other [*Weltanschauung* or *Wissenschaft*] depends on the fundamental inclination by which one is guided be it theoretical or practical.”<sup>122</sup> Just as philosophy is an autonomous and foundational third category between science and worldview, so the moral is an autonomous and foundational third category between the theoretical and the practical.

If we pause here and review, the development of a certain tripartite schematic can be detected. I’ve given the most attention so far to the phenomenological givenness of essence (Chapter 2), existence (Chapter 3), and now value: *Sosein*, *Dasein*, and *Wertsein*. Although essence, or more generally, “being-thus” is not reducible to a theoretical object, nevertheless, insofar as it is an intentional object of

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<sup>122</sup> Quentin Lauer, “Introduction” to Husserl, *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, 15.

consciousness and includes an ideal unit of meaning, for the purposes of argument we can roughly align the givenness of essence with the theoretical as an anthropological correlate. Although resistance and the givenness of existence do not relate perfectly with practical willing for, as was shown, it includes more fundamentally the entire constellation of drives, nevertheless, we can roughly align the givenness of existence with practical willing as an anthropological correlate. The obvious anthropological correlate of the givenness of value is neither theoretical nor practical, but a moral one: the attitude of love (*Liebe*).

From this, the corresponding elements of knowledge and cognition can be seen. It was said in Chapter 2 that essence is given by means of a proximal or direct contact with something in the execution of an intentional act (*Vollzug*); in Chapter 3, reality is given in the resistances that arise on account of the drive-based movement in projects and deeds of willing; now it is said that value is given in human feeling, guided by the act of loving. All of these, if standing alone, are necessary but insufficient conditions for self-givenness. For example, a loving person, simply by being loving, is not sufficiently a philosopher, however, a loving person, with a certain practical comportment and (philosophical) intentional attitude, is one. Together, all three complete an overall intuitive process.

Of the three, acts of loving (or hating) have an anthropological priority over thinking and willing, just as value has an intuitive or intentional priority over *what* something is and *that* something is. Scheler writes that “love is always what awakens both knowledge and volition; indeed, it is the mother of spirit and reason



itself.”<sup>123</sup> The human being, he says, is an *ens amans* before being an *ens cogitans* or an *ens volens*.<sup>124</sup> The anthropological priority of love is congruent with the epistemic priority of value and the givenness of value corresponds with the loving attitude that elevates the moral quality of intentional acts.

However, the full range of values and value-complexes are given, in different ways, in the entire stratification of human feeling. Generally speaking, the four modalities of value (sensible, vital, spiritual, and sacred) correlate with an anthropological stratification of human feeling and emotion.<sup>125</sup> Love and hatred, in effect, heighten or dull, expand or narrow (respectively) the sensitivity of value-feeling.<sup>126</sup> One can have more or less adequate value-intuition of something so long as lived-experience is under the auspices of a proper moral attitude, namely one of love. Hatred, on the other hand, frustrates the course of value-intuition. The main point is that value-givenness, which for Scheler is the gateway for the cognition of an object, depends upon love. If knowledge is a kind of ontological participation, then

without a tendency in the knowing being to move from and out of itself to partake in another being, no knowledge whatsoever is possible. I can think of no other name for this tendency than “love,” dedication, and, so to speak, a bursting of the limits of one’s own being [*Sein*] and character [*Sosein*] through love (GW VIII, 204; GW IX, 113).<sup>127</sup>

As the ancients already maintained, there are moral preconditions for cognition.

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<sup>123</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 110.

<sup>124</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 110-1. Translation modified.

<sup>125</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 332-44. The details of Scheler’s value rank are discussed further in Chapter 6.

<sup>126</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 261.

<sup>127</sup> Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, trans. Oscar Haac (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 40. Translation modified.

But the distinctive thing about Scheler's approach is that it maintains the autonomy (and primacy) of the moral domain without grafting the moral onto the theoretical or the practical. Thus, Scheler's reasons for distancing himself from wisdom is its theoretical reference. Wisdom is an *intellectual* participation with an *objectifiable* being and, thus, the highest attainable object of knowledge is a formal, logical principle.<sup>128</sup> But value, for Scheler, with its independence, is not an object and therefore not something objectifiable. Values "attach"<sup>129</sup> to objects (or acts), but are not themselves objects. "Goods" or things of value (value-beings) are all that can become objects of cognition. Although Aristotle calls the ultimate principle of metaphysics "pure act," the act itself, namely thinking, is still a possible object of knowledge. This is the central issue. As was shown in Chapter 3, there is an essential difference between object and act for Scheler. Pure act, which Scheler calls *Geist*, is not objectifiable. If the ultimate being is spirit, this being cannot be an object of cognition (which is, for Scheler, an essentially objectifying act: it is the taking of something *as* something). An intellectual virtue of wisdom—that which illuminates an object for a subject—is therefore insufficient for an ontological relation (knowledge) that cannot be posed in terms of subject and object (cognition). It therefore falls to a non-objectifying act, such as love, to be the proper act of participation in the divine spirit, as non-objectifiable being.

On the other hand, it was Kant who famously claimed the primacy of the *practical* over theoretical reason which grants rights in the practical sphere that

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<sup>128</sup> Cf. Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 77.

<sup>129</sup> The jargon of the "attachment" of values is used by Scheler in the *Formalism*. Rickert also uses this language, though its mechanism is different; it is the mind that attaches conceptual values to things, for Rickert.

were absent from the theoretical, and furthermore, subordinates the moral domain to practical reason. The result is an ethics based entirely upon moral duty and at the expense of love. The practical sphere is *equated* with the moral instead of *introducing* an autonomous sphere of morality into the practical. Indeed, for Scheler any duty, obligation, or imperative cannot have meaning for us without an insight into its value and the value of the situation toward which it aims.

The late modern crisis era followed Kant's disjunction between the theoretical and practical as the only two alternatives. Neo-Kantian philosophers usually followed Kant on the matter, that is, except allegedly for Rickert. Scheler interprets him as following Kant because he, as Scheler put it, "turned theoretical into a formation of practical reason by equating the being of things with the mere demand...that [their truth-value] should be acknowledged by the act of judgment."<sup>130</sup> However, Frederick Beiser disputes this interpretation saying that Rickert explicitly warns against conflating practical and theoretical values, as well as equating values with the realm of the practical.<sup>131</sup> Indeed, Beiser's interpretation is more consistent all-around especially because it explains why there is, for Rickert, no discrepancy between the value-dependence of the sciences and their possible theoretical objectivity. Due to the view that values are primarily theoretical, they are "directed toward the truth" for its own sake, without any practical (or political)

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<sup>130</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 84. Cf. Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 68-72.

<sup>131</sup> Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 398. Beiser claims that the interpretation that Rickert's is primarily a practical philosophy was that of his student August Faust in 1936. It is interesting to note that Scheler had this interpretation in 1919.

significance.<sup>132</sup> But it's also possible that Beiser may be overlooking the practical import of the "value" of truth. According to Scheler, the acknowledgment of truth, precisely because it is a value, attaches to this acknowledgement, a moral duty. That is to say, if truth is a value then there is practical obligation on the part of everyone to judge according to an objective criterion (truth), as opposed to a subjective criterion (seeking truth). This is perfectly Kantian because, for Kant, a sense of moral obligation is required for metaphysical cognition; the theoretical is achieved vis-à-vis the practical. However, truth is not a value, for Scheler.<sup>133</sup> It is correct to speak of the value of the searching, investigation, or knowledge of truth, but Rickert's "value-metaphysics" as Scheler calls it, "is nonsense, and so is the idea of a transcendent region of values or truth."<sup>134</sup>

Scheler points out that what was for Plato a subjective, "but not less necessary prerequisite" for philosophy, is for Neo-Kantians "a primacy of the moral in the very objective order of things." The shift to the objective "shatters" and "repudiates" the idea that "a certain *moral way of life* is the *sine qua non*" of objective knowledge.<sup>135</sup> However, the point is more significant still. Scheler suggests that a moral attitude, "through which we come to apprehend values and which are consequently the source of all value-judgments as well as of all norms and decisions of obligation, constitutes the unifying factor which is *common* to our practical conduct and all our theoretical knowing and thinking."<sup>136</sup> Loving and hating are, for Scheler, the most

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<sup>132</sup> Beiser, *The German Historicist Tradition*, 411.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Scheler, *Formalism*, 187-9; *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 68-9.

<sup>134</sup> Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 84-5.

<sup>136</sup> Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy," 88.

fundamental acts of the spirit; they are acts necessarily *prior* to thinking and willing, and thus constitutive for epistemology and practical decision. They “constitute the common *roots* of our practical and theoretical behavior; they are the *basic acts* in which alone our theoretic and our practical life discovers and conserves its ultimate *unity*.”<sup>137</sup>

### **Critical Theory and the *Positivismusstreit***

This discussions concerning science and philosophy, the rational and irrational, fact and value, theory and practice are of great importance for critical theory and the members of the Frankfurt School. Perhaps the most general characterization of critical theory historically is the attempt to form a solution to the so-called theory and practice problem, or how to connect an evaluative theory of moral norms to the level of practical, social reality. The problem resides within the relation between science and philosophy because critical theorists thought that in order for theory to be practically relevant, it must be both philosophy (as far as an evaluative and normative endeavor is concerned) and social science (as far as an empirical relation to material conditions are concerned). David Ingram explains that “During the Enlightenment this problem took the following form: how does one reconcile the idealistic and largely ethical heritage of philosophical reason with the materialistic heritage of scientific reason?”<sup>138</sup>

But this is indeed an Enlightenment form of the problem. And when expressed this way, the dichotomy reveals a nineteenth-century narrative at the latest: the

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<sup>137</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 88.

<sup>138</sup> David Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1990), 24.

opposition between the philosophical idealism of Hegel and the historical materialism of Marx. In this story, Hegel plays the model philosopher and Marx, the model scientist.<sup>139</sup> In the historical reconstruction of this chapter, I've attempted to show ways the story has changed and evolved since Hegel and Marx; ways which have altered the opposition. With the arrival of Nietzsche, the *Lebensphilosophie* and *Weltanschauungsphilosophie* traditions, and the onset of "irrationalism" (including the ways psychoanalysis and the sociology of knowledge deal with human irrationality), the dichotomy was no longer primarily between philosophical idealism and the scientific materialism, but rather the opposite: science became more associated with an "objective" law-based methodological form of knowing and philosophy, with a "subjective" life-based experiential form of knowing. The natural sciences, which in Marx and Darwin's day had been revolutionary on account of its empirical contact with nature, now in the twentieth century was the brunt of the reaction against rationalism. The "nomothetic" natural sciences became associated with terms that used to describe philosophy: method, logic and universality. Hence the attempt by philosophers such as Windelband, Rickert, and Husserl to reclaim the philosophical spirit by calling philosophy science, not because of its reference to materiality but on account of its universal objectivity.

Besides the important influence of Freud, who forced the critical theorists to

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<sup>139</sup> I do not suggest here that Hegel is merely an idealist philosopher or that Marx is merely a non-philosophical materialist; the opposition is ultimately a generalization and makes straw men of them both. I only suggest that this is the traditional opposition that has come down within the debate between philosophy and the social sciences.

revise the theory of ideology in light of the dynamics of the unconscious,<sup>140</sup> the new modifications of the domain of philosophy have been largely unacknowledged by critical theory. Arguably, they are still trying work with an idealist heritage that continental philosophy had, for the most part, abandoned. Marcuse understands “reason [to be] the fundamental category of philosophical thought,”<sup>141</sup> and thus, philosophy is understood as a logical pursuit of abstract universality. As such, philosophy “has drawn its life from reason’s not yet being reality.”<sup>142</sup> Abstract philosophy must find a way to be brought to bear on concrete reality and rational thinking toward the creation of rational society. This understanding of philosophy influenced the way the theory and practice problem is posed, and what it meant for critical theory to be, in part, philosophical. Critical theory either “remains faithful to its philosophical heritage, in which case it runs the risk of becoming lost in utopian speculation. Or...tries to be truthful to human nature as it really appears, in which case it ceases to be critical.”<sup>143</sup> It arguably requires both, needing to straddle the disjunction. Marcuse writes, “Like philosophy, [critical theory] opposes making reality into a criterion in the manner of complacent positivism. But unlike philosophy, it always derives its goals only from present tendencies of the social process. Therefore it has no fear of the utopia that the new order is denounced as being.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> David Ingram addresses this well in his *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, esp., Chapter 2, “From Theory to Practice: Freud and the Problem of Ideology.”

<sup>141</sup> Herbert Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” *Critical Theory: The Essential Readings*, ed. David Ingram (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1991), 6.

<sup>142</sup> Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” 6.

<sup>143</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, xxiii.

<sup>144</sup> Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” 10.

The dispute Adorno has with Popper at the 1961 German Sociological Congress, called the *Positivismusstreit*, is itself also a sign that this story has changed. Ironically, a basic materialist assumption of Marxist thought, a century after Marx, is nowhere to be found in the scientific framework of Karl Popper, namely, Marx's insistence that so-called "problems" of knowledge are not originally theoretical problems, but are ideological reflections of social contradictions rooted in the relations of production. This issue of the status of a "problem" comes up in Adorno and Popper's debate. We see an interesting situation arise: Popper, who abides by more mainstream methodology of the social sciences, takes the position that is more closely Hegelian since he understands problems to be originally within the context of ideas. On the other hand, Adorno, the more philosophically oriented of the two, insists that problems originate within reality.

Popper's collection of twenty-seven theses presented at the Congress under the title "The Logic of the Social Sciences," explains that, methodologically, the social sciences begin with certain problems. These problems are not only theoretical: they are in fact the real social problems "of poverty, of illiteracy, of political suppression or of uncertainty concerning legal rights...."<sup>145</sup> However, these problems are originally problems of knowledge insofar as the "tensions of knowledge or ignorance" (or perhaps one could say, between rationality and irrationality) lead to these social problems.<sup>146</sup> It seems as though Popper is making the claim, in direct opposition to Marx's, that problems of society are in fact reflections of epistemic or

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<sup>145</sup> Karl Popper, "The Logic of the Social Sciences," *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, ed. Theodor Adorno, trans. Glyn Adey and David Frisby (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 89 (Fifth thesis).

<sup>146</sup> Popper, "The Logic of the Social Sciences," 90 (Seventh thesis).



logical contradictions since “each problem arises from the discovery that something is not in order with our supposed knowledge; or, viewed logically, from the discovery of an inner contradiction between our supposed knowledge and the facts.”<sup>147</sup>

Adorno challenges Popper’s statements on the status of a “problem”:

The contradiction must not, as Popper at least presumes here, be a merely ‘supposed’ contradiction between subject and object, which would have to be imputed to the subject alone as a deficiency of judgment. Instead, the contradiction can, in very real terms, have its place in reality and can in no way be removed by increased knowledge and clearer formulation. ... The conception of the contradictory nature of societal reality does not, however, sabotage knowledge of it and expose it to the merely fortuitous. Such knowledge is guaranteed by the possibility of grasping the contradiction as necessary and thus extending rationality to it.<sup>148</sup>

The significance of this issue goes beyond the status of a problem, or even the choice between Hegelianism and Marxism, but refers to the way reality is divided by these problems and differences, in this case the separation of epistemic problems and real ones. Adorno writes that “One would fetishize science if one radically separated its immanent problems from the real ones, which are weakly reflected in its formalisms.”<sup>149</sup> Thus, we return to the problem of traditional theory and to a more primary concern of the positivist dispute, the separation of being and value. Habermas points to the separation of facts and values as an important example of the separation of knowledge and interests endemic to traditional theories. Although the ancient world separated knowledge from interests in other ways, Habermas, shows the significance of the connection between *theoria* and a value-charged

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<sup>147</sup> Popper, “The Logic of the Social Sciences,” 88 (Fourth thesis).

<sup>148</sup> Theodor Adorno, “On the Logic of the Social Sciences,” *The Positivist Dispute in German Sociology*, 108, 109.

<sup>149</sup> Adorno, “On the Logic of the Social Sciences,” 109.

*kosmos* characteristic of ancient Greek philosophy. The idea of value-freedom, Habermas writes, represents “psychologically an unconditional commitment to theory, and epistemologically the severance of knowledge from interests.”<sup>150</sup>

Adorno echoes Habermas on this issue, and against some of Popper’s statements in his Fourteenth thesis on value and value-freedom. It is right away evident that over time the social sciences have achieved a greater sophistication on this problem than Weber had in 1909. It even seems that there is more agreement than disagreement between Adorno and Popper on this point. Popper is adamant that a blanket elimination of values from scientific research is not only impossible but is paradoxical “since value-freedom itself is a value.”<sup>151</sup> For Popper, suppressing value-judgments not only robs the scientist of his humanity, but also destroys him as a scientist. However, he makes a new distinction between scientific and extra-scientific values which correspond to scientific and extra-scientific problems, and “although it is impossible to separate scientific work from extra-scientific [let’s say political] applications and evaluations,” nevertheless, the sciences must guard against confusion of these value-spheres by separating “extra-scientific evaluations from *questions of truth*.”<sup>152</sup>

Adorno commends Popper on his attempt to rethink the value problem that “has been dogmatized in the meantime,” since Weber. But Adorno puts the problem on a more metaphysical footing in claiming that all this talk of values, and the distinctions between different spheres of them are reifications; reality therefore

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<sup>150</sup> Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, 303.

<sup>151</sup> Popper, “The Logic of the Social Sciences,” 97.

<sup>152</sup> Popper, “The Logic of the Social Sciences,” 97.

becomes viewed as “imperative-free or merely existent...through the dissections of abstraction.”<sup>153</sup> He continues, “the dichotomy of what is and what should be is as false as it is historically compelling and, for this reason, it cannot be ignored.”<sup>154</sup> Precisely because of this reification and its inevitability for the sciences, Adorno insists that the self-reflection of knowledge in a critical theory of society is what Popper is in fact searching for, namely, the self-reflection required to become aware of one’s own implicit values. It takes a societal critique, i.e., “society’s awareness of its contradictions and its necessity,” in order to “crystallize” a conception of a just society around which the knowledge of sociology aims.<sup>155</sup>

Scheler emphasizes, with Adorno, the original unity of being and value in social phenomenon and will agree that it is only upon taking something as an object and submitting to conceptual abstraction, which is where scientific observation begins, that the aspects of the original unity of an object are separated: what Adorno calls reification. But reification is just what empirical observation does insofar as it is a cognitive and conceptual disruption of givenness, making transcendent the original direct and asymbolic character of knowledge. Accordingly, I express warning that if critical theory leaves out a notion of an essence by not incorporating phenomenology into its program, then Scheler’s critique of Weber will also apply to the Frankfurt School and will be unable to account for the unity for which it seeks. It will effectively leave out that which can provide perceptual unity to social objects; it is the essence that forms “a necessary bridge between areas that fall apart...in a

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<sup>153</sup> Adorno, “On the Logic of the Social Sciences,” 117.

<sup>154</sup> Adorno, “On the Logic of the Social Sciences,” 118.

<sup>155</sup> Adorno, “On the Logic of the Social Sciences,” 118.

purely, uncompromisingly dualistic manner: the value-imperative [on the one hand,] and the existent, value-free reality [on the other].”

Adorno may object that this unity is provided not in the “essence,” but in its “reality”; not in its *Sosein*, but in its *Dasein*. What is needed then is not a phenomenology of essence but a philosophy of reality. The problem here is that, although it is certainly the case that such unity is provided in the reality of an object, for there to an epistemic relation, or “ontological participation” with this real unity, it must happen with respect to *what* that object is, not simply *that* it is. The reality of something may be a condition for an objective awareness to arise, through a practical resistance, but it is insufficient to account for the knowledge of reality because reality is not a knowable aspect of an object; it is ultimately precluded from being a correlate of consciousness. “Reality is *transintelligible* to every possible knowing mind. Only the *what* of the being, not the being of the *what* is intelligible.”<sup>156</sup> An essence is simply the meaningful unity of a real thing.

Despite the relevance of Adorno’s statements for the necessity for sociology to incorporate critical theory, it is important that, for critical theory’s own interests, to incorporate phenomenology since its entire aim is to leave the world in its original intuitive unity. Critical theory needs phenomenology to guard against falling into the very forms of reification and ideology they critique.

But as I’ve pointed out, critical theorists are proud to declare this dualism between theory and practice, “subject and object, conceptual thought and sensuous being, transcendent idea and mundane reality, universal essence and particular fact,

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<sup>156</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 312.

'ought' and 'is.'"<sup>157</sup> The more uncompromising or "non-identical" it is, the more profound the achievement of a dialectical unity. But perhaps this opposition itself is also a reification? If the opposition between fact and value (is and ought) is one reified by the "dissections of abstraction," why aren't the other oppositions? A challenge to critical theory involves their unwavering idea that idealism is something endemic to philosophy and that, in order not to be idealistic, one must, following Marx, transform "philosophy into social science, idealistic critique of knowledge into materialistic critique of political economy."<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, by relating social theory to revolutionary practice, Marx creates a false dilemma between whether rational knowledge is necessary for revolutionary action, or whether revolutionary action is necessary for rational knowledge.<sup>159</sup> The latter, Marxist, alternative is dangerous. Scheler wants to shatter the binary and say that value is necessary for both knowledge and action.

Scheler's conception of philosophy and its autonomy is important here because if the experiential and intuitive element of phenomenology is taken seriously, as well as the philosophical attitude that he seeks to recover from the ancients, the theory and practice problem as well as the rest of the "non-identicals" are misposed, because it begins with the contradiction and aims at unity rather than maintaining that the unity is more original than the contradiction. Critical theorists adopt conception of philosophy that resides on one side of the spectrum, rather than one whose task is to be a "mediator" between the ideal factors and real factors, and to be

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<sup>157</sup> Critical Theory: The Essential Readings, xx.

<sup>158</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, 18.

<sup>159</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, 18ff.

a source of unification between fact and value. Whereas critical theory tries to do theory practically (and practice theoretically) precisely by being both Hegelian and Marxist, for Scheler, the question of unity is not about bringing one side over to the other, but by being grounded in an autonomous third term which constitutes “the common *roots* of our practical and theoretical behavior.” It comes into its own on the act of loving “in which alone our theoretic and our practical life discovers and conserves its ultimate *unity*.”<sup>160</sup>

Marcuse writes in essay “Philosophy and Critical Theory,”

By defending the endangered and victimized potentialities of man against cowardice and betrayal, critical theory is not to be supplemented by a philosophy. It only makes explicit what was always the foundation of its categories: the demand that through the abolition of previously existing material conditions of existence the totality of human relations is liberated. If critical theory, amidst today’s desperation, indicates that the reality it intends must comprise the freedom and happiness of individuals, it is only following the direction given by its economic concepts.<sup>161</sup>

Philosophy’s role, or lack of one, in oppressive and threatening social situations applies because of Marcuse’s formalistic conception of philosophy, that it can only provide universal moral principles or “ideals brought into social struggles from outside.”<sup>162</sup> However, philosophy should be an important supplement in the goal of liberation precisely because values are inseparable from reality, and because philosophy, or phenomenology, has a role of intuition and cognition of values. Despite the fact that all human beings ascribe to some kind of value framework or worldview, it is important to notice that for Scheler values are philosophical phenomena, given in the context of social dynamics precisely through the lived

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<sup>160</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 88.

<sup>161</sup> Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” 11.

<sup>162</sup> Marcuse, “Philosophy and Critical Theory,” 12.

experience of these dynamics of control and oppression, danger and victimization. On the one hand, a phenomenological critique of society would be based upon this experience, in light of which values and bearers of values are threatened and victimized in society. Effective social critique requires a phenomenological experience of social elements precisely by the investigation into the givenness of values. The critique however cannot be based simply upon the anger toward the oppressive elements of society, but upon the love for the bearers of value endangered in the state of affairs. On the other hand, a phenomenological critique does not operate by simply introducing into an existing society ideals abstractly conceived outside of social struggles. Since values are only given with an encounter with real things, the phenomenologist will make a value critique, but does so precisely in the midst of the struggles of existing social conditions. The prospect for social change is directly in relation to those endangered elements of society that bear positive values or the possible arrival of elements into society that bear negative ones.

## 5

### THE HISTORICITY OF SPIRIT AND LIFE

Although it was Scheler who officially launched the project of the *Soziologie des Wissens* when he edited a volume of collected writings, *Versuche zu einer Soziologie des Wissens* in 1924, Karl Mannheim deserves recognition for making the sociology of knowledge an accepted and distinct sociological field of study. His work intensified the debates surrounding the sociology of knowledge, which had occupied “the center of the sociological stage in Germany”<sup>1</sup> for nearly a decade. Scheler used the sociology of knowledge as a way of addressing the problems for knowledge that arise on account of what others had called the existential connectedness (*Seinsverbundenheit*) of consciousness and the relation between different kinds of knowledge and the goals of drive-conation. In Scheler’s words, the sociology of knowledge attempts to manage “the problems posed by the fundamental fact of the social nature of all knowledge and of its preservation and transmission, its methodological expansion and progress.”<sup>2</sup> I want to stress that the sociology of knowledge, for Scheler, must take a philosophical approach. From the conclusions of the previous chapter, philosophy is more effective than science for mediating between domains that tend to be held in opposition, in this case, the ideal and the

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<sup>1</sup> Talcott Parsons, “Review of Alexander von Schelting’s Max Webers Wissenschaftslehre,” *American Sociological Review*, 1 (1936), p. 680. Quoted in Nico Stehr and Volker Meja, “Relativism and the Sociology of Knowledge,” *Knowledge and Politics: The Sociology of Knowledge Dispute*, ed. Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (New York: Routledge, 1990), 285.

<sup>2</sup> Scheler, *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Manfred Frings (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 33.



real, conscious acts and vital drives, society and culture, etc.

This chapter will constitute the first part of the discussion concerning the problems of a sociology of knowledge. I will reserve the inclusion of relevant ideas of the Frankfurt School for the next chapter. My initial aim is to present Scheler's sociology of culture which he took to be an important propaedeutic for the sociology of knowledge proper. Cultural sociology includes primarily a discussion of the domains of ideal and real factors and their interrelation in the process of "realization," or bringing about ideal and real goals into existence. Much of the controversy surrounding Scheler's sociology of knowledge actually pertains more to his sociology of culture. Part of my aim in the chapter is to dispel the controversy, first, with respect to those writing on the sociology of knowledge whose critique of Scheler largely follows the mold of Mannheim's critique of Scheler's so-called "dualism." And second, with respect to critiques against Scheler's theory of the powerlessness of spirit. I argue that, in both cases, even if these critiques aren't dispelled entirely, a better understanding of Scheler's theory of ideal and real factors can be offered by, one, referring to its phenomenological underpinnings and, two, the way these factors achieve unification in Scheler's philosophy of history.

### ***Der Streit um die Wissenssoziologie: Mannheim's Critique of Scheler***

That which has come to be called the *Der Streit um die Wissenssoziologie* (the sociology of knowledge dispute) officially began with Mannheim's paper "Die Bedeutung der Konkurrenz im Gebiete des Geistigen" at the sixth congress of the

German Sociological Association at Zurich in September of 1928.<sup>3</sup> Scheler had died earlier that year, in May. Mannheim's paper was the second of two on the problem of competition. The first was from a colleague of Scheler's at Cologne, Leopold von Weise.<sup>4</sup> The overall concern of the congress participants was the relation between knowledge and being, or the existential connectedness (*Seinsverbundenheit*) of knowledge. David Frisby writes that the comments from the participants made it clear that

the sociology of knowledge was seen to be forging nothing less than an intellectual revolution in the human sciences. It was regarded as a new mode of interpretation of phenomena which relied upon not merely traditional hermeneutic methods but also empirical social science. In this respect, the sociology of knowledge could be seen as forming a significant bridge between the natural and cultural sciences as understood, for example, by neo-Kantian philosophers. It was thus clearly viewed by some as bringing about a paradigm shift in the humanities and social sciences.<sup>5</sup>

Mannheim's *Ideology and Utopia* (1929) must have been a more profound advancement of this "intellectual revolution." The book prompted greater discussion and controversy than his congress paper had, and it was at this point that the Frankfurt School became involved. Horkheimer, Marcuse, and Adorno all had critical essays of the "sociology of knowledge," which, for them, meant Mannheim's

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<sup>3</sup> Mannheim's paper is translated as "Competition as a Cultural Phenomenon," in *From Karl Mannheim*, ed. Kurt Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 223ff., and in *Knowledge and Politics: The Sociology of Knowledge Dispute*, ed. Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (New York: Routledge, 1990). The Meja/Stehr volume also includes an account of the discussion on Mannheim's paper at the Sixth Sociological Congress along with a reply by Mannheim. The discussion included Alfred Weber, Werner Sombart, Robert Wilbrandt, Emil Lederer, Adolph Lowe, Alfred Meusel, Norbert Elias, Hans Jonas, and Paul Eppstein. David Frisby offers a good summary of the discussion with select passages and frequent citations in *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany 1918-1933* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 185-98.

<sup>4</sup> Von Weise's paper was titled "Die Konkurrenz, vorwiegend in soziologisch-systematischer Betrachtung" (Competition, Considered Predominantly in Sociological-Systematic Terms).

<sup>5</sup> Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 195-6.

sociology of knowledge, exclusively. By then, Scheler's contribution for the most part was ignored. Despite the fact that Scheler and Mannheim had never debated at a sociological congress or in writing, I wish to include Mannheim's critique of Scheler's sociology of knowledge as a part of the range of dispute on the sociology of knowledge, or at least as an important preface to it. I do so not because of the high quality of the critique. The critique is worthwhile, first, because of the fact that Scheler and Mannheim are the two founders of the sociology of knowledge in Germany, and second, because, in fact, the critique is rather poor, but one that has nevertheless been influential for lessening the significance of Scheler's contribution to the sociology of knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

The reason Scheler's contribution has been considered relatively insignificant is not necessarily because of what his sociology of knowledge includes, but, first, because Scheler did not seem concerned with forging a new independent field of study; his focus was predominantly upon completing his book on philosophical anthropology. Second, it was not strictly speaking sociology, insofar as sociology is a positive science. That is, it did not relate well with the "substantive" or empirical playing-field of the social sciences at the time. For example, in response to Scheler's paper, "Wissenschaft und Soziale Struktur,"<sup>7</sup> some participants at the Fourth

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<sup>6</sup> Frisby states that "Mannheim's critique is the only detailed one to appear from within [the sociological] tradition" other than Adler's reply to Scheler's paper at the fourth Sociological Congress in 1924. We can surmise then that Mannheim's critique would have been influential for those within this tradition.

<sup>7</sup> Contained in Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (eds), *Der Streit um die Wissenssoziologie*, Erster Band (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982). This paper a brief display of his sociology of knowledge insofar as it deals predominantly with the three kinds of knowledge and their aims.

Sociological Congress criticized Scheler for not being sufficiently sociological.<sup>8</sup> Alfred Weber (Max's brother) suggested that what Scheler had offered was "a 'sociology' only in quotation marks. I believe it was a philosophy with a sociological prognostic."<sup>9</sup> Also, Max Adler, who was Scheler's respondent at the conference states that the direction of Scheler's thought (and his sociology of knowledge in general) is not from a sociological standpoint, but from an "intellectual-historical" (*geistesgeschichtlicher*) one. Indeed, Frisby explains that "Adler's central argument against Scheler's paper was framed around whether it has in fact formed a contribution to sociology at all."<sup>10</sup> These only confirm that Scheler's sociology of knowledge is meant to be an introduction to his metaphysics and philosophical anthropology, and as such, a philosophical contribution to questions concerning cultural sociology. The criticisms seem to miss Scheler's own attempt to challenge these increasingly ingrained scientific approaches to sociological questions.

Insofar as the sociology of knowledge concerns itself with the *Verbundenheit*, or connection, between consciousness and being, the ideal and the real, spirit and life, theory and practice, then for its orientation to be philosophical is important in part because philosophy, for Scheler, has the task of mediating these oppositions.

Phenomenological philosophy is an autonomous *attitudinal* mode of knowing that begins in the sphere of pre-conceptual givenness and arises to conceptual cognition in a way that attempts not to misrepresent the original self-given content. As such, phenomenology has a unique role for these sociological problems that seek to show

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<sup>8</sup> David Frisby discusses these objections more thoroughly in *The Alienated Mind*.

<sup>9</sup> *Verhandlungen des Vierten Deutschen Soziologentages 1924* (Tubingen 1925), 216.

<sup>10</sup> Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 178.

the relation between the conscious and pre-conscious and the social influence upon cognition. It seems that Scheler was optimistic that the inclusion of phenomenological elements could level the playing field, so to speak, against the sociological critique of knowledge, but in a way that anticipates the critique.

The most expressed complaints concern the metaphysical underpinnings of Scheler's sociological positions; such an orientation constitutes the "danger that his central guiding cognitive principles can be misinterpreted as a metaphysics of history."<sup>11</sup> Though the intertwining of Scheler's metaphysical and sociological positions may justify critiques that Scheler's approach is not properly sociological (e.g., Adler's critique), critics often go further to use these metaphysical elements to justify accusing Scheler of a "supra-temporal" theory of truth. Among them, Karl Mannheim's treatment of Scheler's "phenomenological standpoint"<sup>12</sup> may prove to be the most impertinent. His critique of Scheler's "Catholic dualism between the eternal and temporal" is so extravagant that it is as though he may just as well be talking about Plato, Plotinus, or, more likely, St. Augustine.

Mannheim acknowledges that Scheler "cannot rest satisfied with a line drawn once and for all between eternity and temporality [and that Scheler] feels impelled to account for the new cultural factors emerging in the world."<sup>13</sup> Paradoxically, however, the critique amounts to the fact that Scheler seeks to account for these

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<sup>11</sup> Walter Bühl, "Max Scheler," in D. Käsler (ed.), *Klassiker des soziologischen Denkens*, vol. 2, Munich, 1978, 200. Quoted in Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 64.

<sup>12</sup> Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of the Sociology of Knowledge" (1925), *From Karl Mannheim*, ed. Kurt Wolff (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), 79-104.

<sup>13</sup> Mannheim, "Sociology of Knowledge," 80.

cultural factors while retaining the “extremely sharp line”<sup>14</sup> between eternity and temporality (the essential and factual, base and superstructure, etc.). Scheler “seeks to incorporate new factors into an old framework,” and “tries to present the position of ‘historicism’ and ‘sociologism’ in terms of a philosophy of timelessness.”<sup>15</sup> And “since Scheler’s philosophical point of view postulates a supra-temporal, unchanging system of truths..., he is compelled to introduce the ‘contingency’ of sociological factors as an afterthought into this immobile, supratemporal framework.”<sup>16</sup> Scheler, therefore, “never reaches the dynamic (he cannot bridge the gap between the static and the dynamic).”<sup>17</sup> Instead, Scheler’s theory contains two specific “jumps,” an anthropological one and metaphysical one. The first is the jump from historical man to the “superhuman capacity of shaking off all historical limitation and determination.”<sup>18</sup> This jump is supposedly so grandiose and quite literally *high-flying* that “Scheler must imply that he looks upon the world with God’s eyes.”<sup>19</sup> The second ‘jump’ is the metaphysical jump from temporality into “timelessness” since the historical process is renounced as “hopelessly relative.”<sup>20</sup>

The leading historian of German social thought, David Frisby, despite his often careful and detailed scholarship, affirms Mannheim’s statements.<sup>21</sup> But Frisby’s assessment of Scheler is one more piece toward confirming my hypothesis that this interpretation of Scheler’s sociology of knowledge persists among sociologists

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<sup>14</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 80, 82.

<sup>15</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 80-1.

<sup>16</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 101.

<sup>17</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 104.

<sup>18</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 93.

<sup>19</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 103.

<sup>20</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 94.

<sup>21</sup> Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 65.

specifically because they typically read Scheler's sociological writings out of context from the rest of his philosophy. An irony in these criticisms is that if they are accurate, i.e., if it is true that Scheler's philosophy is so dualistic that it cannot accommodate any alteration of "static" ideal factors by their relation to "dynamic" real factors, then there is no way to explain why Scheler would have even made the effort to investigate the sociology of knowledge in the first place.

Frisby questions whether Scheler's contribution could be called phenomenological, writing that Scheler's "metaphysical position seriously prevents him from establishing a consistent phenomenological approach. Hence it is only with the greatest difficulty, and with the most spurious level of abstraction, that one can claim that Scheler did establish a phenomenological basis of the sociology of knowledge."<sup>22</sup> The fact of the matter is that Scheler maintains a phenomenological approach already prior to the development of a metaphysics and sociology, so his metaphysics could not prevent what had already come before it. Certainly, Frisby's statement should not be interpreted to mean that Scheler's metaphysics had prevented his phenomenology; my point is rather that the two are more connected than it may seem. Without an acquaintance with Scheler's earlier phenomenology, it's true that a reader of Scheler's later sociology could very well be confused as to how it is allegedly "phenomenological." The answer lies in the fact that nearly all of the operative elements of his sociology and metaphysics had already been investigated phenomenologically in his earlier work and most of these investigations are then incorporated and reconceived in this later writings to

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<sup>22</sup> Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 64.

pertain to *human social reality*: anthropology (study of humanity), sociology (study of society), metaphysics (study of the ground of being). Anthropology and sociology rest upon his metaphysics because Scheler thinks the ground of being is the “interpenetration” between *Geist und Drang* (spirit and life).<sup>23</sup> But these metaphysical categories, if Scheler is to be consistent with his own conception of phenomenology (which he is) must necessarily refer back to the phenomenological experience of spirit and life.

We already find a phenomenology of spirit (with reference to the phenomenon of *Person*) and drive (with reference to the phenomenon of *Streben*), value and action (*Handlung*) in the *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (1913/16), which continue in other writings, especially in *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* (1923), in which he also develops a phenomenology of social forms, fellow-feeling and love, and otherness; a phenomenology of religion and the absolute is developed in *Vom Ewigen im Menschen* (1921). At times, Scheler will move from a phenomenology to a sociological application within the span of a single text or essay. In Scheler’s early essay “Über Ressentiment und moralisches Werturteil” (1912) he investigates the phenomenon of *ressentiment* (i.e., the basis of value-delusion) and then applies the investigation sociologically.

Since many of the structural elements of Scheler’s metaphysics and sociology were previously investigated phenomenologically, they are grounded in experiential givenness and not some formal system of logic. It’s true that the validity of the meaning or essence of phenomenological investigation is not reducible to the

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<sup>23</sup> *Drang* (usually translated either as urge, drive, or impulsion) is synonymous with life (*Leben*). Life is most essentially drive.



particular experiences in which it is given and selected to exemplify the phenomena, but its irreducibility does not indicate its part within an “unchanging system of truths”; it is rather an ideal meaning content that extends further than a single environmental context. It is by no means the case then, as Mannheim assumes, that “Scheler teaches a logical immanence of the ideal sphere.”<sup>24</sup>

It is interesting to note in light of Mannheim’s critique of Scheler that in another place Mannheim insists that a phenomenological starting point is not only acceptable, but is in fact required for a complete cultural sociology. In one of Mannheim’s unpublished early essays, “Über die Eigenart Kultursoziologischer Erkenntnis” (1922), he claims that the exclusive utilization of “logical-methodological analysis” that characterizes the sciences is insufficient, and that

the determination of the distinctive characteristics, of a cultural science, above all, is complete only when the immanent logical analysis of the knowledge it yields is complemented by ways of looking which are prior to inquiry governed by questions strictly of logic. ... This is because the constitution of knowledge of a cultural-scientific sort is always distinguished by the attitude with which the whole subject approaches the spiritual reality it aims to investigate scientifically.<sup>25</sup>

Mannheim is here endorsing an attitudinal way of seeing, or “looking,” which is prior to logical or methodological analysis, and which is, phenomenologically speaking, an endorsement of forms of givenness in order for an analysis to be complete. Perhaps it’s worthwhile to recall in comparison Scheler’s definition of phenomenology as “an attitude of spiritual seeing...new facts themselves, before

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<sup>24</sup> Mannheim, “Sociology of Knowledge,” 89, n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> Karl Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character of Cultural-Sociological Knowledge,” *Structures of Thinking*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro and Shierry Weber Nicholsen, ed. David Kettler, Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 50, 52.

they have been fixed by logic.”<sup>26</sup> Cultural sociology, Mannheim thinks, requires a phenomenological analysis that will take into consideration the “subjective attitude” as the basis for the determination of various “spiritual formations” (culture). Specifically, there is required a phenomenological analysis of the attitude pertinent to cultural sociology.<sup>27</sup> According to Mannheim, without this phenomenological orientation of cultural sociology, there will be neglect of “two essential moments”: first, what he considers to be a Hegelian point, namely, that “cultural sciences are themselves part of the process they are describing,” and the recognition of this—the self-consciousness of the sciences—is a source of the unification of subject and object. And second, Dilthey’s point that “the subject of cultural-scientific knowledge is not the mere epistemological subject, but the ‘whole man.’”<sup>28</sup>

In describing his own views of the way cultural sociology is to be studied, Mannheim effectively describes the core of Scheler’s phenomenology more accurately than in his explicit attempt to do so (in sociology of knowledge essay). Whereas, in Mannheim’s critique, it is Scheler’s phenomenological standpoint that prevents him from “reaching the dynamic,” in this earlier essay, Mannheim affirms that it is precisely the phenomenological complement to the logical-methodological aspect that can do justice to the “dynamic change” within the concept of culture.<sup>29</sup> This is because what is needed is not an explanation of change on the basis of the concept, but a conceptualization that can preserve an experience of the process of

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<sup>26</sup> Scheler, “Phenomenology and the Theory of Cognition,” *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 137.

<sup>27</sup> Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character,” 53.

<sup>28</sup> Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character,” 50.

<sup>29</sup> Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character,” 51.

change.<sup>30</sup> An objective analysis alone can solve this problem only in part. For this reason, Mannheim suggests that cultural sociology needs both a fundamental (pre-scientific) “immanent” investigation of phenomena on the experiential level, as well as a “non-immanent” or methodological approach which creates distancing and objectification of the phenomenon in order to view the object in the totality of life experiences and is capable of serving as a theoretical check upon the immanent investigation.<sup>31</sup>

But Mannheim reveals an even more profound alignment with Scheler’s phenomenology in his other unpublished essay, “Eine Soziologische Theorie der Kultur und ihrer Erkennbarkeit” (1924). In previous chapters, I have been describing phenomenology with respect to its subjective factors (attitude, acts) as well as its objective ones (essence, value) and the importance of the subjective factors to make the givenness of the objective ones possible. The pre-logical givenness of essence makes possible empirical observation and methodological analysis; the pre-logical givenness of value makes possible value-judgment and moral principles. Furthermore, I have mentioned that the empirical dissection of experiential heterogeneous units presupposes a single holistic or integrated experience of the essence from which each of these partial units receives their meaning and unity.<sup>32</sup>

In Mannheim’s critique of modern rationalist epistemology, he pinpoints the attempt to reduce a single sphere of knowledge into “the paradigm for knowledge as

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<sup>30</sup> Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character,” 51.

<sup>31</sup> Mannheim, “The Distinctive Character,” 55-65. Cf. Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 120-1.

<sup>32</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. Manfred Frings (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2001), 20.

such.”<sup>33</sup> Their “rationalizing fervor” conceals other spheres of knowledge incomprehensible to the orientation of quantification that characterizes this “calculating” epistemology. In contrast, Mannheim refers to what he calls “physiognomic knowledge,” namely, “*learning that does not emerge on grounds of dissection and analysis but owes its assurance precisely to a holistic apprehension which first makes analysis possible.*”<sup>34</sup> To call this knowledge physiognomic is indeed apropos, especially since the term refers to physical (primarily facial) characteristics insofar as they are indicative of an essential feature, such as personality or personal character. Here we might recall Scheler’s phenomenology of the otherness that I expounded in Chapter 2, where he suggests that evidence of the Other is not simply as a body, or “self” but as expressive unities or “patterns of wholeness”; qualitative content given in conjunction with sensations. Scheler writes that “sensory appearances are given only insofar as they function as the basis of these patterns, or can take upon the further office of signifying or representing such [qualitative] wholes.”<sup>35</sup> Mannheim likewise affirms that an individual can be grasped without being articulated in terms of universal concepts or subjected to universal laws. He writes that “a living Other belongs to us not only so far as it can be dissolved into relations.”<sup>36</sup> In comparison, according to Scheler, every essence is individual until individual essences are functionalized into universal concepts.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, Mannheim writes that “we partake of spiritual and sensual learning

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<sup>33</sup> Karl Mannheim, “A Sociological Theory of Culture and Its Knowability,” *Structures of Thinking*, 158.

<sup>34</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 158. My emphasis.

<sup>35</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 264.

<sup>36</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 159.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 157-8; *Formalism*, 48-50.

whose substance we grasp directly and allow to affect us at a single contact.”<sup>38</sup> In comparison, the directness or immediacy of phenomenological intuition within a single act of experience is foundational to Scheler’s phenomenology.<sup>39</sup>

The significance of this connection is more than the connection itself, but also inasmuch as it puts Mannheim against Mannheim, and refutes his own critique of Scheler’s phenomenological sociology of knowledge, which would have been negated had Mannheim bothered to learn what Scheler took phenomenology to be and how it connected with his sociology. Mannheim claims that this mode of “pre-scientific,” “physiognomic” learning, far from being a supra-temporal, eternal kind of knowing, “gains its distinctiveness from *being rooted in situations*, while natural-scientific knowledge abstracts completely from the specific situation of the knowing subject.”<sup>40</sup> Much of what I want to show, so far and in what is to come, about Scheler’s phenomenology is how it remains connected to “the basis of the [concrete] situation.” Mannheim writes that “while general rules could teach anything except in what concrete situation one happens to be placed at the moment, the special capacity of the concrete, pre-scientific practical actor consists in...bringing the facts given into an order relevant to himself and his own situation.”<sup>41</sup> What is more, the aim in part of this work is to ask along with Mannheim, in the context of Scheler’s philosophy, “How [are] insights able to provide at least an orientation for action.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 159

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Scheler, “Phenomenology,” 137-41; *On the Eternal in Man*, 200-1.

<sup>40</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 158.

<sup>41</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 158.

<sup>42</sup> Mannheim, “Sociological Theory of Culture,” 159.

## Scheler's Philosophy and Sociology of Culture

Scheler proceeds in his "Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens" (1925) similarly to the way he does in his work on *ressentiment*. He begins with a discussion of the "essence and concept of a sociology of culture"<sup>43</sup> and moves into the sociology of knowledge proper, which is, he says, "perhaps the most important part of a cultural sociology."<sup>44</sup> What will be of great concern for cultural sociology is the way we arrive at its most basic elements, and they are for Scheler, spirit (*Geist*) and drive (*Drang*). He suggests that the methodological criteria of sociology is on the one hand formal-ideal, concerning general rules, types and laws; and on the other hand, empirical-factual, dealing with "the whole gamut of the human content of life" through the forms of human association and relation.<sup>45</sup> However, the study would not be in any way phenomenological if the formal and empirical criteria were the sole criteria. These methodological criteria must be supplemented by an "immanent" or phenomenological investigation on an intentional level, by which Scheler distinguishes between a "sociology of culture" and a "sociology of real factors." Thus, the distinction is grounded not only methodologically, but ontologically, within that being to which we have the closest immediate access: the beings we are. All cultural sociology and sociology of knowledge must be based upon the phenomenological fact that human activity—activity that is *always* at once spiritual and determined by drives—can be directed either toward *ideal* goals, or

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<sup>43</sup> That is to say, the difference between cultural sociology and the "sociology of real factors." Perhaps it's clearer to say, the difference between a study of foundations of culture and the study of the foundations of society, respectively.

<sup>44</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 65.

<sup>45</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 34.

*real* goals. And since human intentional activity is always simultaneously conditioned at once both spiritually (intentional acts) and vitally (drives), ideal goals are only *predominantly* (i.e., not exclusively) spiritually conditioned, and real goals “result [only] *predominantly* from drives...which at the same time are directed toward the real alterations of such realities according to their social determinacy.”<sup>46</sup> This prospect of altering or changing reality in the context of society is a perfect statement which Scheler attempts to account for in his cultural sociology, and more specifically, what is the role of ideal factors for the emergence of new real conditions, and the role of real factors for the attainment of ideal goals. It might be helpful to state something of Scheler’s position at the outset.

Again it is simply of the nature of human beings, individually or communally, to have both ideal and real goals. To neglect one for the other, or take either one as that into which the other is subsumed, is a mistake. Ideal goals are not ideological simply from of an unawareness of their determining real conditions, because ideal goals, even while having a relationship of determination with real factors are not reducible in content to these factors. More generally, the human being is neither merely a rational being (“*homo rationalis*”) whose whole vital activity finds genuine fulfillment only insofar as it aims toward an ideal goal: an intellectual *eudaimonia*, “absolute knowing,” or “rest in God.” Nor is the human being merely a producing being (“*homo faber*”) whose whole spiritual activity finds genuine fulfillment only insofar as it aims toward a real goal: the reorganization of society through revolution against oppressive socio-economic production relations. In fact, the

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<sup>46</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 34.

human being is both, without being exhausted in either one. Although Scheler will insist that ideal goals cannot simply be subsumed by the real, nor real goals by the ideal (as in a means-ends relationship), they each aim in some way toward the improvement of life, the world, and society. Within the course of the attainment of these goals, ideal and real factors combine and are indistinguishable to those focused on their tasks. On the one hand, thinkers or artists (e.g., physicists, painters, or musicians) seek to change reality in their experimentations, paintings, and compositions. They utilize a variety of relevant tools and follow a course of conative and physical action, but they do so to reach an irreducible ideal goal: e.g., “to acquire knowledge of nature or to obtain from themselves and others an aesthetically worthy meaning for intuitive understanding and appreciation.”<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, “the business administrator, as well as the simple industrial worker of lowest qualification..., the prominent statesman as well as the voter in the election, still deal with a great many preparatory and especially intellectual activities directed toward the ideal realm...for the sake of a real objective”<sup>48</sup> In Scheler’s words, *all goals “serve a becoming.”*<sup>49</sup>

Concerning this becoming (*Werden*): what is it about? Who is it for? What is it for? Scheler thinks there are three chief goals of becoming: (1) the practical becoming or transformation of the material conditions of life; (2) the becoming or edification of spirit of an individual (person), or a national or ecclesial community (culture); (3) the becoming of the divine in the world.

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<sup>47</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 34.

<sup>48</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 34-5.

<sup>49</sup> Scheler, *GW VIII*, 205.



In each of these cases, there corresponds a realization of a specific sphere of values, respectively: (1) material transformation involves the realization of vital and sensible values (along with the consecutive values of utility and luxury); (2) edification of spirit involves the realization of spiritual values (moral, aesthetic values, the value of knowledge, along with their consecutive cultural values); (3) the realization of values of the sacred or holy.

And finally, there corresponds a kind of knowing for each goal of becoming and value-realization, respectively: (1) *scientific knowledge*:<sup>50</sup> the kind of cognition arising from practical intuitions by means of the experience of laboring or working; (2) *essence knowledge*:<sup>51</sup> the kind of cognition arising from the intuitions of person or culture from an experience of spiritual acts, either one's own or a sympathetic acting-with; (3) *redemptive knowledge*:<sup>52</sup> that kind of (metaphysical) cognition that arises from the intuitions of religious experience.

These three types of goals, levels of value-realization, and forms of knowledge are only possible for human beings, who are the only beings in a "place" or situation (*Stellung*) to refashion reality according to ideas or ideal content. In other words, human beings have a universal destiny to make values and meanings real. This is the meaning of human existence. Animals have a very powerful capacity to change

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<sup>50</sup> "*Leistungswissen*" (productive knowledge). This kind of knowledge is "Wissen der positivien Wissenschaft" (knowledge of the positive sciences), or also called "*Herrschaftswissen*" (knowledge of domination or control).

<sup>51</sup> "*Bildungswissen*" (knowledge of culture). But, as Scheler adds, "knowledge of culture is knowledge of essence" ("The Forms of Knowledge and Culture," *Philosophical Perspectives*, 37).

<sup>52</sup> "*Erlösungswissen*." This form of knowledge is rather curious because, though it religious in nature, it is in fact a form of cognition, and not a form or belief or faith. This may be why he tends to link it to metaphysics: a knowledge of the "ground of being," or "ground of the world."

reality, but because they are only vital beings (with limited capacity for intelligence and choice) they cannot guide or direct their conations or inclinations toward purposes by means of values or ideals above real or vital goals. On the other hand, divine or angelic persons, who would presumably have a profound capacity for spiritual acts, would, if there are such beings, be entirely unable to effect any change in reality.<sup>53</sup> The human being is the only “hope” for the divine to come to completion in reality, and the divine is the only hope for human beings to redeem or “sanctify” the world. The human being is the only being who can actualize or realize a divine plan. Humanity and divinity, for Scheler, stand in mutual solidarity and cooperation.<sup>54</sup> But the human being, to achieve its task, must also achieve a solidarity of all living beings by means of “vital sympathy.” Though one may criticize Scheler’s vision here as anthropocentric, it is not at least with respect to other anthropocentric views that use it to justify human domination over other forms of beings. Scheler’s vision culminates on the love of all beings, namely, “to capture the great invisible *solidarity of all living beings* with each other in universal life, of all spirits in the eternal spirit, the simultaneous *solidarity of the world process with the becoming fate [Werdeschicksal] of the highest ground*, as well as its [the ground’s] solidarity with this world process.”<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Scheler explains the idea of an omnipotent God from the historiography of religion. Religions historically originate primarily according to needs of protection, and have persisted because of the tenet of ancient philosophy that equates higher forms of being with more actualized forms of being. God could not be both a being highest in value, but lowest in power because lacking power would constitute a potentiality.

<sup>54</sup> Scheler, *The Human Place in the Cosmos*, 66. My task must suspend detail on Scheler’s notion of God and focus on this human capacity to effect change in the world.

<sup>55</sup> GW IX, 162. My translation.

*The phenomenology of spirit and life*

Scheler's notion of spirit is fundamental for his phenomenology of the person<sup>56</sup> (whether individual or collective), so much so that everything Scheler says about the individual person (*Person*) can also be said of spirit (*Geist*), and vice versa. There are four main points about the essence of spirit.

(1) Spirit is equated with the sphere of acts and all that possesses the nature of act, e.g., "intentionality and fulfillment of meaning."<sup>57</sup> As was discussed in Chapter 3, spirit (as an act-being) is never an object because acts are essentially non-objectifiable.<sup>58</sup> Its only mode of givenness is phenomenologically, namely, within the very performance of acts. Another person, for example, "can only be disclosed to me by my *joining in the performance* of his [or her] acts."<sup>59</sup> Since intentional acts can never hold the act itself (in its performance) as an object, the intentional object toward which an act is directed composes a piece of the individual person's world. Every individual person (living in and through one's acts), by essential necessity, has a individual "world" (the realm of objects toward which the person acts).<sup>60</sup> Person (*Person*) is the *spirit of the factual human being*. Every individual person has his or her own world. On the other hand, an assemblage or association of persons creates a community or society (the specific type of association is not important at this point) and their *interaction* (the joint performance of acts) creates a shared

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<sup>56</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, Ch. 6, pp. 370-595.

<sup>57</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 389.

<sup>58</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 386-7.

<sup>59</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 167.

<sup>60</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 393.

world or group-spirit (*Gruppengeist*).<sup>61</sup> Children raised in a given community will initially take their identity from the shared communal world before they create for themselves an autonomous world of their own (*if* they create one).<sup>62</sup> Culture (*Bildung*) is the communal or collective equivalent of an individual person,<sup>63</sup> namely, the *spirit of the factual community or society*. Another culture, it follows, can only be disclosed to me by my joining in the performance of the acts of the members of that society.

(2) Spirit is a *unity* of different acts. In Scheler's words, spirit is "*the concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences.*"<sup>64</sup> More specifically, it belongs essentially to spirit that various possible kinds of conscious activities are uniformly contained in it. It is only by means of differences of acts that we can account for differences of subjects (individual or collective).<sup>65</sup> This is profoundly important, for Scheler, because personal autonomy is based not simply upon rationality, but upon individuality, and individuality is grounded within the unique character or orientation of this unity of different acts (personhood).<sup>66</sup> It has become customary, since philosophy's beginning, to equate spirit with rational acts of thinking and knowing, but Scheler argues forcefully that purely rational beings would be logical

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<sup>61</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 69.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Scheler, *Sympathy*, 246-9.

<sup>63</sup> This is a generalization. There is a distinction between a culture and the spirit of society that will be discussed later, namely, culture is a "result" at every moment of collective spiritual activity, but not this activity itself. In this way, an individual person can have his or her own culture. My point so far is only to emphasize the association of culture with a collective spirit.

<sup>64</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

<sup>65</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 382-3.

<sup>66</sup> It is worth noting here that autonomy for Scheler is grounded in personhood, and not strictly speaking, in individuality. I will discuss at later the importance of the distinction between the personhood of individuals and the individuality of the person.

subjects that execute rational acts, but “they would not be ‘persons’.”<sup>67</sup> Rational acts (among a host of other acts) certainly belong to the being of the person, but the person is not defined by rational acts (“acts corresponding to a certain lawfulness of states of affairs”).<sup>68</sup> Someone is rational because she is a person; not that she is a person because she is rational. If the being of the person “becomes an indifferent thoroughfare for an impersonal rational activity,” the concept of an individual person becomes a contradiction.<sup>69</sup> It is the *personhood of the individual*, not the *rationality of the person*, for Scheler that grounds autonomy. This cannot be fully demonstrated here, but will reprise in a later chapter.

(3) Spirit “precedes” and is not exhausted in these act-differences. This is the condition for the possibility of spirit to be the “unity” of the differences, namely, a “foundation” for the differences. In Scheler’s words: “*The being of [spirit] is the ‘foundation’ of all essentially different acts.*”<sup>70</sup> The unity is a unity of possible differences. So the person is a foundation for the differences, it is not the case that the person comes into being only when these differences are actualized, but the person is also in the possibility of acting differently. But what kind of foundation is this? Scheler uses a subtle distinction between concrete and abstract essences. A “*concretum*” is the essence foundation for every “*abstractum*,” in every “*individuum*.”

(4) Spirit, insofar as it is a foundation for acts, is the *concretum of abstracta* (acts). Anything abstract requires supplementation for it to be.<sup>71</sup> Just as redness

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<sup>67</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 382.

<sup>68</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 372.

<sup>69</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 372.

<sup>70</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

<sup>71</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383.

cannot be without a concrete thing that is capable of being red and a specific value cannot be without a concrete thing capable of having that value, so an act cannot be without a concrete thing capable of performing acts. In other words it is upon the distinction between *concretum* and *abstractum* that the distinction between spirit and act is predicated. That *concretum* is spirit. One may speak for example of the redness of the chair, the value of the artwork, the act of spirit. But just as the concrete essence of chair does not rule out the possibility of being red or blue or black, or of other kinds of qualitative variation, in some sense the essence of chair pertains to an essential invariant with an entire, but perhaps limited, spectrum of variable qualitative possibilities according to the kind of thing it is. A chair may bear the value of agreeable or disagreeable (in comfort), and the consecutive use values, it may even bear higher aesthetic values, but it is not the kind of thing that can be noble (because it is not alive), or evil (because it does not form intentions and execute acts of willing), or sacred (because it is not something divine or touched by the divine).

This can be an analogy to explain part of what Scheler means by spirit. First of all, *spirit is not real*,<sup>72</sup> as a chair is. And a *concretum*, as an essence, does not have to indicate reality. The number 3 is a concrete essence,<sup>73</sup> but ideal and not real. Furthermore, *spirit is not a substance*, as a chair is a substance, and it is because

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<sup>72</sup> "For us, [real-being], reality, and causality belong essentially together. That is not [causally] effective is also not real. ... Everything that we call spirit is originally only a sum of intentions which are completely incapable of having causal effects" (Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 351). The question of spiritual effectiveness for the realization of goals will be significant later in this chapter.

<sup>73</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 383. All of the possible equations that are fulfilled by the number 3 are "the *abstracta* of this concrete 3":  $4-1=3$ ;  $2+1=3$ ;  $17-14=3$ .

chairs are substances that all chairs are *essentially* the same. For Scheler, all spirits are not essentially the same. Insofar as part of the essence of spirit pertains to a *being* providing unity, all persons are the same, but insofar as the essence of spirit pertains to possible act-differences (both differences in acts and differences in possible acts), and thus, to the very *identity* of spirit, each person is not essentially the same. Spirit is a concrete, but non-substantial being. On the one hand, as a *concrete* unity, spirit is not an empty “interconnective complex” of acts.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand: as being of “*act-differences*,” spirit is not a substance. Rather, Scheler writes, “abstract act-essences concretize into concrete act-essences only by belonging to the essence of this or that individual person.”<sup>75</sup> The person (the spirit of an individual being) experiences oneself as a being that executes acts. However, this does not indicate that spirit is some invariable “point at rest,” like a substance-causality principle causing motion, for the person also experiences oneself as dynamic and changing along with one’s acts. Scheler writes, “the *whole person* is contained in each and every fully concrete act, and the whole person ‘varies’ in and through every act,” without being exhausted in any one of these acts, and without changing simply like a physical thing in physical time.<sup>76</sup> The person varies in and through one’s acts, but there is no need to posit an “enduring being,” behind this variation, in order to preserve individual identity because identity, according to Scheler, “lies solely in the qualitative *direction* of this pure becoming different.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> A contemporary example is perhaps Donald Davidson’s “ontology of mental events,” or even Sartre’s “being-for-itself.”

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 384.

<sup>76</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

<sup>77</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385.

The spiritual unity of acts, which varies with and in its acts, unifies only with respect to the consistent collective orientation and direction of its acts. We will see that this is ultimately a moral- or value-orientation toward the world. There is a qualitative character that permeates the full unity of differences according to the direction of that unity and those differences. That is, personal identity resides within that for which one loves and strives, this pertains to individual persons as well as the spirit (culture) of communities.

The investigation of spirit, or in the case of an individual person, is not complete until we frame the person along with its necessary correlate: the world. A person is a necessary *non-objectifiable*, individual, concrete being for abstract *acts*. A world is a necessarily *objective*, individual, concrete being for abstract *objects*; it individualizes according to the individuality of the person; and is concrete *only* as the world of a person. If there is a person there must necessarily be a world. If there is a world there must necessarily be a person. But the world of a person or culture is not therefore simply a domain of a variety of objects of different type and status; they are arranged by acts and rules of preferring and subordinating according to the range of values that individual and communities attach to these objects. Likewise, a person or culture is disclosed not simply with respect to the disclosure of the objects toward which it acts, but more primarily, with respect to the value prescribed to the objects constitutive of its world. Scheler writes in his essay "*Ordo Amoris*,"

Whether I am investigating the innermost essence of an individual, a historical era, a family, a people, a nation, or any other sociohistorical group, I will know and understand it most profoundly when I have discerned the system of its concrete value-assessments and value-preference, whatever



organization this system has. I call this system the ethos of any such subject. The fundamental root of this ethos is, first, the order of love and hate.... The system always has a hand in directing the way the subject sees this world as well as his deeds and activities.<sup>78</sup>

Loving and hating are “emotive” intentional acts by which a single value can be grasped or given (or not given), through the expansion (in loving) or the contraction (in hating) of “the value-realm accessible to the feeling”<sup>79</sup> of some object of the world. Loving and hating do not refer to values as such, but to “objects in respect of their value.”<sup>80</sup> They are conditional acts of the spirit for values to be more or less disclosed. Therefore, they are foundational for ranking or ordering values, by any individual or society, which is done by means of a different “class of emotional act-experiences,”<sup>81</sup> namely, preferring (*Vorziehen*) or subordinating (*Nachsetzen*) things of value in relation to others.

Scheler insists that the acts of preferring and subordinating belong to the sphere of value-cognition (*Werterkenntnis*), and not to the sphere of conation, such as choosing or willing.<sup>82</sup> Choice refers to the decision to do this or that action, and for some representational content “to-be-realized.” But preferring entails no action. One can prefer some things (foods, occupations, sports, etc.) and subordinate others according to their value without taking any action; preferring also happens immediately, whereas making a choice may require a lengthy decision-making process. One could even prefer one course of action to another without undertaking

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<sup>78</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 98-9.

<sup>79</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 261; Cf. *Sympathy*, “Phenomenology of Love and Hatred,” 147-161

<sup>80</sup> Scheler, *Sympathy*, 154.

<sup>81</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 260.

<sup>82</sup> In his later work, Scheler removes acts of willing from the sphere of conation. I state the reasons for this later on this chapter.

the action. Despite the difference, his point is that preferring and subordinating must form the basis for choosing.<sup>83</sup>

Courses of action reflect the structure of value-preference and vision contained in a certain moral qualification of either individuals or communities which Scheler calls at different times either *Gesinnung* or *Gemüt*.<sup>84</sup> In either case, they refer to a value orientation of the individual or communal spirit, and concern the way the objects that compose the world are valued or preferred in relation to other objects. Good and evil are values attached only to spontaneous (uncaused) intentional acts of the spirit; they are the values proper to *acts* and can never refer to objects. Good and evil refer to the possible value range of a single act (including an action) or of the entire spirit. The value of things range from lower to higher, or between negative to positive, but there is a correlation between the two ranges, because a good action is one that realizes (i.e. willing) a higher or positive value and an evil action realizes a lower or negative value.<sup>85</sup> I will go further on questions of ethics in a later chapter.

It is with the elements foundational for willing and the practical sphere that a transition is made from the acts of spirit to into the vital sphere. Willing for Scheler is a “realizing act”; that is, from our value-cognition, value-feeling, and value-

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<sup>83</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 260.

<sup>84</sup> *Gesinnung* is used in the *Formalism* in the section on the “Ethics of Success,” and indicates a moral disposition of willing and action. *Gemüt* is used in his essay “*Ordo Amoris*” and refers to a moral “ethos.” Both have been translated as an inner or basic “moral tenor,” though Lachterman sometimes translates *Gemüt* simply as “the heart.”

<sup>85</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 26.

conation, it *spiritually conditions vital inclinations*<sup>86</sup> into a course of action which attempts to make this content real within one's own world and/or a shared communal world. An act of willing has its primary intention directed toward realization;<sup>87</sup> or in other words, the content of willing is "what I will to be real."<sup>88</sup> As such, willing *completes* or *fulfills* the criteria required for an action to be good or evil; however (in contrast to Kant's practical philosophy), the realizing act of willing is not itself the criterion for good and evil.<sup>89</sup> Any act of willing, whether good or evil, is dependent not only upon (1) the *representational* value-content ordered by means of intentional acts of preferring and subordinating (from the side of spirit), but upon (2) the *non-representational* value-content contained within the goals of conations, desires, or inclinations (from the side of vital drives). Acts of willing obtain their "purpose" (*Zweck*) from the value-content of these "goals" (*Ziele*). To put it differently, "behind" every act of willing, there is an interplay of values happening on both a spiritual, intentional level with the preferring and subordination of values, and on a vital, conative level with an inclination or conation toward (*Aufstreben*) and an inclination or conation away from (*Wegstreben*).<sup>90</sup> Both intentional preferring/subordinating and conative tendencies toward or away, I should add, depend in their own way upon the *givenness* of value in feeling and feeling states (*Fühl* and *Gefühl*) which supply the original content of these processes. Acts of willing (or any realizing act) are, at this stage in Scheler's philosophy, the

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<sup>86</sup> I will discuss in more detail later the conditions by which spirit can influence the realization of the goals of conation, namely, repression and sublimation.

<sup>87</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 126.

<sup>88</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 122.

<sup>89</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 27.

<sup>90</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 32.

only intentional acts that are also conative.

With the phenomenon of conation (*Streben*), which for all intents and purposes is the phenomenological basis for metaphysical jargon of drives, comes the entire sphere of *goals*. All goals are orientated toward a value; it is the value that gives a goal content. The value component (*Wertkomponente*) is distinguished from a representational (“picture”) component (*Bildkomponente*). The picture-component is always dependent upon the value-component, but the value-component need not be represented or “pictured.” When the value-component of a goal is represented, however, the goal becomes a purpose, i.e., that which one *wishes* to do (conation without the intention for realization), achieves a plan for its possible *willing* (conation with the intention for realization).<sup>91</sup> The practical world for willing acquires character and form on account of the value-components of the goals of conation. “All willing,” Scheler writes, “occurs in reference to a ‘situation,’ a world of (practical) ‘objects.’ ... It is only in the unities of the ‘value-things’ and ‘complexes of values’ that objects can become ‘practical objects,’”<sup>92</sup> namely objects of a realizing act, such as willing. Furthermore, The practical representational content of the purposes or possible objects for the realization of value-complexes “*are selected according to and on the basis of those values* which permeate the *moral tenor* of this willing.”<sup>93</sup> The contents of the goals of conation (the value-component), which are the basis of the representational content of purposes of willing, find grounding in reality in the experience of resistance. This is how Scheler is able to speak of

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<sup>91</sup> On the difference between wishing and willing, see Scheler, *Formalism*, 40, 123-4.

<sup>92</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 133, 134.

<sup>93</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 134.

practical reality always as the same thing as a “value-reality.”<sup>94</sup> The experience of resistance, Scheler adds, constitutes a practical object, but “the experienced point of departure” of resistance is in the “value-object,”<sup>95</sup> insofar as the experience of resistance requires conation.

In the discussion on conation in Chapter 3, I attempted to clarify the importance (there, against Heidegger’s critique of resistance) of the fact that the goal-direction of conation is immanent to the conation itself; it is not dependent upon representational content in any way. Our inclinations guide and direct themselves, though this statement will have to be qualified. While the major philosophical currents in the Western tradition have argued that our inclinations follow what the intellect thinks is good. Scheler’s attempt to turn the Greeks on their head in the relation between love and knowledge has other significant ramifications here. There is no cosmic self-conscious being, unmoved mover, or Form of the Good; no universal principle toward which natural inclinations tend. Although it makes the prospect of being good more difficult, Scheler thinks it is far more phenomenologically accurate to say that what we *think* is good (our value-representation) follows the values (either positive or negative) toward which we are inclined. Our thoughts follow as secondary the goals of conation more than the goals of conation follow our thinking. “The contents, range, and differentiation of our lived conations are in no case distinctly dependent on the contents, range, and differentiation of our intellectual activity of representation and thinking.”<sup>96</sup> The

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<sup>94</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 135.

<sup>95</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 135.

<sup>96</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 39.

“purposes of willing” are the represented contents dependent upon the goals of conation, and the goals of conation are independent from all representation. Scheler writes:

Anything that is called a purpose of the will therefore presupposes the *representation of the goal!* Nothing can become a purpose that is not first a goal! The purpose is grounded in the goal! Goals can be given *without* purposes, but no purposes can be given without previous goals. We are not able to create a purpose out of nothing, [nor] “posit” a purpose without a prior “conation toward something.”<sup>97</sup>

This raises a myriad of questions and perhaps even slight scandal to some if, as it seems, agents cannot rely on rationality to guide inclinations into a moral course of action, and if Scheler’s right, then Kant’s practical philosophy is the first precluded since a “good will,” which is good precisely insofar as it represents the ability of practical reason to choose against inclinations, and derives its goodness from this opposition, would be impossible. How then could one be morally good at all? Or perhaps a more relevant question, how could we prevent from following the principle that Scheler attributes to Spinoza: “what we desire is good; what we detest is evil”?<sup>98</sup> Though I must leave the details of ethical matters for another chapter, it must be insisted that this is not what Scheler has in mind, but it is also not by means of his reliance on rationality or thinking (of universal moral norms for example) that he get out of this problem. I’ll give a brief indication here how Scheler avoids this kind of moral relativism.

First, it is important how values or value-components are immanent to conation. Values are immanent to the goals of conation, but the goals of conation are in some

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<sup>97</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 40. Exclamation points are Scheler’s own!

<sup>98</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 37, n. 30.

way *formed*. They are formed by means of value-givenness. Conation is not the basis for value-givenness because one need not strive for a value for it to be given (i.e., felt). Rather, “every conation has its immediate foundation in value-feeling (in preferring and loving and hating) and its contents.”<sup>99</sup> A value has to be “first” given in feeling (*Fühlen*)<sup>100</sup> and although conation does not “follow” a “good known” (intellectually and with representation), it always follows a *value felt*. In other words, value-feeling is that by which the content originally arises. I use quotations around “first” and “follows” because though it is the case a value can be a component to a goal of conation only after the value is given, sometimes, according to Scheler, it is in the course of inclination and conation that we feel values. However, even if a value is felt only in a conative process, it is still the feeling, not the conation itself, that accounts for the *givenness* of the value-component. For example, one may have a conation toward nourishment, and because of it, may be inclined to eat some food, and actually eat food. The value of the food is not given merely in the drive toward the food, but the value of the food is given in the agreeableness of food and in the feeling of the satisfaction of the conation. Scheler suggests that it is often the case that a certain satisfaction “is what first makes us aware that we strove for the thing in question.”<sup>101</sup> Scheler does not explain sufficiently how a conation would be directed toward something in the first place before there is a givenness of the value content that provides the conation with a

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<sup>99</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 133.

<sup>100</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 35.

<sup>101</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 38, n. 32. His examples are “the presences of a person whom we did not expect or (in negative cases) a death that we wished for without admitting to ourselves that we have this ‘evil’ wish.”

goal. He does however speak of levels of conation to account for more fixed forms of conation that happen instinctually, e.g., the conation toward food grounded in the hunger drive, as opposed to less fixed conations of desire, e.g. the desire to sew a scarf or play a game a baseball. The latter cannot happen without some value already seen in these activities.

Value givenness (the feeling of values), like any kind of givenness can be more or less adequate. The question is whether there is something that can guarantee adequate value givenness and prevent what Scheler calls value-deception or value-delusion. The role of guiding value-givenness with respect to feeling-states (*Gefühlen*) (e.g. satisfaction, pleasure, sensible feelings) are the intentional feelings (*Fühlen*) of loving and hating. As was already mentioned, loving expands the “the value-realm accessible to feeling”;<sup>102</sup> hatred contracts it (*ressentiment*). Furthermore, although conation is largely “self-determined” in that it guides and directs itself, it is possible that conative drives can receive some amount of guidance and direction by spirit, but only negatively, but restricting and preventing certain goals of conation from becoming purposes of willing (contents with the intention for realization). More on this later. The best case scenario is if a person lives her whole life lovingly, she will feel values correctly (in their proper order) and thus can “love things as much as possible as God loves them,” which according to Scheler, is “the highest thing of which [human beings] are capable.”<sup>103</sup>

With respect to Scheler’s sociology of culture, it is more important here to

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<sup>102</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 261; Cf. *Sympathy*, “Phenomenology of Love and Hatred,” 147-161.

<sup>103</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 99.



understand the significance of the fact that representational acts (spiritual acts of thinking and willing) *depend* for their content and purposes (“ideal goals” that are “predominantly spiritual”) upon the goals of conation, and that the goals of conation, while dependent upon value-feeling, are *independent* from the representational acts of thinking and willing. Loving and hating are acts of the spirit, but not strictly speaking representational acts. They are at the forefront of all human activity; there is never a time when they are not involved. They do not follow preferring and value-feeling, thinking and willing, but are “ahead of them as a pioneer and a guide.” Loving and hating is the fundamental disposition that conditions value-feeling, which in turn conditions the goals of conations, which then “enter into the sphere of central willing” and thinking by means of the “order of preference.”<sup>104</sup>

The content-dependency of representational acts upon vital conation, and the representational-independency of conation from spirit, provides phenomenological evidence for what will become Scheler’s notorious doctrine of the weakness or powerlessness [*Ohnmacht, Kraftlos*] of spirit central to his metaphysical vision. This theory is usually interpreted as a characteristic only of Scheler’s metaphysics and philosophical anthropology that marks a very determinate break from his earlier phenomenology. Although I grant that there is some new justification in the later years absent in the earlier, I suggest that the doctrine is not a break, but rather the bringing to conclusion what his phenomenology had already implied, namely, that spirit is a necessary but insufficient condition to bring about real change in the world. Scheler writes in his late lecture “Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos” that

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<sup>104</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 43.

he had already expressed this principle in this ethics, but curiously, instead of citing from his own book, he cites a line from Nicolai Hartmann because of its succinct formulation: “Die höheren Seins- und Wertkategorien sind von Hause aus die schwächeren” (The higher categories of being and value are innately weaker)<sup>105</sup> (GW IX, 51).

In addition to the content-dependency of representational acts, it is possible already to see the relationship of determination is not one-sided, but has reciprocity. Although thinking and willing (representational acts) depend upon conation for their purposes, conation depends upon value-feeling, and ultimately intentional feelings in the acts of love and hate to form its goals. Already here in his phenomenology there is ultimately an *interdependency* between spiritual act and vital conation that gives rise the possibility of willing and action toward the realization of this content. This *interdependency between act and conation*, I argue, is Scheler’s phenomenological explication of what will be called in his metaphysics, the *interpenetration between spirit and life*.

#### *The metaphysics of spirit and life*

Scheler’s understanding of metaphysics is rather unique because it avoids what he takes to be a one-sided perspective throughout the history of philosophy. Metaphysics is neither a universal *Logos* that constitutes the immutable basis behind the back of all material change, nor is it a material evolution from which arises the ideal structure that reflects the material process. Metaphysics is indeed

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<sup>105</sup> Max Scheler, *Human Place in the Cosmos*, trans. Manfred Frings (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2009) 47.

the mode of cognition pertaining to the “Ground of Being,” but this ground is neither merely a spiritual determining ground (whether immutable or dialectical) for material change nor a material determining ground for spiritual change. The ground of being is the very “interpenetration” (*Durchdringen*) between spirit and life. The interpenetration—the vitalization of spirit and the spiritualization of life—must itself be the ground because neither spirit nor life by themselves qualify to be an autonomous, independent determining ground for the other because both are incomplete without the other. And I argue that this metaphysical “interpenetration” comes *directly* from the relation of interdependency disclosed in Scheler’s phenomenology of act and conation. Spirit needs something from life in order to function, and life needs something from spirit. Spirit gains from life *energy and power*. Life gains from spirit *vision and direction*. Before spelling this out further, I should clarify Scheler’s understanding of the one-sided perspectives he attempts to avoid and with which he seeks an intermediate position.

The first is the error of the “classical theory” which holds that higher forms of being (spirit and reason), because of their purity and level of value in the order of being, have greater power and effectiveness. This view, Scheler adds, leads to the further “untenable nonsense of a ‘teleological’ worldview.”<sup>106</sup> Scheler not only assigns this position to Plato and the Christian Neo-Platonists, Aristotle and the Scholastics, but it has entered the modern world via Descartes, as its “most effective” proponent, and was expanded by the German idealists. He cites in particular Hegel’s “panlogicism,” where world history (according Scheler’s

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<sup>106</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 46-7.

description) is the dialectical “self-explication of the divine idea,” and human beings are their “developing self-consciousness of freedom.”<sup>107</sup> He also criticizes Hegel’s notion of the “cunning of reason,” saying that “conditions and events are quite indifferent to such ‘cunning’..., the course of real history is...indifferent to the logical requirements of spiritual production.”<sup>108</sup> Scheler takes this classical conceptualization to be “the basic outlook held by the larger part of the Occidental bourgeoisie.”<sup>109</sup> Echoing Marx, the theory is sociologically “a class ideology or an ideology of the upper classes of the bourgeoisie.”<sup>110</sup>

The second and corresponding error that Scheler also wants to avoid, which retains in part some presuppositions of the first, is to think that since spirit and ideas are without their own power or effectiveness, then spirit must simply be an epiphenomenal reflection or product of material life, and as such, the history of spiritual works of art, science, philosophy, law would be without an inherent and autonomous logic or continuity.<sup>111</sup> To say if spirit obtains its *power* through life-forces, then spirit must obtain its *being* through these forces is a false inference for Scheler. This opposite view—what Scheler calls the “negative theory” of spirit, and of those “addicted to life values”<sup>112</sup>—is assigned to such diverse figures as Buddha (theory of redemption), Arthur Schopenhauer (‘self-negation of the will to live’), Paul Alseberg (his book, *Das Menschheitsrätsel* [*The Riddle of Mankind*]), and Sigmund

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<sup>107</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 45.

<sup>108</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 54.

<sup>109</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 45.

<sup>110</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 45, n.

<sup>111</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 59.

<sup>112</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 43.

Freud (later theory, i.e., *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*).<sup>113</sup> However, with respect to Scheler's sociology of culture, his attention is fixed on Marx. After spending a great deal of effort underscoring the limitations of spirit for effecting reality, and arguing against the theory that the material conditions of social reality are determined and explained "as a rectilinear extension of the history of spirit,"<sup>114</sup> Scheler does not follow Marx either when he turns to the way real factors affect the ideal. It is just as problematic, he thinks, to attempt leave it to material history to univocally determine and explain the history of spirit.<sup>115</sup>

Scheler believes that the "negative" view denies the autonomy of spirit which he identifies as the truth contained in the classical view.<sup>116</sup> However it seems that the negative view denies the autonomy of spirit precisely because they adopt the classical idea that autonomy is identical with actuality. As such, that which contains potentiality—potentiality to act—is not autonomous. Since spirit lacks its own power, it would contain potency and therefore without autonomy. This line of thinking seems to make a lot of sense. If spirit lives in its acts, and it is dependent upon drives for its acting, how could its autonomy square with this dependency. Scheler's solution requires a revision of the notion of autonomy: as was mentioned before, spiritual autonomy consists in the personal value-orientation of its acting, or the direction of its "becoming different" or spiritual edification. Spirit requires vital-energy to *fulfill* this orientation or direction of its own becoming, but the individual direction and orientation itself are not the same as the directions and aims of vital-

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<sup>113</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 41.

<sup>114</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 54.

<sup>115</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 53.

<sup>116</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 46.

drives. Spirit is in fact an autonomous *moral orientation*, directed toward values that are higher values than the biological needs of material life. As such, spiritual autonomy is a *moral autonomy*; its *being* is in its value-orientation; and an orientation that *surpasses or exceeds* in direction biological needs, such as nutrition, reproduction, and power. For example, despite involuntary drive-orientation toward the power to outdo or overcome resistances that lies within the paths of its projects, spirit can use this energy, to inhibit the drive itself, and (paradoxically) divest itself of power, or humble itself, so to speak.

Scheler would ultimately side, I think, with Socrates in his debate with Thrasymachus that the moral orientation of justice, as a rational one, is not the same orientation of outdoing or commanding authority over others. However, it has this different orientation not because spirit is a separate substance with its own power; its being is in its very moral orientation. Scheler would think Plato would be hard pressed to explain the fact that a rational orientation could differ from a bodily one given the new advancements in psychology, physiology, and physics that energy is a counterpart of matter, not spirit. Spirit is without power either to produce or withdraw energy in drives, or to increase or diminish this energy. Spirit is able only “to call upon various drive-gestalts, which lets the organism do what spirit ‘wills’.”<sup>117</sup> Thus, Scheler writes, “from the beginning, what is lowly is powerful and what is highest is impotent. ... The highest points of a culture are [relatively brief] and rare in human history. [Brief] and rare is what is beautiful, in its tenderness and

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<sup>117</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 44-5.

vulnerability.”<sup>118</sup>

From what has been said earlier about willing as both practical conation and intentional act, it is not surprising that the way the goals or purposes of spirit come to be effective in society is by means of willing. However, Scheler seems have revised his theory of willing to be more consistent with the powerlessness of spirit. That willing takes spiritual intentions into a practical conation, oriented toward acting, this part of the theory remains. But insofar as willing is a spiritual act, the act itself cannot be effective to bring about its purposes. Willing alone cannot empower kinesthetic movements required for the completion of an action. In the *Formalism*, in the articulation of the “elements of an action” (*Bezüglich der Handlung*), Scheler distinguishes between on the one hand, the “willing of the contents” (i.e., the willing for something to be done [*Wollen des Tuns*]) and on the other hand, the “willing-to-do” (*Tunwollen*). In the course of the process of action, the willing-to-do follows after the mere willing of the content, and is described as “the class of activities directed toward the lived body leading to movements of the members.”<sup>119</sup> He then goes on to explain that the willing of content alone (*Wollen des Tuns*) is a pure spiritual willing which cannot accomplish an action or bring about its success unless such willing changes into a will-to-do.<sup>120</sup> All willing intends the realization of a content (which distinguishes it from wishing) but only a special kind of willing—the will-to-do—can have enough effectiveness to issue forth into bodily movement. For example, I may “will” that a lamp be upon this desk rather than that one (willing of

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<sup>118</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 47.

<sup>119</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 121.

<sup>120</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 123.

content), but in order for this content to be realized I must “will” the series of movements required to have the lamp on a different desk (the will-to-do). This is the “efficacy of willing (as willing-to-do)” which Scheler castigates Hume and other empiricists for denying.<sup>121</sup>

Ironically, Scheler will later come to deny this also, but not because he denies “the phenomenon of effecting,” as he says Hume does, but because he comes to deny this phenomenon pertains within in the sphere of willing. It seems Scheler comes to give to the domain of involuntary conation (drives) the kind of efficacy with which he describes the will-to-do in his earlier work. This interpretation is consistent with the explanation of the relation of willing to the phenomenon of resistance discussed in Chapter 3. I mentioned that Scheler had earlier ascribed resistance to the sphere of willing, but that later he ascribes exclusively to the sphere of drives and explicitly denies the experience of resistance in willing. Both of the changes (that acts of willing have efficacy, and that acts of willing meet resistance) have the same explanation: that willing on the one hand becomes identified with a pure spiritual act (the willing of content) and loses any of its former efficacy (the will-to-do). Scheler comes to expand the domain and efficacy of the involuntary conation (drives) and diminishes the domain and efficacy of voluntary conation (willing).

This does not mean that willing is no longer able to have influence upon the course of action, but its influence is no longer a positive one; it is only negative. I referenced in the previous subsection on the phenomenology spirit and life a “spiritual conditioning of vital inclinations.” The role of willing, as a purely spiritual

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<sup>121</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 130.



act, can influence the conative efficacy of drives by means of sublimation, on the one hand, and repression on the other. The terms Scheler uses for these two ways of spiritual influencing, *Leitung* and *Lenkung* are not different enough to portray the distinction very well. The words are synonymous; they both can mean “guiding,” “directing,” or “leading.” *Lietung* means “sublimation.”<sup>122</sup> It refers to the *primary* spiritual function to lure “the lurking drives with the bait of appropriate images and values to coordinate drive impulses so that they will execute the project of the will, posited by spirit, and make it real.”<sup>123</sup> *Lenkung* means “repression,”<sup>124</sup> namely the *secondary* function of spirit to inhibit (or release) the conative impulses that counter (or align with) the ideas and values of the spirit.<sup>125</sup> Thus, spirit can influence drives and impulses *negatively* by sublimating and/or repressing their energy. However, spirit can only have this influence if and only if it can present to drives some *positive* content (as an idea or value) that aims toward a *higher value* and some representation of how it can be realized. In other words, spirit extends an invitation, so to speak, to the (non-representational) goals of conation toward the purposes of willing, by means of the representation or “picture-content” of such purposes. But spirit must have some *image* of the purpose to present, and there must be some insight into the *value* of the purpose, in order for the purposes to gain energy and motivation. Scheler warns that if spirit attempts to wage war directly and intentionally against an impulse toward what a person takes to be lower or negative

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<sup>122</sup> Manfred Frings translates *Leitung* in both *Problems* and *Human Place* as “directing.”

<sup>123</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 44; *Problems*, 54, n. 29.

<sup>124</sup> Manfred Frings translates *Lenkung* in *Problems* as “guiding,” and in *Human Place* as “steering.”

<sup>125</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 44; *Problems*, 54, n. 29.

values, without something positive to redirect the impulse, spirit will inevitably lose.

After all, drives are stronger than spirit. Scheler explains it this way:

Willing always produces the opposite of what it wills when, instead of intending a *higher value*, whose realization makes us forget what is bad and *attracts* human energies, it directs itself instead to a mere fight against and negation of a drive whose goal appears to our conscience as “bad.” Thus, the human being also has to learn how to tolerate himself, even those inclinations which he recognizes to be bad or pernicious. He should not fight them directly, but learn to overcome them indirectly by mobilizing his energies toward valuable tasks known by his conscience to be good and proper and possible for him to achieve.

There is a qualification to spirit’s impotence—a proviso that might appease the Aristotelian virtue theorist—in this process of sublimation. It is true, Scheler adds, that spirit initially is without power or energy of its own, but

spirit is able to gain power by virtue of the processes of sublimation, and...drive-life can enter (or not enter) under the laws of spirit and into the structure of ideas and meanings that spirit holds out before the desires. ...[I]n the course of such interpenetration between drives and spirit in individuals and in history, drive-life makes powers available to spirit.<sup>126</sup>

### *The history of spirit and life*

#### I.

I have argued that Scheler’s metaphysics of the interpenetration of spirit and drive comes directly from his phenomenology of the interdependency of act and conation. I want to emphasize now that this interpenetration is itself a process of becoming, and is therefore a history. Indeed, it does not *have* a history, it *is* history. I suggest also that Scheler’s philosophy of history (the becoming of the interpenetration of spirit and life) relies on his phenomenology of temporality.

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<sup>126</sup> Scheler, *Human Place*, 47-8.

In Chapter 3, I explained Scheler's position that history acquires meaning for us with the givenness of temporality in the lived experience of *the power to affect a change*. However, the notion of "power" has since become a problem. Spirit as such "has in itself *no original trace* of 'power' or 'efficacy' to bring [new] content into *existence*."<sup>127</sup> With respect to the development or growth of "emerging real factors such as a new allocation of political powers, the economic relations of production, racial miscegenation, and racial tension,"<sup>128</sup> spirit has only a *negative* determination (restraining or releasing) of that which has a tendency to come into existence on its own accord. Realization for these factors—their "becoming possible"—tend to follow a causal pattern relatively indifferent to ideal goals; qualitative goals of spirit or mind (for political, economic, or racial social relations) that are not within the latitude of these patterns "bites on granite and its 'utopia' fades away into nothing."<sup>129</sup>

But how might one speak of spiritual history if spirit is powerless for effective realization of its purposes and ideal goals? The power to affect change lies within real conditions, which, as I mentioned, determine the narrative of acts: both in the structure and direction of drive conditions and in the existing structures of society. Scheler admits that spirit can be a *positive* "determining factor," but only for the *quality of cultural* content, and never a "realizing factor" for possible cultural developments. The scope of possible cultural development is determined by the "*real, drive-conditioned factors of life*, that is, the peculiar combinations of real

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<sup>127</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 37.

<sup>128</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 37.

<sup>129</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 37.

factors: the constellation of [political] powers, the factors of economic production, the factors of the qualitative and quantitative conditions of populations [i.e., family and blood relationships], as well as geographical and geopolitical factors.”<sup>130</sup>

Cultural diffusion not only requires the backing of drive conations to indirectly acquire the power for the realization of ideas or ideal goals, but this happens from a *small number* of “leading persons” who can attract either deliberate or non-deliberate imitation of a *large number*, or majority.<sup>131</sup>

To summarize briefly the relationships of determination: spirit is never a realizing factor; drives are always the realizing factor. Spirit can play a *positive* determination of cultural qualitative development, but only a *negative* determination of material development (it is in this determination that spirit can exercise normative regulation). Drives, though the source of any realization, cannot provide content for cultural development; they provide the goals and content only for material development. The three basic real factors that Scheler identifies: family, economy, and politics (along with their infinite forms of organization in history) directly refer to the three basic drives: reproduction, nourishment, and power.

Scheler writes that

It is senseless to maintain that economics has nothing to do with the drive for nutrition and the feeding of men because there are publishing houses and art shops, because one can buy and sell books and buttercups, and because even animals have a drive for nutrition and nourish themselves without economics. Without the nutritive drive and the objective goal that it serves biologically...there would be no economics—and no publishing houses or art shops either.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 37.

<sup>131</sup> Scheler cites Gabriel Tarde’s 1895 book, *Les Lois de l’imitation*, (*The Laws of Imitation*, trans. Elsie Clews Parson (New York: Holt, 1903)).

<sup>132</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 35.

Real factors operate as selective conditions that determine which ideas can become realized. When the conditions are fitting, this opens the “sluice-gates” for the dissemination of certain ideas, artistic vision, etc. *Raphael needs a brush*—

his ideas and his artistic visions do not create it; he needs politically and socially powerful patrons to employ him to exalt their ideals: otherwise he cannot act out his own genius. Luther needed the interests of dukes, cities, territorial lords leaning toward particularism, and the rising bourgeoisie; without these factors nothing would have come out of the dissemination of [his doctrines.]<sup>133</sup>

On the other hand, real conditions cannot fully determine or explain the ideas or vision that is ultimately realized by means of these factors. Besides the determination of the goals of our drives and conation, there is also a qualitative determination corresponding to higher values to which drives are blind. Scheler states in an early review essay<sup>134</sup> that the conditions of the medieval economy could never fully explain the magnificent style and unique architecture of the Cologne cathedral. The conditions prevailing in the Middle Ages, the means of productions as well as interested influential parties in building a cathedral, could only determine that it was materially possible to build *a* cathedral, and that this possibility could be realized, but it could not determine the content of the idea or meaning of the cathedral, its religious symbolism and cultural beauty, etc.

Neither the drive alone nor the idea alone is enough to effect history, the two must be united within a single course of action, and they are, even in courses of action that are toward *predominantly* ideal goals, or those that are toward

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<sup>133</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 38.

<sup>134</sup> Scheler’s review of a book by Walter Rathenau, “Vom Kommenden Dingen,” *Hochland*, XIV, 2 (July, 1917).

*predominantly* real ones. Although spirit and drives have their material and content interdependencies, they each possess their own process of development, mode of temporality. I have already spoken about Scheler's connection of different kinds of knowledge with different modes of becoming, particularly, becoming within the sphere of the material life-condition, and becoming in the sphere of spirit. Not only his human action is always, even at once, directed toward both ideal and real goals, but that all goals "serve a becoming."

In the *Formalism*, spirit (or "person" in this case) is identified as a non-substantial "foundation" for a "pure becoming different." Spirit is always forward moving; it is "futural" or "ahead of itself" like Heidegger had later described the being of Dasein. Indeed, the individual identity of spirit is captured in the fact that it is essentially a qualitative direction or orientation of different acts. Spirit, Scheler writes, "lives *into* [physical-relative] time and executes [its] acts into time in becoming different. ...[spirit] lives [its] existence precisely in the *experiencing* of [its] *possible experiences*."<sup>135</sup> If spirit is the human being directed toward the possibilities of becoming, it is the "ego" (*Ich*), or the human self, who carries along with the possibilities of spirit, the history of its acts; "all that we experience is experienced as '*together and interwoven*' in the ego."<sup>136</sup> The temporality of spirit is above the phenomenal temporal predicates of past, present, and future, which only have meaning by means of some present-time point-of-reference. Past and future are always relative to the now-point. For Scheler, it is due to the now-point position of the lived-body, which grounds human anticipation and memory into the present,

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<sup>135</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 385-6.

<sup>136</sup> Scheler, *Formalism*, 415.

that the ego can carry with it that which is given as “past,” and which spirit can be directed toward what is given as “future.” The whole human being, who, in one respect, never stops becoming different with respect to possible experiences, and another respect can never escape his or her past, may now physically stand in the gap that separates “the history that is *possible* and *becoming* at every point of time, and *the* history, the event, work, and actual condition, that has *already occurred*.”<sup>137</sup>

Scheler once wrote that the “Eighteenth-century thinkers, Kant included, erred in not noticing in history the common...*growth of the spirit itself* and of...*a priori* forms of thought, reflection, value-judgment, preference, love, etc.”<sup>138</sup> To be clear, Scheler refers here to the development of the forms or categories of mind or spirit. Scheler thinks that spirit grows and develops with respect to the following:

1. The forms of thought and attitude: e.g., the transition from primitive to civilized mentality.
2. The forms of *ethos* or value-preference, and not merely factual changes in “esteem for goods.”
3. The feeling for styles and artistic sentiment.
4. The development of worldview: e.g., from an organismic to mechanistic worldview.
5. The development of forms of association: e.g., from primitive clans to a political society or state; from life-community to individualistic society.
6. The development of technique: e.g., from a magical form of technology to a scientific one.

These are cases of the development of the categorial forms themselves—the

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<sup>137</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 53.

<sup>138</sup> Scheler, “The Forms of Knowledge and Culture,” *Philosophical Perspectives*, 34.

spirit's own constitution—and are not simply cases of *application*, where a single unchanging spirit or ethos adapts to different historical circumstances, such as, for example, when the Christian ethos is applied to and made to adapt to the different economic and social conditions in ancient, medieval and modern periods of history alike. Though it is left unsaid, it seems Scheler would interpret such application or adaptation as being a result of the changes of the patterns of thinking and worldview. That is to say, the Christian ethos does adapt to every society and time *because* Christians in those places and times are a product of their stage of spiritual history (either progression or regression), namely, of the way of thinking, their moral orientation or attitude, and their value-preference (*ethos*). Scheler thinks that there is “no distinction more important” for the sociology of knowledge than this one, between the development of spirit itself and the various applications within different stages of material development.

To say that spirit has its own mode of development is not to say that spirit develops on its own. Its development would have to rely on real factors in ways already described, but also in another way. Spirit grows, Scheler says, in a “functional” manner: it draws within itself content from lived experience (individual or communal) and forms itself by this content. It has been said that “knowledge of essence” is that kind of knowledge that contributes to the becoming and edification of spirit. Scheler is not saying that philosophy is required in order for spirit to change, and that culture develops only in reference to its philosophy. Rather, through the course of one's lived-experience and intuition of the world, the content of this *knowledge* (*Wissen*, which is ontological, not theoretical) is transmuted or



functionalized into the forms of the way of thinking, loving, preferring, perceiving, etc. Scheler's theory of functionalization is the way he explains how contents of experience and givenness, *through acts of the spirit or person*, condition the value-orientation, attitude (*Einstellung*), or moral tenor (*Gesinnung*) of an individual or community. That functionalization happens by means of act-experiences is important. It is not in the various occurrences or happenings individuals or communities undergo that accounts for changes of spirit and a fluctuation of the "self-value" of spirit (good/evil); spiritual change requires spiritual acts, for spirit "lives in and through its acts." Functionalization, more specifically, is the "process of cultivating the spirit"<sup>139</sup> by means of the transmutation of the essence and value content of its acts and their objects into the attainment of *culture* (*Bildung*).

Culture, for Scheler, is not the cultivating process itself; it is the result, or point at which, for an individual or community, act-experiences become an integrated or imbedded way of life to an extent that it is no longer decipherable to those living that life "how this knowledge was acquired, nor where it came from."<sup>140</sup> It is "primarily a form, a shape, and a rhythm peculiar to each individual";<sup>141</sup> it is an act-experience that "develops as its function and becomes, so to speak, its blood and life."<sup>142</sup> This functionalized content is also the best indicator of the way one will spontaneously react to new practical situations. Scheler writes, "It is a knowledge fully prepared for every concrete situation, ready to act, which has become 'second nature' and fully adapted to the concrete task and to the demand of the hour, fitting

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<sup>139</sup> Scheler, "Forms of Knowledge," 35.

<sup>140</sup> Scheler, "Forms of Knowledge," 36.

<sup>141</sup> Scheler, "Forms of Knowledge," 19.

<sup>142</sup> Scheler, "Forms of Knowledge," 38.

like a natural skin, not like a ready-made suit.”<sup>143</sup> It isn’t a deliberate application of principles or concepts that require theories upon theories as to how they might fit or apply to life situations; rather it is a “*possession...with such relevance that the application ‘seems to’ put to work simultaneously an infinite number of rules and concepts.*”<sup>144</sup>

## II.

Scheler’s theory of culture and functionalization can provide a clue for the way the distinction between ideal and real or spirit and life, form a unified history. It is important to note that these distinctions are phenomenological in origin; they arise, for Scheler, from a phenomenology of human intentionality, conation and action which are integrated within his metaphysics and anthropology. It is from a phenomenology of the interdependency of act and conation, to the interpenetration of spirit and life (in part through the process of functionalization) which compose the elements of a *single history*. My claim is that history is not separated into two different histories according the distinction between ideal and real factors but that their interrelation both constitutes and discloses history.

That there are not two histories, however, may require some explanation since it

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<sup>143</sup> Scheler, “Forms of Knowledge,” 36.

<sup>144</sup> Scheler, “Forms of Knowledge,” 36. Scheler often characterizes the phenomenon of functionalization in such a positive way that he tends to overlook that functionalization could contribute just as much to the decline or regression of spirit as to its growth and cultivation. I’ll give more consideration later on how functionalization is precisely the mechanism by which ideologies grow within society. And if culture is strictly speaking the arrival of functionalized content which characterizes the value-preference (ethos) and moral-orientation of an individual or community, then culture itself, like *Gesinnung*, is not always good, but can range between good and evil, depending upon the content functionalized.

does not seem to square with some of Scheler's references to the "history of spirit" on the one hand, and the "history of emerging real factors" on the other. It also seems to be a problem with respect to all of Scheler's references (which are considerable in number) to "timeless" phenomena. I already defended Scheler against the charges made by Mannheim of a supratemporal ideal domain. Whatever Scheler calls timeless is not strictly speaking without temporality. Spirit is sometimes said to be timeless, but not only is it defined by means of its "becoming different," but it is contrasted with the notion of an enduring substance. Scheler uses the phrase "timeless becoming" also in his sociology of knowledge.<sup>145</sup>

Timelessness refers to phenomena that are given with an immeasurable development in contrast to the measurable rate of change by which time is normally identified, i.e., clock-time. It refers, in other words, to that which does not "change like a thing in time," to use a common phrase of his. That is to say, that which is not *relative* to the changes of *physical* time. Scheler's own explanation is provided:

It is incorrect to regard ideas as standing outside time or as eternal, without first specifying the notion of time which one has in mind here. We would like to show that the actual essences are outside time, if time is taken in this context to be physical or relative time, which is measurable. In this sort of time, ideas are absolutely constant and there is no question of any repetition of different examples of the same idea: there is simply no exchange, no passing away, and no new creations. All this does not apply when we have in mind the notion of an absolute time—to which no space corresponds—a time in which the very history of the world takes place, where coming-to-be and passing away do occur, and which is no longer relative to any particular life.<sup>146</sup>

The spiritual history of a community is an example of what Scheler calls "absolute time." I suggested in Chapter 3 that terminology, "absolute time" is a

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<sup>145</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 155.

<sup>146</sup> Scheler, *The Constitution of the Human Being*, 375.

rather misleading because absolute time is itself relative to the being of spirit, and that it is less misleading to call Scheler's conception of absolute time, "immanent time" because it is characterized above all by the fact that the contents of history are immanent to or inseparable from their historical position. That is to say, it refers to a time that cannot recur. In other words: a "time in which temporal positions and locations, on the one hand, and temporal contents, on the other, are necessarily connected with one another."<sup>147</sup> All acts and events may be able to be abstractly characterized by the kinds of acts and events they are. In this way, they belong more to the conceptual patterns for the understanding of historical events than they belong to historical understanding. Acts and events (individual or communal) also have an immanent connection to their concrete historical position and in this way contribute to the irreversible historical development of an individual human being or community; they are acts and events that remain in the "ego" or self (*Ich*) of that individual human being or community. This is the meaning of history, for it "belongs to the nature of history that a past is at every moment still active and living, and that the contents of this past are variously brought into relief by the tasks belonging to the future."<sup>148</sup>

All change is a becoming, and temporality is the form of becoming. The experience of the power to affect change happens spatially: to affect a quantitative change in the experience of the power to move (relocate), and temporally: to affect a qualitative change in the power to modify, either in the transition of an intentional object (*Sosein*) into existence (*Dasein*) (i.e., realization) or in the transition of a being

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<sup>147</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 349.

<sup>148</sup> Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 348.

with such and such a character (*Sosein*) into another character (*Andersein*) (i.e., re-characterization or reformation). Therefore, all spatial change is also temporal (a kind of becoming), but not all temporal change is spatial. Non-spatial temporal change, as qualitative change, is irreversible change, and this is, for Scheler, the time of history. Even if what a person or group of people worked to realize or reform was eventually destroyed, the very process of the realization or reform alone—the immeasurable moments of those processes—could not be reversed. History moves on even through period of regression or decline; these low periods that refer to the loss of something that was once present do not reverse history, they contribute to that history. The community itself, its *spiritual history*, would have been irreversible even if what was realized or reformed had been reversed. That past experience would still have some psychological and qualitative bearing upon the individual or collective spirit at every moment, and for future possibilities.

History is the qualitative becoming of the acts of a community and the objective changes to its world on account of these acts. The spiritual narrative of a community or society (its cultural narrative) is an independent mode of temporality from the physical changes that a community undergoes, but is invariably connected to spatial change and physical-relative time in the same way that spiritual acts are dependent upon, and partially determined by, interests and conative drives. The variation of real factors or material circumstances, namely, all the various quantifiable changes at any given time, differ from how these changes contribute to the overall qualitative dimension of that society, to the narrative of acts that are behind those real changes and the way that real changes themselves determine the narrative of acts.

Although all spiritual history is within immanent time, not all immanent time refers to the history of spirit. Even natural process, such as the organic flow of seasons, has an immanent temporal quality, or “vital time.”<sup>149</sup> Not every summertime, for example, is the same as every other. The season of Summer is not simply the abstract causal position between Spring and Autumn, or the time when the sun is in a certain position in relation the orbit of the Earth, but every summertime is unlike every other in some qualitative dimension. There is some irreversible and unrepeatable quality of the natural history of the world and of the experiences of the communities of the world obtained in every time of Summer. It is due to the unrepeatability of the temporal content of one time with respect to every other that marks that irreducibility of their histories to every other. Every individual, every society, every organic unity has a history that is qualitatively distinct from every other. It must be then that “there are as many absolute times as there are individuals, societies, and organic unities.”<sup>150</sup> Scheler’s conception of history does not exclude the material life and conditions of a community or specific time of history. That absolute or immanent time (the time of history) remains existentially relative to spirit and not to life does not mean that life is not historical and that only spirit is. It means that historical temporality is the form of the life process itself, and therefore not a part of the life process. As such, only beings with spirit can have an historical consciousness because they are able to see this life-process and the form of its becoming.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 347.

<sup>150</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 349.

<sup>151</sup> Scheler, “Idealism and Realism,” 350.

The consequences of Scheler's conception include the fact that, though causal factors do contribute to the composition of history, history is not simply a temporal causal progression, entirely accessible to empirical measurement and quantification. This refers, for example, to the tendency to suggest that history is reducible to, or at least fundamentally based within, the causal position of its mode of production at any given time. This would mean that history consists of generalizable transition periods of its economic base: the feudal mode of production for some period of time; the capitalist mode of production for a time afterward; and the socialist and communist modes of production, (necessarily) beginning some time in the future. Scheler's notion of history would likewise exclude abstract characterizations of certain periods of history or places geographically, e.g., communities x, y, and z, are all "capitalist societies"; communities a, b, and c, are all "socialist," etc. None of these ways of characterizing societies in terms of historical phases ultimately say anything about the *history* of these societies: their irreducible and unrepeatable way of life, their own unique cultural *becoming* and the value orientation or direction of their "becoming different." Abstract generalizations such as these exclude historical understanding for they necessarily separate temporal content from temporal position.

If Marx's conception of history rests simply upon abstract phases of the modes of production, then the conception does not actually ever achieve an historical perspective. A dialectical understanding of history, despite its strengths, is not immune to this problem. Its strengths consist in the fact that: (1) it takes history to be a process of becoming (without settling the disagreement about whether spirit or

life is that which leads this process); (2) it takes the process of becoming as one that preserves the elements of the past and their gestation into new social synthesis; and (3) it recognizes that history does not ever move backwards or in reverse even if it regresses either materially or culturally. However, if the forces of the dialectic generalize or abstract temporal contents (e.g., various modes of production) with respect to their temporal position and mistake historical development for quantifiable features of which social structures rise and fall, without a grasp of the orientation of the spirit and the meaning behind the rise or fall of its structures, the dialectical understanding will remain largely causal in focus.

But this is a rather cheap rendition of Marx's view of history, which seems to have very much in focus the particular relations within society. When Marx claims that a particular mode of production belongs to a single society, he does so with respect to the social intercourse and their relations of production. Therefore, an abstract mode of production does not serve as the form to understand its social relations, rather, the social relations of a society are used to understand its mode of production. And although the basis for social relations is the production relations (determined by the forces of production) and class relations, which are economic features, Marx is not saying that all social relations are strictly economic, but that other (superstructural) relations, particularly cultural or religious ones, will bear some reflection of the (substructural) economic relations of production.

Marx's conception of historical development is dialectical on account of the tensions of these economic relations in society, especially with respect to the tensions that arise between human workers (labor) and the means of production



(capital), namely, the “social relations of production.” These economic relations find expression within social classes, and their tensions within class conflicts in which the contesting needs and interests of the classes are fought in cultural, political, and military terms. A mode of production is simply a particular set of production relations, and these relations are determined by the forces of production (or productive powers, *Produktivkräfte*), which refers to the instruments of production and the technique or skill of the laborers (and their stage of development). Social change (i.e., changes of the relations of production) happens when these relations cannot accommodate the expansion and development of the forces of production. Allen Wood explains that “To win out over the production relations and accommodate these relations to themselves, the expanding productive powers must wage a victorious struggle against these other social forces.”<sup>152</sup>

Thus, the forces of production constitute the *independent variable* that determines not only all the other variables in an single economic system or mode of production but also the transition into new modes of production. With respect to Marx’s notion of an independent variable, which Scheler also calls a historical constant, Scheler recalls Werner Sombart’s disagreement with Marx and acknowledges his evidence that an economic base does not apply to all societies beyond Western history nor even to the whole history of the West. Accordingly, Scheler asserts that “in the course of history there is *no constant* independent variable among the three chief groups of real factors: blood [family/race], power

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<sup>152</sup> Allen Wood, *Karl Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1981), 77.

[politics], or economics.”<sup>153</sup> He does however point to evidence that suggests periods where a single factor among the three, serves as an independent variable for a time that “determine[s] at least primarily the *form* of groupings, i.e., determine the latitude for that which *can* happen through other [real] causes.”<sup>154</sup> In other words, Scheler is interpreting the phases of history by means of a single set of real factors that have a greater determination of what can or cannot be accomplished culturally or spiritually, that is, those factors which are the primary gatekeepers of “the ‘sluices’ for the realization of spiritual potencies.”<sup>155</sup> However, it is interesting to note that despite Scheler’s resistance to Marx’s univocal, overly economic, interpretation of historical phases, Scheler takes the independent variable at any given time period to be that which is the basis for the class-stratification of society, or as he says, the “*form* of groupings.” The main difference is that Scheler does not take social class divisions to be always primarily about economic classes of ownership and production. It is interesting also to note that Scheler’s three phases of history follow closely to the same transition points as Marx’s, but downplaying the economic interpretation.

With respect, first, to that period which Marx takes to constitute the slave mode of production, Scheler insists that social groupings then did not follow economic lines of division, but followed lines of blood relationships of family and race and “the institutions rationally regulating them (rights of fathers and mothers, forms of marriage, exogamy and endogamy, clan groups, integration and segregation of races,

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<sup>153</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 57.

<sup>154</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 58.

<sup>155</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 56.

together with the 'limits' set of them by law and custom)."<sup>156</sup> For example, that which determined social position in ancient Greece or Rome was not according to economic factors, but simply according to the extent that one was, racially, in fact Greek or Roman. Those who were of mixed racial ancestry, and less racially pure, were either slaves or excluded from political participation. Scheler speaks, in the regard, of the "stratification of *races* on the basis of their inborn dynamic powers and, above all, on the basis of their urge for domination or submission."<sup>157</sup> Consider Alexander the Great. Though he was Macedonian and not Greek, he *functionalized* the stories of Achilles into his character and disposition so thoroughly that he, in a certain sense, *became Greek in spirit*. It was this racial factor that was at this time the independent variable that in turn determined social position politically and economically. It is also worth noting that Alexander, having become Greek, ventured in to the Eastern lands perhaps with the intention of bringing Greek culture to the rest of the world. The result was a shattering of political and racial boundaries, and estrangement of Greeks from their homeland. Alexander's habit of taking Persian wives showed how little he cared for the racially pure social organization.

Something similar happened with the Roman world nearly a century later. With the weakening of the Roman Empire, the influx of Germanic tribes and "barbaric" races into the Western Roman territories made it impossible to keep track of racial purity and thus to maintain such strict racial customs. Ostrogoths and Visigoths sitting on Roman thrones as emperors would have been unthinkable less than a century earlier. It was also during this time that we see the rise of what scholar's

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<sup>156</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 58.

<sup>157</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 59. Scheler credits the contribution of Ludwig Gumplowicz.

now dislike calling “feudalism.” The Carolingian Empire was divided into various kingdoms; Magyars, Muslims, and Vikings were on attacking sprees for over a century, collectively; social life moved into the countryside, close to farmland; cities and towns were mostly abandoned. The manorial village life was motivated largely by defense and protection, hence the rise of the knight as vassals to lords. Although Marx again primarily speaks of the feudal relationships of vassalage as basically economic relations, it was primarily for protection that people choose to become vassals. Consider the fact that a fief (what a vassal receives in exchange for service to a lord) was not only a piece of property, though it was this also, but primarily something over which one could wield control and power. The social class stratification at this time (from which derived the three Estates in France and other countries in early modern Europe) consisted in the noble lords who fought, clergy who prayed, and serfs who farmed (later becoming the clergy, nobility, and peasantry). These social strata were ranked primarily according to those who had the power to protect (nobility) and those who could serve the protectors (priests and peasantry) in exchange for their protection. As Scheler states,

The political *principle* of power, which secondarily leads to the formation of classes, remains the springboard and germ of all class divisions and, at the same time, regulates the latitude of potential economic configurations until the end of the absolutist and mercantilist era. Moreover, capitalism is, up to this point in time, primarily the instrument of politically derived powers and of powers not based on economics at all, however much the simultaneous economic development may have come to their aid.<sup>158</sup>

It is not surprising then that the most dominant social conflicts that arose in the Middle Ages were not between the rulers and ruled, but between the divisions of

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<sup>158</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 59.

authority: secular authority (emperor and kings) vs. ecclesiastical authority (popes and bishops).

The watershed event that ushered in the late Western situation was the French Revolution. That event marked the first break from the determination of social position upon hereditary birth-rite toward social mobility according to factors of wealth and achievement. It was the catalyst for the possibility that the relatively wealthy business classes, who had since been included among the Third Estate peasantry, were recognized as their own urban middle class (the burgher class, i.e., *bourgeoisie*). It ushered in a new situation, one that took nearly a century to unfold, that was based in part upon a new rule: people were not wealthy only on account of their political power (and native birth rite), but people had power because they were wealthy. Scheler writes that “only in the age of high capitalism...does there gradually dawn an era that can be described in a relative way a predominantly economic.”<sup>159</sup> This late situation is the first time in the West for it to become socially universal that classes or the forms of groupings were divided along economic factors, namely, wealth, property and production, and that these factors became the independent variable by which the other social variables are determined.

Despite their disagreement, I hope to emphasize that with respect to this late historical situation, Scheler and Marx agree on two fundamental points. First, that it is the economic variables that, in our day, are the determining variables for the rest of the variables of society, and that the primary evidence of this is that, second, it is according to the economic variables that class-divisions of society are

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<sup>159</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 60.

predominantly (though not entirely) determined. As we will come to see, this does not make Scheler a Marxist in really any sense of the term (other than some cursory agreement in some places) but that it does put both of them on the same field is significant, especially on the note that the Schelerian assessment of the social situation, because of this alignment, *must* refer to these economic variables and class divisions. We will see that the way he describes the patterns and forms of ideology pertain directly to economic classes.

## 6

### TOWARDS A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY

In the previous chapter, I give an account of the conflict between Scheler and Mannheim in relation to issues surrounding the *Streit um die Wissenssoziologie*, or, the sociology of knowledge dispute. This dispute involved more than sociologists of knowledge. Members of the Frankfurt School became embroiled when Mannheim's sociology of knowledge proved influential in reformulating—and, for them, endangering—the Marxist view of ideology. It is important to keep in mind that for social researchers in the 1930's, as David Frisby points out, "the sociology of knowledge was seen to be forging nothing less than an intellectual revolution."<sup>1</sup> Mannheim insisted that a sociology of knowledge could clarify scientifically, and therefore, objectively, many rival interpretations that are encumbered by biased, partisan worldviews—worldviews which are themselves therefore prone to ideology.

According to Mannheim, what most needs correcting is a conception of ideology that is formulated in such a way as to be employed as intellectual artillery of any one party or class who, because of their class-status, are somehow conditionally immune to ideological thinking. Mannheim sought to abolish once and for all using the word ideology "as a weapon by the proletariat against the dominant group."<sup>2</sup> His reasoning is not because of an intention to liberate the dominant group from accusations of ideological thinking, but because using ideology this way falls prey to

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<sup>1</sup> Frisby, *The Alienated Mind*, 195.

<sup>2</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 74.

its own kind of illusion insofar as it absolutizes its own point of view. Mannheim explains:

In short, such a revealing insight into the basis of thought as that offered by the notion of ideology cannot, in the long run, remain the exclusive privilege of one class. But it is precisely the expansion and diffusion of the ideological approach which leads finally to a juncture at which it is no longer possible for one point of view and interpretation to assail all others as ideological without itself being placed in the position of having to meet that challenge.<sup>3</sup>

After Mannheim criticized Marxism as the ideology of the proletariat, critical theorists came to Marx's defense. They did not necessarily come for the sake of saving Marxism, but for the sake of maintaining a critical function with respect to a conception of ideology, which they thought was threatened not only by Mannheim's generalization of the theory, but its non-evaluative scientific approach.

To be sure, Mannheim was not the first to make the charge that Marxist thinking is just as ideologically-prone as any other, nor was Scheler, who made this claim a half decade earlier. The expansion, or generalization, however, was a consistent and explicit theme among sociologists of knowledge. There definitely is a sense in which Mannheim's work is a more detailed development of remarks that Scheler had already made about Marxism and ideology. However, there is an even greater disparity between Mannheim's and Scheler's views, and the disparity is grounded not merely in the difference of some of their conclusions, but with respect to their methods. As I have been urging, Scheler's sociology of knowledge is first and foremost a philosophical study, and one that is an outgrowth of his phenomenology. Mannheim's scientific, non-evaluative approach to ideology is therefore fundamentally at odds with what Scheler has in mind. Value, value-giveness and

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<sup>3</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 74.



the conditions of value-giveness are central to Scheler's discussion of ideology, which will cast the issue in terms of devaluation and overvaluation. As I will show, Scheler's approach to the question of ideology, when considered in light of the phenomenological paradigm that I have been setting up throughout this work, contains a critical function that places Scheler's work in closer proximity with the critical theorists than it is with the research status the sociology of knowledge came to adopt when Mannheim took over the field.

### **Mannheim's Reformulation of Ideology and the Frankfurt School Critique**

It is important to keep in mind the problems from which a theory of ideology emerged historically and what is at stake for critical theorists in general. All knowledge has an emancipatory function. That knowledge is considered to be liberating has been a basic tenet of the history of Western philosophy since its ancient Greek origins. The terms of emancipation, however, changes over time, and especially through the course of the Enlightenment. The meaning of freedom gradually shifted from a pure and theoretical status, to a practically relevant one. For Hegel, history is on a course of emerging rationalization. Knowledge, then, is emancipatory when truth is bound up with being *realistic* and able to further this course of rationalization by restructuring the irrational structures of society, dialectically, one by one. Knowledge cannot be emancipatory if, on the one hand, it becomes lost in utopian speculation indifferent to social conditions and that perpetuate conditions of unfreedom. But, on the other hand, knowledge cannot be critical of those social conditions if it remains merely beholden to the social

conditions themselves. David Ingram suggests that this “paradox constitutes the chief dilemma addressed by critical theory.” He continues:

Critical theory is critical of both the utopian idealism of social and political philosophy and the uncritical realism of social and political science. Social and political theory ought not be so far removed from actual practice as to be useless [i.e., unrealistic]. Yet it ought not limit itself to describing the regular patterns of existing social practice for fear of becoming an uncritical tool in the service of government officials and public opinion manipulators bent on maintaining the status quo.<sup>4</sup>

According to Marx, an ideology is a theory or belief that uncritically reflects the contradictory (irrational) structure of society. Its falsity is on account of harboring and concealing irrationality and due to its implicit justification of economic or political domination of one class over another. Critical theorists are said to disagree with Marx that ideas are ideological simply because they transcended social and historical relations. Rather, they are more inclined to “agree with Hegel that the truth of these ideas consisted precisely in their transcendence of a ‘false’ or imperfect social reality.”<sup>5</sup> Not all transcendent ideas are ideological because their transcendence provides those ideas with a critical function. But, however “transcendent” ideas happen to be, their historical dependence must be kept in awareness. The transcendent ideas that are ideological are those that cannot perform a critical function, namely, insofar as they anticipate purely utopian states of affairs and are therefore unable to achieve realization.<sup>6</sup>

Mannheim notes that this scenario suggests a change in the criterion of truth from a traditional religious one to a modern secular one. The idea of a false

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<sup>4</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, xxiii.

<sup>5</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, 38.

<sup>6</sup> Ingram, *Critical Theory and Philosophy*, 39.

consciousness—“where the lie lay in the soul”—was formerly thought in terms of whether one was or was not “of God.”<sup>7</sup> Inspirational truth was determined on account of a union with the divine, so “when the prophet doubted the genuineness of his vision it was because he felt himself deserted by God.”<sup>8</sup> Ideology in the modern sense is used to regard some thought with *practical futility* or being practically unrealistic. In this view, “all thought labeled as ‘ideology’ is regarded as futile when it comes to practice, and the only reliable access to reality is to be sought in practical activity.”<sup>9</sup> Ideas that are practically futile are also regarded as trivial.

Mannheim notes that accusations of ideological thinking gradually extended beyond reference to the bourgeoisie and ended up being an accusation that groups of every standpoint use against all the rest.<sup>10</sup> Before long, an ideology came to denote the way of thinking of one’s opponents as a way of coping with “the advantage of the adversary in the competitive struggle.”<sup>11</sup> We will see later in this chapter how Scheler characterizes ideology similarly as developing within the social experiences of *ressentiment*. While this usage of ideology is not exactly the Marxist view, it is the usage to which Marx’s view led. It is important to note that (in contrast to critical theorist criticism of the sociology of knowledge) Mannheim does not see his conception of ideology as an introduction of a new theoretical counterpoint to Marxism, but an elucidation of the way the concept of ideology has changed historically, and one to which he thinks Marx unwittingly contributed. That is to say,

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<sup>7</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 70.

<sup>8</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 71.

<sup>9</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 72.

<sup>10</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 75.

<sup>11</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 76.

it is a situation where “one does not call his own position into question, but regards it as absolute, while interpreting his opponent’s ideas as a mere function of the social positions they occupy.”<sup>12</sup> Mannheim’s historical analysis of the idea of ideology seems ultimately to suggest that it is history that has refuted Marxism, not Mannheim.

According to Mannheim, it is the task of a sociology of knowledge to show that all ideas and theories, including Marxist ideas, are a function of the social positions people occupy, making them therefore no less susceptible to ideology. Mannheim differentiates between a general and special formulation of ideology. The general formulation is the one Mannheim endorses because it acknowledges that “the thought of all groups (including one’s own)...is recognized as socially determined,”<sup>13</sup> not just the thought of only specific groups, as the special formulation denotes.

Due to the fact that all ideas and theories are functional of the subject’s social position, they represent perspectives which necessarily have limited adequacy. Mannheim does not take the view that socially- or historically-situated cognition is the source of error, rather it is the source of its own adequacy, but one that is inherently constricted by means of the position. A particular perspective is not erroneous merely because it is not comprehensive. He writes: “The circumstance that thought is bound by the social- and life-situation in which it arises creates handicaps as well as opportunities.”<sup>14</sup> As such, Mannheim does not think this makes knowledge “merely relative,” in the sense of objectively inadequate and partially

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<sup>12</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 77, n17.

<sup>14</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 81.

invalid, but that it does suggest a *relational* quality of knowledge: knowledge refers to the very relation between the subject and his or her social and historical situation.<sup>15</sup>

The sociology of knowledge, for Mannheim, is an alternative to—and in many ways a substitution for—the critique of ideology, because the project of a critique of ideology seems to imply that there is some theoretical position from which to critique other ways of thinking. With the sociology of knowledge, Mannheim says, “what was once the intellectual armament of a party<sup>16</sup> is transformed into a method of research in social and intellectual history generally.”<sup>17</sup> And as a method of scientific research, Mannheim insists that with the sociology of knowledge, the theory of ideology takes on a value-neutral character. A scientific theory of ideology neutralizes its traditional evaluative component. Volker Meja observes that “Mannheim’s ‘total conception of ideology’ ...implies a rejection of the goals of critical ideological analysis: ‘ideology’ becomes a value-neutral concept....”<sup>18</sup> Mannheim suggests that the purpose of the nonevaluative approach to ideology, is “to confine oneself to showing everywhere the interrelationships between the intellectual point of view held and the social position occupied.”<sup>19</sup>

Mannheim’s general formulation and non-evaluative approach to ideology was the primary focus of the Frankfurt School critique of the sociology of knowledge. In

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<sup>15</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 79.

<sup>16</sup> Mannheim refers in a footnote to the “Marxist expression, ‘To forge the intellectual weapons of the proletariat.’” (no citation provided).

<sup>17</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 78.

<sup>18</sup> Volker Meja, “The Sociology of Knowledge and the Critique of Ideology,” in *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 1975 3: 57, 63.

<sup>19</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 78.

his essay “A New Concept of Ideology?” Horkheimer identifies what I take to be the most important oversight of Mannheim’s conception of ideology, namely, that it misunderstands the emancipatory function of knowledge (or at least emancipatory in the critical, rather than the traditional sense) and the fact that Marx conceives of ideology in light of this critical function.<sup>20</sup> Horkheimer was distraught not because of Mannheim’s critique of Marxism, but because of Mannheim’s inversion and distortion of Marx’s original concept. Since Mannheim locates ideology in any intellectual perspective that is socially conditioned and existentially bound, ideology is based upon a criterion of totality, whereby the view that is better able to incorporate a totality of different perspectives is the more valid one. Since most (if not all) knowledge is unable to bypass a particular social perspective, most (if not all) knowing is ideological. Knowing is ideological not insofar as it achieves epistemic adequacy (which all perspectives achieve to some extent), but insofar as knowing bears a degree of epistemic inadequacy, or incompleteness. Knowledge is necessarily ideological simply on account of its inadequacy. On account of this theory, any view that considers itself ideology-free, as Marxists presumably do, means that it wins for itself some unconditioned view of a totality of perspectives. Ideology, for Mannheim, is therefore nothing more than the fact of “existentially-bounded thought” and no one is immune to thinking in the context of existence.

But certainly Marx of all people did not think his critique of capitalism was somehow outside of an existential context. Horkheimer writes that “the goal of Marx’s science was neither the discovery of a ‘totality’ nor of some total and

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<sup>20</sup> Max Horkheimer, “A New Concept of Ideology?” *Knowledge and Politics: The Sociology of Knowledge Dispute*, ed. Volker Meja and Nico Stehr (New York: Routledge, 1990), 140-56.

absolute truth, but rather the transformation of particular social conditions.”<sup>21</sup> He continues that therefore, “In the sociology of knowledge, the modern concept of ideology is assigned a task which runs counter to the theory from which it arose.”<sup>22</sup> Critical theorists are, of course, very comfortable with admitting a side of unknowing to conceptual understanding—a nonconceptual side to our concepts. However, for critical theorists, ideas are not ideological simply because they are incommensurable with the fullness of the social and historical world, and therefore perspectival. That is to say, ideological thinking is not based upon the criteria of the *completeness* or *incompleteness* of knowledge at all. Rather, ideology arises in the failure on the part of subject to admit a space of incompleteness in one’s ideas—to assume identity where it is not. Mannheim’s admission that all knowledge is inadequate on account of perspective may be a claim that guards against the formation of ideology, but Mannheim has the problem perfectly backwards, by reversing the conditions of ideology: Ideology is in the *claim* of completeness, not in the recognition of incompleteness. The very condition that Mannheim considers ideological, critical theorists suggest guards against ideology. Ideology is in judgment that one’s knowing extends further than it does or is fuller than it actually is.

Furthermore, the explanation of ideology is different. For Adorno, inadequacy is not a matter of social position and perspective, it is contained necessarily in the non-identical nature of concepts. The object is always more than the concept. It is *nonidentity*, not *perspective*, that accounts for the incompleteness of knowledge.

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<sup>21</sup> Horkheimer, “A New Concept of Ideology?,” 140.

<sup>22</sup> Horkheimer, “A New Concept of Ideology?,” 144.

Because of this, Mannheim's intelligentsia,<sup>23</sup> to whom he assigns the role of proffering a totality of perspective (or at least the greatest possible totality) is, for the critical theorist, the one who is most steeped ideology due to a certain arrogance of completeness. Among the intelligentsia, not only is there a lack of self-awareness of the inadequacy of one's concepts, as concepts, but it inevitably views knowledge in the manner of traditional theory, as an interconnection of abstract ideas without reference to social reality.<sup>24</sup> We have to keep in mind that for Marx, ideology was in those whose ideas are existentially dependent, but who consider them to be more independent (more abstract) than they in fact are. According to Mannheim, the thinking of the intelligentsia is, "socially unattached" or "free-floating" and therefore are "best equipped to mediate between contending standpoints and synthesize a comprehensive understanding of the totality."<sup>25</sup> The idea that the Intelligentsia are the group less ideologically-prone represents not only a reversal of Marx's view, but a regression from Marx's view.

Consequently, overcoming ideology is not, for critical theorists, the impossible task of compensating for incomplete knowledge by accumulating the amount of perspectives toward a (ever elusive) theoretical totality of perspectives. In this view, how could you ever know one has accumulated all of the actual perspectives as well as all the possible perspectives. On the contrary, for critical theorists, overcoming

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<sup>23</sup> Cf. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 153ff.

<sup>24</sup> This does not suggest Mannheim's views avoid reference to social reality, but the idea that completeness of knowledge is simply the sum-total of perspectives, to form some kind of theoretical whole, represents a regression, it seems to me, from the view of ideology that critical theorists espoused. Marx's theory of ideology is more sophisticated than Mannheim credits.

<sup>25</sup> Leon Bailey, *Critical Theory and the Sociology of Knowledge: A Comparative Study in the Theory of Ideology* (New York: Peter Lang, 1994), 55.



ideology is a more manageable task, and one that is essentially Socratic: to increase self-awareness with respect the inadequacy of one's own concepts and to removing the discrepancy between a limited concept and the totality that a subject tries to claim for that concept, or conceptual framework.

As such, Mannheim and the Frankfurt School have different methods of dissolving ideology. We could call Mannheim's the *accumulative* approach and the Frankfurt one the *reflective* approach. Interestingly, Mannheim's approach can, in this way, be more closely aligned with Lukács' view of ideology since they both agreed on a certain point that critical theorists rejected. Leon Bailey expressed their agreement this way: "there is one social standpoint from which the totality may be known. One group of class is presented with the objective possibility of grasping to whole. It is the mission of this group or class to synthesize a comprehensive understanding of the totality."<sup>26</sup> The difference, however, between Mannheim and Lukács is that while Lukács points to the Marxist tradition and suggests this mission belongs to the working class (proletariat), Mannheim aligns with the idealist tradition and suggests this mission of synthesis and comprehension belongs to the intellectual class (intelligentsia).

### **Scheler's Concept of Ideology and Ideology Critique**

While I will ultimately show how Scheler's view of ideology has greater consistency with critical theorists', than with Mannheim's, Scheler's position shows us that that we need not decide between the set of problems treated by the

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<sup>26</sup> Bailey, *Critical Theory*, 54.

sociology of knowledge and those treated by critical theory. The epistemological question about the possible validity of cognition in relation to the social origin of the content of cognition remains an important question for the critique of ideas that perpetuate structures of oppression in society. We must not only consider the effect that inadequate, or “false” forms of consciousness have on social behavior, but provide an explanation of those forms of consciousness. However, it should be familiar enough to the reader at this point that, for Scheler, forms of consciousness are always derivative of underlying elements and attitudes. It is in there that the discussion of ideology will have to play out. But we first have to reach that sphere in the course of the discussion.

There is a part of Scheler’s writings that conceive the problem to be Mannheim’s version of it, where the concern is about absolute truth, its form and contents, and sees its mission as an illumination of this matter. On the other hand, Scheler will not opt for a non-evaluative, or value-free, approach to the problem, and so will offer a conception of ideology that maintains a critical function, without generalizing ideology very broadly or too thinly. My aim is to show that a *critique of ideology* must reach into the *sociology of knowledge*, and that a sociology of knowledge can bolster a critique of ideology. The two should not be interpreted too exclusively, as Mannheim and Horkheimer each do. It is counterproductive to take sides with respect to the two approaches to ideology. However, both positions may have to compromise something in order to cooperate. The sociology of knowledge should not be so tied to scientific methodology as to make itself irrelevant for social

critique. And the critique of ideology should not be so closed to utilizing non-evaluative approaches that they consider incapable of harnessing a critical function.

It is significant to keep in mind that Scheler's sociology of knowledge is not his entire philosophy (like, to a large extent, it is for Mannheim). Scheler's phenomenology matters a great deal for his sociology of knowledge, despite attempts to separate these two sections of Scheler's career, or worse, consider them to be opposed. I've already stressed, in the previous chapter, how all the basic concepts in Scheler's metaphysics and anthropology, upon which he constructs a sociology of knowledge, are concepts that come from his phenomenology and are already phenomenologically clarified. The metaphysics and sociology of knowledge would not, and could not, be what they are without the phenomenology of these concepts.

My fundamental aim in this chapter is not only to show the way that Scheler can provide a critique of ideology. I argue also, on the one hand, that his critique of ideology is grounded largely in his phenomenology of values and the person (that is to say, it is the phenomenology that provides the critical function). On the other hand, I argue that the sociology of knowledge serves as an explanation of the criteria of validity (in a social context) that will be operative for the critique of ideology. Scheler's critique of ideology, however, will differ substantially from the critical theorists by the fact that Scheler will insist that a critique of ideology must be a moral critique. The problem of ideology is not only identity-thinking, but overvaluation and devaluation. We will see that the ideological arena is more fundamental than the conceptual inadequacy and the recognition of this inadequacy.

It rests ultimately within the very moral attitudes or value orientations with which we approach the world. Scheler's sociology of knowledge gets us to the place—the arena—where the drama plays out, and explains why the drama must play out there.

### *Ideology and Idols*

The number of times Scheler uses the term “Ideologie” is scarce, but the idea or problem that theories of ideology are invested in disclosing by the term is a problem central to Scheler's philosophy as a whole, and his sociology of knowledge specifically. Scheler first raises the issue of ideology within the context of his cultural sociology; ideology is mentioned in relation to, but with distinction with, the meaning of prejudice. Explaining the relation and difference of ideology and prejudice is the first important task.

Cultural sociology, if we recall from the previous chapter, is that part of human activity that is predominantly directed (intentionally) toward ideal goals, namely the realization of these goals within one's own social context. Ideal goals are inextricably connected toward real factors, whether this be in terms of the way spiritual activity is determined by drives toward “real goals,” or the way social conditions make the realization of some ideas futile. Scheler just assumes that goals have to be practically realistic, not in order to be worthwhile, or of value, but at least in order to be effective in transforming the material or spiritual quality of society.

All goals, Scheler thinks, serve a distinct domain of historical becoming, either *practically* (in terms of material transformation), *spiritually* (in terms of personal or

cultural transformation), or *soteriologically* (in terms of the becoming of God's redemptive value in the world). It is worth repeating that these domains of goals have correlations with different kinds of knowing, which arise from different types of intuitions. The empirical intuitions of the material world tend toward a *scientific knowledge* of the ways of controlling the material world. Intuitions of persons or cultures, arising from interpersonal and intercultural experiences tend toward a *knowledge of essences*. Religious experience and corresponding intuitions about the nature of the divine tend toward a *redemptive knowledge*.

These three types of knowing correspond to what Scheler calls "social forms of spiritual cooperation."<sup>27</sup> First, the type corresponding to scientific knowledge are various *research organizations* among the positive sciences which are united (and distinguished) by the objects and practical goals of research. These organizations, Scheler notes, are usually "connected with the organizations of technology and industry or with certain professional [i.e., legal, medical, or political] organizations."<sup>28</sup> Second, the type corresponding to knowledge of essences are *educational communities* united (and distinguished) by a certain system of ideas or values. And third, corresponding with redemptive knowledge are *religious communities* or churches, united (and distinguished) theologically.

Scheler insists that these higher organizations of knowledge are to be distinguished from the social groups of "estate, profession, class, or party," where belonging is based upon collective interests on the level of *prejudice*.<sup>29</sup> Scheler

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<sup>27</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 46.

<sup>28</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 46.

<sup>29</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 46-7.

characterizes the prejudices of social class or political party as “pseudo-knowledge”—or better presumed knowledge, on the level of presupposition. By this phrase, he indicates the situation where “those who have [this ‘knowledge’] in common remain *unaware* of both the collective root of interests behind [it] and of the circumstances that only they as a group, and only by virtue of belonging to one of these groups, have this knowledge in common.”<sup>30</sup> Prejudices, as prejudices, (namely, “automatic and unconscious” sentiments of a particular social group on account of shared interests) are inevitable and natural. And on the level of prejudice, these shared interests have not yet achieved the status of ideology. Prejudices form the necessary basis of ideology, but an additional condition must apply in order for a prejudice to become an ideology, namely, the legitimation of prejudice on a conscious level. Ideologies are the conscious and deliberate theoretical *justification* of prejudices “behind the aegis of religious, metaphysical, or scientific thinking, or by drawing on dogmas, principles, and theories originating in [any one of] those higher organizations of knowledge.”<sup>31</sup> Ideologies are, in effect, consciously justified class or party interests.

Within a later section concerning the “material problems” of the sociology of knowledge, Scheler says more about ideology in relation to class-interests. His intent in this case is to consider the task that Mannheim says a sociology of knowledge has with respect to ideology, which is mapping out, in a non-evaluative sense, the correspondence between intellectual perspectives and social position.

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<sup>30</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 47.

<sup>31</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 47.

Scheler calls the following list “formal types of thinking that are determined by classes.”<sup>32</sup> It considers the categorial tendencies of class-based thinking.

<b>Lower-Class Mentality</b>	<b>Upper-Class Mentality</b>
Value-prospectivism	Value-retrospectivism
Reflection upon becoming	Reflection upon being
Mechanical worldview	Teleological worldview
Realism (world as ‘resistance’)	Idealism (world as ‘realm of ideas’)
Materialism	Spiritualism
Induction, empiricism	<i>A priori</i> knowledge, rationalism
Pragmatism	Intellectualism
Optimistic view of the future and pessimistic retrospection	Pessimistic view of the future and optimistic retrospection
Dialectical thinking	Identity thinking
Thinking about milieu	Nativistic thinking

Scheler insists these class-based categories “are not to be construed as merely *philosophical theories* bearing the same titles. Rather they represent the very functions of *living types of thinking* and living forms of intuition—not reflective knowledge about these forms.”<sup>33</sup> And, furthermore, these types of thinking are not subject to strict determination, but are *tendencies* that can, in principle, be overcome. Scheler also does not consider these “*class-conditioned, subconscious inclinations*” to be prejudices, or at least not necessarily. They represent attitudes of class position (*Klassenlage*) that are functional for the formation of prejudices.

Scheler considers the elucidation of the necessary origins of these attitudes to be

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<sup>32</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 169.

<sup>33</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 169.

what he refers as a “sociological doctrine of idols.” “Idols,” here, is used in the Baconian sense of certain “deceptions” of perception.

In the early part of his career, Scheler was so influenced by Bacon’s theory of the idols of outer perception that he continued the theme in a work that considers the “idols” or deceptions of inner perception. The essay was first published in 1911 under the title “Über Selbsttäuschungen” (“On Self-Deceptions”). An expanded version has been translated as “The Idols of Self-Knowledge,” which attempts to refute the idea that “one *cannot* be deceived or mistaken about one’s own internal mental experiences.”<sup>34</sup> The essay is Scheler’s contribution to a phenomenology of illusion and error which leads him to make an important distinction between them as two different source of false propositions. An error is a falsity on the level of inferential judgment. An illusion, on the other hand, is a deception on the pre-propositional level of intuition; it refers to something that is given in intuition, but is not itself present.

To use Scheler’s own example: “If, on the basis of some moisture which I see on the way to my house, I judge that ‘it has been raining,’ and if I find afterward that farther along the street is not wet, and if, finally, I learn that a street-cleaning truck has passed by my house, I know that my judgment is in error.”<sup>35</sup> An error pertains specifically, and exclusively to a mistaken propositional inference made on account of an accurate perception. An illusion, on the other hand, is when the perception itself is mistaken (not merely, though, on the level of appearance, but on the level of

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<sup>34</sup> David Lachterman, “Translator’s Introduction” to Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, xxx.

<sup>35</sup> Scheler, “The Idols of Self-Knowledge,” *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 12.



taking an appearance as indicating a certain state of affairs which is incongruent with the actual state of affairs). When, for example, on the way to my house, I notice that the street or part of the street looks wet. The street is given in intuition *as wet*, but it turns out that a shadow or a glare on the street had given the impression of wetness. Although I might later on make the true judgment that the street, in fact, is not wet, the intuition remains an illusion, and the illusion is essentially different from the judgment that I make about the street: whether I infer from the given state of affairs whether the street is or is not wet. Scheler writes that,

Consequently, illusion is wholly independent of the sphere of judgment, the sphere of 'believing,' 'asserting,' and 'supposing,' Illusion takes place in the prelogical sphere of states of affairs and consists in an incongruous relation between at least two states of affairs and the levels of being to which they belong. ... While illusion remains wholly within the sphere of the intuitive, error consists in a relationship between what is thought and what is intuited.<sup>36</sup>

This reference to illusion (or deception, "idols") in the domain of intuition plays a significant role in the phenomenology of ideology, but it extends further than deceptions within that domain, because ideology, as Scheler acknowledges, refers the elevation of "idols" (intuitive deception) to ideology (cognitive error), as it pertains to the sociologically-conditioned mentality. What Scheler calls a sociological theory of idols is, he says, "an analogy to my own theory of the idols of inner perception."<sup>37</sup> Idols, though, are not ideologies, they are on the level of class attitudes, which, become prejudices, and are the stuff out of which ideologies emerge when they are raised to the level of conscious justification. That is to say, such "idols" refer to the way the world is *given*: "the world *itself* presents *different*

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<sup>36</sup> Scheler, "Idols," 15-16.

<sup>37</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

*formal reliefs* to the upper and lower classes and to both of them insofar as they themselves are aware of their [own] 'rising' or 'sinking.'"38

On the one hand, Scheler insists that sociologically-conditioned idols are "more than errors." Rather they pertain to class-based intuitions: "*what* presents itself to a member of a class" and pertains to "the *objective forms* in which it is presented."<sup>39</sup> Idols on the intuitive (and attitudinal) level are the basis of ideology with any or all of the following three types of equations: (1) The equation of "class-conditioned systems of idols" with the very being and becoming of things. (2) Their equation with "the objective forms of thought, intuition, and valuation"<sup>40</sup> and their analogy to these categorial class interests and perspectives. (3) Their equation with universal class-obligations. In Scheler's words: "one not only regards such systems [of idols] as *inclinations* of thinking and institutional *beginnings*..., but also holds that, out of causal necessity, all individuals, belonging to a class, *must* follow these inclinations and drives in their super-automatic, conscious, mental activities of cognition."<sup>41</sup>

It is important to make clear that, with respect to these "systems of idols" or class-attitudes that Scheler marks out, he is in agreement with Mannheim's designation of ideology as "total" rather than "particular." That is to say, it is something that affects more than certain partial contents of thinking, but to the "total" forms of thinking themselves. In Scheler's words: "class attitude *widely determines* both the *ethos* [i.e., the type of value-preferencing] and the *type of*

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<sup>38</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

<sup>39</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

<sup>40</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

<sup>41</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

*thinking*—not just the objects and contents of thinking and cognition.”<sup>42</sup> Ideology pervades the entire thought-process and the very conceptual apparatus. To a certain extent, it is an acknowledgement of what Marx called “false consciousness.” As we will see in what follows, this means that, for Scheler, there are ontological (and even moral) conditions of ideology, not simply epistemic conditions.

But despite the deep-seated nature of such deceptions (that can find their way into the very structure of one’s own personal character or “basic moral tenor” [*Gesinnung*]), Scheler insists that “Class prejudices, and also the formal laws of their formation [i.e., the systems of idols or attitudes], can, in principle, be overcome by any individual of a class. They can be put out of action by anyone—no matter what his class—the more they are recognized in their sociological lawfulness.”<sup>43</sup> It is remarkable here that, although Scheler agrees with Mannheim that ideologies have a “total” (rather than a “particular” or partial influence), he seems to be in disagreement with the “general” characterization of ideology: that ideologies apply to every perspective insofar as that perspective is conditioned by a social position or particular perspective. Consequently, Scheler is taking the critical theorist side against the generalization of the idea of ideology, that not all perspectives are ideologically saturated equally. Scheler writes that “If there were no realm within the human mind that could raise itself *above* all class ideologies and their perspectival interests, all possible cognitions of truth would have to be deception. All cognition would then be *nothing but a function of the outcome of class*

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<sup>42</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 169.

<sup>43</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 170.

*struggles.*"<sup>44</sup> I take Scheler's view of ideology to be consistent with the critical theorist critique of Mannheim's view on both counts: (1) ideologies cannot be generalized as pervasive or saturating all points of view equally. The situatedness of knowledge is admitted, but ideology means more than what is caused by merely having a perspective that is not all-encompassing. (2) That a philosophy of ideology cannot be a non-evaluative study, but must be a value-relevant critical study. I argue that a view of ideology can be garnered from Scheler's philosophy that follows a critical model ultimately because of a third consistency: (3) that ideology is more about a lack of self-awareness of incomplete perspectives (or what I called in the introduction to this work, an "incongruence between concept and intuition") than it is about the incompleteness itself.

An analysis of these three points constitute the remainder of the chapter. But there is a difficulty here because although Scheler insists that ideologies can be overcome, he does not provide any further exposition about the way he thinks this is to happen. He does, however, make two statements that hint toward a way one is able to overcome ideology. In the *Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge*, when Scheler acknowledges the "apparent contradiction" between the deep-seated nature of class attitudes and the ability of "any individual of a class" to overcome them, he points to his theory of functionalization as a way out of the aporia. He thinks it is significant to keep in mind that, in his words: "*categorial systems* of intuition, thinking, and valuation, which form themselves in history by functionalizing the comprehension of essences, are determined not according to the validity and

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<sup>44</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 68-9.

possible origins [of knowing] but through *selection and choice, as well as* by classes.”<sup>45</sup> He means to suggest that there is a difference between the social constitution of *forms* of thinking and the validity of the *contents* of knowledge. The social constitution of categorial forms or concepts does not necessarily imply the social constitution of epistemic content, or at least in a way that would eradicate the *validity* of the content of knowledge. The genesis or origin of cognition does not invalidate the adequacy of the content of cognition. I will investigate this claim in the next section.

The second statement is contained in “The Idols of Self-Knowledge,” which Scheler wrote a decade earlier. He acknowledges that the idea of the phenomenological insight into essences suggests that “absolute being [where what is meant is what is given] in every sphere of the external and the inner world alike, can be known with self-evident and adequate knowledge [i.e., intuitive knowing].” However, in light of this total capacity of human knowing, Scheler acknowledges also that this kind of knowledge is hindered by the “separation, detachment, and seclusion” of the human spirit from being. This separation, say says, does not rest on “something inalterable in the constitution of the knowing subject, but only on the weaknesses and inclinations which we can, in principle, overcome.”<sup>46</sup>

These two passages aim at away to frame Scheler’s critique of ideology, first, with respect to epistemic considerations in terms of his sociology of knowledge and second, with respect to ontological consideration, namely, on the level of moral preconditions of intuition and cognition.

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<sup>45</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 169.

<sup>46</sup> Scheler, “Idols,” 4.

*The Sociology of Knowledge and Functionalization*

The basic principles Scheler takes to be fundamental for a sociology of knowledge stimulate reflection upon the origin and nature of communal prejudices that sometimes lead to ideological thinking. Scheler takes it as axiomatic in the sociology of knowledge that all human beings begin in a stage of *identification* with a social group. "Identification" is rather technical terminology in his social philosophy, meaning not simply taking other's *feelings* as one's own feelings, but taking another *self* as one's own self.<sup>47</sup> Elsewhere, Scheler writes that, "In other words, [one] tends, in the first instance, to live more in others than in [oneself]; more in the community than in [one's] own individual self."<sup>48</sup> Younger members of a community are often so immersed by the content of their social environment that their inner awareness is predominantly constituted by experiences "which fit into [socially] conditioned patterns which form a kind of channel for the stream of [their spiritual] environment."<sup>49</sup> Insofar as the spiritual threshold of a community contains certain kinds of judgments or emotional reactions, during one's early years, such judgments are not understood as those of another, and then assented to consciously and autonomously. Rather, Scheler says, "We fall in with it, without being consciously aware of the element of cooperation involved. And the effect of this is that we begin by regarding it as our *own* judgment or emotional reaction."<sup>50</sup> It is important to keep in mind that his kind of preconscious falling-in with other's judgments and emotional reactions (as one's own) are on the level prejudice and not ideology (that

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<sup>47</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 18.

<sup>48</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

<sup>49</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

<sup>50</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

is, at least for the one who is falling-in, in contrast to the one whose ideas they originally are). It is, therefore, not a judgment as such, but rather a “pre-judgment” or presupposition. At this stage of development, he or she has not chosen either to justify those judgments (uncritically) or to accept or reject critically.

Scheler’s first principle of the sociology of knowledge states that

All human knowledge, insofar as [a human being] is a member of a society in general, is not empirical but ‘*a priori*’ knowledge. The genesis of such knowledge shows that it precedes levels of self-consciousness and consciousness of one’s self-value. There is no ‘I’ without a ‘we.’ The ‘we’ is filled with contents prior to the ‘I’.<sup>51</sup>

Only in individualistic society, Scheler adds, are others experienced as *alien*, perceived *as an other* (alter ego) merely by analogy of bodily gestures and common experiences, and with whom one forms contracts.<sup>52</sup> This reference to individualistic society shows that, while human beings begin in a state of social identification with the feelings, attitudes, and spiritual character of their community, it is possible, and even natural, to transition away from this identification. Human beings are capable of such intense transition away from the mindset of their native communities that those with whom they originally self-identified can suddenly be considered alien and strange.

However, this kind of transition is a process because it is a transition not only out of a complex of social attitudes of which one is a part, but away from one’s own self, albeit, a heteronomous self where one’s inner awareness is to a large extent, if not entirely, socially conditioned. Scheler uses the metaphor of the current of a stream with respect to socially conditioned patterns of experience. Only in time

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<sup>51</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 67.

<sup>52</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 68.

does one have the strength to move upstream, against the current. Or in Scheler's words, "Only very slowly does [one] raise [one's spirit] above this stream flooding over it, and find [oneself] as a being who also, at times, has feelings, ideas and tendencies of [one's] own."<sup>53</sup>

How does this transition occur? Again, to articulate a Schelerian response requires piecing one together from various disparate statements. Scheler suggests that "raising one's spirit above the stream," is possible only "to the extent that [one] *objectifies* the experiences of [one's] environment in which [one] lives and partakes, and thereby gains *detachment* from them."<sup>54</sup> He then mentions the significance of the act of remembering for this process of objectification: "It is only in recollection that the experience normally comes to have the character of something acquired from without, depending on how far we have succeeded by then...in separating our own experience (and its individual contents) from that of other people."<sup>55</sup>

While it is the case that ideologies require an objectification of prejudices in order for them to be given rational justification (making them ideologies), a critical appraisal of ideologies, as prejudices, also requires objectification. In this case, objectification is awareness, and the objectification (by the act of recollection) of one's own prejudices, as prejudice, is self-awareness—one becomes aware of the inadequacy of one's own former perspective. Scheler suggests that recollection can achieve this objectification and detachment when one has new experiences beyond one's "original communal threshold." He says that although one's consciousness is

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<sup>53</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

<sup>54</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

<sup>55</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.



originally “already filled with ideas and experiences of whose real origin [one] is completely unaware...once [one] has begun to lay hold of experiences of [one’s] own...he [or she] can call upon such ideas in order to make sense of [one’s] environment, because that is just where they [i.e., the ideas] have come from in the first place.”<sup>56</sup>

It is obvious to see at this point that Scheler considers an undeniable sociological fact that all knowledge is, to some extent, socially conditioned. His insistence that “the ‘social’ sphere of the ‘with-world’ and the ‘world of the historical past’ is pre-given to all other spheres [of knowing]”<sup>57</sup> is likely to have led him into considerations of the sociology of knowledge in the first place, whose most fundamental aim was simply to consider the extent to which knowledge is (and is not) bound to specific social and existential contexts. Scheler’s position is that all knowledge invariably *arises out of* such contexts, however, the validity of the content of knowledge is not necessarily buried and obscured on account of its social origination. Scheler puts it this way:

all knowledge, all forms of thought, perception, and cognition are undoubtedly of sociological character. This proposition does not refer to the content of knowledge, and still less to its objective validity. It means that [the] selection of the objects of knowledge is made according to the ruling [social perspective of interests]. The ‘forms’ of the mental acts by which knowledge is acquired are always necessarily co-conditioned sociologically, that is, by the structure of society.<sup>58</sup>

Put in other terms, Scheler is claiming that it is undeniable that all knowledge is

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<sup>56</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247-8.

<sup>57</sup> I have used Harold Bershady’s translation of this section of Scheler’s “Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens,” in Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, ed. Harold Bershady (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 206.

<sup>58</sup> Scheler, *Problems*, 72-3.

socially conditioned. This refers especially to all forms of thinking, intuition, and cognition. However, it does not follow from this social conditioning that the contents of knowledge and their validity are also socially conditioned in a way that would invalidate their adequacy; for this reason the contents of knowledge cannot be the *source* of the sociological character of both knowledge and the forms of thinking. Rather, the source of socially conditioned knowledge is in the *selection* of objects of knowledge which conditions the forms of thought, and does so upon the basis of the prevailing social perspectives of interests.

Scheler is isolating the process of the selection of certain objects of knowledge, according to what he calls the social perspectives of interests, as being most fundamentally the basis of the social determination of knowledge. Societies, historically and geographically, differ with respect to the things of which those societies are composed (among other ways). Confronting different objects within our environment conditions the framework of knowledge. But, he is also isolating the social constitution of the “forms” of thinking (epistemic categories and concepts) in contradistinction to the “contents” of knowledge (knowledge of this and of that). The contents of knowledge may have universal validity even if the forms of thinking are conditioned by our social environment. However, this is a very peculiar position to take because the forms of thinking—our conceptual apparatus—constitute a lens, so to speak, by which our empirical knowledge of particular things is filtered. How then can it be that the forms of thinking are socially conditioned, but the contents of knowledge are not? In actual fact, this is, but in a sense is not, what Scheler is indicating.

One the one hand, if the process of selection is socially conditioned, then all thinking and knowing will be conditioned by the items we select to consider. However, on the other hand, if his comments are considered in light of his phenomenology, we can recall that Scheler considers the validity of intuition (the data given in lived-experience) independent from the status of cognitive forms. Intuitive knowledge (*Wissen*) operates with greater independence from the forms of thinking than other kinds of knowing, such as cognition (*Erkenntnis*). Cognition, Scheler says, is the unity or correlation between intuition and concept.<sup>59</sup> If that is what cognition is, then intuition is knowledge independent of concepts. Intuition does not derive meaning from concepts, rather concepts derive meaning from intuition. This is what Scheler's theory of functionalization shows. The idea is contained in the following passage, which is a footnote to the previously quoted passage:

...false paths in sociology [e.g., sociologism] can be avoided if all functional forms of thought are reduced to *functionalized comprehension of essences* in the *things themselves*. In this way, the particular *selection* to which this functionalization is subject may be seen as the work of society and its interest perspective rather an a 'pure' realm of essences.<sup>60</sup>

In taking up a question that, in his time, was growing in importance for sociologists (namely, the relation between social context and epistemic validity), Scheler is urging that sociologists consider phenomenology and the contribution its findings have for this problem. That is to say, the phenomenological claim of the intuition of essence does not disregard or contradict the fact that all knowing it socially contextualized and conditioned by that context, but nor does it follow that

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<sup>59</sup> Cf. Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," 308.

<sup>60</sup> Bershady's translation in Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 214, n8.

essential insight is not possible simply because people live in particular societies. Essences are, in this case, intuitive content that supersede contingent factors, whose meaning unifies those factors, and when functionalized, has relevance beyond the confines of one's particular social experience. The findings of phenomenology do not presuppose one to be a god—to have “a view from nowhere”; they pertain to people living in different times and places. Ultimately, Scheler's position is that though the intentional objects that comprise a variety of worlds differ according to social differences, the knowledge that we can have of those objects need not be tainted simply on account of their differences. The only thing that we can guarantee will differ are the objects of which one has experience; it doesn't mean that the experience of those objects (as pertaining to those objects) will not yield an essential insight. However, on account of the particular objects that compose the purview of our experience, the forms of thinking will be conditioned according to the experience of those objects, and not others. Like Mannheim, Scheler is insisting that although social position circumscribes a perspective, the social position does not invalidate the adequacy of intuition or cognition within the perspective. In Mannheim's words, social context “creates handicaps as well as opportunities.”<sup>61</sup>

Scheler's idea of functionalization—the way intuitive content is operative in the formation of concepts—is grounded in his phenomenology and, as we have seen, is employed as a centerpiece of the conclusions he draws from his sociology of knowledge. It may be surprising therefore to learn that the idea is first developed in Scheler's work on the philosophy of religion, and that, as important as the idea is for

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<sup>61</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia*, 81.

his philosophy as a whole, the idea is given relatively short shrift (only a few pages). The discussion comes up in his treatment on innate ideas, and specifically the question of an innate idea of God. Scheler says, that “It is only because there is *no* innate idea of God that in principle there may be *unlimited growth of the natural knowledge of God* through constant acts of cognitive acquisition spread over the history of the human [spirit].”<sup>62</sup> His general point is that *a priori* knowledge is not strictly speaking independent of experience (*Erlebnis*), but independent only of empirical, inductive experience (*Erfahrung*). As I discussed in Chapter 2, only a single, unified experience is necessary for essential insight. It is also important to keep in mind from that chapter that Scheler divides *a priori* content into formal and material domains, and the content that gains entry into the categorial domain is transmuted essences (material *a priori*) generalized for the way we understand new perceptual experience. Scheler explains the phenomenon this way:

...essential knowledge is functionally transmuted into a law governing the very ‘employment’ of the intellect with regard to contingent facts; under its guidance the intellect conceives, analyzes, regards and judges the contingent factual world as ‘determined’ in ‘accordance’ with the principles concerning the cohesion of essences.<sup>63</sup>

I want to point out that the functionalization of essences becomes formal categories or laws governing what is given in empirical, perceptual experience (of the “contingent factual world”). The new forms do not hold sway over subsequent intuition of essence. This reinforces the independence Scheler thinks intuition has with respect to concept formation and why the forms of thinking can be socially constituted in a way that the contents of (intuitive) knowledge are not.

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<sup>62</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 199.

<sup>63</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 201.

Scheler adds that, by the process of functionalization, “What before was a thing *becomes* a form of thinking about things; what was an object of love becomes a form of love, in which a limitless number of objects can now be loved...”<sup>64</sup> The givenness of the essence of friendship, as was discussed in the second chapter, can be employed here: the essence of friendship is given in the lived-experience of having a friend and the act of being a friend. The friendships that we have early on in life establish for us what a friend *is*, as the idea or concept of a friend. What a friend means comes from a functionally transmuted essence (the individual meaning and value content without contingent factors). However, transmuted content from childhood friendships is so hidden and habituated (like a second nature) that, by the time one advances in age, they seem as though they are “innate.” By the time we are mature enough to reflect (as philosophers) on these transmuted essences (or forms), they are so structurally present, and so pure (i.e., independent from the actual friendships from which they arose), that it is as if they could have no origin in one’s natural life. This might point to a phenomenological explanation of Plato’s idea that knowing is recollecting a previous dwelling of the mind amongst the forms. Plato’s idea of recollection is accurate, but in coming to a formal awareness, one is not recollecting a qualitatively different life prior to his birth, but just one’s past life prior to the onset of a philosophical consciousness and the capacity for self-reflection.

One’s social context and immediate environment (e.g., the neighborhood that one lives, the school one attends, the activities or sports in which one is involved)

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<sup>64</sup> Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 201.

present a limited domain of people among whom an individual is able to *select* as friends. This is usually not—at least not at a young age—a process of intense deliberation: people tend to fall into friendships in the course of their social interaction. One does so on the basis of what Scheler calls *Interessenperspektive* or the perspective of interests, which he says governs the objects of interest, attention, and love which seems to vary according to an object's nearness or remoteness. Scheler thinks that we take interest or ignore objects in our environment according to a range of increasing and diminishing intensity of value-givenness. It seems we turn to objects and select them as objects to know and love primarily in seeing (intuiting) their value. And this may refer to those we experience the most (quantitatively), and experience the most genuinely (qualitatively). On the other hand, the diminishing intensity of the perspective-range holds with respect to those with whom we have less acquaintance or diminished accessibility.<sup>65</sup>

This might seem to be obvious, but it's nevertheless curious that, as Scheler explains,

If we do not see someone we love for a long time, our attachment for him slowly diminishes. We may read in a newspaper that a thousand Japanese have been drowned, or even that twenty million Russians are starving, but this normally has less effect on our sympathies than when our wife cuts her finger or young Johnny has a stomachache.<sup>66</sup>

The principle is that a certain experiential context is necessary in order for the value of an object to be given, and value-givenness establishes a framework of imperatives with respect to what ought to be loved (by that individual).<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 191.

<sup>66</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 188.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. *Formalism*, "Value-Ethics and the Ethics of Imperatives," 163-238.

Scheler criticizes the idea that the love of all of humanity, collectively, is superior to the love of self, friends, family, country, etc. He references, for example, the utilitarian imperative to act for the sake of the “greatest number.” While, on the one hand, Scheler admits that “Assuredly, [humanity] as a whole is intrinsically more worthy of love than any one nation or country,” on the other hand, the act of love for one’s own country or family “has intrinsically greater value than the love of [humanity]; and this because one’s country affords an intrinsically greater positive value-content than ‘humanity’ for the possible experience of any [single individual] whatever.”<sup>68</sup>

It is by means of these rules of the perspective of interests that we select friends. A single individual will inevitably end up with a different set of friendships from nearly everyone else, from those in his or her hometown to those in foreign lands. Insofar as friendships differ, Scheler thinks that there is an individual essence to each one, a unity of meaning for all that various perceptual experiences pertaining to a particular friendship. There is a difference with respect to the meaning of one’s friendship with Dave, or her friendship with Kara, and or with John. However, her friendships with all three are collectively transmuted (along with perhaps many others) into what she takes friendship to be: the concept of friendship.

Insofar as concepts are derived out of a specific experiential context, they will invariably have existential relativity. That is to say, concepts are indubitably socially conditioned since they are necessarily derived only from those objects in the environment which are possible objects of selection, bearing in mind the existential

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<sup>68</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 190.



and social diversity of possible objects of selection. However, the existential relativity does not indicate that the intuitions of friendship that are given throughout the course of my lived-experience of having friends and being a friend have lesser validity. Far from invalidating the content of knowledge on account of its relativity, the experiential context is precisely a condition for the *adequacy* of intuitive knowledge. Knowledge is an ontological participation, so the participatory element in an object or with another person is a greater guarantee of adequacy of knowledge, not an epistemic hindrance. Essence and value are given *more* adequately the more we are actively engaged in and with those objects or persons. This is one reason why, for example, “the witnessing of an accident [has] such a very different effect from the mere report of it.”<sup>69</sup> The proximity to and the participation within the happenings of a situation increases the ability to see (intuit) the content of that situation all the more. Knowledge is limited by a circumscribed set of objects that constitute possible experience, but among those objects, and by means of experiencing them, the validity of knowledge is intensified, not diminished. This explanation is what I take to be behind Scheler’s claim that the validity of the contents of knowledge are not necessarily affected by the socially conditioned character of knowledge.

Part of what makes socially conditioned knowledge a *problem* originally is due to false presupposition. According to Scheler, we have become too accustomed to taking truth as a universal category: something that must be the same for everyone, necessarily. In this case, something cannot be valid unless it applies everywhere. But

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<sup>69</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 188.

Scheler thinks it is just as accurate to speak of an individual validity to one's own intuitions with respect to different friendships, even if they do not apply to all other friendships everywhere: there is the truth and value of *this* friendship which is true for me, but is also objectively true (and can be objectively true even if no other person ever sees it). What makes it objectively true is simply that it is grounded in an adequate intuition of the intentional object (the friendship itself). However, insofar as these essences are functionalized into formal concepts, one concept of friendship may differ from another concept (according to their different experiences of friends) and they may *both have their own validity*. The different concepts may overlap, and thus we can, through philosophical analysis (and a phenomenology of friendship) try to point to universally valid claims about friendship, but this does not mean content must be universally valid, first, in order to have any validity (or adequacy) at all.

Scheler maintains that absolute (nonrelative) being is construed as unknowable only if we assume the falsification that what is absolute must, necessarily, also be universally valid. Scheler writes that the idea of a material essence "does not exclude the possibility that something is true and good for an individual and thus that an absolute truth and insight is essentially valid for one individual and yet strictly objective."<sup>70</sup>

### *Delusion and Falsification of Values*

If the above analysis pertains, it cannot be the whole story, at least not if we are

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<sup>70</sup> Scheler, "Phenomenology," 154. Cf. *Formalism*, 394-5.

to consider the possibility of ideology and a critique of ideology. If knowledge is socially conditioned only according to a socially demarcated set of objects, then we would be at a loss concerning how ideology is even something of a possibility. There is nothing in this description to account for error or illusion, for delusional thinking, or false consciousness. If intuition is always adequate, and the forms of thinking are given social constitution merely with respect to the different experiential contexts and the various objects that fill those contexts, then knowledge would hardly be much of a problem. Cultural knowledge would change with respect to different experiences, but it could all, in principle, indicate perfectly valid thinking with respect to those experiences. Scheler is assuming intuition with ideal adequation (absolute intuition) of essences and values, but the question is whether it is appropriate to assume ideal intuitive adequation in the first place. Perhaps what Scheler means to say is that *insofar as* it is the case that intuition is adequate, social factors only determine knowledge on the basis of the time and place you find yourself and the set of objects you have on account of that time and place.

But again this cannot be the whole story. And indeed, the story that Scheler offers in his sociology of knowledge, which concentrates on the process of the selection of culturally-specific objects as the primary social determinant of knowing, is not the only story that Scheler offers if we consider the whole range of his writings. The other part of the story, and the part that will be most relevant for the idea of ideology, is whether social conditions negatively affect knowledge *on the intuitive level*. Scheler has written of this problem at length on different occasions. I have already shown earlier in this chapter what Scheler considers illusion to be, in

“Idols of Self-Knowledge,” and how illusion pertains to intuitive inadequacy—a certain blindness in the realm of givenness. He speaks of an “idol” in this case as intuitive illusion. As we will see, this is only half of the meaning of idol or idolization.

He reprises the theme of idolatry or idolization in another early essay entitled “Ordo Amoris” where he considers what he calls “the confusion of the ordo amoris,” or the proper order of preferencing in relation to an objective rank of values. Idol is referred to in this essay as the absolutization of finite goods, or whenever one’s loving and preferring of goods contradicts the rank-order of values. In other words, this is the problem of overvaluation.

Finally, in his book *Ressentiment*, Scheler explores a specific invective, but extremely prevalent and possibly inevitable social dynamic which leads to, at least, value-delusion and, at most, what he calls the falsification of value (value-inversion). *Ressentiment* remains arguably Scheler’s most profound investigation into the social dynamics of disordered valuing. The problem considered in this work focuses primarily on the pertinent social conditions that explain the devaluation of things. I will show the ways that devaluation is oftentimes an influential factor for the subsequent overvaluation of things, or idolization, which, on the conscious level, leads to ideological thinking.

Again, each of these deal with factors that pertain to the conditioning of knowledge on the level of intuition, which makes it seem surprising that, in his sociology of knowledge, he would say that it is “only in the respective *selections* [that we see] a product of *society*,” because he had already written extensively on how social factors influence and are reflected in our attitudes—the very attitudes by

which we account for adequate and inadequate intuition. But perhaps it is important to consider that Scheler says it is in the respective selections that we see not only a product of society, but also “its perspectives of interests,” because what is selected is a function of its interests. The particular range of objects for any individual is susceptible to the influence of prevailing social perspectives, and especially when these interests are, in part, “defective.”<sup>71</sup>

The fact of the matter is that, according to the perspectives of interests, we not only have friends nearby, but enemies. While it’s likely that indifference grows with the increasing remoteness of things, the people we hate are usually just as close as the people we love. It is not guaranteed that we will see the value of something just by means of the thing being close enough to experience it. Sometimes—who knows, maybe even most of the time—we will not see the value of something we experience, or worse we take that thing as bearing a negative value. Likewise, it is possible for entire societies bear a predominant attitude of hatred to things of higher value and an attitude of esteem to things of lower value. Prevailing social interests quite literally demarcate an interest-range, according to what a society or culture esteems as most valuable. This greatly influences individual valuation, not only with respect to devaluing, but also to overvaluing.

Earlier (in Chapter 4), I referred to a lengthy passage where Scheler refers to the idea of “metaphysicalization” which he defines as “a mistaken transposition of the object-realm into the world of ‘absolute meaning.’”<sup>72</sup> This is also the way that he describes the formation of idols. He described how new discoveries in intellectual

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<sup>71</sup> Scheler, *Nature of Sympathy*, 191.

<sup>72</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 87.

and scientific history were succeeded by a period of intense overvaluation: discoveries of new objects or sets of objects, “whether number, stars, plants, historical reality, matters of divinity, etc., whose exploration did not pass through a phase of bias before entering the impartial phase of value-free analysis.”<sup>73</sup> I used the point in part to demonstrate Scheler’s view of the priority of value in our perceptual and cognitive engagement with the world. And just as, in the domain of being, *Wertsein* or the value-being of an object, according to Scheler, has intuitive priority over *Sosein* (being-thus) and *Dasein* (existence), in the domain of intentional act, loving has priority over thinking and willing.

The perspective of interests is paramount in the conditioning of knowledge because we encounter the world first and foremost on the level of drive-based striving and taking-interest. Knowledge, for Scheler, is an ontological participation of one being with another whose beings are not merged in the process. Love he says is the “primal act by which a being, without ceasing to be this one delimited being, abandons itself in order to share and participate in another being as an *ens intentionale*.”<sup>74</sup> Knowledge, therefore, presupposes this primal act of “abandoning the self and its conditions, its own ‘contents of consciousness,’ or transcending them, in order to come into experiential contact with the world as far as possible.”<sup>75</sup> What I have been referring to throughout the work as two distinct preconditions for knowledge: (1) experiential contact in the execution of intentional acts (*Vollzug*) and (2) the moral precondition in acts of loving (*Liebe*), are now considered as being

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<sup>73</sup> Scheler, “The Nature of Philosophy,” 87.

<sup>74</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 110.

<sup>75</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 110.

bound up in a single act since the experiential contact, whenever willed and sought freely, requires and must be accompanied by the act of love. Furthermore, and more significant for our purposes here: the extent of the participation and experiential contact (which knowledge requires) directly depends upon the purity of love. In other words, *knowing is more or less adequate according to the degree of moral adequacy in the act of loving.*

Recall also Scheler's claim that intuitive adequacy is hindered not primarily on a methodological level, but by an ontological detachment: the separation or seclusion of the human spirit from being. This separation, he insists, does not rest on "something inalterable in the constitution of the knowing subject, but only on the weaknesses and inclinations which we can, in principle, overcome."<sup>76</sup> Pointing to these moral preconditions of knowing, we see here that this ontological *detachment* from being can be guided back into course by means of a loving attitude motivating *participation* in being.

The ontological elements of Scheler's epistemology leave us with a startling conclusion: knowledge (including intuition) cannot have ideal adequacy without being accompanied and qualified by perfect loving, in a *moral* sense of the term. This means that the kind of experiential contact that we have with our enemies is not the same kind of participation in relation to the person, as we have with our friends. The act-unity of love and participation is also an extremely important piece in assembling a complete picture of a Schelerian conception of ideology as well as a critique of ideology, but a piece that lacks consideration in his sociology of

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<sup>76</sup> Scheler, "Idols," 4.

knowledge. While on the one hand, Scheler's sociology of knowledge sought to ground the validity of cognition in the adequacy of intuition, we see now that, on the other hand, the fact that Scheler connects epistemic and ontological features (intuitive quality with moral quality), ideal intuitive adequacy seems not only less likely, but nearly impossible. This does not negate the possibility of coming to genuine insight in a kind of piecemeal fashion, but it does present significant obstacles to participating (and therefore knowing) things fully.

#### A. The Order of Values

Scheler begins his essay "Ordo Amoris" with a captivating description:

I find myself in an immeasurably vast world of sensible and spiritual objects which set my heart and passions in constant motion. In know that the objects I can recognize through perception and thought, as well as all that I will, choose, do, perform, and accomplish, depend on the play of this movement of my heart. It follows that any sort of rightness or falseness and perversity in my life and activity are determined by whether there is an objectively correct order of these stirrings of my love and hate, my inclination and disinclination, my many-sided interest in the things of this world.<sup>77</sup>

There are two aspects here worth pointing out: first, that ultimately all human activity and intentionality are grounded within one's "stirrings of love and hate." Second, that any reference to righteousness and wrongdoing has to depend upon some kind of measure of validity: an order whose validity is grounded objectively, beyond one's own stirrings of love and hate. Scheler calls this the "ordo amoris," or elsewhere, the "rank of values."<sup>78</sup> The *ordo amoris* is an objectively valid rank of

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<sup>77</sup> Scheler, "Ordo Amoris," 98.

<sup>78</sup> This idea is commonly referred to as a "hierarchy of values," but I avoid using this phraseology because it tends to overcast Scheler's point with a certain law-based



what is more or less worthy of love. He states that “Loving can be characterized as correct or false only because a man’s actual inclinations and acts of love can be in harmony with or oppose the rank-ordering of what is worthy of love.”<sup>79</sup>

The value of something—that which makes something worthy of love—is originally given affectively, through various emotional compartments, depending on the kind of value is given. Values correlate, in their givenness, with respect to a stratified emotional life, from localized feeling-states to intentional feelings.<sup>80</sup>

Scheler thinks that all particular values that can possibly be given fall into, or are related to, one of four categories, or value-modalities.<sup>81</sup> From lowest to highest, the four modalities pertain to the following domains: the sensible, the psychical (vital), the spiritual, the sacred. The general characteristics of each modality are as follows:

1. **Sensible values** (agreeable and disagreeable).<sup>82</sup> Values in this modality correlate with sensible feelings, (pleasure and pain). Specifically, pleasure and pains that are extended and localized with respect to the physical body (*Körper*).

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connotation that can confuse the idea. Scheler’s main point is that there is a universally valid domain of values that may initially seem to appear chaotic and unordered. The idea of a rank of values is analogous to a scale of musical notes or a spectrum of colors.

<sup>79</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 111.

<sup>80</sup> On the difference between feeling-states (*Gefühle*) and the intentional feeling-of-something (*Fühlen*), see, *Formalism*, 253-264.

<sup>81</sup> Scheler’s value modalities parallel Kant’s reference and ordered set of various goods: (1) “agreeableness and disagreeableness” (pertaining to sense) (2) “well-being and woe” (pertaining to psychological health) (3) “good and evil” (pertaining to the will). Scheler’s highest value modality, the sacred, parallels Kant’s idea of the “highest good,” or *summum bonum* (in a category of its own, even for Kant). Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in *Practical Philosophy*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 188.

<sup>82</sup> Values of utility—which are sometimes demarcated as a modality in their own right by scholars, are in fact considered by Scheler as *consecutive* of or derived from this modality, and therefore, are neither higher nor lower.

2. **Psychical or Vital values** (noble and ignoble).<sup>83</sup> These values correlate with “vital feelings,” or feelings that represent the quality of vital well-being of the lived-body (fatigue and vigor, health and illness) and psyche (gladness and sadness, anxiety and courage).
3. **Spiritual values** (aesthetic: beautiful and ugly; moral: right and wrong; and intellectual: knowledge and ignorance). These values correlate with intentional or spiritual feelings, namely, emotional comportment that is in regard to an object, such as, loving and hating, preferring and subordinating, hoping, kindness, generosity, sympathy, etc. Cultural values are consecutive of this modality.
4. **Sacred/Profane** (values of the holy and unholy, given in objects considered as *absolute*). These values correlate with the feelings of bliss and despair indicative of the nearness or remoteness of the divine in experience. However, this sphere of values is given specifically in the love of the person (person being that which is of absolute value).

Before considering the factors at play in falling into confusions of this value order, it is important to see some of the ways Scheler justifies the idea of a value order, and the particular order he gives. I will refer to two sources of evidence, the

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<sup>83</sup> It may be difficult to see immediately why “noble” (*Edlen*) and “ignoble” (*Gemeinen*) are chosen to represent vital values. Scheler has in mind racial or blood distinctions that have become largely obsolete these days. Literally, *Gemeinen* means “common,” which is an indication that Scheler refers to “nobility” (“noble birth rite”) as opposed to a “commoner.” However, in a footnote Scheler also seems to indicate that he does not wish to be controversial because he thinks we just as well use “noble” to describe things like horses and trees when they are dignified (*Formalism*, 106, n. 82.). However, there’s still something amiss, because the term noble refers more these days to actions or deeds, rather than one’s heredity or a condition of one’s life.

first is phenomenological, the second is logical (inferential).<sup>84</sup> First of all, it is important to point out that ordering things with respect to their importance is something human beings cannot avoid. All people are constantly preferring some things to others things: we are always in the midst of preferring this or that, and ordering things on a continuum of higher or lower. We might, for example, consider the amount of time we want to dedicate to certain things in the course of our day. The question is whether this preferring (*Vorziehen*) or subordinating (*Nachsetzen*) is empty of normativity or whether it is indicative of a standard of validity beyond our own preferring: that is to say, whether it is inappropriate to prefer some things or subordinate others. It might seem that since there is vast difference in the things that people are ordering as higher or lower, it does not indicate a normative dimension, however, phenomenologically it is possible to glean a normative dimension to this process more than initially presents itself.

Despite the difference in the kinds of things we prefer to include in each of the value categories, upon a closer inspection we notice the four modalities that Scheler identifies remain in the same order. For example, different religions or religious views may disagree about what it is that bears a sacred value (divine). Perhaps the highest value belongs to an idea or logical category (e.g., “pure act,” or “that-which-nothing-greater-can-be-thought”); a *personal being* who is said to be revealed or is considered divine, whether the person is also human or not (e.g., Yahweh, Jesus, Allah, an Egyptian Pharaoh, Buddah, etc.); a part of nature (e.g, the sun: “Aten,” holy ground: “Mount Olympus,” a terrifying thunderstorm, etc.); and finally something

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<sup>84</sup> There is a theological argument that Scheler provides in “*Ordo Amoris*” that I will forego here.

artificial (e.g., Golden Calf). Whatever specific *object* an individual or group prefers to include in the *position* of the Holy and as bearing that value, does not, in any of those very different instances, change the fact that the value-position of the holy or divine is the supreme value-position. All religious belief agrees that holiness is highest, irrespective of the different factual things or persons that are the objects of belief, considered to bear that value.

Likewise, the value of sensible pleasure is always given as lower than the value of life. It would be absurd to sacrifice one's very life for greater pleasure—a pleasure that consequently could not be enjoyed. Among all the different kinds of things one could consider painful or pleasurable, one does not prefer some physical pain (sensible value) over the loss of life or over diminished health. Even severely injured patients who would prefer to die rather than continue in the pain of staying alive usually do not prefer death merely on account of the pain. It is because their injury is given as a loss of their life. Actual physical death is not seen, therefore, as any lower in value than the event that has already taken place. Furthermore, we might intuitively consider it degrading when, that which is of a higher spiritual or cultural value, such as a human being or even one's civic or cultural identity, are put up for sale.<sup>85</sup> Human trafficking is reprehensible because it treats that which is inherently of higher value (spiritual value) as a value of utility (sensible value).

Although buying and selling people should not be done, it could still actually be done. There are some things, however, that could never be bought and sold as a

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<sup>85</sup> Michael Sandel's book *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets*, explores the corrupting effect markets have on society when they influence wide scale devaluation of things that ought to be valued more highly.

piece of property: one could pay someone to act like a friend but she could never purchase their friendship (or their enmity); one could hire someone to act like a spouse, but he could never buy the love of a wife. One could pay someone to perform a good action, but she can never purchase virtue or a good moral character (nor a vicious one); one could hire a tutor, or pay a college to issue a diploma at the completion of a course of study, but he can never, strictly speaking, buy knowledge (nor ignorance). The irreducibility of these kinds of goods not only show that the goods themselves are irreducible to lower values, but that they are *because* the spiritual values they bear are irreducible.

It is, however, possible for one to love a new car more than the love of his spouse, for example. It is possible to value all sorts of material goods above personal love, virtue, or knowledge, but the latter are nevertheless more worthy of love—not because of their being (as was traditionally thought) but because of their value.<sup>86</sup> We can sometimes value things incorrectly—and we do not usually need a philosophical theory to identify this; usually a candid discussion with the people whose relationships we are valuing below material things will be revelatory enough. It seems noble and heroic to sacrifice material possessions, pleasures, and useful things for the sake of other people or even for the sake of one's own moral or spiritual well-being. However, it seems proportionately abhorrent to sacrifice those things for the sake of material goods, even if they are necessary goods.

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<sup>86</sup> Being and value have, for Scheler, a phenomenological independence that traditional metaphysics does not allow. All things bear some kind of positive or negative value, but existence as such is value-neutral. This is because Scheler thinks that one kind of thing can genuinely bear different kinds of values at different times or in different places, without contradicting the value-rank. The value of something is not *always* written into the nature of a thing.

These phenomenological considerations relate to an inferential argument regarding the relation between higher and lower value modalities. Scheler writes that “one can easily imagine vital values without pleasure, but [imagining pleasure without vital values] is impossible. ... The value of *both* [the vital and the sensible] is itself determined by their capacity or incapacity of *strengthening vital* values. Therefore a pleasurable thing that obstructs life is bad,”<sup>87</sup> i.e., of negative value. By way of inference, it is possible to apply this relation to the rest of the rank:

1. Spiritual values strengthen values of the holy, so spiritual things that obstruct holiness are of negative value (e.g., wrongdoing, ignorance, etc.).<sup>88</sup>
2. Vital values strengthen spiritual values, so things pertaining to our vitality that obstruct spirituality are of negative value (e.g., depression, anxiety, illness, etc.).
3. Sensible values strengthen vital values, so pleasure that obstructs vital health is of negative value (e.g., too much candy, deserts, or other unhealthy food).<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 107. Scheler gives a similar argument in the *Formalism*, which states that lower values are always “founded” on higher values (*Formalism*, 94-6). This argument about value-foundations justifies my application of the *Ressentiment* passage to the rest of the scale, but I prefer the way Scheler states the mode of foundation in *Ressentiment* because it says more about the character of each value modality.

<sup>88</sup> A person is a better person the more they share in the essence of the divine, or *Urwesen* (primal essence; ground of being). For Scheler, the *Urwesen* is most characterized by love, so one shares in the essence of the divine the more genuinely one loves (Cf. “The Nature of Philosophy,” 75). Scheler says that “the highest thing of which a human being is capable is to love things as much as possible as God loves them” (“*Ordo Amoris*,” 99).

<sup>89</sup> It is fitting to make a distinction between something of lower value specifically *obstructing* the realization of a higher value and something pleasurable that merely *does not contribute* to the realization of a higher value. Certain deserts that have no nutritional value, enjoyed in moderation, cannot be of negative value because they offer pleasure without other harmful side effects. However, too much of such foods can end up causing greater pain (pertaining to health problems, or stomach aches) than the pleasure that they cause. What constitutes too much, however, is ultimately, as Aristotle puts it, “relative to us.”

4. “Useful” things that obstruct pleasure and agreeableness are of negative value (useless). “Nothing can meaningfully be called ‘useful’ except as a means to pleasure.”<sup>90</sup>

## B. Falsifying the Order of Values

Recall Scheler’s admission that “any sort of rightness or falseness and perversity in my life and activity are determined by whether there is an objectively correct order of these stirrings of my love and hate.” We have considered the order, but what about the falsification, confusion, or inversion of values? The falsification of values is an effect of that from which all value inversions begin: the feeling of *ressentiment*. The phenomenon of *ressentiment* refers to a situation of angst and

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<sup>90</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 108. It has unfortunately become a common interpretation of Scheler’s value rank that values of utility occupy a *higher position* than sensible values. This view is not only mistaken, but, according to Scheler himself, an absurdity: “It is true that enjoyment can and should be subordinated to higher values.... But subordinating it [i.e., enjoyment, pleasure] to utility is an absurdity, for this is a subordination of the end to the means” (108). He continues in saying that “it has become a rule of modern morality that useful work is better than the enjoyment of pleasure” (108). Scheler’s value rank is thereby interpreted by some as consistent with the very rule of morality that Scheler specifically rejects. It should be mentioned that when Manfred Frings suggested that use-values have an independence from, and a position higher than, sensible values, he implied that this interpretation is a departure from Scheler’s own view, or at least from what Scheler explicitly articulates (Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler*, 28-9). However, Zachary Davis’ recent entry “Max Scheler,” in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* lists the values in the way Frings does (“pleasure, utility, vitality, culture, and holiness”) as if this ranking is unproblematic (Davis, Zachary and Anthony Steinbock, “Max Scheler”, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Spring 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.)). One point that supports Frings’ and Davis’ view is Scheler’s ranking of the personality of the “leader of civilization” (which allegedly corresponds with the value of efficiency and utility) above the “*bon vivant*” (which allegedly corresponds with the pleasure values) (*Formalism*, 583ff.). The way Scheler ranks model persons could be an indication that he has changed his view about the value-relation of utility and pleasure since writing *Ressentiment*. While this is intriguing, Scheler does not mention in this section any alteration in the way he ranks the *value-modalities*, specifically, and so this inference, which is to serve as sole evidence, cannot be conclusive. There is still little reason why we should make some assumptions by inference to trump what Scheler actually says—very clearly and forcefully—about the value-relation between utility and pleasure.

emotional repression that is caused by the social dynamic where an experience of envy or an impulse for revenge is coupled with an experience of weakness or impotence to act upon the inclination, leaving the impulse unfulfilled. This plays out in all sorts of ways that represent the common paradigm of someone growing in disdain for something one cannot have or obtain, because one cannot obtain it. This is played out constantly among children who typically want to play with a toy with which another is playing. When the struggle ends with an adult issuing the toy to the one, perhaps, “who had it first,” the other child commonly dismisses the value of the toy: “I don’t want to play with your stupid toy anyway.”<sup>91</sup> To be sure, this scenario plays out among adults in perhaps more vicious ways.

The envious or vengeful, however, will not be plagued by *ressentiment* when those feelings are able to achieve expression, either in relation to their proper objects or some other outlet of energy (e.g., “venting” or forgiveness). Scheler states that “*Ressentiment* can only arise if these emotions are particularly powerful and yet must be suppressed because they are coupled with the feeling that one is unable to act them out—either because of weakness, physical or mental, or because of fear.”<sup>92</sup>

*Ressentiment* creates a new impulse to *detract* that which is causing the *ressentiment*, leading one to see the object in terms of those negative feelings

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<sup>91</sup> The “bully” in these scenarios who tends to be able to take things from peers and get away with it usually does so as a coping mechanism, carried over from his own *ressentiment* in a different context. Scheler supports this in his claim that those who hate are those who’ve been the recipient of hatred (or simply an absence of answering or responding to their acts of love, i.e., unfulfilled). Those who love are those who have been loved (or who’ve had their acts of love answered, i.e., fulfilled). This is a fundamental insight for his theory of co-responsibility and theory of solidarity: “the occurrence of wickedness always has a communal basis” (*Nature of Sympathy*, 164-5).

<sup>92</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 26-7.



leading to a *devaluation* of the object. The situation of envy is particularly poignant because in this case, the object is originally desirable and seen to be of great value, but when one experiences an inability to attain the object desired, there is an effort to convince oneself that the object is not in fact something of value; the thing is devalued, and the one devaluing takes on an attitude of value-delusion with respect to all things of that type. If the case is constant enough, the givenness of valuable things as of negative value may functionalize into a way of *cognizing* the thing in question. For example, even a single (but extremely painful) case of unrequited love may lead one to detract or devalue “all men” or “all women,” whatever the case may be. This may last until some some kind of recompense or genuine forgiveness is achieved. Scheler explains,

“To relieve the tension, the common man seeks a feeling of superiority of equality, and he attains his purpose by an illusory devaluation of the other man’s qualities or by a specific ‘blindness’ to these qualities. But secondly—and here lies the main achievement of *ressentiment*—he falsifies the values themselves which could bestow excellence on any possible objects of comparison.”<sup>93</sup> The falsification of values is different in kind from simply devaluing of things. To use Scheler’s example, the fox who could not, with all his might, obtain the grapes, devalues the grapes, comforting itself with the fact that they “are not really savory; indeed they may be ‘sour’.”<sup>94</sup>

Idolization is a result of delusion, namely, the absolutizing of certain goods that are opposed to the good that one could not obtain—the devaluation has a

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<sup>93</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 34.

<sup>94</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 46.

concomitant valuation of opposite things. Scheler calls “a good absolutized through delusion a (formal) idol.”<sup>95</sup> He also uses the term infatuation “to designate the most general form of the destruction and confusion of *ordo amoris*....”<sup>96</sup> There is a difference, though, between absolute and relative infatuation. The absolute sort is when one takes a finite good to be something of absolute value (holiness). Relative infatuation pertains to when one’s order of preferencing “transgresses against the objective rank-ordering of what is worthy of love.”<sup>97</sup> Each type of infatuation manifests a certain degree of idolatry, but only the first is idolatry in the strict sense. The most important point, however, is the way idolatry (overvaluation) is concomitant with *ressentiment* (devaluation). The things we turn into idols are a result of the value delusions that arise with respect the things we originally take to be of value but cannot obtain for whatever reason. I consider the process of idolization to be the intuitive beginnings of what becomes, on the conscious level, full-fledged ideology.

The fox and the grapes scenario of devaluing is not yet on the level of *the falsification of values*. It is a value-delusion, but not yet a value-inversion. “The fox does not say that sweetness is bad, but that the grapes are sour.”<sup>98</sup> A delusion pertains to whether or not a certain *good* bears a value of a certain height; falsification pertains to rejecting the height of the values themselves. Consider again the differences among that which different religions consider holy or bearing an absolute value. In the case of a disillusionment with one’s particular religious

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<sup>95</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 115.

<sup>96</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 114.

<sup>97</sup> Scheler, “*Ordo Amoris*,” 115.

<sup>98</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 46.

beliefs, it is possible to devalue the particular *objects* of belief with respect to what he or she used to consider holy (and unholy), and substitute old religious beliefs for new ones. In this case, the position of holiness is still considered the highest position—there may be a delusion here, but no falsification. Suppose, on the other hand, one becomes disillusioned with religion as such and rejects holiness to be of value. This would be an example of the falsification of value.<sup>99</sup>

According to Scheler, industrial capitalism is an example not only value-delusional, but is inverts the value scale by subordinating the higher value of life to the lower value of utility. Scheler considers the kind of valuation that is the ruling ethos of industrialism: “the exaltation of utility values and instrumental values over vital and organic values.”<sup>100</sup> The practice of slavery, for example, may have been abolished and previous slaves emancipated, but this does not mean that seeing people primarily as objects to put to use has changed. Social changes may not indicate a change in the mindset and valuation. Abolition may not indicate any alteration in the cultural *ethos* and worldview that once supported the structural oppression of African Americans. It simply means that certain factual mechanisms of society have changed. Devaluing organs as tools,<sup>101</sup> people as workers, may still prevail in more subtle and socially acceptable ways.

It is important to point out that, for Scheler, these falsifications (which, I argue,

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<sup>99</sup> It is worth mentioning that, at least in the case of the holy, its falsification is impossible. Since we are always preferring and subordinating things to be of higher and lower value, we will invariably take something to be of highest value. That which we take to be of highest value will invariably occupy the position of the holy, whether we consider it to be or not. “Every finite spirit believes either in God or in idols.” See, Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 267ff.

<sup>100</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 116.

<sup>101</sup> About viewing organs as tools, see Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 120-5.

on the conscious level constitute ideology in the fullest sense) are not formed in consciousness, as a reaction to certain concepts or theories, “but at the same stage of mental process as the impressions and value feelings themselves: *on the road* of experience into consciousness.”<sup>102</sup> That is to say, value judgments are based upon, and are an outgrowth of, a more original (unconscious) falsification in the sphere of value givenness. Indeed, the point that I am stressing is that this original falsification resides on the intuitive level. Falsification of values, as the “accomplishment” of *ressentiment*, seeps in with our intuitions, their effects become “fixed attitudes, detached from all determinate objects.”<sup>103</sup> Scheler continues that the *ressentiment* attitude “even plays a role in the formation of perceptions, expectations, and memories. It automatically selects those aspects of experience which can justify the factual application of this pattern of feeling.”<sup>104</sup> *Ressentiment* influences the social perspective of interests, on the level of what we select in terms of its value, whereby a specific ruling ethos or dominant morality conditions the ethos (or order of preferring) of all individuals in that society. What one selects and by what value one selects it, is what one comes to know and the way one knows it. The *falsification of values* leads to the *falsification of worldview*, and indeed, to “*false consciousness*”—ideology.

A discrepancy between Marx’s and Scheler’s views of ideology is that Marx attributed ideology to the upper classes, while the lower classes had a more healthy dose of realism that prevented divorcing ideas from material conditions. Scheler’s

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<sup>102</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 49.

<sup>103</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 46.

<sup>104</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 47.

view of *ressentiment*, as a condition for ideology, pertains more in situations of oppression and is therefore, “the attitude of the weaker party.”<sup>105</sup> A more important question than whose view is correct, is how Scheler can account for ideologies forming among the more dominant class if *ressentiment* is conditional in ideologies forming, and since dominant classes usually do not suffer from involuntary repression or feelings of impotence. Even if, for Scheler, Marxism is itself an ideology insofar as it represents both a certain class attitude and a specific pattern of valuation, is it the case that upper class attitudes are free from *ressentiment*, and therefore free from ideology? Putting the discussion in a Marxist context of class struggle, we should see that the bourgeoisie were not always the dominant class; they were once, in most European countries, consigned to the status of peasantry since they were neither nobility nor clergy. What was once an oppressed group later became dominant, as a result of the 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal revolutions throughout Europe. The working class struggles and labor movements were likely to succumb to even greater bitterness and resentment since the status afforded to the bourgeoisie from revolutionary success was not also afforded to the proletariat.

The prevailing valuation and worldview that arose as a result of the century-long disintegration of the social privilege of heredity and the new mobility of the middle class by business wealth is not necessarily free of *ressentiment*. Rather, it represents a positive value-framework that was born out of *ressentiment* in an earlier period, characterized by their previous oppression. Therefore, the specific bourgeois value-framework takes on a unique ideological character arising from its reactions to the

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<sup>105</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 28.

worldview of the *ancién regime*. Scheler writes “all seemingly positive valuations and judgments of *ressentiment* are hidden devaluations and negations.”<sup>106</sup> Indeed, *ressentiment* forces us to “go so far as to extol another object which is somehow opposed to the first.”<sup>107</sup> The prevailing ethos of a new dominant class is characterized by a reaction against the older and oppressive pattern of valuation. Once the attitudes of the previously weaker class are liberated from their social restrictions and impotence, there is an extension of the influence of these values well beyond the time and place, people and situations, from which they arose.

Scheler remarks that

When a reversal of values comes to dominate accepted morality and is invested with the power of the ruling ethos, it is transmitted by tradition, suggestion, and education to those who are endowed with the seemingly devaluated qualities. They are struck with a ‘bad conscience’ and secretly condemn themselves. The ‘slaves,’ as Nietzsche says, infect the ‘masters.’ *Ressentiment* man, on the other hand, now feels ‘good,’ ‘pure,’ and ‘human’—at least in the conscious layers of his mind. He is delivered from hatred, from the tormenting desire of an impossible revenge, though deep down his poisoned sense of life and the true values may still shine through the illusory ones.<sup>108</sup>

All devaluation that occurs in a *ressentiment* situation may constitute an ideology for a certain individual or small group, but it is by no means something contagious throughout all society. Some change in the social status of such individuals or groups has to take place for their pattern of valuation to become influential for forming the mentality and attitudes of society as a whole, or at least of a large portion of society. The prevailing status of ideology is important because it suggests the culminating moment in Scheler’s view of the social conditioning of knowing:

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<sup>106</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 41.

<sup>107</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 46.

<sup>108</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 48-9.

*individual attitudes reflect or mirror social attitudes.* We are influenced cognitively, first and foremost, by the patterns of valuation prevalent in our own society.

Adorno's idea of *Selbstbesinnung* (self-awareness) rings true here, but it is considerably modified. Adorno's idea urges awareness of the way our concepts contain a history—the way they are historically dependent and therefore reflect the socio-historical reality from which they arise. Scheler introduces a worthwhile addendum to this idea: just as our concepts, according to Adorno, have a history and reflect society, so do our attitudes and our patterns of valuation. The issue does not pertain primarily to the content of our concepts or conceptual frameworks, but more originally to our attitudes and value-frameworks—to the ethos or order of preferencing of one's specific socio-historical reality.

There are therefore two forms of self-reflection. Critical theory suggests an exclusively *conceptual* form of reflection while Scheler suggests a conceptual reflection to be rooted in a deeper *attitudinal* form of reflection. I suggest that a more profound critique of society can be achieved by means of a reflection on our attitudes and value-orientations than that which can be achieved by means of a reflection upon our concepts. Self-reflection has to be more than about the way we think, it has to be more originally about the way we are oriented and attuned to the world. Instrumental rationality is itself a reflection of the way society values things. Critical rationality can counter this trend by bringing out a better way of valuing by opposing the current valuations of society. However, if a critical theory can be more than about the content of our concepts, and if it can include the value dimension, I argue that it has to be able to incorporate phenomenology, or if not phenomenology,

then at least an adequate conception of intuition that can accommodate the intuition of value. I do not know of a better articulated theory of intuition that contains feature of value-givenness so prominently than Scheler's phenomenology does.

*The Critique of Ideology*

The way I see phenomenology incorporating a critical function, or having a capacity for the critique of ideology, pertains significantly to the function of intuition. Indeed, it pertains to the issue of nonconceptuality with which I framed the discussion from the start, in the introduction. Adorno and Scheler both acknowledge some discrepancy between the formal content of a concept and the material content of experience. For Adorno, this plays out ultimately in a discrepancy of purity. Concepts present material circumstances abstractly, but we also know this conceptual purity is not the way things are. A pure concept propagated as capable of capturing reality is ideological. There is a dimension of nonconceptuality that harnesses, in contrast, individuality, materiality, particularity “things which ever since Plato used to be dismissed as transitory and insignificant, and which Hegel labeled ‘lazy Existenz’.”<sup>109</sup> Concepts in and of themselves present the world as an unantagonistic entirety. They do not themselves contain a dialectic that is true to history; rather they give the illusion of identity. Critical theory insists that we critique these concepts insofar as the identity they present is illusory—and that there is always more to the particular object—the “material moment”—than what the concept expresses.

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<sup>109</sup> Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 8.



The phrase “material moment” is fitting not only for Marxist and neo-Marxist materialistic theories, but also for Scheler’s phenomenology. Scheler’s phenomenology is, indeed, a kind of materialism, but material in the sense of the non-formal—not in the sense of an exclusion of the *a priori*. However, if *a priori* meant a strict abandonment of experience, Scheler would also be forced to abandon the *a priori*. But there is a material *a priori* that is given in (non-empirical) lived-experience. This is the domain of intuition. Since Adorno rejects the critical significance of intuition (as consistent with the domain of nonconceptuality) he is forced to make his critique of concepts by means of an epistemic assumption: that all concepts, as concepts, necessarily represent the object inadequately, and it is by this assumption that the critique plays out. As a result, all philosophy is capable of is critique: there is no possibility of insight or nonconceptual intuition of the individual as individual to advance a positive thesis or present a reliable alternative to that which one is critiquing.

On the other hand, the nonconceptual domain for Scheler is not just an empty point of departure for critique, but it is a domain that is full: full of content (as opposed to form), full of insight. Concepts can be criticized by means of actual intuitive content—“data” that is consistent with and given right within actual material, historical, and social circumstances. The main thrust of this work is to show how Scheler’s theory of intuition able to incorporate non-formal elements, nonconceptually: individuality (essence), history, reality, and society. This has been groundwork for a critique of ideology. However, from here is it not difficult to see at least an outline of how a phenomenological critique of ideology is accomplished.

There are these three basic features of a phenomenological critique of ideology:

1. A critique of ideology is ultimately a value critique of society by criticizing the ways that social organization institutionalizes value-delusions and/or value-inversions.<sup>110</sup> One must be able to *see* the way certain social practices manifest a fundamental improper order of preferencing (the ethos, or “heart,” of society is disordered) and to see, within the structure of society, where that which is of higher value is *threatened* by the elevation of that which is of lower value.
2. In order to see the way the heart of society is disordered, one has to become self-aware of the ways one’s own heart is disordered, and see the way one’s own attitude is a reflection of the wider attitude or ethos of society. Each has to become aware of the way our individual preferencing is a reflection of prevailing social attitudes and values and the prevailing social perspective of interests. Ideology critique is to disclose the improper valuations of society by a reflection upon one’s own *ordo amoris*.
3. In order to see the disorder of the prevailing social attitudes and valuation, one has to be attuned to the discrepancy between one’s own intuitions and the conceptual framework that has solidified perverse or delusional valuations, by being ingrained within cultural traditions.

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<sup>110</sup> Social agency is not simply an aggregate of all individual agents within society, because not all individuals in a society influence social conceptions and prejudices equally. Scheler would point to the leaders of a society as those who predominantly institutionalize ways of thinking, but it is more complicated than that in our society. Insofar as the dictum “money is speech” holds good, social agency is led primarily (but not exclusively) by those most wealthy.

The third point requires the most explanation since it is most particular to my argument and since it is the one that makes the other two possible. The question that has to be answered in order to see the plausibility of the third point is the following: how is it that the value order that an individual can intuit (more or less correctly) be different from the prevailing social valuation, since, as was just mentioned, individual attitudes reflect social ones.

On the one hand, ideologies are valuations and prejudices consciously justified—they are functionalized idols. *As ideologies*, they reside ultimately on the level of concepts and ideas that dictate and express something about the society, specifically, a certain social order of preferencing. This order of preferencing is sustained intergenerationally by means of passing on ideas through education, practice, and tradition. On the other hand, *as idolizations*, they pertain to a specific historical situation, one in which the leaders of a new society may have been oppressed in an older one. When the “slaves” become “master,” their previous devaluations as slaves influence what becomes the predominant positive valuations (the value emphasized) as masters. The valuations that become ideologies in the new society really only *make sense* in the older one, within the *ressentiment* situation. By way of example, an emphasis on the value of frugality in a later society or generation of that same society can be a reaction against the extravagance of a older one (e.g., the dissolution from Timocracy to Oligarchy in Plato’s *Republic*.) Democracy may be valued now not only in and of itself, but as a reaction against authoritarian absolutism. No doubt atheism or protestant Christianity were in part subsequent reactions to the disgust people had for Catholic practices in the late

Middle Ages. A certain historical dialectic is noticeable, here, but not in terms of opposition among *ideas* (theses or antitheses), nor in terms of opposition among *production relations*, but most originally in terms of opposition among *patterns of valuation* (devaluations and overvaluations).

Although a dialectical pattern is noticeable, Scheler will emphatically reject the notion that proper valuation (a coherent *ordo amoris*) is some kind of historical accomplishment to the tension between opposing valuations. This is because it is perfectly possible for valuations to become *more disordered* as history advances, and also because it is perfectly possible for certain individuals to value things correctly even when the society in which they live represents a particular value disorder. This can happen first and foremost insofar as later generations of individuals are removed from the conditions of *ressentiment* that influenced certain valuations, and the justification of a certain framework of ideas (ideologies). Overtime, people living in a society characteristic of a certain ethos, gain distance from the circumstances from which those patterns of valuation arose in the first place. In such cases, the ideology affects members of that society on a theoretical level, but being removed from the situation, they have a greater capacity for a less tainted and less prejudicial set of intuition.<sup>111</sup>

There are two reasons that explain the possibility that distancing oneself

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<sup>111</sup> Scheler does not speak of being removed from historical situations in this way, but he does provide a way of considering the different ways being removed. The most important way of have distance and being removed is intentionally. This means being removed from the attitudes (*Einstellung*) prevalent at the time. Being removed temporally is significant only insofar as the passage of time allows for greater objectification and intentional removal from a social situation and the prevalent attitudes of the players in the situation.

diminishes the effects of *ressentiment* and ideological thinking. The first pertains to Scheler's insistence on the independence of intuitions and concepts. One of the most important moves I made in the argument of this chapter is that social factors do not condition the content of knowledge in the same way as the forms of thinking because of the independence of the validity of intuition from the status of cognitive forms. Intuition does not derive meaning from concepts, rather concepts derive meaning from intuition. It is therefore possible to inherit a certain set of ideas, concepts, and practices from our social circumstances, that remain on a conceptual level, while also remaining independent enough (on an intuitive level) to have intuitions that contradict the ideologies of society insofar as one is free from the same *ressentiment* that conditioned the value-preferencing in the first place. Distance implies freedom from *ressentiment* attitudes insofar as one is intentionally liberated from them. By paying attention to the way our own value-giveness contradicts and conflicts with the prevailing ethos, a member of a society is able to critique the prevailing ethos. It is in paying attention to one's value-giveness that provides an area of leverage for social criticism.

Even if the independence of intuition from conceptual content may be true, it only becomes significant if it is also true that ideologies only affect members of society conceptually, and not intuitively. Indeed, another argument I make in the chapter is that ideology refers to a falsification on the intuitive level. My additional caveat is that ideologies form on an intuitive level only for those in a certain experiential context, in a situation of *ressentiment*. When certain ideological patterns of valuation gets handed down to others removed from that experiential

context, one's intuitions may in fact contradict the ideas taught to him or her in school. Consider Scheler's sociological suggestion, mentioned above, that a growing capacity to *objectify* the experiences of one's environment conditions the ability to detach from them. Interestingly, he refers to the significance of remembering or recollecting for gaining objectification and detachment when one has new experiences—and therefore different intuitions—beyond one's "original communal threshold." Scheler adds that "once [one] has begun to lay hold of experiences of [one's] own...he [or she] can call upon such ideas in order to make sense of [one's] environment, because that is just where they [i.e., the ideas] have come from in the first place."<sup>112</sup> At that point, one is compelled to consider communal ideas of one's youth, and the *ressentiment* they carry, as "something acquired from without."<sup>113</sup> I also mentioned above how this natural pattern of development goes hand and hand with a growing self-awareness of the character of one's community and therefore the character of one's previous experience. It provides additional leverage for a critique of ideology.

Therefore the first condition for the possibility of one's own experience and valuations be inconsistent with the prevailing social attitudes is on the condition of being removed from previous historical conditions that led to those social valuations which provides the opportunity to objectify the prevailing attitudes of the society. The first condition is *detachment*.

However, this isn't enough, because one could have this detachment and still value things in the way the society at large endorses. It is possible that one may

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<sup>112</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247-8.

<sup>113</sup> Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 247.

never objectify social experiences enough to notice the ways that the prevailing social ethos is disordered and threatens the realization of higher values. In my estimation, this would be a Schelerian (value) rendition of Heidegger's description of inauthenticity and "falling-prey" to *Das Man*. As was mentioned, proper valuation is not an accomplishment of a determinate historical and dialectical process, nor is it growing in anticipatory resoluteness, it is the condition for each of those: cultivating a morally qualitative change in one's attitude and character (*gesinnung*) in and through acts of loving. The second condition that guarantees independence of one's personal intuitions from the prevailing social ethos is *love*.

The adequacy of our value-giveness grows in love and is diminished in hatred. If it is in a more adequate (less prejudicial) value-giveness that allows for greater social opposition, then it is in cultivating an attitude of love that gives us greater capacity to critique society insofar as this critique is a value critique. It allows us to see more clearly when social policy is threatening the realization of higher value. *Ressentiment* is not itself hatred, and therefore only "overcasts" or covers (*überdeckt*) value intuition,<sup>114</sup> but it can lead to hatred, which is the narrowing of one's ability to see values of higher types, and hinders loved-based preferring which properly orders values given. Certainly Socrates did not criticize Athenians because he hated them, nor because he hated Athens. It was his *love of Athens* that motivated his criticism of it, and his love of Athens that made him see its value all the more.

The third condition that guarantees the independence of intuition from ideology is that which love brings about, but which is the opposite from the first condition:

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<sup>114</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 36.

***participation.*** On the one hand, recall that Scheler calls love not only the act that discloses higher values, but also the act whereby one abandons oneself “in order to share and participate in another being.” This participation is required for adequate knowing. Indeed, knowing *is* participation, as an ontological relation. On the other hand, this participation is in a different sense than the detachment that was mentioned above. Detachment refers to a temporal removal from a certain historical context of experience that laid the path to the ethos of a society or community. Participation, on the other hand, refers to intentionality rather than temporality. It suggests that the one who is in a position to be engaged in social conflict is the one not only who can understand the conflict on an intellectual level, but who can see the values threatened in the conflict on an intuitive level. Academics can cognitively *understand* conflicts from their proverbial Ivory Tower, or from a perspective in the future looking into the past (by studying conflicts historical). However, one cannot *participate* in those conflicts, and so are entirely incapable of knowing the situation in the most intimate sense: intuitively. One cannot be given the values and value-complex at work in this situation. The means that the person in the best position to critique social organization is the one who can best see the falsification of higher values for lower ones, positive values for negative ones. This person would seem to possess the following three characteristics.

- (1) This person must have a position in society which would put him or her within proximity to heavy social conflict and oppression. Not necessarily to be an oppressed minority, but to be near them and with them (in solidarity). Someone in a leadership position may hear of much social turmoil, but may



also rarely witness it.

(2) This person must possess *an attitude of love*. He or she must be removed from *ressentiment* and have overcome ideology. This person can love the oppressed without hating the oppressor. Not hating the oppressor does not mean a lack of resolve for action required to change society. “Love forbids class hatred, but not an honest class struggle.”<sup>115</sup> However, though social change is important, this person sees that what is more fundamentally required is a change of hearts and cultivating an attitude of love in society, by being a model of love.

(3) This person must be able to have a vision of the whole scale of values. Though there is authentic humanitarianism, it is important for Scheler that humanitarianism not be employed as a polemic against religion, but consistent with it.<sup>116</sup> Humanitarianism must not itself be motivated by *ressentiment* (one must not make an *idol* out of material welfare). Therefore, it requires religious experience, and the givenness of the value of the Holy. This person must see that the genuine transformation of society does not mean only structural transformation of material conditions, but means also an edification of spirit in person and culture as well as the realization of the divine in the world.

A “rationally organized society” or emancipation from ideology would be for Scheler, among other things, a society geared toward the prevention of *ressentiment*,

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<sup>115</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 93.

<sup>116</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 79-95; *The Nature of Sympathy*, 99-100.

at least on a collective scale. All sorts of private *ressentiment* are unavoidable (sibling rivalry, ostracization from group of friends, etc.). However, “Ressentiment must therefore be strongest in a society like ours, where approximately equal rights or formal social equality, publicly recognized, go hand in hand with wide factual inequality in power, property, and education.”<sup>117</sup> This issue most likely pertains to our society far more than it did to Scheler’s.

But, nothing dispels ideology more than love. I emphasize this to make a point against the way critical theory is customarily conceived and practiced. It tends to fall prey to its own kind of *ressentiment* out of which Scheler calls “*ressentiment* criticism.” Not all critical theory is criticism of this kind, but it is the problem that critical theory is most susceptible. Scheler states that *ressentiment* criticism is “indiscriminate criticism without any positive aims.”<sup>118</sup> He continues: “a secret *ressentiment* underlies every way of thinking which attributes creative power to mere negation and criticism.”<sup>119</sup> This infection of thinking can go so far “that improvements in [social] conditions criticized cause no satisfaction—they merely cause discontent, for they destroy the growing pleasure afforded by invective and negation.”<sup>120</sup> Or again, this attitude that accompanies thought “does not seriously desire that its demands be fulfilled. It does not want to cure the evil: the evil is merely a pretext for the criticism.”<sup>121</sup>

This is an attitudinal problem that may accompany negative dialectics, but

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<sup>117</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 28.

<sup>118</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 29.

<sup>119</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 41.

<sup>120</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 29.

<sup>121</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 29.

Scheler stresses also a concomitant issue with epistemological commitments of the dialectical method itself. He finds it problematic that the object is no longer the standard of adequacy in thought. He writes: "I am referring to the view that the 'true' and the 'given' is not that which is self-evident [i.e., given with self-evidence, or self-given], but rather that which is 'indubitable' or 'inconstestable,' which can be maintained against doubt and criticism."<sup>122</sup> Scheler is suggesting harnessing the epistemic significance of intuition frees one from a resentment mentality. He makes the point even clearer as follows: "Whenever convictions are not arrived at by direct [i.e., immediate] contact with the world and the objects themselves, but indirectly through a critique of the opinions of others, the processes of thinking are impregnated with resentment."<sup>123</sup> Notice, however, that Scheler is not dismissing the importance of critique, for "Genuine and fruitful criticism judges all opinions with reference to the object itself. Resentment criticism, on the contrary, accepts no object that has not stood the test of criticism."<sup>124</sup>

It is safe to say that this work as a whole aims at a defense of Scheler's theory of intuition, the elements of intuition and their relation, as well as the relation between intuition and cognition. I have in mind that Scheler's phenomenology and sociology of knowledge are neither a kind of idealism, nor a kind of irrationalism, but draws upon moderate elements of each (intentional consciousness and ecstatic [i.e., preconscious] and pre-conceptual intuition). In large part, I have done so by attempting to justify phenomenology to critical theorists, using critical theory as a

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<sup>122</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 41.

<sup>123</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 41.

<sup>124</sup> Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 41.

kind of model of social criticism. To some degree, using critical theory as a standard and model is warranted and necessary. However, the significance of these final remarks show that Scheler is under the impression that phenomenological method is in fact more *objective* than the procedure of immanent critique, it is able to be more *engaged* in the socio-historical situation than immanent critique, and it is *less prone to resentment* and ideological thinking than immanent critique. To some extent, this work is a kind of immanent critique of critical theory, that is to say, that their methods do not fully serve their own aims, and that phenomenology elucidates prior grounds for the possibility of emancipatory critique.

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