APPRAISAL

The Journal of the Society for Post-Critical and Personalist Studies

www.spcps.org.uk

Vol. 8 No. 4, October 2011 ISSN 1358-3336

Re-Appraisal: Max Scheler (Pt 2)

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Demon in the sanctuary: The paradox of intimate violence

Max Scheler
1874-1928

// APPRAISAL

published twice a year in March and October; four issues per volume.

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- From time to time ***Appraisal*** will include *Re-Appraisals*, articles or collections of articles upon 20th C. thinkers whose work deserves to be more widely known.
- ***Appraisal*** takes a particular, but by no means exclusive, interest in the work of Michael Polanyi.

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- The maximum length of articles is 10,000 words, although longer articles can be split into 2 parts for publication in successive issues.
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- Please see inside rear cover regarding references to the works of Michael Polanyi.
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Please send all communications regarding **Appraisal** *(articles, subscriptions, etc.) to the Secretary.*

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Vol. 8, No. 4, October 2011 ISSN 1358-3336

***Editor:* Dr R.T. Allen**
20 Ulverscroft Rd, Loughborough, LE11 3PU, England
***Tel.* 01509 552743; *E-mail:* editor@spcps.org.uk; www.spcps.org.uk**

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This issues new contributors:

Alicja A. Gescinska is a researcher at Ghent University (Belgium), having been offered a grant from the Research Foundation Flanders (FWO). She is currently finishing her doctoral thesis on the meaning of the human person, freedom and intersubjectivity in the thought of Max Scheler and Karol Wojtyla. She previously published articles on Scheler, Berdjaev, Cieszkowski, and on Catholic sexual ethics. She is author of the book *De verovering van de vrijheid* (*The Conquest of Liberty*, Lemniscaat Publishers), in which she combines a philosophical analysis of boredom with a plea for positive liberty.

James Jeffries is an ABD graduate student in the Department of Philosophy at Urbana-Champaign. He specialises in phenomenology and ethics, working especially with 19th and 20th Century European thinkers. His dissertation research focuses on an analysis and phenomenology of creativity, which provides the basis for understanding the role of creativity in ethics. Additional research-interests include aesthetics, theories of selfhood, Nietzschean ethics, and virtue ethics.

Dr Keith R. Peterson graduated from DePaul University in Chicago where his training was in European philosophy from Kant to the present. His recent primary areas of research and teaching include environmental and natural philosophy, value theory, and philosophical anthropology. His translation of German Idealist F. W. J. Schelling's philosophy of nature appeared in 2004 (SUNY Press), and his current book project resituates traditional philosophical anthropology, value theory, and ontology in the context of current environmental philosophy. He currently teaches at Colby College in Waterville, Maine, USA.

EDITORIAL

As previously announced, subscriptions for Vol. 9, 2012-13, which are now due, have been increased for only the second time since *Appraisal* was launched in 1996. The increase is £5 on all subscriptions in order to cover the extra costs of having a functioning committee at long last. Full details of the new rates can be found on the inside rear cover.

In this issue we have the remaining three articles of our Re-Appraisal of the philosophy of Max Scheler, plus the second part of Daniel Paski's article on Polanyi (with apologies to the author for not including it in the March issue), and two other articles. The success of the appeal for articles on Scheler has encouraged us to launch appeals for ones on particular topics, beginning with the two appeals below.

CALLS FOR PAPERS

1. For the March and October issues: 'The Metaphysics of the Person'. Length: up to 8,000 wds. Outlines of 300 wds, and complete papers if possible, by Dec. 31st 2011.
2. For a *Special Student Supplement* with the Oct. 2012 issue: *Contributions only from undergraduate and postgraduate students at British or Irish universities and colleges*. Length: up to 4,000 wds. Outlines of 300 wds, and complete papers if possible, by March 31st 2012.

All papers and outlines must be prepared for blind review and complete papers must be composed in the format prescribed in our Style Sheet, available at www.spcps.org.uk, and sent to secretary@spcps.org.uk

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Author of "Common Cause – The Case for Working with our Cultural Values".

Afternoon: **Dr. Richard Allen, Member of the Fellowship and Chairman of The Society for Post-Critical and Personalist Studies (SPCPS).**

To book and pay for a place (Fee: £12 or low-income concession £6; Buffet lunch: £6) go to www.johnmacmurray.org

or send letter and cheque (payable to 'John Macmurray Fellowship') to Mr G. Ferguson, 31 Rossington Rd, Hunter's Bar, Sheffield, S11 8SA.

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June 8-10, 2012, at Loyola University, Chicago

For full details go to: www.polanyisociety.org

BRINGING VALUES DOWN TO EARTH: MAX SCHELER AND ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY

Keith Petersen

Abstract:
Scheler's philosophical anthropology and value theory provide rich resources for current discourses in environmental philosophy. It is argued that his pluralist value-ethical framework offers a novel perspective on current debates over the 'nature of value and the value of nature' in contemporary environmental ethics. 'Bringing values down to earth' is a characterization of what Scheler calls 'sublimation:' the unique place of humans in the cosmos is to actualize values which only they are capable of apprehending. This may be interpreted in a non-anthropocentric way in order to balance environmental views that attempt to minimize the sense of human uniqueness.

Keywords
Max Scheler, Man's Place in Nature, Environmental Philosophy, Environmental Ethics, Value Theory, Value Pluralism, Paul W. Taylor, Philosophical Anthropology, Sublimation, Moral Agency, Articulation

...we may say that at no time in his history has human being been so much of a problem to itself as it is now.[1]

1. Social and ecological crisis

Many of the works of Max Scheler share with those of some environmental philosophers a characterization of the symptoms of present crisis, a diagnosis of the ailment of the age, and a prescription for a cure. In both the disease is taken to be (importantly but not solely) a kind of systematic value delusion, and likewise in both a remedy is recommended involving a transvaluation of values. In his analyses of contemporary German society Scheler railed against the symptomatic decay of 'culture' and the burgeoning of the mediocre, where the businessman's scheme of value preferences has taken over and usefulness, efficiency, convenience, and pleasure rule the day as highest values. Similarly, many early environmental philosophers inveighed against the anthropocentric evaluations of a civilized humanity that can only find the natural world instrumentally useful but cannot see its intrinsic value. They hoped that the philosophical discovery of nature's intrinsic value would help to correct the course of a wayward industrial civilization. While there are significant differences in the two discourses, both are nevertheless responses to perceived crises, and both find ingredients for a resolution in analyses of the place or role of human beings in nature, however these terms are interpreted. I'll share here some of my results of an exploration of this homology to show how the two reciprocally illuminate one another, how their combination exposes more sources of disease than either alone, as well as the limitations of their respective remedies. What is called for is not so much a return to Scheler as a reawakening of sensitivity to the breadth and depth of the problems with which he was attempting to deal.

Among the many issues discussed in early environmental philosophy, two are especially central.[2] One regards the question of the continuity or discontinuity of human being with other living things, or put more traditionally, of human difference in degree or in kind from them. The answer to this question is normally taken to be decisive for subsequent inquiries about how humans ought to conduct themselves in nature and society. Despite its central importance, scholarly discussion of this anthropological question in environmentalism has been marginal, and has usually been treated under the heading of 'anthropocentrism' (the notion that human interests are the measure of all value, also called 'human chauvinism'). In environmentalism questions about human nature are thus intimately connected with questions about human evaluation. Hence the 'value in nature and the nature of value' is the other central issue to be addressed.[3] Developing throughout the 70s and 80s in the cocoon of a kind of wilful naiveté about value theory, much of the environmental discourse on 'instrumental' and 'intrinsic value' would frankly look primitive from Scheler's perspective, whose *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* (1916) is still one of the most profound treatments of the subject in 20th century philosophy. Scheler was admirably clear on both issues and diverged from the commonly accepted views, so that a look at his ideas will help to throw their assumptions into relief.

Opening his final published work, *Man's Place in Nature*, Scheler remarks autobiographically that 'the questions "What is human being?" and "What is the human's place in the nature of things?" have occupied me more deeply than any other philosophical question,' and there the intimate relation of the two issues becomes especially evident.[4] I will take that text as a point of departure.

The need for contemporary environmental philosophy to develop a distinctive philosophical anthropology based in current ecological and social theory is urgent, as is fresh thinking about the role of environmental ethics in reorienting the values and motivations of an increasingly globalized mass society. Scheler's concern with the historical tendencies of mass culture, theories of human nature, and axiology make his works a bountiful if admittedly somewhat idiosyncratic resource for reflections on these themes.

2. From anthropocentrism to philosophical anthropology

The early treatment of the theme of anthropocentrism in environmental philosophy tacitly involved both philosophical anthropology and value theory. Many environmental thinkers attributed the cause of the environmental crisis to Western anthropocentrism, defined either as human supremacy or the notion that human interests are the measure of all value. For the anthropocentrist, if a being does not satisfy human needs then it possesses no value in itself.[5] The question arises as to the origin of these evaluations, and one is led to some predictable responses: humans are universally anthropocentric given their selfish biological nature; or only Western, scientific, industrialized culture produces anthropocentric humans; or it is some combination of the two.[6] These responses obviously entail a certain understanding of human nature. What does it mean to say that humans are 'biologically' disposed to value things insofar as they are or may be vitally useful? How could such an evaluation derive from our constitution? Likewise, what does it mean to suggest that only Western humans have been culturally conditioned to perceive only what is useful in nature? Both naturalist and culturalist views call for an examination of the nature of the kind of being(s) that can apprehend values of various sorts. Thus, initial questions about anthropocentric valuing lead us to ask questions of an anthropological sort.

In the essay 'Man and History' Scheler created a typology of 'theories' of human being which he thought in 1926 were still effective in many different discourses, and in contrast to which he formulated his own philosophical anthropology.[7] It is remarkable to see how well the current types extant within environmental discourse exemplify the types already criticized by Scheler.

His typology included four major images of human being and one minor. The Judeo-Christian, Greek, scientific, and 'pan-romantic' are the major types, 'postulatory atheism' is the minor. Here a brief summary of the key features of each will suffice. The Judeo-Christian image (I) is so well-known as to hardly deserve mention: it is the notion of an ensouled body, fallen into sin with the hope of redemption, created in the image of God, between beast and angel, having dominion over the creatures of the Earth. While Scheler recognizes that this idea still plays a largely unacknowledged role in the lives of many individuals, he thinks that it is not relevant for formulating a genuine philosophical anthropology. The Greek conception (II), on the other hand, is indispensable. It emphasizes the possession of *nous* and *logos*, those distinctive capacities which make humans the noble 'rational animal,' raising them above the brutes and making the divinities their kin. On this view reason (or spirit) is timeless and endowed with the power to effect changes in the world. The next conception Scheler associates with positivism, pragmatism, and the sciences (III), and it states that human beings are one evolved type of animal among others, ontologically on a par with them, and views all human capabilities as more complex versions of the capacities which can be found among other forms of life. This view is still the dominant one among scientists and many environmentalists, although aspects of the previous types are not without adherents among them. It is obvious that C. P. Snow's depiction of the 'two cultures' split simply recapitulates this dichotomy, where the humanists subscribe to something like a Greek conception of the human and the sciences to the naturalistic view of *homo faber*. The fourth 'pan-romantic' view (IV) is not as popular today in the general culture as in Scheler's time, but as a reactive conception provoked by the symptoms of crisis it has many adherents among environmentalists. With it Scheler refers to any view which is basically naturalistic like the previous one, but which views the human capacities often claimed to have led us to the development of high culture and civilization as dangerous and debilitating rather than as noble and praiseworthy.[8] Similarly, some environmental writers blame the environmental crisis on the 'civilizing' forces in us, and yearn for a return to earlier ways and times as the beginning of a solution to the ecological crisis.[9] Finally, the fifth view presented by Scheler (V), 'postulatory atheism,' is a characterization of the view of one of his contemporaries, Nicolai Hartmann, who proposed a non-reductive naturalism that recognizes the independent reality of the unique human capacities for reason and moral agency. It claims that all teleological conceptions of the world (theological or otherwise) implicitly or explicitly deny human beings any special role in the world. Therefore, it is *necessary* to postulate the non-existence of deity or cosmic purpose in order to ennoble the human.[10]

Readers of Sartre should see resonances here, as this idea was much expanded upon by atheistic existentialism. Scheler's typology ends here, but I would add a sixth major type to the list in order to take into account the now current notion that the very idea of a 'theory of human nature' is a quaint, even dangerous, essentializing project of a dead Modern past. Despite the postmodern denial that there can be such a thing as a theory of human nature,[11] one is nevertheless implied whose image of the human is of a fragmented, situated, embodied, gendered, subjectified, disunified being strewn across nodes of networks of linguistic, material, economic, political, and symbolic forces. This is fundamentally a culturalist vision which eschews naturalistic accounts altogether. While I am sympathetic with its general scepticism about essentialisms, such a negative image obviously has no hope of forming a relevant view for environmentalism.[12]

Of these six, the first two and the last two register a fundamental difference of kind between humans and other living things, while the third and fourth assert only a difference of degree. Using this distinction of *kind* or *degree*, we would have to place Scheler's considered view among those that assert a difference in kind. But for our purposes may be prudent to subdue our tendency to recapitulate the traditional dichotomy. The relevant question for us is not simply how like or unlike other living things we are, assuming there is an 'objective' view of this; but which are the relevant similarities and differences, the meaningful continuities with the natural world and the significant discontinuities, specifically from the perspective of our ecological interests? Treatises anxious to argue that humans are different in kind from animals generally establish the point in order to conclude that we are therefore entitled to harm them, or to justify some other current damaging human behaviour. Environmentalists respond by insisting on the idea of human continuity and sameness with other living beings. This can be interpreted as a 'romantic' reaction to the separation between human and nature severely instituted during the Modern period. The continuity proposed may be characterized in terms of physics, Darwinian evolution, or the holism of Deep Ecology. But in the effort to establish ontological continuity these discourses tend to overshoot the target by minimizing difference. They should not only aim to demonstrate human continuity with all of the living world, but also to reveal human differences relevant for the project of environmentalism. As ostensibly the one creature on Earth able to reflectively consider the consequences of its behaviour, any definition of human being for the purposes of environmentalism would be remiss if it did not mention precisely that set of capacities which gives humans the singular ability to care for the Earth community as a whole, or to regard it as possessing inherent worth. In other words, precisely the capacity to lead a life styled 'environmentalist,' which entails a clear set of value commitments, is one of the most relevant features of the kind of being that we are. What these values are remains to be articulated, and anthropocentric, biocentric, ecocentric, and even 'non-centric' frameworks have all been suggested. I'll return to this issue in section 5. For now, let's consider Scheler's point of departure for such considerations in *Man's Place in Nature*.

3. The problematic place of the human in the cosmos

The plurality of types summarized above formed the backdrop for Scheler's own attempt to provide a 'unified' theory of human nature which he hoped would become the foundation for the many emerging sciences that take an interest in human beings, including sociology, economics, psychology, ethology, and evolutionary theory. From at least 1915 Scheler made the idea that human being is a 'problem' to itself *and is aware of it today* a proper theme for philosophy.[13] In *Man's Place in Nature* Scheler grapples with this problem and presents the germ of the philosophical anthropology which he had planned to publish before his untimely death. The work is divided into roughly five parts. In the first chapter Scheler provides a structural description of the capacities of living nature in 'stages,' from the lowest level and most widely distributed *pathic impulse*, belonging to all the living (including plants), to the less widespread but still widely distributed *instinct* (all animals), to the less common *associative memory and habit* formation, and finally the capacity for *problem-solving intelligence*, belonging to many higher mammals and to human beings. Scheler is philosophically progressive in arguing—based on recent ethological evidence such as that of Wolfgang Köhler[14]—that many animals are highly intelligent, and that humans and animals share a great many sophisticated capacities. He insists on the continuity of humans with all of life. But in the second and third chapters he argues that the kind of intelligence that belongs even to the higher mammals, if sufficiently intensified or complexified, still cannot account for the kinds of abilities which he attributes to the human spirit. Spirit for Scheler includes reason and self-consciousness, as well as the intuition of universal, *a priori* essences, but interestingly also includes intentional

acts such as love and hate, awe, wonder, kindness, remorse, and free decision. Correlative to the power of self-consciousness Scheler counts the *objectification* of things in the world, a power unique to humans which allows them to *see* things *as* objects with properties and values. He calls the centre of spirit in the human being the 'person,' which is never open to objectification, since it is pure actuality, having its being only 'in and through the execution of its acts.'[15] Spirit is what allows human beings to occasionally 'detach' themselves from the life of the drives, to say 'no' to vital inclinations.

With this duality of spirit and life in hand, Scheler criticizes popular conceptions of spirit and defines the key process that will be used to characterize the unique place of humans in the cosmos. This is what he calls *sublimation*. He distances himself from the traditional concept of spirit which associates its immateriality with supreme potency, whether in Greek or Christian thought, and he in fact insists that spirit, as the domain of values, ideals, intentions, and essences, is utterly *impotent* in itself. He also criticizes 'negative' concepts of the spirit, such as Freud's, which attribute accomplishments such as art, science, and philosophy to the *effects* of repression and sublimation of drive energies *alone*, and claim that spirit as such does not exist. Situating himself between these two positions, he adopts and modifies Freud's notion of sublimation. For the individual, in order to realize or bring into existence any values beyond the level of vital values such as health, strength, or survival, spiritual intention must redirect the energies of the drives and guide them by means of attractive images toward the kinds of values only disclosed to a being possessing spirit, such as truth, justice, and beauty. More controversially, Scheler claims that sublimation also operates at the level of the cosmos and throughout the course of evolutionary and human history. As the sole being in whom drive and spirit intersect, it becomes the special role of human beings to bring spiritual values into the world. Scheler imagines human beings as co-creators with the 'godhead,' facilitating the gradual penetration of higher values into the world over time. The result of sublimation, then, despite its name ('raising up'), is to *bring values down to Earth*. It is an ennobling view, and one which he attempts to make more plausible through an analysis and criticism of theories of mind-body dualism in the next chapter. He argues that the conventional line between mind (mental life) and body does not exist, that both are manifestations of cosmic drive life, and that this fundamental duality must be reinterpreted in terms of life and spirit. In the last chapter he reflects on religion and metaphysics generally as attempts to provide answers to the question of the place of the human in the cosmos.

Scheler's answer to the anthropological question here forms the basis of his answer to the values question touched on at the start. Spirit is what allows human beings to redirect the energies of the drives toward the higher values disclosed by spirit, and away from the lower values that have become dominant in the preferential trend of contemporary society. We might expect a parallel development of philosophical anthropology in environmental thought since it too aims at a transvaluation of values, redirecting attention from the instrumental value of nature to its intrinsic value. But our expectations would be disappointed. Even Scheler's own account of sublimation here is incomplete without reference to his theory of values worked out years earlier in *Formalism.* A brief glance at its contents will not only make Scheler's view clearer, but it will show that not only is current environmental thought lacking an anthropology, it is also lacking an adequate theory of values.

4. Value Theory

Sketching the outlines of Scheler's value theory and his original idea of the rank order of values will help us in understanding the rationale behind the concept of sublimation. In addition, as we'll see in the next section, Scheler's value theory shows the standard dichotomy between instrumental and intrinsic value to be hopelessly unrefined, and that a more subtle, nuanced, and differentiated qualitative series of values is called for in environmental discourse.[16] This also leads to a more adequate conception of the way in which the articulation of these values can affect perception and action. While in the end we do not have to accept Scheler's rank order of values or his criteria for value 'height,' he does provide a point of entry into the discussion of value pluralism, of prioritizing and articulating values as a central feature of moral agency.

Three interrelated criticisms and positive contributions make up the core of Scheler's value ethics: 1) the critique of the division between reason and feeling; 2) the critique of the notion that feeling is a disorderly mass of impressions and cannot contribute to knowledge or valuation; 3) the critique of the idea of the subjectivity of values and the complementary disclosure of an objective rank order of values.

A large part of Scheler's criticism of Kantian ethics pertains to Kant's emphasis on reason as the only genuine source and arbiter of moral worth. Kant's reliance on a basically Greek anthropology entails a dualism between inclination (feeling, drive)

and duty, or heteronomy and autonomy. The moral worth of an action has nothing to do with motives which stem from feeling, inclination, or desire on the part of the subject, but only upon the subject's intention to act according to duty. These duties derive from the self-legislation of the moral subject as member of the 'kingdom of ends.' Through a phenomenological examination of moral psychology and of feelings as intentional acts Scheler denies that reason is the primary source of moral evaluation, and holds instead that feelings (especially love and hate) are the source of all evaluative activity. He suggests that our perception of the world, situations, and others is always permeated by implicit evaluations which correspond to our own and our culture's preferential trends. Perception is value-saturated and cannot be otherwise, and feeling is the locus of evaluative orientation. This does not mean that values are subjective.

Scheler appeals to an older tradition to argue that feeling is not an amorphous mass of reactive impressions but instead has its own order and organization, an *ordre du coeur* (the phrase derives from Pascal who took it from St Augustine's *ordo amoris*). Since feelings are transcendent acts toward intentional objects, and since to each shade of feeling a value quality corresponds, he argues that feelings disclose values and their inherent 'essential interconnections' to one another and to their bearers. Values have lawful relations among themselves, and these are revealed to the discerning moral sense. Among the many different types and bearers of values he discusses, the distinction between two general kinds stands out as crucial, values of goods and moral values.

Moral values, which might include virtues like courage and moderation, ideals like brotherly love and charity, Enlightenment values like freedom and justice, or even the Nietzschean value of self-creation, are values which can be borne only by a human person and never by things. Things cannot be courageous or charitable. However, in order to exhibit these qualities, human beings have to comport themselves among things and others with an eye to the goods values that those things and others bear. In order to be honest and not steal, relations to things regarded as valuable enough to be stolen in the first place must be presupposed. In order for gift-giving to be a virtue, the gifts given must be acknowledged as having a value for this purpose. Thus the dimension of human moral values arises on the basis of a world of ostensible goods values and is dependent upon it, even though the existence of goods in no way *explains* the genesis of the moral values that depend on them, nor the structural relationships between them. Even moral values themselves can be treated as goods values in certain relations. The courageous soldier is considered a good thing by the commanders, as is the loyal friend by her friend, even though courage and loyalty are, properly speaking, moral values of a person rather than goods values.

Finally, Scheler argues that the idea of the subjectivity of values which permeates the modern era has many causes, and one of them is *ressentiment* of the weak towards the strong. If values are considered to be subjective then there would be no objective standards which certain authorities can appeal to in order to justify their rule. (Hartmann called Scheler the 'Catholic Nietzsche,' and while Scheler largely appropriated Nietzsche's genealogy of *ressentiment* he defends Christianity against Nietzsche's criticisms.) Scheler instead claims that while each person has a characteristic 'preferential trend' toward particular values, this may or may not coincide with the genuine rank order of values. This objective order of rank of values has not been laid down by traditional authorities but is present in every human heart. Values can shift relative to their bearers (values of goods), but the rank order of values themselves is objectively fixed, and according to Scheler adopts the dimensions of a single vertical axis. He developed a series of criteria for value height which gives some insight into this rank order. Higher values are distinguished by their lack of divisibility and their relative independence of material bearers. They are more long-lasting, indifferent to the intention to achieve them, and their achievement results in a deeper contentment. Most importantly, the higher are in a founding relation with the lower.[17] In other words, the lower values do not 'make sense' without presupposing the higher. The ranking itself, starting from the lowest values, runs from comfort (agreeable) and discomfort (disagreeable), to useful and not useful (efficiency, economic values), and these are most localizable and most attached to specific bearers (sensible bodies and things). The next major level of values are called 'vital values,' and include value qualities such as health, strength, survival, vitality, the noble and base, and these values of the living 'found' the lower values of comfort and utility. This means that something can appear to be useful only for a being striving to survive and to be healthy, or a nest comfortable, for this higher vital purpose. The next highest rank refers to values of the intellectual and cultural life of persons and society, including aesthetic, legal, moral, and cognitive values. Finally, the highest value in the scale is that of the sacred or holy, and he claims that it founds all the others.[18]

In the context of his late work this rank order and the other basic principles of his value ethics provide the vertical dimension to his understanding of the process of sublimation, both in the microcosm of the person and the macrocosm of the universe. All living beings exhibit a life of the drives which orients them toward vital values, and secondarily to other lower values as well. According to the division between spirit and drive established by Scheler, animals cannot experience the value of lawfulness or beauty, and so cannot realize any values above the vital values in the rank order. Humans share with other living organisms the basic orientation toward vital needs, but by virtue of being endowed with spirit they also have purchase on a realm of values beyond the vital. They can 'say no to life.' Given Scheler's innovative and anti-classical claim that spirit is in itself impotent to achieve anything in the world without the help of drive energy, he develops his theory of sublimation to describe the way in which higher spiritual values can play a role in individual actions and in the world. Since higher values are disclosed to persons through love, and since these values are incapable of being realized by any higher being, it falls to human beings to be the 'co-creators' of spiritual reality by leading and re-directing the energy of the drives toward those higher ends grasped by the spirit, as mentioned above. This happens when individual humans act morally and redirect their inclinations accordingly, and this also happens as a world-historical, cosmic process of the gradual infusion of spirit into the world of drive and the overcoming of the initial diremption of the world ground into two attributes, spirit and life.

Seen against the elaborate background of Scheler's value ethics current environmental ethics appears inadequate to capture all of the dimensions of human evaluation. One of the fundamental problems with the way the question of the value of nature is approached by environmental ethicists is its formalism and universalism. It is assumed that the mission of the environmental ethicist is to enlarge the sphere of moral consideration to include non-human life and ecosystems, usually by invoking the concept of the intrinsic value of nature. In this light, the question 'Do trees have 'intrinsic value' at all, or does their value depend on their 'instrumental' value for humans?' is typical. Questions like this are *framework* questions, because they ask whether value exists and if so, what type it is. In contrast are questions of a fundamentally different type: 'Is the value of the spotted owl's existence greater than the value of the loggers' livelihood?' In a case of value conflict or a moral dilemma, they ask what is more valuable, which should we choose? These *priority* questions tend to disappear from the perspective of intrinsic value theory. Environmental philosophers have often thought that getting an answer to the first type of question would lead conveniently to answers to the second. In fact, they have seldom got to the second, messier type of question because there is little unanimity regarding the first. Most of us are daily in the habit of prioritizing, often groping for a language capable of facilitating our ability to qualitatively contrast the alternative values and interests at stake in moral conflicts. Discussions of the difference between instrumental and intrinsic value are not helpful when it comes to making such choices. The next generation of ecological philosophers must explicate the *value-contents* implicated in environmental value conflicts. Scheler's work provides both a framework and a language for prioritizing, emphasizing a content-oriented sense of values and an attention to personal agency that is generally ignored by many environmental ethicists. Ethicists hoped that by the discovery and defence of some entity or property called 'intrinsic value' in nature they would be able to curtail wanton exploitation of the environment and transform human motivation toward a respect for it. But this strategy poorly understands the nature of motivation—there is no moral psychology presented by these writers adequate to the task of understanding such a transformation of perspective. Moral agents articulate grounds for their actions, and these reasons are expressed in the form of qualitatively distinctive values in contrast to some others. While the ethicists assumed a difference of height was implied in the contrast between instrumental and intrinsic value, the problem is that these are not specific value qualities but are categories or types without internal differentiation. Without this internal differentiation, without names for specific value qualities, the hope of understanding how perspectives on nature can change, and hence motives for acting in it, is vitiated.[19]

If environmentalism demands value prioritizing and thinking through everyday value conflicts then we need a language with which to articulate moral dilemmas. Where we have no language to describe and *articulate* these dilemmas we become unable to understand our experiences in a manner that makes them the basis for new perceptions and conditions of future experiences. What we struggle to know is which intended values take precedence over others, not whether there are 'really' any out there to begin with. It is the clash between the value-contents of claims that is at the heart of moral dilemmas, including environmental ones.[20] Conversations about value priorities thus refer not only to the world of

goods and ends of action, but to the value of the self (morally good or bad) who prefers or chooses the higher in contrast to the lower value.

5. Environmental philosophy and bringing values down to earth

Scheler's philosophical anthropology and theory of value can be contrasted with that of some mainstream environmental ethicists who largely adopt conventional scientific views of the human being as materially continuous with nature. The question remains as to how one is able to create a plausible foundation for ethics on this naturalistic theory—anthropocentric, biocentric, or otherwise.[21] Paul W. Taylor, in one of the earliest systematic texts devoted to these topics, attempts to establish his biocentric view on an ecological naturalism.

> We share with other species a common relationship to the Earth. In accepting the biocentric outlook, we take the fact of our being an animal species to be a fundamental feature of our existence. We consider it an essential aspect of 'the human condition.' We do not deny the differences between ourselves and other species, but we keep in the forefront of our consciousness the fact that in relation to our planet's natural ecosystems we are but one species population among many….The laws of genetics, of natural selection, and of adaptation apply equally to all of us as biological creatures. *In this light we consider ourselves as one with them, not set apart from them.*[22]

He emphasizes *continuity* over difference here, and in light of a long tradition of radically separating humanity from nature he is justified in doing so. However, while what he provides is ostensibly a simple description, this description may already be viewed as an evaluation. Considering ourselves to be 'one with them' is already taken to be a positive value, contrasted with traditional views which privilege discontinuity, separation, and difference. Continuity is taken to have a moral as well as ontological relevance, and in this very provisional articulation of human as part of nature we are already in the domain of value contents. Taylor recognizes that the ecological 'belief system' he proposes is a strong motivator for the adoption of the moral attitude of 'respect for nature' that he takes to be a fundamental principle of environmental ethics. The denial of human difference in the form of 'human superiority' is the connecting link between the ecological ontology and the ethical claims.[23] However, not all relevant differences imply hierarchy or superiority, even if they do remain evaluative.

He undermines arguments for human superiority by pointing out their often circular logic.

> Such uniquely human characteristics as rational thought, aesthetic creativity, autonomy and self-determination, and moral freedom, it might be held, have a higher value than the capacities found in other species. Yet we must ask: valuable to whom, and on what grounds? The human characteristics mentioned are all valuable to humans. They are essential to the preservation and enrichment of our civilization and culture.[24]

Therefore, he concludes, there is no 'objective' standard, especially from the ecological perspective, for valuing humans over other creatures as philosophers have done for so long. We only value ourselves more because we measure with our own yardstick of values, and this is circular.[25] He states that '[thinking] is intrinsically valuable to humans alone, who value it as an end in itself, and it is instrumentally valuable to those who benefit from it, namely humans.'[26] While I am sympathetic with much of his critique, I disagree with the conclusion that if there is no superiority then there are no morally relevant differences.

The question here is not simply that of continuity or sameness versus discontinuity or difference; it is how much sameness and how much difference is there, and in terms of which properties or qualities? Why are some continuities, e.g., our genetic constitution, or our being products of natural selection and adaptation, more important than other equally material differences, e.g., fantastically large brains, indeterminate morphology, or a long period of social learning? With clarity of purpose Taylor doggedly undermines conventional justifications of human superiority, but in doing so cannot help but see all similarity as material and all difference as hierarchical. He cannot entertain a *significant* nonhierarchical concept of difference. Therefore, if there is no superiority then there is no difference either. However, as I noted in section 2, with respect to the demanding values of Taylor's own (and the environmentalist) project, there are differences that *are* morally significant, and are significant not for our sakes alone. Thinking, not to speak of the other traits mentioned, is not only intrinsically valuable as well as instrumentally valuable for ourselves; other beings have benefited from (just as they have been harmed by) our capacity to think, feel, and value.

Indeed, it is precisely the ability he calls 'a genuine *capacity* to take [the organism's] standpoint' that allows one to see that it has a 'good of its own,'27 an inherent worth that must be respected, that would be beneficial primarily for them. It appears that only human beings have this capacity, as well as the capacity for ecological knowledge which he takes to be a motivating prerequisite for it. But he fails to acknowledge that while human intelligence and autonomy have led to profound disturbances of

natural cycles and systems, these same capacities are those which fuel his very attempt to correct this wayward course. It is only as beings who value and who feel the demands of multiple values that human beings may be motivated to care for the Earth community in a way that no other being on Earth can. This is perfectly in line with the presuppositions of his own enterprise. He calls his ethics biocentric, and it can only be biocentric thanks to the very capacity humans possess of responding to the claims of values beyond those 'anthropocentric' or egocentric ones that predominate in our culture. But his denial of human superiority becomes an unfortunate denial of human distinctiveness altogether.

So Taylor argues that the idea of human superiority is inconsistent with the worldview provided by the biocentrictofuture generations, both human and nonhuman. This is in practice what he himself is doing by writing an 'environmental ethics.' Arne Naess, founder of Deep Ecology, also adopts a biocentric outlook and affirms the inherent worth of all living beings, but at the same time he clearly sees humans as specially positioned.

> The emergence of human ecological consciousness is a philosophically important idea: a life form has developed on Earth which is capable of understanding and appreciating its relations with all other life forms and to the Earth as a whole…. A specific feature of human make-up is that human beings consciously perceive the urge other living beings have for self-realization, and that we must therefore assume *a kind of responsibility for our conduct towards others*.[28]

Biocentrism does not inevitably lead to the erasure of human difference.

Scheler would most likely tie the capacity to sympathize and to value back to his notion of spirit. He would agree with Taylor that we can be understood as biologically continuous with all the rest of life. But he would disagree that this is all we are. He might claim that Taylor fails to appreciate the degree to which knowing ecology, taking on the perspective of another (even a nonhuman), and responding to values beyond the anthropocentric, must be understood as integral capacities which go beyond even those of a highly developed problem-solving intelligence. By means of his concept of sublimation he would articulate the unique place of human beings in nature, which Taylor seems to implicitly acknowledge and explicitly deny at the same time.

Even if we don't agree with the details of Scheler's moral phenomenology or his rank order, we can at least recognize the importance of being able to *articulate* and *prioritize* one's values in the process of acting in the world. The fundamental intuition of the environmental ethicists is that intrinsic value or inherent worth is 'higher' than instrumental value, and according to Scheler this is correct, but they miss the entire matter of transforming an individual's system of preferences toward the higher because they do not name specific value qualities, only value- types. Only a language of qualitative contrasts is suitable to articulate our motivations. Encouraging others to see the natural world as valuable in itself has been the mission of environmental ethics, and this amounts, in Scheler's language, to a kind of sublimation of the drive energies toward the actualization of this higher value in our communities. Instead of a process of 'raising up' the lower to the higher, it too could be envisioned as a process of *bringing values down to Earth* to the extent that the Earth is seen as valuable in itself rather than for the sake of satisfying some lower needs. It may be seen as the infusion of the sacred into the everyday, or the sanctification of life.

If writers like Taylor were not so injudiciously focused on criticisms of human superiority, most of which are justified, they would recognize that there is a legitimate reason to recommend humanity's unique place in the context of the ecological crisis. Not only we ourselves, but all living things, have an interest in the fact that we are the only ones who can care for the Earth, or bring values down to Earth. The values of respect for life and sustaining the biosphere are uniquely human values, therefore, being the kind of agent who is able to pursue and sometimes realize them has an *absolute value that is constitutive of the ecological project itself*. It should be plain that we are the only beings on the planet without whom the values of respect for life and care for the Earth could not come into existence.[29]

6. Conclusion

Scheler's consideration of the problematic place of humans in the world has suggested that their role is to bring values down to Earth. But in order to do so Scheler created a metaphysical framework which, as naturalists of a sort, we have to find untenable. The question now is whether there is any way to account for the kinds of capacities Scheler identifies as distinctive without reference to something like spirit to support them.[30] The challenge is to do so without sacrificing the richness of the values discourse Scheler provides, since this is precisely that by means of which we are able to articulate environmental values as clearly as possible and to shape perception and motivate action. But the fact remains that as responses to the crisis of his own era, Scheler's philosophical anthropology and value theory can be rich resources for the even more

serious crisis faced by all of us, and much can be learned from them.

Department of Philosophy, Colby College
4550 Mayflower Hill, Waterville, ME 04901-8840
tel 207.859.4551; keith.peterson@colb y.edu

Notes

1. Max Scheler, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, ed. Manfred Frings (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 2002), p. 10. Hereafter SM. For the English I will use the translation of Hans Meyerhoff, *Man's Place in Nature* (New York: Beacon Press, 1961), as I do here (p. 6) with minor modification, unless otherwise noted. Both German and English pages will be given as SM 10/6.
2. By 'environmental philosophy' I mean research of the last four decades or so which explicitly examines the human relationships to and impacts upon the natural world against the horizon of acknowledged environmental crisis. This is broader than and includes 'environmental ethics,' a field defined by its attempt to construct an ethical theory which regards living beings and nature generally as morally considerable entities. Initially virtually synonymous, environmental philosophy has grown to include all sorts of investigations into the ontological, scientific, political, historical, economic and social dimensions of the environmental crisis.
3. This is the title of a piece by the well-known environmental philosopher Holmes Rolston III. 'Value In Nature and The Nature Of Value,' *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, III, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 143-153.
4. SM 5/3.
5. The exclusive disjunction is almost always entailed—only more recently has it been suggested that things may be *both* valuable to humans *and* have value in themselves. For an example of this position, see the Rolston essay cited above, n. 3.
6. For one of the strongest culturalist arguments, see Carolyn Merchant's *Death of Nature: Women,* Ecology*, and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: HarperOne, 1990 [Orig. 1980]).
   For a naturalistic determinist view, see ...
7. 'Man and History,' in *Philosophical Perspectives*, trans. O. Haac (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1958), pp. 65-93.
8. Representative figures cited by Scheler include Paul Alsberg, a disciple of Schopenhauer, as well as Theodor Lessing, Ludwig Klages, and Friedrich Nietzsche.
9. A few of these authors include Paul Shepard, *Coming Home to the Pleistocene*, 1st ed. (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2004), John Zerzan, *Against Civilization: Readings and Reflections* (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2005), David Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-Than-Human World*, 1st ed. (New York: Vintage, 1997), and Kirkpatrick Sale, *After Eden: The Evolution of Human Domination* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2006).
10. For Hartmann's own discussion, see his *Ethics*, Vol. I, trans. Stanton Coit (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932 [Orig. 1926]), pp. 243ff.
11. E.g., Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 373.
12. For some discussion of the tensions between post-modernism and environmentalism see Kate Soper's *What is Nature?* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, USA, 1995).
13. See 'On the Idea of Man,' trans. Clyde Nabe, *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology*, Vol. 9, No. 3, 1978, pp. 184-198. This conception of *human-as-problem* is reiterated in almost all of the anthropologists, including Helmuth Plessner and Arnold Gehlen, and makes its way into the mainstream through existentialists like Martin Heidegger and Jean Wahl.
14. Wolfgang Köhler, *The Mentality of Apes* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973). Scheler's text is filled with references to his scientific contemporaries, which evinces his attempt to come to terms with the most current research.
15. SM 48/47.
16. Such a shift is argued for by John O'Neill, Alan Holland, & Andrew Light in *Environmental Values* (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), though from a different perspective. The arguments would benefit from wider acquaintance with the minority tradition of value ethics in the history of philosophical ethics. There is both an Anglo-Saxon and a Continental tradition in axiological ethics, including figures such as Moore and Ross in England, Dewey, Perry, and Pepper in the U.S., and Brentano, Meinong, Scheler, and Hartmann in Austria and Germany. See the brief text by J.N. Findlay, *Axiological Ethics* (London: Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1970) for a general survey. Most recently, figures like Charles Taylor and Joseph Raz are working in this value pluralist tradition. This author has drawn principally from Scheler's contemporary Nicolai Hartmann in order to promote a fresh look at environmental ethics. See his ...[FEPIV 2010].
17. See Hartmann's critique of these criteria in *Ethics*, Vol. 2, trans. Stanton Coit (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1932 [Orig. 1926]), pp. 27-29, 54-57.
18. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: a New Attempt Toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, 5th ed. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), pp. 90-97. There is not sufficient space here to examine this scale of values in detail. What is important for the point being made is that values discourse is indispensable for an adequate conception of moral agency, and that some sense of a value scale exists in all of us. Just what the values are and what are the criteria for ranking may remain open for the time being. Nicolai Hartmann's ethics began where Scheler's left off, and his multidimensional value scale is quite different from Scheler's and, to this author's mind, more plausible. See his *Ethics*, Vol. 2 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1932), *passim.*
19. I have made these points more extensively in the piece cited in note 16. A central question as yet

unaddressed is what the relevant bearers of 'environmental values' are, but I believe that this question cannot be answered without first engaging with the question of priorities.

20. One might object that we are ignoring the important question of the ontology of values (whether values are subjective or objective) and that until that question is settled we can't move forward. The force of this question arising from Modern value-skepticism may be attenuated by beginning with a discursive approach to values. As Charles Taylor has persuasively argued, a language of qualitative contrast forms the horizon of our self- and world-understandings. In this context the question is not 'are values subjective or objective' but which are higher and lower, which goals are worth pursuing and which not.
21. I can only provide a glimpse of what is typical in mainstream environmental ethics here, and take Taylor's views as representative of the general position. But environmental philosophy and ethics are increasingly internally heterogeneous, so an analysis of individual positions and the diversity of views—from Deep Ecology, ecofeminist, and environmental justice theorists to environmental virtue ethics—would be needed to establish more firmly the points made here.
22. 'The Ethics of Respect for Nature,' in *Environmental Ethics: An Anthology*, Andrew Light and Holmes Rolston, III, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), pp. 76-77, my emphasis. We must, he says, 'become cognizant of our status as members of the Earth's whole biotic community, a status we share with every other species,' and become fully aware 'of the fundamental fact that we are animals.' From *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 115-116.
23. 'The Ethics of Respect for Nature,' p. 83.
24. Ibid., p. 79.
25. Ibid., p. 80.
26. Ibid., p. 82. No analysis of Taylor's very Kantian ethical theory can be provided here. Taylor invokes a moral framework of 'rules and standards to be binding on all moral agents' (76). But how, on his naturalistic account, are human beings capable of this kind of moral thinking at all? With Kant we have recourse to the metaphysics of reason. Here we have no such recourse, and no explanation is offered. An explanation of the nature of this sort of moral agency is needed.
27. On having a 'good of its own,' see Ibid. p. 78. With a biocentric outlook 'we gain a genuine *capacity* to take its standpoint and make judgments based on its good,' *Respect for Nature*, p. 128.
28. Arne Næss, *Ecology, Community, and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 166, 170.
29. This is a gloss of the way in which Hartmann interprets Scheler's view. See his *Ethics*, Vol. I, p. 242.
30. I have begun this project in ... [ATWA, 2010].

REALIZING MORAL VALUES:

ON ACTING PERSONS AND MORAL VALUES IN MAX SCHELER'S ETHICS

Alicja Gescinska

Abstract

This article explores some important aspects of how Max Scheler conceived of the relationship between persons and actions. The primary source to do so is Scheler's *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, but it will also be observed that the concept of the person as an *act-accomplishing being* figures as a leitmotiv in Scheler's entire oeuvre: from the writings on sympathy and love to the late writings in which Scheler developed his controversial metaphysics.

Keywords:

Human person**,** Moral act, Personalism, Resentment, Values

1. Introduction

Max Scheler's philosophical magnum opus – *Formalism in Ethics* – is an attempt to elaborate the philosophical foundations of ethical personalism. 'Personalism' is a term that is rather difficult to define very precisely, and there is a wide range of philosophers that have been called *personalists*. Albeit that the term *personalism* – which goes back to Friedrich Schleiermacher – seems itself sometimes too broad, it is a fact that in the first half of the twentieth century, several thinkers – often Christian thinkers indeed – focussed on the concept of the person in their writings, and that these thinkers considered themselves (or were seen by others) as *personalists*.

It was not merely a concern for the human person that linked these thinkers, but similar views on individualism and modern society, freedom as a positive concept (which often entailed fiery critiques of negative freedom), intersubjectivity and love. These are some of the topics around which thinkers like Berdjaev, Marcel, Mounier, Maritain, Scheler, Wojtyla and several others elaborated their thought.

A keen interest in the human (and especially) moral act is another one of these connecting threads between the above-mentioned philosophers. An increased interest in the subject of the human/moral act could be noticed in the first half of the 20th century, and especially among philosophers who also made the concept of the human person central in their ethics. To underpin this thesis one only needs to take a quick look at Berdjaev's *The Meaning of Creation* and his concept of *tvorcestvo* (moral creativity), to Blondel's *L'action*, or the second chapter of Maritain's *Court Traité de l'existence et de l'existant.*

All these writings offer an analysis of human agency, which is closely interwoven with the topics of human freedom and personhood. Furthermore, it is important to notice that a following generation of philosophers, profoundly influenced by (some of) the above-mentioned early twentieth century thinkers (see Wojtyla's *The Acting Person* or Vladimir Jankélévitch's active philosophy and demanding ethics of permanent vigilance), equally emphasized the concept of the human/moral act in their ethics (Wojtyla adopted the Thomistic term *actus humanus* to denote this concept, a term which indeed well qualifies to describe this concept).

A similar interest in the phenomenon of the human act is also one of the salient features of Max Scheler's ethics, and of his philosophy in general. It has often been said that Scheler was a rather impulsive and inconsistent thinker, a view which was especially nurtured by the fact that Scheler had abandoned Catholicism in his later writings in order to develop an anthropocentric concept of *Gottwerdung* (with an emphasis on the *becoming* rather than on the *being* of God) which seems incompatible with the concept of God that traditionally features in Catholicism. However, Scheler never seemed disloyal to his ethical beliefs, and in all of his writings a similar concept of the person and human agency – the person as an *act-accomplishing being* – occupies a distinct and central place.[1]

2. Persons and moral values

2.1. Persons and acts

Scheler's concept of the person is highly complex and cannot be entirely explained within the framework of a single article. I will therefore focus on one salient feature of that concept, namely the intrinsic relationship between personhood and action. It is evident that this is only one aspect – though a most crucial one – of Scheler's concept of the person. Of equal importance is for example Scheler's concept of *ordo amoris*, without which little meaningful can be said about Scheler's concept of the person. A recurrent theme in Scheler's thought and writings is that human persons are not the rational beings Kant thought they were. Man is

not a rational animal or a *Vernunftswesen*, but an *ens amans*. 'Man is – before being an *ens cogitans* or an *ens volens* – an *ens amans*.'[2]

This implies that what a man does, thinks and wants is determined by the spectrum of what he loves and hates, and consequently, that a person and his moral worth are equally determined by this spectrum, which Scheler calls the *ordo amoris*. Heinz Leonardy nicely summarized the immense importance of the *ordo amoris* in Scheler's concept of the person: 'The actual essence of the person, that which makes the person being a person […] is the ordo amoris.'[3]

Though I shall not extensively discuss the *ordo amoris* (its normative and descriptive meaning) throughout this article, it has to be emphasized that the way in which Scheler conceived of the relationship between persons and acts is also determined by his views on love and the *ordo amoris*. In many of his writings Scheler analyzes how love is a dynamic force of human agency. Love is *motion* rather than *emotion*, it increases our insight in how we can do good or evil, and can motivate us to pursue the former rather than the latter.[4]

Love fundamentally determines the acts we perform, and it is not only the fact that we love, but also that we act which makes the person being a person. 'A person *acts* [and] it belongs to the essence of the person that he only exists and lives in the performance of intentional acts.'[5]

The question is then of course whether the person constitutes acts or whether the acts constitute the person. That is the apparently simple but highly complex question around which Scheler develops his concept of the person as an *Aktussein* (a dynamic synthesis of the being and the acting of the person). According to Scheler, the person is not the necessary or causal correlate of human activity, rather the person is the unifying principle that encompasses the entirety of this activity, and of which the person is also the driving force. Furthermore, persons are themselves modified and determined by these acts.[6]

This concept of the human person is 'the happy medium […] between a (static) *substantialism* and an exclusively dynamic *actualism.*'[7] The person constitutes all human acts in which it is always entirely involved. Similarly these acts constitute the person, without the person being merely a *mosaic of acts*, and the person entirely coinciding with the acts he performs, and of which he would thus be nothing but the sum.

This view – as opposed to some recent and popular theories (some of which being influenced by Eastern spirituality) which deny that there is such a thing as a person or a core from which human agency springs, but partly in line with other recent theories of the human person (e.g. Richard Hallam too argues that the person really exists as an act-accomplishing foundational being, though he claims that the person is the origin and not the outcome of acts) – is determined by a mutual interaction and interdependence of persons and acts. The person constitutes acts, and yet these acts also determine the human person itself. 'The person is both the actor and the product of the act.'[8]

The person is not a static thing or subject, the passive outcome of the acts man performs, neither do these acts originate in a vacuous space without any coherence or consistency. This would entail the view that the being of a person is merely the succession of singular and independent actions, and rather a virtual reality than real existence, a view which Scheler explicitly rejected. Persons are not the empty starting point of acts, neither are they the mere coincidence of acts.[9]

Scheler's conceptualization of the person as a unity of acts undoubtedly raises many questions that Scheler perhaps not fully answers. It has been objected for example by Stephen Schneck that the ontological question – if persons are unities of acts, what exactly are these unities? – remains largely unanswered. 'Scheler is perhaps over-much restrained in his answer', as Schneck contends.[10] Similarly, Philip Blosser objected that Scheler's language about the person (as is his language about the ontological nature of values) is too ambiguous and characterized by *prima facie* inconsistencies.[11] It is anyhow clear that according to Scheler persons are capable of performing acts (of which the complexity will be discussed in part three of this article), and by defining the ability to accomplish acts as a salient feature of the person, Scheler turns the human act itself into the centre and core of his ethics. Not only the being of the person is determined by human agency, also the being (or to be more precisely the *realization*) of moral values depends on human agency.[12] 'All good and evil necessarily depend on *acts of realization*.'[13]

The person is an *act-accomplishing being* and it is through the accomplishment of acts that moral values are realized, and that persons manifest themselves as being good or evil. Scheler does not only elaborate this view in *Formalism in Ethics*; it constantly returns in many of his writings. In *The Nature of Sympathy*, Scheler includes a small chapter on personhood, love and moral values, but the overall significance of the concept of the person in Scheler's theory of sympathy can hardly be

overestimated. Schneck even claimed that Scheler never dealt more rigorously and carefully with the ontogenetic and psychological aspects of personhood than in *The Nature of Sympathy*.[14]

Though it still seems that Scheler more extensively elaborated his concept of the person in *Formalism in Ethics* (which Scheler himself also stresses in *The Nature of Sympathy*), it is a fact that many aspects of Scheler's ethical system, as elaborated in *Formalism in Ethics*, are incorporated in Scheler's theory of sympathy, so that Scheler's psychological, phenomenological and ethical observations are closely interwoven with each other.[15] As regards the concept of the person, it is relevant to notice that Scheler again maintains that the person is not a static object or thing, but the individually experienced *Einheitsubstanz* (substantial unity) of all acts, acts which the person accomplishes.[16]

In the late writings too, the concept of the person as an *act-accomplishing being* is of great importance. In Scheler's late metaphysics Scheler again emphasizes that the person is the locus of morality, but it is not merely the being (again: the realization) of moral values that depends on the human person and his acts, but also the being (or realization) of God. The following description of the person could have easily fitted in *Formalism in Ethics*, still it is an important fragment of *The Place of Man in the Cosmos*: 'The person is […] a structured constellation of acts, which ceaselessly brings itself forth. The person exists only in and through his acts.'[17]

2.2. Good and evil as values of the person

In Scheler's thought, the good is not a static object of desire or preference, but a value which belongs (originally) to the person, depending on the person's concrete acting and how values are realized through those acts. It is the latter which I shall now briefly try to clarify, i.e. the relationship between moral values and the human person in Scheler's ethics.

In both the third and sixth chapter of *Formalism in Ethics* Scheler extensively analyzes the (moral) meaning of man's ability to perform acts, while it appears as a crucial concept in many of the other chapters as well. *Formalism in Ethics* is such a complex piece of thinking, that it is impossible to grasp and represent its essence in a few simple lines. Perhaps it could best be characterized as an attempt to elaborate an objective hierarchy of values, whilst fully recognizing the affective foundations of our moral agency.

Formalism in Ethics presents a value theory in which an objective hierarchy of non-moral values is essential as regards the realization of moral values. This hierarchy consists of four types of values.[18] The lowest of these non-moral values are the sensory values, based on feelings of agreeableness or uncomfortableness, pleasure or pain. The modality of the second kind of values is entirely different, since these values – vital or life values – cannot be reduced to that which is agreeable or useful. The vital values relate to vital feelings, and encompass that which we call noble and excellent or vulgar and bad (by which Scheler indicates that these values should not be confused with moral values, i.e. good and evil).

At a higher level of the value hierarchy we find spiritual values, which differ from the vital values as they are detached from the sphere of the lived body and environment (health, sickness, strength, weakness, courage, cowardice, nobility, vulgarity). The spiritual values consist of aesthetic values (beauty or ugliness), values of justice (right or wrong), and values of truth cognition (true or false).[19] The last value-modality consists of the *holy* or *unholy*, which cannot be further defined. The only thing we can say about them is the way by which they are *given* to us; as absolute *Materiale*. By this Scheler intends to say that these values are absolute and independent of (a) feeling states of happiness or unhappiness, and of (b) *material goods* (of what people correctly or incorrectly hold as being holy or unholy).[20]

Scheler distinguishes between higher and lower values and – at each echelon of the hierarchy – between positive and negative values (pleasure versus pain, beauty versus ugliness, etc.). The peculiarity of Scheler's value theory is of course that moral values are not included in his hierarchy of (non-moral) values, but that he makes use of this hierarchy to conceptualize moral values nonetheless. Non-moral values relate to each other in an objective hierarchy, and moral values – good and evil – depend on the ability to comprehend this internal relationship and rank among values and to pursue those values that are of a higher or positive kind. In other words, moral values come into being (are *realized*) through the person's ability to *will* and pursue the realization of non-moral values of a higher or positive kind.

The spectrum of non-moral values is thus of a constitutive kind as regards the realization of moral values. Moral values *ride on the back* of non-moral values, as Scheler says. Scheler not only maintains that the moral value of the good comes into being due to the act of preference in which a higher value (e.g. education) is preferred to a lower value (wasting one's money on luxury things at the expense of educating one's children). He also adds that the good occurs when a positive value is *willed*,

and at each echelon of the hierarchy of values such positive and negative values exist. This is put central in several axioms which are essential to Scheler's ethics: good is the value that relates to the realization (grounded in the sphere of willing) of positive and high values, evil is the value that relates to the realization (grounded in the sphere of willing) of a negative or low value.[21]

Many critics have argued that such a value theory confronts us with a problem. Non-moral values can occur, it is objected, without them necessarily entailing a moral good. This critique has been repeatedly put forth by Philip Blosser, which Blosser attributes to Scheler's alleged failure to fully conceptualize the distinction between moral and non-moral values. Blosser argues that the realization of non-moral values does not always require human preference, willing or agency. Nature is perfectly capable of creating beauty, but it would be rather absurd to say that nature for example is behaving in a morally good way when it offers us a beautiful sunrise; that it does good (moral value) when realizing a beautiful sunrise (non-moral value).[22]

The critique that the realization of non-moral values does not always require human agency – and that it would be incongruous to call nature morally corrupt or sublime, depending on its beauty – and that Scheler fails to acknowledge or explain this, is fundamentally incorrect. Scheler's theory of values could never give way to such absurd claims about the moral nature of other beings than the human person. Moral values necessarily relate to the person, and there can be *no* moral values *without* the human person (the person's will and agency). Hence Scheler would never say that the existence of positive non-moral values (e.g. the beauty of a sunrise) itself intrinsically entails moral values. Moral values can only (originally) apply to the human person:

> What could rather be *originally* called 'good' and 'evil' [is] the 'person', the being of the person itself. [..] 'Good' and 'Evil' are values of the person (*Personwerte*).[23]

What is important in Scheler's conceptualization of the relationship between moral values, human agency, and willing, is the explicit and intrinsic relation between *doing* and *being*, between the human act, the being of the person and the realization of moral values. As Schneck nicely observed: 'Literally, it would appear, to be (in the sense of being a person) is to do.'[24] And indeed to do is to realize (moral) values, or values of the person. In Scheler's own words: 'The value 'good' appears when we realize the higher, positive value'[25]

As such, Scheler defines moral values in proportion to the realization or accomplishment of acts (*Realisierung der Akte*) by the person. 'The value *good* is that value which sticks to the acts of realization; which realize a positive value (opposed to a negative value) within a higher value level.'[26] The *realization* or accomplishment of acts, by the human person, is thus of great importance in Scheler's ethics, as a consequence of which Scheler's ethics indeed revolves around the concept of the person as an *act-accomplishing being*.

3. The accomplishment of an act

3.1. Realizing a basic moral tenor

Since Scheler considers the person's ability to perform acts essential for the being of both the person and moral values, the evident question is then: what is it exactly to accomplish an act? Not everything man does, qualifies as an *act*. Scheler for example explicitly indicates that acts require intentionality, and sensory functions are therefore not to be understood as personal acts.[27]

Intentionality is however only one feature of the accomplishment of acts, and Scheler distinguishes between at least seven levels or aspects of accomplishing an act, which is particularly relevant regarding the realization of moral values. The question we are concerned with here is, in other words: what is precisely required for doing good and realizing moral values? The following aspects need to be distinguished[28]:

I. The present situation and the object of the act.
ii. The content which has to be *realized* in the act.
iii. The willing of this content by the person.
iv. The capabilities and activities which move the person (towards the performance of the act), i.e. a *willing-to-do* (*Tunwollen*).
v. The experiences and feelings that accompany this *willing-to-do*.
vi. The (experienced) realization or accomplishment of the content that was willed (performance).
vii. The experiences and feelings that accompany the content that has been realized.[29]

What is particularly interesting, is that Scheler as such rejects any ethical theory in which the phenomenological complexity of the accomplishment of acts is simplified, and in which moral values (good and evil) solely depend on the intentions of a person. The entire act-accomplishing process that follows is of no importance in such ethics. As Wolfhart Henckmann correctly observed: 'With this theory, Scheler opposes to the much simpler view, according to which an act only consists of the inner determination of the will.'[30]

Indeed the rejection of such a *Gesinnungsethik* seems to be the broader purpose of this particular

aspect of Scheler's ethical theory. Scheler emphasizes that there can be no good acts without the basic moral tenor being good. The basic moral tenor determines all other and subsequent aspects of the act. But that is only a preliminary, though fundamental, condition of accomplishing (moral) acts, and it does not suffice itself for realizing (moral) values.

That the other aspects of accomplishing an act, by which a person *does* good and *is* good (the good that is done, being a *personal value*), is made clear by Scheler through the example of a paralyzed man who witnesses how somebody drowns. He may experience the same *will* to rescue the person in need as any other man (who is able to swim), but he can never transform this will into an act, since his *willing-to-do (Tunwollen)* does not coalesce with an *ability-to-do* (*Tunkönnen*). It would be incorrect to say that the paralyzed man is morally corrupt for not rescuing the person in need, but equally it would be incorrect to say both the paralyzed man and the rescuer deserve equal moral praise.[31]

We can only speak of such (moral) values of the person if the basic tenor is *realized* in an accomplished act.[32] A virtuous person is both *willing* and *able* to accomplish acts in which moral values are realized. We must therefore explicitly stress the importance of the concepts of *Tunwollen* and *Tunkönnen* in Scheler's concept of the person and in his thought in general.[33]

3.2. Able persons

A person must be *able* to accomplish this complex process of acting. Further on in *Formalism in Ethics*, Scheler indicates that a *moral person* (by which he means: a person who is capable of performing acts which entail a moral value) must have specific capabilities, so that in a most strict sense not all people are persons (insofar as those who aren't, lack the capabilities to perform acts): 'Therefore, the place where the essence of the person first flares up, has to be sought only within a specific group of people, not in man in general.'[34]

That probably sounds more controversial than Scheler intends. What he means to say is that the accomplishment of acts which entail moral values – and which are thus essential to the being of the person – is not an easy thing, and that it requires knowledge, maturity, and specific capabilities. A person must be sane, capable of understanding the unity of the acts he performs himself (identifying and taking responsibility for one's own acts).[35]

A person must also have a correct awareness of what he is exactly capable of. The things he wishes to pursue must be *realistic*, in the sense that it must be possible to pursue the willed content with one's own acts. A child may be willing that the stars drop from the sky into its own hands, Scheler states, but this pure act of willing, cannot be the basis of an actual pursuit of the willed content. The creative, active realization of moral values always requires an actual willingness and ability to perform moral acts (again *Tunwollen* and *Tunkönnen*), and the moral elevation of man precisely depends on this synthesis between what one wills and what one is capable of. 'The primary phenomenon that characterizes all spiritual maturing is a continuous involvement of the will into the sphere of acting (*die Sphäre des "Tunlichen"*).'[36]

Without such a balanced awareness of what one is actually capable of, much of the person's powers to accomplish an act – and to do good – will remain latent.

> Many powers sleep in man and will never be realized due to the fact that he lacks a correct awareness of his abilities (*Könnensbewußtsein*). […] Pedagogues have therefore correctly claimed that one has to focus on the enhancement of this awareness in pupils.[37]

In short, a person must be able to transform his will into action, and that is only possible if he has a correct awareness of what he is capable of. If someone constantly pursues (or wills) things he cannot possibly accomplish, this will be detrimental to both the feelings and mental states of that person, and this will not be conducive to his willingness and ability to do good. If the gap between what one wishes for and what one does is too big, this will give way to negative feelings, resentment, hatred and eventually acts which don't entail a positive or high value. Because of that, Scheler repeatedly stressed the importance of a correct *Könnensbewußtsein*, and emphasized the dangers of *Ohnmacht* (impotency, as Frings translated it in *The Mind of Max Scheler*): the inability to accomplish those positive acts in the pursuit of a willed content. *Ohnmacht* is the breeding ground of resentment, hatred and vice.

In Scheler's thought 'virtue is the experienced *power* to be or to do something that ought to be or to be done.'[38] Vice is the opposite: 'The word *vice* springs from the impotency towards an ideal *ought*.'[39]

3.3. *Ohnmacht* and resentment

It is noteworthy that Scheler frequently morally rejects impotency, though this should not be all too surprising either. At the heart of his ethics stands the person as an *act-accomplishing being*. The accomplishment of acts which entail high or positive values is a very complex process, and impotency, simply put, disturbs this process.

Only persons can do good, and they can only do

good because they are able to act and to love. That is basically the core of Scheler's concept of the person and of how he thought person's capable of doing good. Impotency, however is a hindrance to these two crucial aspects of personhood, for hatred and inaction spring from impotency. Since his specific concept of the person is a constant leitmotiv in Scheler's entire oeuvre, it is no surprise that the concept of impotency also appears in many of Scheler's writings.

In *Schriften zur Soziologie und Welt-anschauungslehre*, Scheler recapitulates the view that there must be a balanced synthesis between *Tunwollen* and *Tunkönnen*. Hatred is always a consequence of a lack of such an equilibrium: a conflict between reality (*faktische Realität*) and the object of the will which turns out to be a mere fantasy. The experience of this inability gives way to hatred, while hatred itself is an obstacle in the accomplishment of (good) acts.[40]

In *Ordo amoris* too Scheler observes that the inability to transform one's will into action, is the primary source of hatred and resentment. This inability (again called *Ohnmacht* or impotency) leads to a *désordre du coeur*: the *ordo amoris* as the core of the person is affected by this, and therefore also the core of the person as an act-accomplishing being. The person's ability to do good is thus hampered by this phenomenon.[41]

The problem of *impotency* is indeed a severe moral problem. In his theory of resentment, Scheler elaborates this view more thoroughly, and explicitly links the problem of resentment to that of moral indolence and impotency. The inability to act and *re*act is the primal breeding ground of resentment. Secondary origins of resentment, like vengeance, jealousy and envy, can only give way to resentment from the moment man is *unable* to transform his (negative) feelings into (positive) action.

> Feelings of revenge, envy, jealousy, malice, malicious delight and malevolence first appear in the formation of resentment where no moral conquest (in the case of revenge for example *real* forgiveness), nor an act […] occur; and where those don't occur because a manifest awareness of the impotency (*Ohnmacht*) hampers such an act or such an expression.[42]

Scheler believed that the rise of resentment was essential to the crisis of his times, due to which his *Kulturkritik* of man, politics and society was essentially a moral critique. According to Scheler, man, in the first half of the twentieth century, lived in times of resentment which was stimulated by the specific structure of modern society.[43]

The reasons for this are to be sought in the discrepancy between a merely formal (juridical) equality, and the major inequalities in actual access to power, property and education. Furthermore, Scheler believed that the democratic political system itself was defective and infected with resentment at all echelons.

In *Man in an Era of Adjustment*, Scheler also maintains that politics should be concerned with the moral elevation of man. Political means ought to be applied in such a way that they stimulate and guide (Scheler uses the words *leiten und lenken*) a change of heart, a *Wertsteigerung* (rise of values) of man, which is necessary to overcome the crisis of interwar Europe.[44]

The rise of resentment however obstructs this rise of values. Moreover, Scheler identified this crisis as a moral crisis, because the rise of resentment is essentially synonymous with the moral downfall of society: hatred, resentment, and indeed impotency lead to a distortion of values, instead of a *Wertsteigerung*. Resentment is a *moral* disease, a moral self-poisoning and embitterment of human personality.[45] It leads to a counterfeit of value images (*Fälschen des Wertbildes*), a forgery and a subversion of the value hierarchy.[46]

It has already been observed previously in this article that according to Scheler, love increases our insight in the value hierarchy. Due to hatred and resentment, that insight decreases. The realization of moral values depends on the person as an *ens amans* and an *act-accomplishing being*. That is a leitmotiv in many of Scheler's writings, and it should therefore not surprise us that Scheler also deals in many of these writings with the opposite of love and acting, namely hatred (and also resentment) and impotency, which are always *tathemmend* (hindering positive action).[47]

4. Conclusion

This article has sought to explore some features of the way in which persons, acts and moral values relate to each other in Scheler's ethical theory. The first part of this article mainly focused on how Scheler, in several of his writings, defined the ability to perform acts as a salient feature of both the person and the realization of values of the person (good and evil as *Personwerte*). The elaboration of this concept of the person is strongly connected with Scheler's value hierarchy, and thus of immense importance in Scheler's ethical theory in general.

The second part of this article explored the phenomenological complexity of acting. Such a further exploration was indispensable in order to come to a better understanding of Scheler's concept of the person. If one says that a person is an *act-accomplishing being*, and that moral values are realized through the person's acts, it has to be made

clear what the process of acting exactly involves. This also allowed us to consider more thoroughly the concepts of *Tunwollen* and *Tunkönnen*, and the concept of *Ohnmacht.*

Scheler's concept of the person is essentially about the ability and the power of man to perform acts. A good person has both the will *and* the power to accomplish acts which entail positive or higher values, whereas a lack of this power appears to be a serious moral problem. It might be clear now why Scheler repeatedly links *Ohnmacht* to hatred, resentment, and vice. Good persons are able, loving persons, whose acts are not inspired by resentment or hatred, but by love and a correct insight in the objective hierarchy of values.

Department of Philosophy and Moral Science
Ghent University, Blandijnberg 2
9000 Gent, Belgium
alicjgescinska@ugent.be

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Notes

1. In chapter 13 of *God, Goodness and Philosophy* (Ashgate, 2011) I already argued that Scheler always remained loyal to the key principles of his ethical system, and that the rejection of Scheler's late metaphysics by critics like Nota, De Raeymaeker, Becker, Hildebrand and several others – a rejection based on an alleged innate inadequacy of Scheler as a man and as a thinker – does little justice to Scheler as a man and as a thinker. Scheler had his reasons to change his metaphysics, and these reasons were not of a personal but of a philosophical kind: they root in Scheler's ethical beliefs (something which Scheler declared himself in the preface to the third edition of *Formalism in Ethics*).
2. M. Scheler, 'Ordo amoris', in: M. Scheler, *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*, Berlin, Der Neue Geist Verlag, Vol. 1, 1933, p. 238. (further referred to as OA, all translations in this article are from the author)
3. H. Leonardy, *Liebe und Person: Max Schelers Versuch eines 'Phänomenologischen' Personalismus*, Den Haag, Martinus Nijhof, 1976, p. 145.
4. In *Ordo amoris* love is described as the wake-up call of our moral agency, our will and reason. Similarly, in *The Nature of Sympathy* and the essay *Love and Knowledge* love is considered by Scheler as a fundamental determinant of both human agency and the realization of moral values.
5. M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, Bern/München, Francke Verlag, 1966, p. 389. (further referred to as *FORM*)
6. R. Perrrin, *Max Scheler's Concept of the Person: An Ethics of Humanism*, Houndmills/London, MacMillan, 1991, pp. 90-91.
7. H. Leonardy, op.cit., p. 138.
8. Idem, p. 142.
9. M. Scheler, *FORM*, pp. 382-384.
10. S. Schneck, *Person and Polis*: *Max Scheler's Personalism as Political Theory*, Albany, University of New York Press, 1987, p. 50.
11. P. Blosser, 'Scheler's Concept of the Person Against its Kantian Background, in: S. Schneck (ed.), *Max Scheler's Acting Persons: New Perspectives*, Amsterdam/New York, Rodopi, 2002, pp. 56-57.

12. The being of values definitely belongs to one of the most interesting aspects of studying and interpreting Scheler's ethics. Scheler is not always very clear about what a value actually *is*. At times Scheler seems more eager to argue what values are not, rather than clearly arguing what they are. They are not purposes, aims, consequences, objects or things *an sich*, neither are they merely properties of objects, and even though an objective hierarchy of values can be found at the core of Scheler's ethics, this did not immediately force Scheler to defend a peculiar kind of ontological value objectivism. In his doctoral thesis, finished in 1897, Scheler for example explicitly stated that values, strictly speaking, do not exist objectively. Still, values seem to have some sort of objective meaning in Scheler's ethics. This has been clarified by Manfred Frings, who offered an important incentive to come to a better understanding of the *being* of values in Scheler's ethics, by speaking of the *functional existence* of values. Values don't *objectively exist* in Scheler's value theory; they *become*. Values *become* extant through their bearers like the colour green becomes extant through the green surface.
13. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 49.
14. S. Schneck, op.cit., p. 53.
15. Scheler's hierarchy of values and the corresponding hierarchy of model type persons play for example a crucial role in the way in which Scheler distinguishes between several forms of love and hatred in *The Nature of Sympathy*.
16. M. Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Bern, Francke Verlag, 1973, pp. 167-168.
17. M. Scheler, 'Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos', in: M. Scheler, *Späte Schriften*, Bern, Francke Verlag, 1976, p. 39.
18. In Manfred Frings' reconstruction of Scheler's hierarchy of values there are five types of values, since Frings also differentiates sensory values from values of use. That seems plausible, inasmuch as Scheler speaks of both values of pleasure and of values of usefulness regarding the lowest kind of values.
19. M. Scheler, *FORM*, pp. 124-125.
20. Ibidem, pp. 125-126.
21. Ibidem, p. 48.
22. P. Blosser, 'Max Scheler: A Sketch of His Moral Philosophy', in: J. Drummond, L. Embree (eds.), *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy: a Handbook*, Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002, pp. 409-410.
23. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 49.
24. S. Schneck, op. cit., p. 51.
25. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 48.
26. Ibidem, pp. 47-48.
27. Ibidem, p. 387.
28. In this specific part of *Formalism in Ethics* Scheler speaks of *Handlung* (deed) rather than of acts. However, whereas Scheler distinguishes acts from (sensory) functions, the terms *Handlung* and *Akt* seem almost entirely interchangeable. This also seems to be suggested by Henckmann in his discussion of the meaning of the moral act (*Begriff der Sittlichen Handlung*) in *Formalism in Ethics*.
29. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 137.
30. W. Henckmann, *Max Scheler*, München, Verlag C.H. Beck, 1998, p. 125.
31. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 136.
32. Scheler speaks of *tatbereite* and *tatfähige* Gesinnung, i.e. the moral tenor plus a willingness and ability to accomplish a specific act.
33. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 144.
34. Ibidem, p. 470.
35. Ibidem, pp. 471-474.
36. Ibidem, p. 141.
37. Ibidem, p. 240.
38. M. Frings, *The Mind of Max Scheler*, Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 2001, p. 34.
39. M. Scheler, *FORM*, p. 213.
40. M. Scheler, *Schriften zur Soziologie und Weltanschauungslehre*, Bern/München, Francke Verlag, 1963, p. 200-201. (further referred to as SSW).
41. M. Scheler, *OA*, p. 253.
42. M. Scheler, *Vom Umsturz der Werte*, Berlin, Francke Verlag, 1955, p. 41. (further referred to as VUW)
43. Ibidem, p. 43.
44. M. Scheler, 'Der Mensch im Weltalter des Ausgleichs', in M. Scheler, *Späte Schriften*, Bern/München, Francke Verlag, 1976, p. 152.
45. M. Scheler, *VUW*, p. 41.
46. Ibidem, p. 67.
47. M. Scheler, *SSW*, p. 20

COMMON EXPERIENCE AND INDIVIDUATION

James Jeffries

Abstract
We often distinguish our own ideas from those of others within mental life. What accounts for this distinction and how is it important for individual selfhood? I follow Max Scheler in positing a shared social experience to account for this distinction. But I argue, contrary to Scheler, that a phenomenology of creative acts best describes the individuation process.

Key Words
Scheler, selfhood, individuality, creativity

We are familiar with cases in which some ideas seem to be our own and other ideas seem to belong to someone else. For example, one attributes a particular literary idea to its author, but claims ownership of one's personal reflections about that idea; one allows Descartes his conception of God, but claims a particular interpretation for oneself. In these typical cases, both the ideas of others and one's own ideas must occupy a place in a single mental life, or else one would be unaware of their distinct senses. Let us assume that one's (genuinely) own ideas provide an important indication of one's individuality. Given the different senses of ownership that attach to aspects of mental life, how can we generate a viable concept of the *individual self*—self that has its *own* feelings, ideas, values, and mental life generally?

Some accounts of the individual self will not adequately accommodate the distinctive experience of ownership, because their conditions for being a self are too inclusive. For example, the Cartesian *cogito*, simple subjective experience, or physical bodies do not have the resources to distinguish individuals from others at this level of examination, because both one's own ideas and the ideas of others relate to them on equal footing.

My goal in this paper is to demonstrate some ways that distinctions among types of ownership begin to emerge in experience and how they might have a special relevance to understanding selfhood. For this purpose, I draw on an account from Max Scheler, for whom the best way to make sense of these distinctions is by referring them to a more basic shared social experience. Scheler's view suggests that the recognition of an individual self is a contingent achievement of a developmental process. But what is this process and how is it possible? Is individuation a process of discovering and articulating a self, as Scheler claims? I will argue against the adequacy of this view. Toward an alternative position, I describe several patterns of experience suggesting that the individual self is positively created in acts at least as much as it is discovered in them. This alternative may bear on Scheler's conception of essential *personhood* in ways I explore without fully settling. My primary purpose is to work toward a more adequate phenomenology, from which additional questions may be raised and addressed.

1. Explication of Scheler's view

The suggestion that the individual self may be derivative or achieved arises in the context of Scheler's discussion of the problem of other minds. The view that makes the perception of other minds a philosophical problem begins with the commonsense claim that we are each aware of our own mental states in a privileged way (238).[1] This starting point requires one to find lurking in the contents of one's mind—in comparison of one's perception of other physical bodies to one's own[2]— necessary relation to others in order justify the knowledge of their independent existence. Thus, on this view, one must somehow connect representations of an other 'inside' one's mind with an actual other 'outside' the mind, which opens the possibility of a sceptical wedge between the representation and the concrete other. Call this the 'traditional view.'

Scheler's key claim is that the traditional view begins with the faulty assumption that one's mental states are always one's 'own' in a sense adequate to establish a distinct, individual self. This is the assumption, for example, that everything showing up in subjective reflection is *one's own*, and signifies *one's own* mind. But why should we identify the perception of *a* mind with the perception of *one's own* mind? According to Scheler, when one attends to the phenomenological evidence without the presupposition that a '*real substratum*' (e.g. the nervous system) provides a reference point for identifying all and only those things that are *one's own*, then one encounters a field of mental life differentiating between mental contents in a quite different way (245). For example, among my 'own' mental states—thoughts, feelings, volitions—I constantly attribute some to another person. I express a thought in conversation that I got from a friend; I sympathize with a loved one's pain; I do the

will of some authority figure. These are experienced differences in the ownership of a mental state, which deny me a full claim to them.

For Scheler, these assignments of mental states to one's self and others are symbolic or representational in nature.[3] That is, in assigning mental states, one cognitively judges some mental contents to be one's own. However these assignments all take place within a single mental life. We therefore discover a tension between senses of 'ownness': on the one hand, one ascribes every mental state that presents itself to oneself; on the other hand, one refers at least some of those contents to others. Though mistakes in attribution may be made, the sense that some genuine attribution can be made at all within my own mental life does not make sense on the traditional view. Thus we must look for some more fundamental source from which this differentiation of experience is possible within the compass of mental life.

To account for this basic sense of otherness within one's own mental life, Scheler considers an 'immediate flow of experiences, *undifferentiated as between mine and thine*' (246), and a 'stream flooding' over the self (247). I label this 'common experience'. To describe common experience, Scheler begins with the basic experience in which a mental state is given with an undetermined reference to oneself or another. Ideas *in the air* (political ideas, fads) or the pervasive mood of a rock concert could serve as examples. Such mental states are clearly enough presented, even if one has doubts about who 'owns' them. One simply falls in with ideas or moods presented in this undifferentiated state, and is governed by them. The mental lives of children and primitive peoples[4] provide exemplary cases of common experience for Scheler. Children are bound by a 'family feeling,' or a dominant set of ideas, feelings, or tendencies handed over from their close relatives or community long before the capacity for the kinds of symbolic distinctions necessary for individual selfhood develop. Primitive cultures tend to prioritize different possible experiences through communal norms, such that those experiences that might lead to individuality are never taken up or explicitly pursued.[5] Common experience provides the grounds for a shared understanding of one's environment (247-8), and a pervasive back- ground from which one can slowly begin to collect and organize experiences into distinct categories of self and other. By the time one develops the symbolic capacities necessary for distinguishing an individual self, one's mental life is already filled with the mental lives of others; and indeed this background of shared experience is a further necessary condition for individual selfhood at all.

What is the nature of this self, and how can it emerge? Answering these questions in full would require a deeper investigation of the *capacities* necessary for judging mental states (e.g. symbol operations), the *criteria* used in these judgments to distinguish one's own mental states from another's, and the concrete *conditions* prevailing in common experience that enable individuation. I cannot fully examine all these concerns here. For my purposes, the most salient problem is to characterize the relation between an un-individuated entity and common experience that initiates the individuating process.

Reconstructing Scheler's approach to this problem proves challenging. From *The Nature of Sympathy*, for instance, we get the claims:

(1) that every experience belongs *in general to a self*, so that wherever an experience is given a self is also given, in a general sense;
(2) that this self is necessarily an *individual self*, present throughout every experience (in so far as such experiences are adequately given), and not therefore primarily constituted by the interconnections between them[;]
(3) that *there is an 'I' and a 'Thou' in a general sense*. (246)

I shall engage with the third claim in the next section. The first two claims, however, depend on a prior, fourth claim: that a unique person, a concrete whole, underlies all of our acts.[6] I will call this an 'essential personality'. Crucially, *persons* are categorically different from *selves*, for Scheler. Persons are always individuated as concrete essences: '*the person is the concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences*'.[7] Because it is concrete, the unitary personality instances an *ordo amoris*, an ordering of value-preferences or loves, though these preferences can be distorted in concrete action through value-inversion (*ressentiment*) or self-deception. Finally, selves, as we have already seen, are assembled through representational cognition, by judging, rightly or wrongly, that particular contents of experience relate to (are 'owned' by) particular individuals.

The question is *how* one actually makes judgments attributing some contents to oneself, and some to others. What provides the criterion for these judgments? Scheler describes the fact of this attribution, without explaining the mechanism:

> [undifferentiated common experience] represents the common starting-point for the elaboration of an ever nicer distribution of the material of experience so

given between ourselves and other people; an ever more precise appropriation of 'our own' and repudiation of what belongs to 'others'. (246)

The reconstruction I propose is of an entity galvanized by the tension between one's essential personality and one's received values and ideas in common experience. It should be possible for the *self* to bear a veridical relation to the *person*, to be true of it.[8] The unitary person thus provides an implicit criterion for judging the acts, ideas, and values presented in mental life for their authentic connection with a more basic, essential personality. With the right sensitivity to the 'call' of this essential personality combined with the necessary symbolic capacities one may gradually articulate one's authentic, individual self. This achieved self is an uncovered or discovered self. It provides the meaning of being true to one's own nature.

Perhaps the closest Scheler comes to ratifying this position is in his *Formalism*, where he describes the 'coming of age' of a child:

> The basic phenomenon of coming of age consists in the ability to experience insight into the difference between *one's own* and *someone else's* acts, willing, feeling, thinking, an insight which is already given in the immediate experiencing of any experience itself (the insight into the difference is *not* based on the content of the experience). (*Formalism*, 478)

However, the parenthetical makes all the difference, because Scheler has still not explained the actual attribution of particular mental contents. How *this* concrete, particular idea becomes my own, how I may be jealous of another's use of it, and how I may make a genuine claim to it still seems obscure.

2. Critical discussion

In this section, I introduce some general worries about Scheler's understanding of individual selfhood. In particular, I claim that Scheler's concern for common experience is predominantly epistemological, rather than ontological. That is, Scheler is concerned with what it is to *know* our selves and others (or, minimally, to know that there *are* selves and others). In the next section, I try to demonstrate that not just knowledge of selves, but their existence, depends on a productive relation to common experience. Thus, my overall criticism is that Scheler misses an opportunity to investigate the *ontology* of the self along rather different lines.

First we might consider whether the experiences of otherness in our own mental states have any ontological import. One may deny such import by continuing to insist on the traditional assumption: all states must be *mine* in a primary sense, and are only derivatively the other's. But the theories of analogy or sympathetic projection that try to sustain this assumption have a deep formal implausibility. The basis for any analogy or projection could only be one's own mental contents or perceptions, so one could never arrive at a genuine sense of *otherness*—i.e. one could only analogize or project one's *self* onto the other, and one could recognize in the other only those states one has already experienced for oneself. This should be enough reason to take the distinctions in ownness we find in our mental states more seriously as evidence for a possible primary, constitutive phenomenon. And if we find that our sense of an individual self arises together with our sense of something other, that they are interrelated or co-constituted, then we must accept this result as ontologically significant for the nature of the self.

But Scheler does not seem to be making exactly this point. First, as we have already seen, he takes the essential person as a presupposition in describing common experience. Scheler already defends a strong locus of personhood that exists independently from the individual self, which provides the basis for authenticating individuality. Indeed, Scheler takes it as a virtue of his account that he has clearly separated the ontological questions surrounding selfhood and others from the epistemological questions—mostly questions about the genesis or constitutive development of one's reflective awareness and enactment of an individual self.[9] There is never a question for Scheler of being an individual *person*, but only a question of realizing an individual *self*. Second, he argues on independent grounds that we have an *a priori*, intuitive basis for grasping the sense 'Thou' by virtue of our experience of a particular emptiness given when basic social emotions go unfulfilled (235).[10] For example, my experience of shame indicates the other, and makes sense only with respect to otherness. But social emotions of this kind cannot be learned or contingently developed, according to Scheler, but must instead be presupposed for any possible social experience. We cannot help but be social beings. Thus, Scheler wishes to articulate a conception of the human person for whom individual selfhood is always possible, and access to the mental lives of others is essential. On his account, common experience seems both extraordinarily deep and yet never deep enough to deny the possibility of individuation. We can rely on common experience to guarantee that when one achieves self-awareness, one's mental life comes replete with ideas and experiences of unrecognized origin, but shared intelligibility.[11] And we can rely on one's essential personality to guarantee that one always has a buoy

above the surface conditioning the possibility of one's gradual achievement of a self.[12]

Thus, for Scheler, the *self* stands to the *person* as a contingent, cognitive entity to an essential entity. The self is the (admittedly incomplete) knowledge we have of our personality, some of which is authenticated (recognized as true or false) in the course of the differentiation of the individual from others. But since one refers mental contents to oneself and others only in their symbolic forms, we may conclude that only those aspects of mental life that can be cognized—only those aspects of the self that are responsive to symbolic appropriation—can produce a distinction between oneself and the other. By contrast, 'spiritual' values that inform one's essential personhood remain uncognizable, and therefore of a different order than one's individual self. According to Scheler, one has access to spiritual values—intellectual, non-utilitarian, or religious values—of the other only through participating in his thoughts or acts and reproducing them for oneself (224).[13]

Several features of this view of the self are questionable. First, we may adapt one of Sartre's objections to the Heideggerian notion of 'being-with' to show the limitations of the *a priori* sense of the 'Thou'. Even if an *a priori* structure can be positively established in the nature of the self, grounding our sense of otherness in this *a priori* structure still leaves our relation to concrete, particular others in jeopardy. Recall that Scheler argues for the *Thou* based on its presence in basic, *a priori* social emotions (shame, sympathy, personal love). Even assuming the success of this argument, it still leaves the basic form of our access to others inadequate in a way similar to the proposed relations of analogy or projection: owing to our essential constitution, we project otherness onto our experience necessarily. But this cannot guarantee that we have encountered genuine others.

Second, assuming the existence of non-cognizable experience (experience that cannot be fully explicated symbolically), we do not have the resources to attribute this experience to any essential personality, and thus provide evidence an *individual*, except on the assumption that all experience belongs to some personality or other necessarily. In fact, this is the assumption Scheler makes. But it is difficult to ratify this assumption phenomenologically even in the case of cognitive contents. Many of our everyday experiences do indeed seem to call for an assignment to some individual or other, even if we are in doubt about how to make this assignment. But for at least some experiences, the question never seems to arise, or strikes us as artificial if we ask it: I do not have to ask who owns (originally) my ideas of perceptual objects or shared norms (e.g. norms of vocal modulation, eye contact, or distance-standing). It seems that a great deal of the 'material of experience' we find in common experience is essentially *anonymous*, rather than simply *undifferentiated*. It belongs to no one in particular; it is shared in the strong sense of being owned by everyone and no one, rather than having some unknown origin with a particular individual person. Nor is it clear that a reference to a self is implicit in crowd phenomena or in cases where one does 'the will of the people,' even when one acts against one's own will. An underlying idea here seems to be that what one does *not* experience as one's own must nonetheless belong to some other. But this just ignores a positive phenomenon of anonymity that defines those experiences.

However a strong reason still remains to accept the relationship between the self and an essential personality as Scheler describes it. Once we make the discovery of undifferentiated common experience, and once we characterize this stream as a deep background capable of (nearly) overshadowing the self entirely, then we must assert an essential personality to make sense of the basic fact of individual selfhood. Or, to formulate this point differently: given common experience, *if* there is to be an individual self, *then* there must be some essential personality making the individuating process possible. The *knowledge* we have of selves can only make sense on the *ontology* of an essential person. In brief, by positing a ground of shared meaning as strong and uniform as common experience, we must posit an equally strong ontological condition for the possibility of individual selfhood.

Yet common experience must be even 'stronger' for Scheler in a different way, in a way that never permits individuation. It is not just that common experience can dominate one's mental life, but also that, it seems, all experience must in principle be common. Scheler's brief commentary on art can bring this point into focus. As Scheler conceives it:

> That is indeed the mission of true art: ... to press forward into the whole external world *and* the soul, to see and communicate those objective realities within it which rule and convention have hitherto concealed. (253)

Poets are adventurers into human experience. They 'soar above the prevailing network of ideas in which our experience is confined, as it were, by ordinary language; they enable the rest of us to *see*, for the first time, in our own experience, something which may answer to [their] richer forms of expression'

(253-3). While it is true for Scheler that artists make a contribution to possible self-awareness, they do not actually create new experience or new values. They create new forms of expression that, so to speak, chart the order of being. Experience is always already common experience, even if it can be further explored by artists. And how could it be otherwise? Reproduction of ordinary experience would be superfluous, and pure subjective fancy would be 'transitory and 'necessarily a matter of complete indifference to other people' (253). Art, for Scheler, only makes sense on the background of a remarkably comprehensive common experience. Individuals never differentiate themselves from common experience in this sense, but only discover their concrete essences within it.[14]

Scheler's arguments in this section succeed, I submit, only if common experience has been accurately described. Does his description answer to the phenomena? In the next section, I will question the uniformity and comprehensiveness of common experience. If I am successful, then I claim at least some evidence against Scheler's view. Instead, I suggest that the individual self must be conceived as positively created, rather than discovered. What makes one an individual self—what one legitimately 'owns'—is precisely those mental contents that one creates, and that realizing a creative act just *is* the criterion by which we legitimately claim ownership of a mental content. As a result, artists need not be conceived as cartographers of common experience, but may indeed be genuine participants in its construction.

3. Structure in common experience

Scheler's vision of an 'immediate flow of experiences' (246) streaming through a channel of 'sociologically conditioned patterns' of mental life (247) suggests that common experience provides a continuous source of meaning in terms of which a person lives, and from which one might never need to distinguish oneself. In keeping with the figure of the stream, I wish to demonstrate some ways in which common experience may often be too turbulent or shallow to suppress the emergence of a self; indeed, the specific features of common experience often call on us to individuate ourselves in important ways. Thus, I am looking for patterns of engagement in common experience that facilitate positive creation, rather than discovery. I focus on two general patterns: discord and displacement.

The basic structure of *discord* is a tension or incommensurability posed by the specific content constituting common experience—these are tensions built into features of the shared values, thoughts, and styles of life presented in shared experience, which only present themselves in specific contexts. Discord arises when common experience presents an issue or poses a challenge to us and reveals its inability to *settle* the matter for us. The conditions for discord may arise extremely frequently or rarely. In any case, discord forces us to affirm a particular dimension of shared experience over another—to prioritize—or generate an alternative to the typical responses available to us. In this act, we build the self in some distinctive, if minor way, in a way that contrasts with common experience on at least a small point. That is, in such acts we cease to be a mere *embodiment* of the contours of common experience and instead come to engender a positive contrast with it.

Discord figures into life at any stage. For adults, discord appears in many practical or moral choices. One may be faced with a choice between two academic positions, each presenting a significantly different arrangement of values: a high-pressure position in a prestigious department amenable to one's career or a teaching position amenable to one's family life. One may have to choose, as in Sartre's famous case, between a commitment to a family member (one's mother) or to a political cause. But such discord appears in life even for young children. It opposes the complete 'overshadowing' of the mental life of a child in the ethos of a family. For instance, a child faces the diffuse influences of her parents: parents may assent to entirely opposed activities, have differing temperaments and moods, express themselves in different gestures or patterns of language, and embody different styles or attitudes toward life. Much of the complex turbulence of a concrete romantic relationship is impressed upon the child, and not just the celebrated connections it provides between people. Some of these differences can be combined or reconciled, but others are confrontational or contradictory. They present alternative ways of being a person. Even life with a single parent can be complicated by shifts in mood, temperament, and expectations. Moreover, the child usually collects other experiences outside the family, which disturb the regular family feeling. It is of course possible that a dominant member of a family will override many of the sources of discord as they arise—an oppressive husband and father may leave little room for alternatives. But it is doubtful that such interventions can always succeed. A child, like an adult, may also be carried by inertia or indecision past the relevant contextual conditions in which a discord arises, and thus may not have to face it at all. But at least sometimes the child, like the adult, must act in order to resolve the discord and is therefore forced to situate himself among the alternatives. This

act of overcoming the discord in one's experience may be as simple as an assent to one idea over another. Discord is not necessarily coincident with strife or stress (one may be presented with very different, but equally positive or exhilarating values to pursue). Instead, discord refers to the forced moment in one's experience where one must individuate oneself with respect to alternatives presented in common experience.

Displacement refers to an isolation in common experience in which one must offer up a personal act in order to re-engage with one's environment. It is form of detachment forcing one to respond to 'gaps' in the structure of common experience—instances when the common stream carves out an island, as it were, and no longer carries one along by a continuous shared experience. This is not necessarily an intellectual detachment, because one's experience may be principally characterized by impulses or emotions. In displacement, one's impulses are disconnected from a situation such that one must articulate or develop them in a genuinely new way.

Displacement, like discord, is often unavoidable. Even in a crowded room, in the bustle before a holiday dinner, a young child may find herself displaced: the adults move around her in indifferent orbits—they are busy, wrapped up in putting the turkey on the table, filling glasses, chattering; the child drifts between the adults, but is not present to them. Here the practices informing common experience have suddenly left a gap, a pocket into which the child falls with no immediate expectations, no requirements, and no desires but those he can muster on his own. Now he must speak or act in order to fill the practical space left to him, to reconnect with his environment. Of course, he cannot produce his act *ex nihilo*, but must draw on available resources. Nonetheless, raising one activity to prominence—to go explore outside, to raid the dessert early—is to affirm that activity in a way only made possible from the space opened up in displacement. In displacement, one's own desires and ideas have a chance to 'materialize' and move one to action in a new way; the locus for the felt source of one's acts moves from the undifferentiated dictation of the common stream to something more immediately one's own. Displacement forces this new distinction between being drawn along by practical engagements and moving oneself along. This distinction may not be very sharp, and it may not last long, but it indicates a starting point for the substantive sense of self—that is, a self attached to specific contents by means of creative acts.

What follows from these patterns of discord and displacement? Can we derive any ontological significance from them? If these patterns accurately describe part of our engagement with common experience, then can we describe the individuation of a self as a process of discovery? I do not think we can, because discord and displacement describe concrete breakdowns in common experience. In these patterns, the resources provided by common experience prove inadequate for containing the mental life of a person; one must contribute something to it in order to act. Because this contribution is something new, it is worth calling a creation. The self, then, is created in those acts that overcome discord or displacement.

But creation poses a special problem for Scheler. Recall that common experience was introduced as an element in a solution to the problem of other minds. Common experience accounts for our cognition of ideas owned by others and essentially related to them. But to explain the cognition in others of our own *new* ideas, one must hold that common experience is, in some sense, a repository of all possible (cognizable, shareable) experience—that the materials of experience are never created, but only 'wrested ... from the fearful inarticulacy of our inner life' (253). But this is just what Scheler's conception of the link between personhood and selfhood leaves unclear: how is *this* idea the one I stumble upon and how are specific ideas discovered in my personality?

It can be otherwise. In the case of art, for instance, we see specific presentations of patterns of discord and displacement. Sophocles' *Antigone* reveals the discord between two currents in common experience, brought to relief only in a contingent, tragic circumstance. Hopper's 'Night Hawks' and Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* both seem to showcase possible displacements, where common experience fails to secure the ongoing engagement of its members. Artists often bring us into contact, not with new orders of being, but with being out of order. They enable the conditions under which we may experience discord and displacement, and thus inspire us to respond with our own creative acts. Thus intelligibility may be preserved, to some extent, by a background of common experience that nonetheless permits amendment.

So too with selfhood. Private acts of creation need not be considered unintelligible subjective fancy, because they take the intelligibility of common experience as their point of departure, and because they produce results that anyone may reproduce, given the opportunity. Finally, in the mental life of an individual, one may legitimately lay claim to just those contents one experiences as created. This, it seems to me, answers to the phenomenon of individuality more accurately than self-discovery. Self-knowledge

and -discovery are important, but incomplete. The individual self I am is not just discovered within me, but is also created, as Nietzsche put it, high above me.[17]

Naturally, this conclusion serves in an incomplete analysis, and must be considered provisional. In particular, I have not related these results back to Scheler's conception of personhood, nor have I tried to reconcile self-creation with Scheler's solution to the problem of other minds, nor again with his phenomenological realism. It is also not clear that I can account for some important additional senses of ownership. Consider that one's work may be something extremely fulfilling or something encumbering. But either experience of work may be the result of an individuating act in the sense I have described. For instance, the professor who takes a less challenging job in order to spend more time with his family may nonetheless find himself deeply unsatisfied. Phenomena of positive freedom or authenticity may not be explained simply on the basis of self-creation. Similarly, I may 'own' ideas or acts of which I am not proud. So, for example, an essential personality may be necessary to explain why some individuating acts achieve special relevance for a self, while others seem wrongheaded, lacklustre, and boring after the fact. But such a result does not invalidate my description of common experience as a complex ground for individuating acts. Instead, we see that the self may be a variegated and complex phenomenon involving multiple strands of development of self-knowledge and self-creation, both of which need additional investigation.

Dept of Philosophy, the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
hjeffri2@illinois.edu

Notes

1. Scheler, Max. *The Nature of Sympathy*. Intro. Graham McAleer. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2008). Parenthetical references throughout come from Part III, 'Other Minds,' in this text.
2. Cf. Husserl, E. *Cartesian Mediations.* Trans. Dorion Cairns (Boston: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999).
3. This … [individuation] only occurs to the extent that [he] *objectifies* the experiences of his environment in which he lives and partakes, and thereby gains *detachment* from them' (247). Again: '[A]n experience only becomes a concrete experience…inasmuch as I thereby apprehend an individual self *in* it, or as it becomes a *symbol* to me for the presence of such an individual' (243).
4. By 'primitive,' Scheler intends no negative connotation. His reference is to communities with specific sociological patterns of relationships and activities.
5. The community 'overshadows the private life of the individual' (248).
6. As a first approximation, 'Personality is the substance of which acts are attributes' (224 ff.).
7. Scheler, Max. *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*. Trans. Manfred Frings and Roger Funk (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1973). Pg. 383. As a concrete essence, a person is also not merely a 'network of acts': 'Abstract act-essences concretize into concrete act-essences only by belong to the essence of this or that individual person.'
8. Both self and body acquire their ultimate individual character from their evident connection with the unitary *person*' (243).
9. Cf. *The Nature of Sympathy*, 216 ff.
10. See also *Formalismus*, 519 ff.
11. One is already 'filled with ideas and experiences of whose real origin [one] is completely unaware' (247.
12. Note Scheler's qualified language: in family feeling, the child's own life is only '*almost* completely hidden from him' (247, my italics); the private life of an individual in the primitive tribe is only 'virtually' overshadowed (248).
13. This limitation on cognition conditions psychology: 'For only a part of our total mental and cognitive existence is capable of becoming an object for us … .' 'Whatever lies open to experiment is exclusively confined to the field of being and becoming at the automatic, teleological, *vital level* of the mind, which lies *beneath* the domain of the free acts of the spiritual personality' (222-223).
14. Sartre, J. P. *Being and Nothingness*. Trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1992). 333-4.
15. Scheler makes an exception here only for pure bodily sensations, which are genuinely private.
16. his thesis must be handled carefully, for it does not deny individuality in a different sense. With his notion of the 'intimate person' (*Formalism*, 561 ff.), for example, Scheler argues that each person, enmeshed in (or sculpted from) an objective totality of values, is nonetheless singular. An *essence* is not necessarily *universal*, when it is *concrete*.
17. Nietzsche, Friedrich. 'Schopenhauer as Educator' from *Untimely Meditations.* Trans. R.J Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997).

EMERGENCE AND REDUCTION IN MICHAEL POLANYI (II)

Daniel Paksi

Abstract:
The problems of emergence and reduction play a key role in the philosophy of Michel Polanyi. Polanyi deals with the concept of emergence *both epistemologically* (conceptually) *and ontologically* (existentially). However, epistemological emergence does *not* follow from his famous theory of 'tacit knowing' but from his theory of 'tacit knowledge'. Expressed differently in Polanyi's terms, the conceptually (epistemologically) emergent entities can be defined as 'test-tube' type 'boundary conditions'. The theory of boundary conditions is, in turn, his third and *crucial* theory for understanding his concept of emergence. *This* concept can be used to mark the existentially emergent entities that can be defined as 'machine type' boundary conditions. Polanyi is interested in *this* kind of emergence mainly, one that cannot be understood on the basis of his theory of tacit knowing, only on his theory of boundary conditions. Nevertheless, his resulting theory of ontological emergence is very unique and suggests an entirely new kind of emergence that I will call 'medium emergence'. It follows that different kinds of reduction are possible in the Polanyian universe, which also call for new concepts, such as 'synchronic' and 'diachronic' reduction, as discussed in the paper. After all, I will argue that Polanyi's concept of emergence is not a vitalist or a strong emergentist one in the usual sense, but rather *system theoretical* in nature.

Key Words:
Boundary conditions, emergence, levels, ontology, personal knowledge, reduction, system theory, tacit knowing.

4. The problem of reduction of fundamental physical entities

Polanyi states that the development of higher levels is an emergent process and that these higher levels cannot be reduced to the lower ones. However, even if, according to Polanyi, someone accepts that there are emergent levels, it would not follow that every higher level entity is emergent. For example, the question arises: what is the situation in the field of physics with respect to such fundamental entities as the hydrogen atom? Are they really irreducible? Is the hydrogen atom not reducible to a proton and an electron, according to Polanyi?

Now, after the detailed investigation of his crucial theory of boundary conditions, we can turn to the application of his concepts of emergence and reduction, and we can answer these questions. In order to do this, let us recall that in Polanyi's theory focal and subsidiary awareness are complementary. For us, humans, due to our tacit knowing, there is no focal awareness without subsidiary awareness, and the latter appears to us only via our focal awareness. These are the two fundamental parts of any cognition, something without which there is no cognition. However, explicit and tacit knowledge are not complementary; of course, due to our personal point of view, there is no explicit knowledge without tacit knowledge but there is tacit knowledge without explicit knowledge.

> While tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is either *tacit* or *rooted in tacit knowledge*. A *wholly* explicit knowledge is unthinkable. (KB: 144)

It is a fundamental feature of living beings that they posses tacit knowledge; and at least one of them, the human being possesses something beyond, which is explicit knowledge. These are the two hierarchical parts of our personal knowledge. Thus, in contrast to focal and subsidiary awareness in the process of cognition,—from simple perception up to obtaining scientific knowledge—the explicit and tacit knowledge signify two different *levels* of knowledge where the process of cognition may take place. Naturally, the higher of these levels of knowledge is accessible only for certain more developed living beings. The independent lower level is a precondition to reach the higher but it does not mean that if the explicit knowledge of the higher level is worded then it cannot be self-sufficient or meaningful alone, such as the fingerprint of a cultural ritual, for example, or a law or model of physics like the hydrogen atom or the proton and the electron.

It follows that a higher level but entirely physical entity such as the hydrogen atom can be reduced onto the proton and the electron. First, according to Polanyi's theory of tacit knowing, among the three models (hydrogen atom, proton, and electron) *there is no kind of process of tacit knowing* which could determine the relationship between the hydrogen atom and the proton and electron. The model of hydrogen atom is not formed by the integration of the separate models of proton and electron—as a matter

of fact, no one had thought about a proton or an electron when the model of hydrogen atom was formed—, thus, there is no kind of 'not fully definable' integration process which could lead to emergent, irreducible levels.[25] All of the models are formed by different processes of obtaining scientific knowledge, where the clues, skills, tacit knowledge and integration process have their own role, and, consequently, the models will be emergent compared to these parts (e.g. clues) but not to each other. So tacit knowing *cannot* be a source of emergence and irreducibility among these three explicit physical models.

Second, according to his theory of tacit knowledge, the three models are worded absolutely *at* the higher, explicit level of our hierarchy of knowledge. So from the point of view of their content, there is *no* kind of *previous tacit knowledge*. There are only three *entirely explicit* physical models; and in the case of the reduction of the hydrogen atom the problem of putting the models to practice where our skills and tacit knowledge take place *also* does not come up because as a deduction it is absolutely a theoretical process of the explicit level. 'This difference between a deduction and integration lies in the fact that deduction connects two focal items, the premises and consequents, while integration makes subsidiaries bear on focus.' (Polanyi, 1968: 32) So our tacit knowledge also *cannot* be a source of emergence and irreducibility among these three explicit physical models.

Third, according to his theory of boundary conditions, in the case of the three models there is *no* kind of machine type boundary condition. The hydrogen atom does not control and harness the proton and the electron for some purpose, and naturally neither of the models is achievements of the emergent process of evolution. So machine type boundary conditions also *cannot* be the sources of emergence and irreducibility among these three explicit physical models.

Thus, according to Polanyi (despite the complicities of his epistemology and notwithstanding the theories of tacit knowledge and emergence) the model of hydrogen atom is *not* emergent compared to the models of proton and electron; it is only another, less specified description of the same entity. Thus the different models are the consequences of two different processes of obtaining scientific knowledge towards the *same* goal—and this is exactly the reason why I have been speaking about three models and not about three different entities. Three different entities in Polanyi's theory would not be the same, pure targets of the same scientific inquiry. In Polanyi's theory, the three different entities are necessary three different, *tacitly recognized comprehensive* entities. They as clues determine the process of obtaining scientific knowledge of some kinds of fundamental models and the determinants are such kind of explicit models as the hydrogen atom or the proton and electron.

Since the three models are all worded at the higher, explicit level of our hierarchy of knowledge, it is entirely clear now that in this case the formal conditions of reduction are fulfilled. (see Nagel, 1961: 345-358) Moreover, due to the fact that the connection between the models is purely deductive (by the terms and laws of quantum mechanics), this is an *ideal* case of reduction.[26] (Nagel, 1961: 354) So in the case of the hydrogen atom, there is no obstacle to (physical) reduction onto proton and electron—they are just different models of the same supposed entity, and they all refer to that. The hydrogen atom is emergent only relative to several collected clues which intrigued the inquiring mind when the scientific research of the hydrogen atom was started. After that, because of some newly found clues which were added to the old ones, a new scientific research was started towards the proton and electron which are emergent in a kind of sense only relative to these old and newly found clues.

So the fundamental physics, which partly formulates the ideal knowledge of Laplace's demon by its purely explicit and universal laws and models, has a particular position also in the philosophy of Michael Polanyi. At the same time, it is important to note, that according to him, in itself 'a complete "Democritean" or Laplacian knowledge can tell us nothing without relying on our personal knowledge of these comprehensive features'. (PK: 358) In the case of fundamental physics, the sense-giving, comprehensive features are those clues which due to the structure of our human cognition determine the nature of scientific inquiry. The fundamental laws and models themselves, however, are the same kind of purely formal systems like their historical prototype, the Euclidean geometry is among the axioms and theorems of which are purely explicit, deductive connections and they in themselves are in the same way without content and meaning as the laws and models of fundamental physics are.

5. Conceptual and existential kinds of emergence and the problem of reduction of conceptually emergent comprehensive entities

So the hydrogen atom, in contrast to a frog, is not emergent relative to its physical parts. But what is the situation with the entities that are partly like the frog and partly like the hydrogen atom, for example a rock or a crystal? Since a crystal in some aspects resembles rather a frog—e.g. palpable, individual,

colourful, etc.—but in other aspects it is like a hydrogen atom—lifeless, purposeless, passive, etc.

First thing to establish here is that a rock or a crystal is, due to its comprehensive properties, not such an explicit, universal physical model without meaning in itself like the hydrogen atom. In contrast to the universal model of the hydrogen atom—due to 'our natural sensibility to hidden patterns…' (KB: 118),—we recognize a *meaningful comprehensive individual entity* in every crystal about which we have concrete, *previous* knowledge compared to our physical knowledge of its parts. (The crystal is a macroscopic body and is distinguishable and has a history etc.) It is one of the fundamental tacit acts of our personal point of view and personal knowledge that in certain things we recognize crystals. Merely *after* this act can we give a full detailed explicit physical topography of the individual entity which in itself would be meaningless and tell us nothing about the concrete crystal, without a previous tacit knowledge of that crystal. This means that our previous knowledge about the concrete, individual crystal and its structure is again *emergent* relative to the physical knowledge of its parts (section 3). In this particular (and restricted) aspect, the crystal and the frog are the same when compared to each other and different when compared to the hydrogen atom. So, in contrast to the hydrogen atom, in both cases their individual structures are recognized by such a previous tacit knowledge which is *indeterminable* on the basis of the explicit physical knowledge of the parts.

In Polanyi's theory the comprehensive structure of the crystal, in contrast to that of a frog, however, can be deduced from the physical and chemical processes of its structure. (SEP: 286)

> The first thing to observe here is that, strictly speaking, it is not the emerged higher form of being, but our knowledge of it, that is unspecifiable in terms of its lower level particulars. We cannot speak of emergence, therefore, except in conjunction with a corresponding progression from a lower level to a higher *conceptual* level. (PK: 393-394)

The difference between the crystal and the frog, on the basis of Polanyi's concepts, can be put in the following way: in contrast to the comprehensive structure of the frog, that of the crystal falls under the test-tube type boundary conditions *only*, while the comprehensive structure of the frog falls, at the same time, under machine type boundary conditions *as well*. This means that, as opposed to the crystal, the structure of the frog is not the consequence of the physical and chemical processes of its structure but, after all, the consequence of a historical evolutionary development. Now it is clear from this, that the concept of test-tube type boundary conditions expresses merely a conceptual explicitly indeterminable relationship between our previous knowledge of a tacitly recognized higher level comprehensive structure of an entity, and our knowledge about its explicit physical parts.

> Yet since in the case of the crystal we can easily pass from the pattern to the topography and back again, the conception of such a pattern is in fact not destroyed by the knowledge of its topographic particulars. I would acknowledge, therefore, in this case two distinguishable conceptual levels but not two separate levels of existence. (PK: 394)

So due to our previous tacit act of personal knowledge we recognize a comprehensive individual entity both in the case of the crystal and the frog, something which cannot be determined on the basis of its explicit physical parts only. Because of this situation, for Polanyi both the crystal and the frog are emergent entities in the *conceptual* sense. In contrast to the model of the hydrogen atom, which was reducible, both the structure of the crystal and that of the frog are determined by test-tube type boundary conditions, which are not.

Further, according to Polanyi, in the case of the frog we recognise not only a comprehensive individual entity (as in the case of the crystal), but also a higher level entity controlling and harnessing the lower level processes, that is, a higher level entity which have certain *purposes*. (SOM: 47-48; PK: 328-331; TD: 35-36; KB: 226-227, 286-291) Such purposes are *not* possessed by a rock, a crystal or any other non-living thing, the structure of which falls under the test tube-like boundary conditions *only*. It is one of the fundamental *tacit* acts of our personal knowledge that in certain things we recognise frogs *as frogs*, which are determined not only by the laws of physics, but *also* by the higher level principles of life and evolution. They have specific higher level structures which can, as machine type boundary conditions, control and harness the lower level physical and chemical processes in order to achieve some kind of purpose. This means that, in contrast to the crystal where it is *merely us* who recognize a comprehensive individual entity, in the case of the frog we recognize a different kind of comprehensive entity, one which does not obtain its individuality from the act of our tacit recognizing, *but from its own structure*, as it were. So, in the case of the frog, we recognize such a comprehensive individual which—because of its specific origin—has purposes, and a *specific structure* which cannot be deduced from its ongoing physical processes and parameters. Because of this, the frog—and other similar entities such as machines—is an emergent entity in the

existential sense now. In contrast to both the crystal and the hydrogen atom, two examples we have considered before, the structure of the frog is a machine type boundary condition.

From another point of view, we can say that the crystal is a conceptually emergent entity because it is merely a consequence of someone's knowing activity expressed at a certain evolutionary level. Contrary to this, the frog is (besides being conceptually emergent since we conceptualize it) an existentially emergent entity, because it is itself an achievement of a preceding, real evolutionary process.

This is still not the end of the train of thought. Because, although both a frog and a machine are emergent entities in the existential sense, there is a significant difference which draws a clear border between them, as two different types of emergent entities. A frog—and any other living being—is not merely a purposeful being but, in contrast to a machine, it has a *centre*.[27] (PK: 344, 383, 401) This means that (just like us) *the frog itself is also a cognitive agent, and enters a cognitive relationship with his environment* (PK: 345, 403). The frog can see the world from its own individual point of view. It has its own phylogeny and ontogeny, that equip the frog with this genuine ability, and therefore the purposefulness of the frog is original, while that of the machine is derived – the machine's purpose derives from the designer's purpose. According to Polanyi, contrary to a living being which is an achievement of a real, autonomous evolutionary development, a machine is not an autonomous entity, only a designed and programmed tool which is merely a consequence and part of a human activity at a certain cultural evolutionary level.[28]

As we have seen, according to Polanyi, the hydrogen atom and the similar fundamental models and laws of Nature are not emergent, and furthermore, in the existential sense the comprehensive entities which can be identified as test-tube type boundary conditions are not emergent *either*. That is, in the existential sense they can be reduced onto the fundamental levels.[29] As a consequence, it should be possible to create explicit higher level models of every conceptually emergent comprehensive entity—e.g. of crystals—which can then be reduced to fundamental laws and models of physical parts. However, this case of reduction is not as ideal as we have seen it in the case of the hydrogen atom in the previous section; here, the connection between the levels (and between the concrete crystal and its explicit model)[30] will be rather based on conventions and empirical facts (Nagel, 1961: 354) and will not be purely logical. It means according to Polanyi, that the connections (between the comprehensive entity and its explicit model) will be partly based on a previous *tacit* knowledge, which is not accessible for some Laplacian demon, only for us. And just due to this very fact, in contrast to a Laplacian demon (which has no access to our tacit knowledge) *we can perform* this kind of non-ideal, 'murky' process of reduction

6. The condition and the meaning of emergence

The 'entire emergent system […] is unspecifiable in terms of its detailed particulars.' (PK: 392) It follows from our cognition process, for Polanyi, that a recognized object cannot be specified on the basis of its compelling clues. It follows from the logical structure of physical topography, that a tacitly recognized higher level pattern cannot be specified on the basis of it parts. And so on: it follows from the logical structure of machine type boundary conditions, that their structure cannot be deduced from its physical processes. And 'it is impossible to define the probabilities derived from the random character of a system by the microscopic details of the system.' (PK: 390) It means that randomness itself—which is a specific relationship between a system and its particulars—is also a kind of emergence. (PK: 391)

So, to cut it short, according to Polanyi, a system is emergent if it *cannot be determined* on the basis of its parts. Nevertheless, it also means that *the system is random*[31] *compared to its parts*, since if it was not random then the parts of the system would determine the entire system unambiguously (PK: 390-391)—and then one could not write different text on the same page, segments of the DNA could not code different information, etc.

All in these cases, one can identify a random relationship between a given system and its parts—between the recognized object as a system and its compelling clues in tacit knowing, between the recognized pattern as a system and its explicit physical parts in the case of test-tube type boundary conditions, and between the structure of a machine type boundary condition as a system and its lower level physical processes. In all these cases, the random relationship follows from the fact that the recognition and appraisal of any order 'is an act of personal knowledge, exactly as is the assessment of probability to which it is allied.' (PK: 36) It is the *personal* act of our *tacit knowing*, our *tacit knowledge*, and our *tacit cognitive development* (and, as we have seen at the end of section 1, not the consequence of some kind of fundamental physical processes).

From all this now, it can be stated that *the fundamental*—necessary, but not sufficient—*condition for any kind of emergence in Polanyi's theory is the random relationship between a system and its parts*.

(1) According to Polanyi, it follows from the structure of our tacit knowing that every recognized object as a system is random compared to its parts which lead us to the recognition of the object. In this sense, the model of the hydrogen atom is also random with respect to those compelling clues—but not in the least with respect to its physical parts!—from which the scientific knowledge process recognizes the hydrogen atom.[32] It is important, however, to emphasize that although the fundamental condition of emergence is thus always realized, on the basis of this, Polanyi does *not* regard *anything* as emergent. For Polanyi emergence is a relationship between a given entity and its *constituting* parts, and not between the entity and the clues of the recognition process leading to it. That is exactly the reason why a random relationship between a system and its parts is only a necessary condition for emergence, and not a general definition of emergence. So it follows that the hydrogen atom and other explicit physical models are not, in any of these sense, emergent.[33]

(2) According to Polanyi, it follows from the structure of our personal knowledge that every higher level recognized entity as a whole is random with respect to its explicit physical parts. In this sense, both the crystal and the frog are random when compared to those physical particulars from which they are built.[34] It is important, however, to note that, on the basis of this condition, Polanyi regards all entities to be emergent *only in a conceptual sense* and therefore he is *not* interested in this kind of emergence. (See e.g. PK: 381-405 or TD: 29-52) So it clearly follows that the crystal and other similar entities are emergent only in a conceptual sense, and thus, as discussed, *in an existential sense* we *can* reduce them to their fundamental explicit physical parts without obstacles. This conceptual sense of emergence can be closely likened to the now-standard theory of *weak emergence*, because like the latter, 'it is metaphysically innocent', and entirely 'consistent with materialism.' (Bedau, 1997) It means that the higher levels exist only epistemologically—they come from our tacit knowledge—and there is no any kind of downward causation which can threaten the causal closure of the physical domain. At the same time, there are some important differences too. For example, for Polanyi, the complex processes of life and evolution are not merely cases of weak emergence as for Bedau, and, in contrast to the latter, Polanyi *does not derive* the higher level patterns from the fundamental physical domain but entirely from our personal knowledge. For, Bedau writes this: 'Weak emergence is not just in our minds. [...] Rather, weak emergence is an objective phenomenon that exists in nature.'[35] (Bedau, 2008b) This raises several problematic questions: e.g. what does it mean for an epistemological object to 'exist in nature' and 'not just in the mind'; or what does it mean for weak emergence to be an 'objective phenomenon', or is it not the fundamental physical entities that are objective?, etc.[36] I do not want to discuss these problematic questions here, I just stop to note that for Polanyi these questions do not arise... They do not arise, because, in contrast to the weak emergentists, he has a different theory of emergence to answer the questions are the root of these problems, that is, about the reality of minds.[37]

(3) According to Polanyi, it follows from the human knowledge about the recognized entities' *own* structure that every machine type boundary condition as a whole must be random compared to its explicit physical processes. In this sense the frog is also random with respect to the physical processes that are controlled and harnessed by its structure.38 It is important to emphasize that Polanyi regards some entities to be *emergent—in an existential sense*—on the basis of *this* condition (the existence of machine type boundary conditions), and he is interested in *this* kind of emergence. 'The first emergence, by which life comes into existence, is the prototype of all subsequent stages of evolution, by which rising forms of life, with their higher principles, emerge into existence.' (TD: 49) So, it follows that the frog and other similar entities *are* emergent—*in the existential sense*—and that we *cannot* reduce them to their fundamental explicit physical processes.

Although conceptual emergence can be closely connected to weak emergence, existential emergence cannot be put onto the framework of strong emergence (e.g. Mill, 1843; Alexander, 1920; Morgan, 1923; Broad, 1925). In the case of strong emergence, it is assumed that there are objective, higher ontological levels, whereas for Polanyi the higher levels are existential but not objective, or otherwise a Laplacian demon would see them.[39] In the classical case of strong emergence, the typical example considered for an emergent level is the chemical level upon which the biological and then the psychological levels are built, whereas for Polanyi, there are several different (existentially) emergent levels starting with the first primitive cell—but the chemical level is not a distinct one for him—and the

structure of these levels reflects the fact that they are connected by the machine type boundary conditions. In the case of strong emergence, the higher levels are assumed causally active in a mechanical way (McLaughlin, 1992), whereas for Polanyi the activity of the higher levels is in our teleological understanding of their formal control processes (see e.g. the citations of section 2). So in the case of strong emergence, there is downward causation which breaks the causal closure of the physical domain, but for Polanyi there is no downward causation and nothing breaks the causal closure of the physical domain, or again, otherwise a Laplacian demon could not 'compute all future configurations of all atoms throughout the world.' (SOM: 48)

On the basis of the above, I believe, one can bravely state that Polanyi's concept of emergence is a unique, absolutely new concept lying outside the standard categories. Polanyi's concept of emergence can be understood as a kind of *medium type emergence* (from the concept of 'medium downward causation' of Claus Emmeche et al. (Emmeche, 2000)). It is clearly stronger than the weak notion of emergence—for Polanyi there are also the existential and active higher levels—but weaker than the strong notion of emergence—there is no downward causation and nothing breaks the causal closure of the physical domain (section 1). One can put into the same category of medium emergence the concept of the famous neurophysiologist Roger W. Sperry, an idea which is very similar in several aspects to Polanyi's one. (See e.g. Sperry 1969; 1980; 1986 or Emmeche, 1997; Hodgkin, 1992) However, because in general no difference between strong and medium emergence is drawn, it is not a miracle, that both Sperry and Polanyi are usually and wrongly understood as strong emergentists in the received view (e.g. Clayton, 2003; 2004: 16-17). Moreover, maybe because of the problematic classification, Clayton understands them as vitalists. However, it is clear that Polanyi's concept is weaker than either strong emergence or, for that matter, vitalism, and that over and above the physical he does not assume or permit any other substance—such as some kind of Bergsonian 'élan vital.' This is exactly the reason why he states that 'when I say that life transcends physics and chemistry, I mean that biology cannot explain life in our age by the current workings of physical and chemical laws.' (SEP: 294-295) I will discuss this in more detail in section 9.

7. The reality and origin of emergence

Nevertheless, the question now arises: what does it mean to be 'existential' and real? For Polanyi, the personal 'transcends the disjunction between subjective and objective.' (PK: 300) So, because due to our personal point of view[40] we can have *only* personal knowledge and this kind of knowledge is not objective, *it is not possible for us to have objective knowledge* about reality. Thus, reality itself is necessarily *hidden* from us and only manifests itself in some of its aspects.[41] 'An empirical statement is true to the extent to which it reveals an aspect of reality, a reality largely hidden to us, and *existing therefore independently of our knowing it*.' (PK: 311) Of course, in the theory of Polanyi, the same is also true for Laplace's demon who cannot know the higher level emergent aspects of the hidden reality. In principle, it is possible to conceive such an intelligent being who grabs the hidden reality via a still deeper (e.g. some kind of super-physical) knowledge—this is the reason why Polanyi does *not* think that physical knowledge is primary and peculiar.

So one cannot have objective[42] knowledge about reality itself but 'man has the power to establish real patterns in nature, the reality of which is manifested by the fact that their future implications extend indefinitely beyond the experience which they were originally known to control.' (PK: 37) This means that a comprehensive entity is real (in itself) because it corresponds to the hidden reality in some aspect, and is not merely our idea (like the crystal or a fancy being). So a real comprehensive entity is *not under our control* and can manifest itself as an aspect of the hidden reality *in genuinely new ways*.[43] Therefore those recognized entities are real, the structure of which is a machine type boundary condition, because they always manifest themselves for us in absolutely new ways; just think about a frog or a child in contrast to a rock or a crystal. So the machine type boundary conditions are real in themselves as higher, emergent levels. Because Polanyi does not assume any other substance over and above the fundamental physical level, these real entities are built entirely from physical substance. Thus the physical domain has to be also *real*. Since it can exist outside of higher level, emergent structures—that is in inanimate comprehensive structures—it is real *in itself*. At the same time, a crystal or a cobblestone never manifests itself in new ways[44] so they are merely real in the sense that they are identical with the lower level entities of the fundamental physical level. That is, they can be reduced to the latter, and as higher, emergent levels they are not real in themselves. This is exactly the reason why Polanyi states that 'minds […] are more real than cobblestones.' (TD: 33)45

For Polanyi, scepticism is not a possibility (PK:

269-298). We *cannot* doubt our reality. However, his reason does not stem from a kind of Cartesian rational argument or from a faith in God but from considerations concerning certain *evolutionary achievements* of our personal knowledge. We have such *common tacit roots* in our knowledge—in contrast to an ideal rational being's knowledge like that of a Laplacian demon which is not the achievement of an evolutionary process—and because of this, we necessarily recognize higher level entities as rocks, crystals, cobbles or frogs, machines, and humans. At the higher cultural levels of human life, these fundamental tacit roots develop into such higher level cultural entities as faith, trust, and traditions[46], which commit us to accept our reality because we cannot live without them[47] (PK: 49-65; 299-324). Thus we accept our personal knowledge based upon our tacit roots and our tacit knowing. We recognize that other living beings have exactly the same structure of knowledge in them as we do—*both* their and our knowledge are achievements of a common emergent evolutionary development. Thus, we also can accept the reality of other recognized living beings. By contrast, the structure of a crystal or a cobblestone is only the consequence of our knowledge. However, this structure again reflects the structure of living beings, because its source, the structure of our knowledge was shaped by the very same process as the structure of all living beings, that is, by a common evolutionary development. And, of course, this is exactly the reason why the structure of any kind of cognition is also the same as any other (as long as done by humans or animals which are biological kin). This kind of cognition was also necessarily formed by the evolutionary development. However, neither of their consequences will be an emergent entity because neither of them is the same process as the emergent evolution itself.

As we have seen in section 2, the hierarchy of machine type boundary conditions which are gradually built upon each other as emergent levels is the consequence of an evolutionary process. This is our knowledge about the higher levels and *about ourselves* because, of course, we are *also* the achievement of evolution. It follows that 'evolution can be understood only as a feat of emergence' (PK: 390) which is obviously true vice versa: emergence can only be understood as a process of evolution. And because real higher levels come from this process, consequently, emergent evolution is *also* a real comprehensive manifestation of the hidden reality.

So our knowledge about the world and ourselves is the achievement of a process of emergent evolution and this has its own consequences for our knowledge. Due to this fact, our cognition has the tacit structure we recognize: we are not entirely rational beings but fallible ones, with common tacit roots and with a specific personal point of view—which is our *necessary centre of individuality*. And, of course, these tacit achievements come from not an explicit rational process but from a tacit one, in accordance with meaning, *emergent evolution itself is an explicitly unformalizable, tacit development.* More exactly, as we have seen, it is a process of development of higher level machine type boundary conditions which can control and harness the lower level processes, after all, the lowest fundamental physical level—e.g. as the mosquito-caching activity of a frog, as the skill of bicycle-riding, as the cognitive structure of an eye, as the cultural activity of obtaining scientific knowledge, or as a specific cultural commitment of our life. For Polanyi, again, there is no other substance over and above the physical, which, however, is not primary regarding reality. That is, we are composed out of physical matter and—which gives our essence—higher level boundary conditions, *by the possession of which we can control and harness the lower level domains—this is our life. So our reality consists of nothing more but matter together with this hierarchy of knowledge*.[48]

8. The new kind of emergent entities of human culture

It is clear from the foregoing that in Polanyi's theory there is no deep chasm between the biological and the cultural stages of emergent evolution. That is, the 'second major rebellion against meaningless inanimate being' (PK: 389) did not break the original sequence of machine type boundary conditions which has been gradually built upon each other. For Polanyi, the higher cultural levels are fundamentally equal to lower biological levels. Yet it is worth taking a closer look at this second major transition and at the minor differences between the two kinds of machine type boundary conditions at the two sides of it.

The significant change that accompanies the development of culture was the end of gene-centred evolution where 'the evolutionary process takes place in the germ plasm, but it manifests itself in the novel organism which the germ plasm potentially embodies.' (PK: 400) According to Polanyi, the machine type boundary conditions which have been gradually built upon each other under the emergent evolutionary development were coded fundamentally in the genes. This specific *centre* of life controlled the mechanisms which during ontogeny have reproduced the former achievements of emergent

evolutionary development in every new generation. This process was supplemented by the *new coding mechanisms* of human culture now, first of all by spoken language which made it possible to reach a fundamentally different higher level of our hierarchy of knowledge, that is, the level of explicit knowledge. Of course, to formulate such explicit universal models as it has been done by physics, further new coding mechanisms were needed, such as writing and mathematical formalism.[49] In this way it became possible to develop a new kind of machine type boundary condition under the cultural stage of emergent evolution.

Naturally, my former Polanyian example, speech (see section 2) is nothing but a new kind of culturally existing machine type boundary condition which controls and harnesses the other, lower level processes, now including biological ones. However, speech is not entirely just a new kind of machine type boundary condition, because the first three levels of speech—the production (1) of voice, (2) of words, and (3) of sentences—are still partly coded by the genes (just think about the process of phonation or generative grammatics). But the last two levels—the production (4) of style, and (5) of literary composition—are only coded by the new coding mechanisms of culture (see KB: 236). The articulation of voices was may already be possessed by the Homo Erectus, the utterance of words by the early Homo Sapiens, and the production of sentences by the Homo Sapiens Sapiens, but the sophisticated style and literary composition were only the achievements of higher cultures, and products of a separate level of cultural evolution.

So the cultural stages of human evolution made the development of this new kind of machine type boundary conditions possible. These are emergent levels exactly in the same existential sense as those of biological beings are. This clarifies why the explicit knowledge which is formulated at the higher cultural level is meaningful in itself and why is it self-standing, when its roots are tacit—that is, there are necessary conditions as lower tacit levels to reach it. It is meaningful in itself and self-standing because it is part of a higher level of the hierarchy of our knowledge, which is emergent in the existential sense and necessarily real for us.[50]

Physics and chemistry are cultural achievements in exactly the same way as speech. They, as machine type boundary conditions produced by human culture, also control and harness the lower level processes, in this case directly the knowing activities of certain selected human groups (the scientists). During the process of revealing aspects of the hidden reality, physics has formulated such explicit universal models as is, for example, the model for the hydrogen atom.

In most cases Polanyi treats physics and chemistry and their theoretical entities as lumped together without further distinction. The reason for this is that he is interested in emergence only in the existential sense, and thus he contrasts the different entities like hydrogen atoms, rocks, and crystals to machines, living beings, and cultural entities. No further of finer distinction is needed for him. Still, the question arises: is there an aspect of reality from which there is a clear difference between physical and chemical entities?—that is, can the more complex chemical entities be reduced to their explicit physical parts?

In the Polanyian theory, the knowledge of a chemical molecule as a whole is random in contrast to the knowledge of its physical parts, because it follows from such chemical scientific knowledge obtaining questions of which are based on such random *conditions* which cannot be specified in the terms of physics. 'Therefore, while quantum mechanics can explain in principle all chemical reactions, it cannot replace, even in principle, our knowledge of chemistry. We may acknowledge this as an incipient separation of two forms of existence.' (PK: 394) Thus, the cultural practices of physics and chemistry, as two clearly distinct cultural forms of existence 'emerge by randomization.' (PK: 394) However, note that 'we can even widen the conceptual gap between two levels, to the point where it precludes altogether the representation of the higher level in terms of the lower, without establishing a complete existential disjunction between the two.' (PK: 394) According to Polanyi, this means that although the chemical entities are not emergent in the existential sense, *in the conceptual sense*, in contrast to the fundamental physical entities, *they are*. Hence they are the consequences of such cultural scientific activities the concepts and terms of which are based on such random conditions which cannot be specified on the basis of the physical concepts and terms alone. So the chemists study the more or less stable chemical molecules in accordance with certain non-physical conditions.[51] These specific conditions are the reasons why the knowledge of the chemical molecules as systems are random compared to the topography of their physical parts. It follows that they are emergent in the conceptual sense, and therefore, at the same time they can be reduced—in the existential sense—as we have seen it in the case of another conceptually emergent comprehensive entities (section 5).

Nevertheless, the source of conceptual emergence of chemical entities is entirely different from that of rocks or other similar physical entities of colloquial language. In the case of the latter, the source is that

tacit roots of our previous knowledge which are grounded in the biological stages of evolution. In contrast to this, in the case of chemical entities this source is a cultural and scientific activity, or form of existence which determines the random (in the sense discussed) conditions of the research. However, it can be conceived that by some time the chemical scientific activity will some to an end, or at least the concepts, conditions, and terms used in chemistry will fundamentally change, and there will exists no more emergent chemical entitie s in the conceptual sense—after all, several similar turns have happened in the history of science.[52] In contrast to this, there will always be emergent rocks and similar entities in the conceptual sense because of their much deeper, biological roots of our common, human perception. So it is clear that in Polanyi's theory, in the existential sense, *it is the chemical domain of scientific activity*—which has been developed during the cultural stage of emergent evolution—*that constitutes an emergent entity* as a cultural form of existence and not its chemical models—which only arise from the temporary cultural commitments of the chemical scientific activity, and which reflect only the tacit structure of this domain knowledge of ours.[53]

An analogous case can be found in physics—but not in fundamental physics which is the only real physics for Polanyi—in connection with the notions of temperature and pressure of a gas.

> The gas can be said to have a definite temperature and a definite pressure only if we assume that its molecules are in random motion; an assumption which is incompatible with our knowing the configuration of molecular motions in the gas… [because] …if we know exactly the position and velocity of each molecule (within the limits of wave mechanics) we could only predict the behaviour of the molecules, but not the comprehensive features defined by randomness. (PK: 391)

That is, according to Polanyi, the concepts and terms of thermodynamics are based on such random conditions (again, in the sense discussed earlier) which cannot be specified in terms of wave mechanics and statistical physics. However, the scientific activity of wave mechanics and statistical physics, as specific forms of existence, can displace and mostly have indeed displaced thermodynamics but this did not come from that pure fact that the reduction of the latter was fulfilled. The process of this change can as well be understood as a kind of reduction of a cultural form of existence.

9. Diachronic reduction: the problem of reduction of existentially emergent entities in a system-theoretic approach

Now we are in a position to draw a conclusion and make a few suggestions of our own. The above examples, concerning chemistry and thermodynamics, hint at a possibility of an entirely new sense of reduction. In this new sense, one could reduce the emergent aspects of reality not onto the present lower levels, but onto those lower levels from which they have evolved under an evolutionary development. Nonetheless, the final results would be the same as with more ordinary reduction, since in the end everything would be reduced onto the lowest, fundamental physical level. The possibility of this new kind of reduction is left open in Polanyi's philosophy because in his theory the higher emergent levels are unambiguously the consequences of an evolutionary process – and therefore it follows that before this process there were no such higher emergent entities as frogs, machines, and minds. Only 'primordial inanimate matter' (PK: 404) and some higher level ordering principle existed in the beginning, which made the emergent evolutionary development possible. 'No new creative agent, therefore, need be said to enter an emergent system at consecutive new stages of being. Novel forms of existence take control of the system by a process of *maturation*.' (PK: 395) So the question is: what is this creative agent (higher level ordering principle) which according to Polanyi determines the process of emergent evolutionary development from the beginning of life?

'The *ordering principle* which *originated* life is the *potentiality* of a stable open system…' (PK: 383-384).[54] This means that the laws of physics make it possible that such a random configuration of matter are given at the beginnings which can function as a basis for a stable open *evolutionary system*—like the Earth—where the developmental process of emergent evolution can be started.

I think this view, the view of historical (diachronic) reduction also makes it clear that Polanyi's approach to emergence and evolution (from which it is derived) is not in the least 'vitalist' or 'British emergentist' but unambiguously system theoretical.

Then, in accordance with Polanyi, we can say that the emergent higher level ordering principle which has originated and now sustains life was only a specific configuration of the pure physical matter, whereas the details of this specific higher level configuration cannot be determined on the basis of its elementary explicit physical parts. Billions of years ago, there were only these two at hand, that is, the *fundamental entities of physics* as well as a *specific, unformalizable order of inanimate matter*, the potentiality of forming a stable open

system, namely the Earth—the origin of which is entirely *random* (in the sense used by Polanyi and here throughout) in contrast to the laws of physics and not at all determined by them. In this sense—over time—*we can reduce and explain all later, higher level emergent principles*, those of machines, living beings, functions and purposes that exist in our time, by projecting them onto the history of inanimate matter and its specific order of the beginnings. (cf. PK: 404-405) This new kind of temporal reduction, in contrast to the usual, *synchronic* one, can be called *diachronic reduction*.

By means of ordinary, synchronic reduction, the conceptually emergent comprehensive entities can be reduced, as we have seen this in section 5. Their structure corresponds to a test-tube type boundary condition and was thus formed by the process of their physical parts. At the same time, by the new kind of diachronic reduction, existentially emergent comprehensive entities can also be reduced. Their structure corresponds to a machine type boundary condition which is formed by the process of emergent evolution. It follows that this new kind of reduction does not fulfil the usual conditions of reduction as formulated by Nagel in the context of mechanical explanations. (Nagel, 1961: 345-358) Here the origin of the explanandum, that is, the origin of the machine type structure of the existentially emergent comprehensive entities is a mostly *tacit*, *teleological* process. In the case of this diachronic reduction, for example, experimental laws, axioms and special hypotheses cannot be formulated in the same way and with such accuracy as it is the case of normal reduction. This will be also true of the connections of levels and the relation between models and original comprehensive entities; however, the linkages will be based in the same way on research conventions and experimental facts together as we have seen that in the case of non-ideal, comprehensive entities.

Although this specific new kind of reduction reduces onto two different principles (namely matter and emergent order), it is nevertheless a valid form of reduction because it reduces onto an emergent principle (as well as, of course, matter) which is emergent *only in the conceptual sense*. The specific configuration of matter of the beginnings is not yet a machine type boundary condition since naturally it does not control or harness fundamental physical processes *for some kind of purpose*. It only determines a future equilibrium state of the system, which will be the cause of an ongoing emergent evolutionary development producing frogs and machines in the end. It follows that this cause is future or final only in the conceptual sense of our teleological explanations now; in the existential emergent situation it is a normal efficient cause.

To sum up, in the existential sense the specific order of the beginnings can entirely be reduced—in the usual synchronic way—onto its physical processes. This means that it is *entirely* physical in the existential sense and it follows that in the existential sense it can be stated that due to this new kind of diachronic reduction every higher level principle and entity of our time can be reduced to the 'primordial inanimate matter of the beginnings'. So in my view this is the reason why Polanyi (albeit not using the hitherto introduced notion of diachronic reduction) says that 'when I say that life transcends physics and chemistry, I mean that biology cannot explain life in our age [i.e. synchronically] by the current workings of physical and chemical laws.' (SEP: 294-295)

So if being a physicalist only means that in some way or another one can hope to reduce every higher level phenomenon existentially onto the physical level, and does not imply some kind of commitment to the objectivity and exclusive reality of the physical level, then, paradoxical as it sounds, Polanyi is a *physicalist*. In accordance with this, Polanyi satisfies to the definitions of physicalism. For example, Tim Crane asserts that physicalism claims that after putting all the particles in place and setting up all the fundamental physical laws God's work is done. (Crane, 1991, 2001) This means that in principle, every possible future setting of the fundamental particles can be computed, as we have seen that in the case of Laplace's demon, in absolute accordance with Polanyi's position. David Lewis defines physicalism as the thesis according to which, by copying the physical realm, we copy every fact of the world. (Lewis, 1983) Polanyi corresponds to this definition too, since according to him the causal closure of the physical domain is not broken by the emergence of new levels (section 1), new levels only build upon the fundamental one like another floor of a house—thus if one copies the entire physical domain (at a time) this will also copy all higher level domains. We could bring up still further definitions to which Polanyi would also correspond, but I think it is much more important to make it clear that this does not mean that Polanyi *wants* to be a physicalist. It only shows, again, how little the usual definitions and categories are applicable to the description of the philosophy of Michael Polanyi.

Summary

According to Polanyi, real emergent levels are the consequences of an evolutionary development. This process gives rise to various 'machine type boundary

conditions', building on each other, where every machine type boundary condition controls and harnesses the lower level processes for some kind of purpose, and after all, they all harness the fundamental physical level. On the basis of his theory of personal knowledge, Polanyi rejects the objectivist approach, because he maintains that we cannot give an account of every aspects of the hidden reality. He, at the same time accepts the not-wholly-explicable, partly tacit, higher levels as real—constituting emergence in the existential sense. Because the tacit roots and commitments of man, which come about in this emergent evolutionary development, also determine our cognition of the inanimate domain, hence the latter appears as emergent and multi-levelled too—that is, emergent in the conceptual sense. There is room for complete and ideal reduction, but merely in the case of completely explicit physical entities. However, in an existential sense, we can reduce every conceptually emergent comprehensive entity in the same normal, synchronic way. At the same time, existing emergent levels can be reduced too, but only against evolutionary development, backwards in time, in a diachronic way. This reduction relates existential emergent levels to two, emergent principles in the more limited conceptual sense, reducing them, ultimately, to inanimate matter and the specific order—that is onto a stable open system which as an ordering principle originated and sustain life and the emergent process of evolutionary development. This means that, as Polanyi ultimately presupposes only one kind of substance, namely inanimate matter, he is not a vitalist or a radical 'strong' emergentist, yet at the same time, with the help of a system-theoretical approach, he can also regard the necessarily given higher level structures as real.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Márta Fehér, Péter Fazekas, Barbara Rozmis, Márton Dinnyei and especially George Kampis for useful comments and suggestions on various drafts of this paper.

Department of Philosophy and History of Science
Budapest University of Technology and Economics;
Department of History and Philosophy of Science
Faculty of Science, Eötvös Loránd University.
E-mail:

Notes

1. Insomuch as, when he does not indicate differently, he always uses the word 'emergence' in this sense.
2. It is his famous, well-known paper, which was originally published in *Science*, 160 (1968), 1308-12.
3. The shape of crystal is an original Polanyian example, however, we can think of e.g. a tornado or an astrophysical or geological phenomenon too.
4. It is clear from this example that the machine-like structure is not simply a matter of complexity.
5. According to the Game of Life analogy (see e.g. Dennett, 1991), physical knowledge is the knowledge of actual cell-states (black or white) as well as their laws of changes. The higher level, secondary knowledge (the knowledge of machines and their principles) is here the knowledge of higher level cell-shapes (glider, blinker, pulsar, etc.) and their rules of changes. Polanyi calls these boundary conditions and, as we can see that in the Game of Life, there is no breaking of the clausal closure of the physical domain (see below in section 1). Nevertheless, for Polanyi, in contrast to Dennett, neither the higher level knowledge nor the lower level knowledge is objective (or subjective), and for Polanyi the main question is about the relationship between them. Is the higher level knowledge contingent in the explanation of the multi-levelled phenomenon and its lower level processes? See section 5 and 6.
6. 'Assume, for the sake of argument, that we posses a complete atomic theory of inanimate matter. We can then envisage the operations of a Universal Mind in the sense of Laplace. The initial positions and velocities of all the atoms of the world being given for one moment of time, and all the forces acting between the atoms being known, the Laplacean Mind could compute all future configurations of all atoms throughout the world, and from this result we could read off the exact physical and chemical typography of the world at any future point of time. But we now know that there is a great and varied class of objects which cannot be identified, and still less understood, by establishing their complete physical and chemical topography, for they are constructed with a view to a purpose which physics and chemistry cannot define. So it follows that the Laplacean Mind would be subject to the same limitation: it could not identify any machine nor tell us how it works. Indeed, the Laplacean Mind could identify no object or process, the meaning of which consists in serving purpose. It would ignore therefore the existence not only of machines but also of any kind of tools, foodstuffs, houses, roads and any written records or spoken messages.' (SOM: 48-49)
7. It follows that the chemical knowledge of the chemist cannot be simply replaced by an ideal physical knowledge because the latter simply does not contain the former (section 8).
8. From the point of view of the boundary conditions, it can be stated that the test-tube type boundary condition is *contingent* according to the explanation of lower level processes since it entirely *depends* on them, it does not control and harness the latter and it is important *only* for the process of *observation*. Contrary to this, the machine type boundary condition *is not contingent* according to the explanation of lower level processes since its origin is entirely *independent* from them, controls and harnesses them and it is absolutely an important and *necessary* factor in the process of *explanation*. (Küppers, 1992)

9. Other authors also take Aristotelian causal notions as an inspiration to think of causal processes in the case of biological beings and other complex systems, as e.g. Salthe (1985); Rosen (1991); El-Hani and Queiroz (2005).
10. More exactly, the Demon's point of view and knowledge are different not because he has not got our personal point of view and knowledge but because his point of view and knowledge literally are not personal—this is exactly the reason of the hypothesis of the Demon as a rational ideal. However, in the nature, of course, there are no such ideal beings with a point of view from *nowhere*, so every kind of possible—intelligent—being has a different and *personal* knowledge.
11. This problem and its consequences will be discussed in detail in section 6 and 7.
12. The structure of an organism is 'a boundary condition harnessing the physical chemical substances within the organism in the service of physiological functions. Thus, in generating an organism, DNA initiates and controls the growth of a mechanism that will work as a boundary condition…' (KB: 229-230) So a DNA itself is not yet a boundary condition, but something which can originate boundary conditions, and thus functions as a "primary boundary condition'. (Küppers, 1992)
13. However, in accordance with the case of machines, this also does not mean the breaking of the causal closure of the physical domain. The structure of a living being is not the consequence of the elementary physical and chemical processes of the living being, but of such processes which are contingent on these processes. Still at this level, that is, at the level of the elementary physical, chemical parts of the living being, these contingent processes can also be solely understood as elementary physical and chemical processes which are absolutely in accordance with the laws of physics and of chemistry. It is another question if it is possible to talk about a living being as a comprehensive entity meaningfully—or at all—without the help of the higher level principles, in this case without the help of the principles of biology.
14. In Polanyi's theory, pre-existing life is a precondition of evolution (just as in Darwin), therefore, it has to have a different principle. More exactly, the two processes are entirely different. Life is an actual developmental process of existing beings, while evolution is a comprehensive process of development from the first primitive prokaryote to the highest level cultural activity of man. (PK: 400) See in detail in Paksi, 2008.
15. As a matter of fact, naturally the machine type boundary conditions of machines also come from the human culture, but the next example is much clearer and typical of the machine type boundary conditions of human culture discussed by Polanyi.
16. This is probably the reason why Polanyi calls the emerging of human culture as the 'second major rebellion' of the evolutionary process (PK: 389) because this superseded the development of the strictly DNA-centric biological evolution and made possible the development of entirely new kinds of machine type boundary conditions. However, in accordance with the cases of machines and biological beings, this also does not mean the breaking of the causal closure of the physical domain, because in the same way, the structures of cultural entities at the physical level are the consequences of contingent physical processes. And it is also another question if it is possible to talk about a comprehensive cultural entity meaningfully— or at all—without the help of the higher level principles, such as cultural theory.
17. Built upon that zero level, the fundamental level of life are the following: 1. *compartment*; 2. *cell*; 3. *multicellular* organism; 4. organism with *nervous system*; 5. *culture*/language. (PK: 387-389)
18. Italics: D. P.
19. In another way, Polanyi puts it like this: 'We can recognize then a strictly defined progression, rising from the inanimate level to ever higher additional principles of life.' (KB: 234)
20. From the point of view of its chemistry or underlying matter two pieces of DNA with different informational pattern can be the same. For example, ATCGATCGATCG and TAGCTAGCTAGC; because Laplace's demon cannot differentiate between such higher level patterns and cannot understand their meanings, in Polanyi's approach the Demon can see *merely* the same meaningless sequence of quarks and electrons. See section 1 and footnotes 5-10.
21. From the lower level it means that the structure of the higher level machine type boundary condition is formed by one or more lower level processes which are contingent upon the lower level processes of the higher level structure. However, it is important to state that this formulation does *not* mean the lower level explanation of the phenomenon because the concept of contingence is *not* understandable without that higher level boundary condition which indicates the boundary between the two contingent lower level processes. So from an absolutely lower level point of view there are only entirely homogenous and deterministic lower level processes without any kind of higher level entities and explanation.
22. Italics: D. P.
23. Polanyi describes three imaginary experiments which can help us understand this logically independent correlation and its consequences between two different levels. (PK: 39-40) (1) Take a large number of perfect dice resting on a plane surface and all showing the same face—say a one—on top. Prolonged Brownian motion—acting at low temperature—will destroy this orderliness and ultimately produce a state of maximum disorder. (2) Take a similar set of dice showing the one on top but let them be biased in favour of showing a six on top. Prolonged Brownian motion acting at low temperature will cause a rearrangement in the sense that most dices will show a six on top. (3) Take again a similar set of dice showing the one on top being biased in favour of showing a six on top. Prolonged Brownian motion acting at high temperature will destroy this pattern and produce instead of the same kind of random aggregate as in experiment (1). Experiment (2) shows that random

processes can create such *conditions* in the case of which well-arranged pattern is forming at the higher level of the dices, however, it is clear from experiment (1) that random processes—as opposed to the appropriate conditions—will cause a well-arranged pattern only if there is an *action* of a higher level ordering principle restricting and controlling these lower level random processes. So the situation is that there is not only a well-arranged higher level pre-pattern which will destroyed by the lower level, here Brownian, processes but a continuously functioning higher level principle, here the loadedness of the dices. Finally, experiment (3) naturally shows that a higher level principle is not enough in itself if there are no appropriate conditions in the lower level. So, it means that any kind of lower level processes cannot be controlled by a certain principle. In simpler words, no matter how skilfully we can roll we will win for certain only if we have loaded dices. This boundary condition follows from an entirely different, logically independent principle as the skill of dice rolling. (In this case what is random is how the sides of the dice are named, and this is not determined—only—by the laws of physics, however,—also—by the principles of the higher levels, and in this sense entirely determined by them.)

24. It also means that the higher emergent levels are not the consequences of a neo-Darwinian evolutionary process by purely random, lower level mutations but the achievement of a goal-directed one by an emergent, higher level ordering principle.
25. 'Clues are not fully specifiable. Nor is the process of integration which connects them fully definable.' (SEP: 255)
26. At the same time, the problem of reduction, of course, is not too interesting at this fundamental level,—it has no real sake—but only when one want to reduce some higher level, secondary science together with its laws and models onto the fundamental physical level (see section 5). Here, for Ernest Nagel the prototype of reduction is not this ideal one, but the much less ideal case of the reduction of thermodynamics to statistical mechanics. (Nagel, 1961: 338-345)
27. Polanyi regards living beings 'as instances of morphological types and of operational principles subordinated to a centre of individuality' (PK: 383) and 'the acknowledgment of such a centre is a logical novelty' (PK: 344); it follows that 'no types, no operational principles and no individualities can ever be defined in terms of physics and chemistry. From which it follows that the rise of new forms of life—as instances of *new* types and of *new* operational principles centred on *new* individualities—is likewise undefinable in terms of physics and chemistry.' (PK: 383)
28. So Polanyi's theory of machines is in a deep contrast with the thinking of much of Western science and philosophy (from Descartes to Artificial Intelligence). Nevertheless, this does not mean that there can be no possibility for autonomous machines in Polanyi's theory, but in that case, the autonomous machine has to be an achievement of a real, embodied evolutionary development—as it is found e.g. in one of the novels of Stanislaw Lem (1973)—and not only the result of a human cultural activity at a certain evolutionary level. That is, in Polanyi's view, autonomous machines cannot be designed explicitly, they have to evolve tacitly.
29. Of course, a reduction is always existential,—that is, this is not a new approach to reduction—since the reduction of something to something else is, at the same time, also a statement of existential identity between the referenda of the levels.
30. Such an identification problem does not come up in the case of the purely explicit and universal model of the hydrogen atom, of course.
31. Random in the sense as have discussed in section 3.
32. The situation could be different only if the structure of our tacit knowing was not necessarily loaded with subsidiary awareness (due to our personal point of view) and thus loaded with tacit knowledge.
33. Yet, in contrast to Polanyi, someone may want to call this 'cognitive emergence' because it implies randomness that follows from the structure of our cognition.
34. The situation could be different only if the structure of our personal knowledge, as the knowledge of Laplace's demon, due to our tacit knowing was not necessarily be loaded with tacit knowledge. But it's true that in that case we simply could not recognize higher level patterns much as the Laplace's demon cannot.
35. Here is the reason why I speak of emergence in a conceptual sense in the case of Polanyi, and not of epistemological emergence, as weak emergentists do.
36. Similarly to Bedau, Daniel C. Dennett—whose starting point is the same as Bedau',s namely an analogy using the Game of Life—also states that the higher level patterns are, in a sense, real by themselves ('real patterns' he calls them) but he also fails to define exactly what this means (Dennett, 1991). In essential contrast to Polanyi, these authors do not draw a clear distinction between implicitly existing different kinds of emergence, and do not investigate the question of the ontological position of the cogniser.
37. Bedau himself admits that weak emergence cannot explain the qualitative phenomenon of mind. (Bedau, 2008a)
38. The situation could be different, on the one hand, if the structure of our knowledge, like the knowledge of Laplace's demon, was not necessarily be loaded with tacit knowledge—but in that case we simply could not recognize higher level machine type boundary conditions as the Laplace's demon cannot,—and, on the other hand, if the recognized entities' own structure was deducible from their physical processes.
39. Here is the reason why I speak of emergence in the existential sense in the case of Polanyi and not of ontological emergence as do strong emergentists.
40. 'For, as human beings, we must inevitably see the universe from a *centre* lying within ourselves and speak about it in terms of human language shaped by the exigencies of human intercourse. Any attempt rigorously to eliminate our human perspective from our

picture of the world must lead to absurdity.' (PK: 3; italics: D. P.)

41. In some sense, this is not a new standpoint in philosophy. For example, in the philosophy of Kant, the "thing in itself' (Ding an sich) cannot be grasped by human beings in the same way as it is with Polanyi's hidden reality. We can merely reach those aspects of reality (for Kant) which are the consequences of our pure forms of intuition and our categories, in Polanyi's theory the ones which are the consequences of our tacit knowing and accumulated previous tacit knowledge.
42. As a matter of fact, Polanyi uses this word, however, not in the received sense. He refers to the common aspects of our personal knowledge which transcends subjectivity.
43. With this Polanyi, similarly to e.g. Martin Heidegger, breaks the more than 2500 years old tradition of philosophy which tries to understand reality on the basis of a scientific method towards hidden objective entities and of the rejection of ordinary experience. Rather he starts with the scientific verification of ordinary experience and on the basis of this goes towards a scientific revelation of the deeper levels of hidden reality.
44. This it is true only for a *given* individual cobblestone or crystal, and this is the existential side of the problem. However, in the conceptual sense, certain classes of cobblestones and crystals (as manifesting test-tube type boundary conditions) are inexhaustible with regard to their future manifestations, since technically it can be conceived that an infinite number of *different* particular cobblestones and crystals exists inside a certain class.
45. "Persons and problems are felt to be more profound, because we expect them yet to reveal themselves in unexpected ways in the future, while cobblestones evoke no such expectation. This capacity of a thing to reveal itself in unexpected ways in the future I attribute to the fact that the thing observed is an aspect of a reality, possessing a significance that is not exhausted by our conception of any single aspect of it. To trust that a thing we know is real is, in this sense, to feel that it has the independence and power for manifesting itself in yet unthought of ways in the future. I shall say, accordingly, that minds and problems possess a deeper reality than cobblestones, although cobblestones are admittedly more real in the sense of being *tangible*. And since I regard the significance of a thing as more important than its tangibility, I shall say that minds and problems are more real than cobblestones.' (TD: 32-33)
46. This will be discussed in section 8.
47. 'Biology then comes to include the accrediting of our own intellectual powers and the confirmation of our commitments within the framework of our calling. It acknowledges, in particular, our capacity for continually discovering new interpretations of experience which reveal a deeper understanding of reality, and takes us eventually to the point where the whole panorama of science unfolds for a second time within a biology of man immersed in though.' (PK: 373-374)
48. It is worth noting once more that this is not an objectivist dualist standpoint as e.g. Aristotle's where everything is composed from two different substantial parts, *matter* and *form.* It is such a non-objectivist—but not subjectivist—substance-monist theory which (beyond matter) also regards the complex higher level structural relationships as real. Worded in the language of system theory, this latter means that it is the *informational* relationships of the subsystems of the whole evolutionary system. So in Polanyi's theory our reality consists in matter and information (or knowledge).
49. As it can be seen, the cultural stage of evolution, in contrast to the biological stage, has more than one fundamental coding mechanism—and furthermore, in contrast to that of the biological stage, it is at a higher level than the pure human individual. This is an important reason why it is not possible to understand it merely as an analogy of biological evolution. Polanyi himself, however, does not investigate this question in detail, at the same time, I think the theory of cultural evolution of Merlin Donald is quite useful from this aspect and also I believe it is in accordance with Polanyi's fundamental intentions. (Donald, 1991)
50. This might be worded in the following way. Explicit knowledge exists at higher cultural levels above the level of the pure individual minds in accordance with his own higher level principles. To illustrate this, here is an example: due to this autonomous existence, using some newly excavated written memories of a long forgotten and vanished people, a historian can reconstruct the mostly lower level, significant parts of the culture, language, and life of that people which at one time led to the drafting of that once vanished and now excavated explicit written memories. This would not be possible if the higher level had been vanished forever and had lost its autonomous existence when the lower levels vanished which provided the necessary preconditions of its drafting. Nevertheless the uncovering of the culture of the long forgotten and vanished people cannot be completed in this way because the culture and knowledge of a people is in part necessarily tacit. (At the same time, the excavation of the material memories could deepen the understanding of the culture of the long forgotten people.)
51. In a wider sense this conditions are also (test-tube type) boundary conditions (see e.g. Kampis, 1991) but here I do not use this term to evade any misunderstanding.
52. For example, phlogiston theory was eliminated from chemistry in this way and not by ordinary reduction. Today there is an increasing interest in whether molecules exist, i.e. whether the molecule is the right kind of entity to address the problems interesting for chemistry.
53. 'Consider the chemical aspects of matter. They are fully determined by atomic physics; yet no Laplacean Mind schooled in quantum mechanics could replace the science of chemistry. For chemistry answers

questions regarding the interaction of more or less stable chemical substances, and these questions cannot be raised without experience of these substances and of the practical conditions in which they are to be handled. A Laplacean knowledge which merely predicts what will happen under *any given* conditions cannot tell us what conditions *should be given*; these conditions are determined by the technical skill and peculiar interests of chemists and hence cannot be worked out on paper. Therefore, while quantum mechanics can explain in principle all chemical reactions, it cannot replace, even in principle, our knowledge of chemistry. We may acknowledge this as an incipient separation of two forms of existence. We may acknowledge this as an incipient separation of two forms of existence.' (PK: 394)

54. 'It is a fundamental property of open systems, not described before now, that they stabilize any improbable event which serves to elicit them.' (PK: 384)

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GOING BACK TO BASICS: PHILOSOPHICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND THE METAPHYSICS OF AGENCY

Simon Smith

Abstract
This paper concerns two names not commonly associated: Austin Farrer and Ludwig Feuerbach. For these two very different thinkers person-concepts offered a metaphysical vision. That vision represents a critical return to religious *praxis*. Philosophically, the closed categories of scholastic ontology are exchanged for a concrete theory of persons, one that predicates self-hood on social premises. This insight enabled Farrer and Feuerbach to overcome the dualism underpinning classical rationalism. Moreover, by realigning the terms of that dualism within a framework of human action, they returned metaphysics to its origins in the personal images needed to conceive God.

Key words:
Farrer, Feuerbach, empirical mandate, species being, personal analogy.

This paper brings together two names not commonly associated: Austin Farrer and Ludwig Feuerbach. For these two very different thinkers person-concepts provided the key to a metaphysical vision. That vision, I suggest, represents a critical return to religious *praxis*. Philosophically, the closed categories of scholastic ontology are exchanged for a concrete theory of persons. That theory concerns the dialectical development of self-hood. It predicates consciousness on social premises. Thus, self-hood develops as a response to life in community. Most importantly, the activities, ideas, and ideals which express that self-hood are not only transacted with others, they are learned from them. In teaching us how to act, how to speak, how to think, others supply the tools with which we construct our identities.

For Farrer and Feuerbach the reflection of religious consciousness here was unmistakable. Analogies drawn from our prospective involvement with others provide the terms with which to make sense of our talk about God. These analogies overcome the 'abstract, merely conceptual being' of that 'old onto-theology.' They offer instead 'a God about whom we have something to do.' This concerns the logically basic role of person-concepts in metaphysical exploration. Our first and most primal notion of 'real being' is as a corollary of consciousness, socially constituted, physically enacted. Moreover, these psycho-dynamic structures also remind us what 'God-talk' is really about. The same process of conscious becoming is expressed in the practice of faith: the self co-constructing itself in relation to others.

Recasting theology in the anthropological mode takes us back to philosophical basics. Back, that is, to the epistemology underpinning this metaphysical vision. Being pragmatists at heart, Farrer and Feuerbach located the conditions for all conceivable 'being' in action.

To explain: classical theology stands upon the disjunction of finite and infinite. This is predicated on a more basic move: the disjunction of subject from object. Logically and ontologically isolated, subject and object are distinct substances. They are what they are essentially, that is, by definition. A wholly 'internal' affair, subjectivity is reduced to what Sartre called a 'flickering, unstable, semi-transparent moment-to-moment "being".' Objectivity, meanwhile, is independently real, ontologically secure. But radical contrast forestalls reconciliation. Once opened, the ontological breach cannot be closed without compromising the terms of its charter: the demand for Real Being.

Subjectivity is synonymous with Descartes' ego-abstraction, that 'merely thinking being, to whose essence the body does not belong.' This 'back stage artiste' lacks the means to perceive its objects. 'That of which I think without sensation [Feuerbach insisted] I think without and apart from all connection.' And without connection, there is no conception: no concepts *sans* percepts.

The abstract mind… isolates the being-for-itself as substance, atom, 'I', or God. It can therefore only arbitrarily connect the being-for-others with the being-for-itself, for the necessity of this connection is only sensation, from which, however, the mind abstracts. (*PPF*, 52)

Apart from any sensory *modus operandi*, that is, experience has no owner and thought no experiential content. Without knowing subjects, there is not even a conception of object known.

Exorcising these old ghosts requires an empirical mandate, one predicated on the interactive conditions of knowledge. Feuerbach's goes like this: 'Thought that is isolated for itself, enclosed in itself, without senses…is absolute subject that cannot be and ought not be an object for others.' Likewise, Farrer insisted '[n]o physical science without physical interference, no personal knowledge without personal intercourse;

no thought about any reality about which we can do nothing but think.' Our first encounter, then, is not with an object of thought, but with an 'object of the senses, perception and feeling.' Real knowledge starts with physical contact: 'we know things as they condition or affect' our activities.

> [A] real object is given to me only where a being that affects me is given to me and where my self-activity – when I start from the viewpoint of thought – finds its boundary or resistance in the activity of another being. (*PPF*, 51)

Feuerbach's transformation of passive subjects into active agents is echoed in Farrer's 'causal solution' to ontological segregation. '[T]he world is not known [he argued] but as the playground of human thews and human thoughts; were there no free play, there would be no knowledge.' These are the first and most reliable facts of experience. Subject and object encounter one another as agents of 'free play'. Resistance to my will constitutes my only possible access to the world. (So Farrer designated 'touch' as 'the primitive sense' precisely because 'it worked through contact.')

Moreover, resistance is the force against which my will is actualised. Put simply, explanations result from explorations in a physical environment. 'Our conscious experiences find themselves from the start framed by this system.' This means 'resistance activity' is logically basic: it supplies consciousness with 'shape' or 'form'. Consciousness reflects the environment in which it is enacted. Mind-and-the-world are, in other words, co-constructed. This is the manifesto of a personalist metaphysic. '*ESSE* is *OPERARI*, and an *operatio*, *energia*, has a plurality of elements to it.' Actual 'operations' conduce to 'co-operative effects'. *Energia* enacts the concrete combination of inter-agents. This privileges conscious physical agency over sheer or mere mentality, designating activity as the essential ingredient in any claim to knowledge.

> [A]part from any personal identity with my bodily performances; and apart from my experience of impinging upon, and being impinged upon by, other things or forces, I have no conceivable clue to physical existence, or physical force, or physical interaction. (*RF*, 210)

Thus, in providing access to a physical world, conscious physical action becomes what Farrer called the 'natural unit of thought'. This takes the argument a step further. Resistance activity not only provides consciousness with access to real 'being'; it also provides the clue for recognising it as such.

That revives the connection between knowing agents and objects known. At the heart of consciousness, Farrer located 'the interpretation of our environment by the model of our own interaction with it.' So the most basic diagram of reality I have is extrapolated from my own action. The existents constituting my field of experience are recognisable because we have properties in common. And the most basic property of any existent is what appears to be 'self-activity'. That which is not me but impinges upon me, makes itself known as a corollary of my actions, a physical ingredient in conscious interaction. *To be* an agency of some recognisable sort is to exercise what Farrer called 'disturbance effect'. This emphasises the impact on conscious agency. Feuerbach highlighted the concrete quality of experience, so dubbed it 'reciprocal effect'. Both expressions denote a mutual interplay of action-patterns. Whichever we choose, the net result remains the same. 'I treat the thing as an 'other' overagainst 'me'.' We don't, of course, regard ourselves as 'things' any more than we regard 'things' as 'selves'. Quite so, Farrer agreed, but we do 'erect a pseudo-genus of which 'thing' and 'self' are species.' Put simply, in experiencing 'disturbance effect', I conceive the 'object' as an agency *like* me. *Nota bene*, this rises on analogical extensions, not literal – i.e. realist – denotation. 'Like-me-ness' issues not in anthropomorphic, but in anthropological projects. In other words, person-concepts (active agency) give shape to our experience of, and thought about, other agents. Moreover, the judicious application of that projection is what converts 'disturbance effect' into 'reciprocal effect'. Just how reciprocal it is depends on the degree of similitude. To experience physical force is one thing, to experience the force of personal action is another. Each – and every level in between – makes its own 'experiencable difference.' Likewise, each requires, better still, evokes a response *in kind*.

This brings us back to the theistical point. The believer's project is not, of course, a response to physical effects. It is evoked by 'spiritual' impact: what Farrer called the 'higher functions of personal activity'. Just here, 'higher' means increasingly personal, that is, *inter*personal. Hence, those 'functions' denote the becoming of self-hood: 'higher' acts of consciousness wherein the self is most clearly expressed. This extends the epistemological point. Recasting consciousness in the interactive mode, Farrer drew the dialectical conclusion: 'mentality always was a social, not a solitary, thing.'

Thus, consciousness is transacted. And if transacted, then first invested. Those who help create us supply the mental resources with which to explore our world and ourselves. Our teachers provide the tools with which we shape our part in the

dialectic.

We learnt to talk, because they talked to us; and to like, because they smiled at us. Because we could first talk, we can now think; that is, we can talk silently to the images of the absent, or we can pretend to be our own twin, and talk to ourself. (*CF*, 74)

Grounded in those earliest transactions, the image of the other is 'internalised'. Farrer called thought 'the interiorisation of dialogue'. Echoes of Feuerbach. 'Man thinks – that is, he converses with himself.' In doing so, he cultivates what Feuerbach called 'the inner life of man:' his 'species being'.

> Man is himself at once I and thou; he can put himself in the place of another, for this reason, that to him his species, his essential nature, and not merely his individuality, is an object of thought. (EC, 2)

This internalised other displaces 'individualistic' self-conceptions. Socially, and therefore morally, implicated, the self learns to 'double himself so as to play the part of another within himself'. So conscious action and social conscience are built-into self-construction by the other. It follows that self-hood does not belong primarily to the self; it endures in the other and is bodied forth by them. The self achieves awareness of itself in being appropriated and learning to do likewise. In short, the self learns to play its part in shared perceptions of its own activity.

Consciousness, then, is essentially fragmentary, consolidated in exchanged perspectives. This is a commonplace of post-modern theories of identity. The 'unity' we call 'a self' is a function of that dialectic. 'I am an 'I' for myself [Feuerbach declared] and simultaneously a 'thou' for others.' Learning to put myself in the place of others, I become thou by re-enacting that place. Being thou unto others, the self becomes 'species being'. Amplifying Feuerbach, Marx Wartofsky suggests: 'I know my humanity only in the process of acting humanly with respect to another. I am not an *I* except with respect to a *Thou*.' Thus, consciousness arises under the emotional and psychological pressure exerted by the other. It is not a response to *mere* '*being*', but to the *significance* of personal 'being'. Hence, 'species being' is simultaneously co-optive and reflexive. All teachers know how much they learn from their students. In philosophical parlance, the creative involvement in the consciousness of another is a creative involvement of consciousness in itself.

The moral and existential implications of this should be clear. They make it a religious matter. Firstly, they supply theology with a much-needed predication-principle. Analogically extended, the involvement of one consciousness in the development of another gives shape to our talk about God. Secondly, they return theology to its roots in religious *praxis*. The concrete experience of otherness reminds us that we are what we are by the grace and gift of others. This is the 'truth' of religious consciousness. Involvement in the other is an experience of (self and other) creation that points beyond the inevitable limitations of the participants. It points towards an ideal, which may become a real participant in the dialectic.

The first move honours the practical conditions of knowledge. Hence Feuerbach signals the basic criterion of existence: 'a *real* being, the true *Ens realissimum* – man.' Farrer understood the religious truth of this. Personal action, he insisted, is our first and only clue to God. The God of faith is '*sensible au coeur*'. He is an active agent: the wellspring of grace and providential care. Believers call Him God the Father (souls sensitive to the fertility of images, might prefer a (M)other who loves like no other). Thus 'the basic personal category remains inescapable, as long as God is a real Other to us.' So Farrer planted the 'God-construct' firmly on human ground.

> [T]here is no question of our bypassing analogy; for to think about God is to think of living act, to which our own is the only possible clue; and it is a clue which falls so short that it must be stretched by a bafflingly great extension. There is, then, no thought about God without analogy. (*FS*, 129)

This *via analogia* overcomes the scholastic isolation of finite and infinite. It does so (Wartofsky suggests) by reminding consciousness of its role in metaphysical exploration. '*God* and *Being* are…the images of the universality of human species consciousness and species sensibility'. They are, in other words, analogical modes, reflections of 'species being', or consciousness conceiving itself.

In realist hands, reflections become objectified, defined as objects apart. Consequently, they lack the fertility of images drawn from socially oriented projects. Breaking off all connection with conscious subjects renders the analogy inert, psychologically disenfranchising the believer. Put simply, theistical realism projects its 'object' 'beyond' any actual or possible experience, so offers no motive for action.

Observing the breakdown in relations, Feuerbach pinpointed the believer's dilemma: 'how could the divine love work on me as its object, nay, work in me, if it was essentially different from me?' Without similitude, there is no sympathy; as Farrer has shown, '[u]nderstanding goes by sympathy.' Without it, indifference reigns. Hence Feuerbach sharpened the psychological point. 'If [God] be of a different

nature, how can his existence or non-existence be of any importance to man?' And indifference cuts both ways. 'How can [God] take so profound an interest in an existence in which his own nature has no participation?' His answer was a pragmatic bombshell. 'A God who does not trouble himself about us, who does not hear our prayers, who does not see us and love us, is no God'.

Images of otherness overcome psychological and theological indifference. They supply a concrete analogue, a conception of God as Other, as *Thou*. No Absolute Being nor sheer Creative Agency; this God is fully involved in the psycho-dynamics of consciousness. And involvement offers epistemological purchase on the God of faith.

This brings us to the second move. Anthropological projects reveal the 'truth' of religious consciousness. No abstraction, but an act of self-projection.

Religious *praxis* inscribes the interpersonal relations wherein consciousness co-constructs itself. Essentially pragmatic, its injunctions charge us with the moral and existential claims of others. Endeavouring to meet those claims, consciousness becomes religious consciousness, or 'species being'. Seeing its reflection in the other, that is, consciousness becomes self-conscious. This is because what is reflected is not only myself as I am, such as I am. It is the 'internalised' other, my self transformed by the presence of the other. This self-reflection not only 'proclaims to me what I ought to be, it also tells me to my face, without any flattery, what I am not.' No simple mirror image, then, (as Feuerbach shows) the dialectic embodies a vital difference. Not radical separation; but an ideal, a 'higher' analogue whose presence invokes both my limitations and their overcoming. In self-consciousness, the self participates in the realisation of this ideal, enacting the relation it represents.

That aspiration orients the dialectic 'upwards'. It does so by relating the self to itself via a symbolic co-efficient of the other: an Other who transcends individual limitations. In transcending, this Other represents that which 'I cannot but hold sacred' in my neighbour, so holds me to higher account. Charles Conti agrees: 'we live under the shadow of an "ought" and in the presence of a holy "Thou".' Commissioned by the other, that is, persons 'are limited not only by what they are, but by what they are *called to be*.' And what we are called to be is the reflection of our ideals, 'the *Eros* of living, needy existence.'

These are the anthropological grounds on which religious consciousness stands. It means (Wartofsky argues) the 'original and immediate content of religious consciousness is not a matter of theoretical reflection, [i.e. onto-theology] but of human action: human feeling, human need, human will, human belief.' This issues not in 'false consciousness' (as reductive readings of Feuerbach insist) but in the pragmatic re-appropriation of its projects. So Atheism is not the conclusion.

> [It] was only the necessary therapeutic, transitional stage from the empiricist concept of God as an external object (of the sort to which the vulgar question 'Does God exist?' is relevant)…to the concept of the Godly. (*Feuerbach*, 132)

Atheism marks the reflexive tendency of the project to return to its anthropological grounds. There it finds a more basic category of 'being' in conscious connections. Traditional 'being' categories are thereby subordinated to, and displaced by, the consciousness which charters them. Put simply, the practice of faith is not defined *a priori*, mediated by theological semantics. As a mode of consciousness, it is actualised in one's creative involvement in the becoming of another. This is the search for God *in* action.

Not atheism, then, but the 'revelation of religion to itself, *the awakening of religion to self-consciousness*.' That was how Feuerbach reminded consciousness of its religious conception (in both senses). 'To have no religion is *to think only of oneself*. To have religion is to think *of others*.' That is the practical metaphysics he and Farrer shared. Farrer too, reminded theology of its origins in 'moral congruence' and the 'claimingness' of others. 'Above and before all worlds' theology finds only sterile self-reflections; 'God's will is written across the face of the world.'

Thus, Farrer and Feuerbach are themselves reflections: two sides of the same philosophical coin. Person-concepts supplied Farrer with the *means* to think (ourselves) metaphysically. He conceived the self in relation to a divine Other who is both pattern and primary instance of personal relation. Feuerbach looked to the transactions of consciousness and its idealised reflections to supplement this. Seeking the divine in human nature, he provides a *reason* for thinking (ourselves) metaphysically. This brings anthropology to self-consciousness, so awakens it to the reinvestment in its own self-conceptions.

Model College of Business and Science,
Muscat, Oman.
smith@oreillo87.freeserve.co.uk

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DEMON IN THE SANCTUARY:

THE PARADOX OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE

Wendy C. Hamblet

Abstract

This paper investigates the paradox that human beings are hardwired to loathe strangers, yet violence is primarily an in-group phenomenon, and especially a family affair. It investigates love, the 'ontological glue' of the home, in the work of a number of philosophers, to determine why its bonding ability falls short of the lofty ideal.

Key Words

Love, home, intimate violence, Janus, Plato, Julia Kristeva, Aristotle, Soren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky.

1. Pig people and Janus-faced warriors

'All human beings love and seek the good;' on this point the ancient philosophers concur. If this were accurate, we could expect to find the history of our species to be one long chronicle of pacific, idyllic co-dwelling. But clearly, this is anything but the case. Instead, ours is the most cruel and belligerent of species; ethologists and anthropologists agree: we won a dominant position among the rest largely because we applied our superior intelligence precisely to the task of devising more effective killing methods, which we straightway turned upon each other.

So why are the philosophers so far off the mark of truth? Perched on our ladders perusing idealistic visions, far above the brutal realities of the cave, we use our art to counsel humans, a spark of the divine spirit, to use their reason to mirror the gods' perfection, but we have largely proven useless in inspiring common things toward the heavens. In the *Republic*, Plato acknowledges this uselessness but he bids us not blame the philosophers (489bc):

> You are right in affirming that the finest spirits among the philosophers are of no service to the multitude. But bid him [who wonders at this fact] blame for this uselessness, not the finer spirits, but those who do not know how to make use of them.

Philosophy is still denigrated as useless and annoying; it is still seen to perch on its haughty ladder, considering heavenly possibilities but having nothing of value to contribute to the cold, dark realities of city caves. It is the scientists that study those realities, counting and categorizing the social diseases and making a handsome profit from the diagnosis and treatment of those diseases.

What do the scientists tell us? Psychologists explain modern dis-ease as a function of psychological trauma. Sociologists tell us the problem resides in the quality of life typical of industrialized societies, which fragments communities, pits individual against individual, and degrades human bonds. Anthropologists trace modern psychological and societal sicknesses back to the earliest human communities, and the rankings and orderings, the ritual practices and the counter-cultural rejection sacrifices that enabled early hominids to form bonds within their in-groups. Ethologists and biologists tell that human beings have a natural predisposition to fear and loathe out-groups, a tendency hard-wired into us from the earliest moments of human time.

Disgust for difference and its complementary aspect, the unqualified love for the in-group, are two sides of the same existential coin, one of the oldest and most engrained of instincts, symbolized in the ancient world by the Roman god of the portal, Janus, the deity with two faces: a smiling, benevolent face looking to one side and a scowling, angry face directed to the other. To be Janus-faced is not only to be diligently circumspect, but to be intently absorbed in two tasks, seemingly conflicted but integrally entwined and working together to preserve the sanctity of the in-group: the Janus-faced god is a warrior who welcomes and protects friends and menaces and murders enemies.

Maurice Bloch uses the example of the rites of passage of the Pig People or Orokaiva of Papua, New Guinea to demonstrate how counter-cultural rejection functions to affirm group identity. At initiation time, the youth are stolen away by 'ancestors' in ceremonial dress, enclosed in a dark, confusing alter-world (secluded huts) and made to endure excruciating tortures (that render them unconscious, metaphorically murdering' their former child-selves). Thereafter, they take on aspects of the nether world, learning special dances and songs.

At the conclusion of this terrifying ordeal, the youths are returned to their village newly born adult warriors. In full ceremonial dress, the wild young mob turns upon the in-group aliens, the pigs who have been raised as their siblings, suckled alongside them in their homes. Amidst the genuine wails of their human mothers, the warriors slaughter their pig-siblings, whereupon a festival is unleashed, the entire tribe feasting on the sacrificed pig-children to

celebrate the warriors' triumph, and by extension, the tribe's renewed connection with the ancestors and the divine.

Ultimately the tribe's renewed sense of power is discharged outward in aggressive overflow onto their neighbours; there will be stone-throwing, threats and curses, sometimes attacks and looting, and occasionally even murderous raids. Significantly, the tribe only carries their displays of power to murderous lengths at times when they feel certain of victory and safe from out-group reprisal. Bloch's conclusion rings true: people tend to harm their animal and human neighbours only when they know they can do so with impunity.

We are a violent species, then and our histories testify to our murderousness. Charles E. Scott succinctly captures the problem: 'We happen as memorial events.'[1] Histories grow bodies in specific ways; they invade our fleshy bodies, programming our instincts for particular responses to threat; they occupy our cultural and political bodies, shaping our institutions and the logic of our policies, laws, and political processes; they colonize our familial bodies, configuring our social and moral bearing and the way we raise our children, the stories we tell them about who we are and what we are meant to accomplish with our lives.

These bodies, at every level of our identity, are moulded by our pasts, because bodies are not simply things in the world whose 'sides' bump up against 'sides,' as Levinas figures in *Totality and Infinity*.[2] Bodies are relations *with* and *within* a world; they *be* in one another, penetrating each other's depths. Interiorly woven, they mutually elicit ways of being-in-the-world that reconfirm historical triumphs and exonerate historical losses. Modern soul-sickness is the predictable result of the rebounding of our violent histories into our present consciousness; Levinas states, 'the consciousness of a world is already consciousness *through* that world.'[3]

2. Janus the deceiver and the homeliness of violence

I have suggested that a pathological counter-cultural logic serves in-group identity, solidarity and power. But counter-cultural mechanisms cannot explain the far more baffling mystery, the most impenetrable conundrum about violence: the paradox that violence, well documented in every society, is almost exclusively an in-group phenomenon. The sad fact is that Janus is a deceiver: we have comparatively little to fear from strangers. All people are in greatest danger of every kind of harm, from mild attack to lethal, right in their own homes and neighbourhoods, at the hands of their in-group and especially their intimates.

The statistics are indisputable in every society: long-term studies show that a woman is five times more likely to be assaulted in her home than on a street.[4] An estimated 653,000 women and 546,000 men (7% and 6% respectively) encountered some form of intimate violence, according to a five year study by *Statistics Canada*.[5] We might expect that traditional marriages, tending to be patriarchal, are more prone to intimate abuse, and more modern marriages, grounded in an ethos of gender-partnership, would overcome this problem. However, the *Stats Canada* study found that rates of intimate violence were highest among young lovers, between the ages of 15 and 24, people in relationships of three years or less, and people in the less traditional union of common-law marriage.[6]

The nature and consequences of intimate violence are more severe for women than for men. Female victims are more than twice as likely to be stalked by a previous intimate, twice as likely to be injured as their male counterparts, three times more likely to receive life-threatening assaults, and twice as likely to be the targets of more than 10 violent episodes.[7] When children are beaten and killed, the perpetrators are also generally their intimate loved ones, and very often their mothers. Violence in families, like violence in the global community, tends to rebound *within* groups and *down* the power chain, from most powerful to weakest, as suffering seeks an outlet for release where abjection can be certain of escaping reprisal.

This fact assaults our intuition on a fundamental level, because home is experienced as the very place to which we retreat from the rigors of an often harsh, competitive, and threatening world. The pheno- menon of home, in its *lived* sense for human subjects, is one of refuge and security, a place where we trust in being hospitably received and protected from harm. We imagine violence to belong to the world 'out there,' lurking like the stranger of our nightmares in the shadows outside our door, awaiting a lapse in our vigilance to lay waste the home's fundamental accord. But a more accurate under-standing places violence squarely in the home, seated at the family table, warming itself at the family hearth, plotting against external enemies but visiting its frustrations upon intimates.

One explanation for this paradox is that home is the primary meeting site of human differences, but a meeting site where sameness, not difference, serves as the tacit rubric of convergence. Individuals are radically singular, even where their identity work is executed under a common valence. Thus differences

are always rubbing up against differences in every site of human encounter. But in our homes, difference comes into view as a violation of the sacred order of the dwelling. Violence shows up in the home so frequently, because difference radically threatens the sanctity of the home, triggering subterranean pathologies and obsessions with security and order. Ironically, our intuitive sense of the stranger as the extreme danger readies us for the worldly encounter with difference, counselling us to use great care in choosing our mode of encounter. But in sites of shared identity, such as the family home, where sameness trumps difference as the rubric of our being-in-the-world, we are unprepared for difference and often unskilled in choosing our responses.

Home is an institution, the most sacred of all institutions, and as every institution, it seeks integrity, coherence, and continuance across time. Like other institutions, the family's integrity, coherence, and continuance are fostered by shared beliefs (which can erode), shared interests (which can collapse), and shared goals (which can change). Every institution seeks stability and continuance through the imposition of order on the parts. Order is sought through rankings, which by definition privilege some members and disadvantage others. Like other institutions, the family sorts and ranks its members on a scale of values, but in the family domain those values are constantly shifting.

Sometimes the family's ordering mechanisms favour those with greater vulnerability, affording protections to the weaker members ('Let your baby sister watch what she wants on TV'), but sometimes, partiality rests on power and seniority (older children get to stay up later and parents decide where holidays will occur). Because members command differing degrees and aspects of power and have differing degrees and aspects of vulnerability, the family structure has a tendency to pit members against each other in what Conflict Theory names 'zero sum games,' that is, contests that produce winners and losers. So the very strategies—the ordering mechanisms—that are adopted to bring stability to the family have costs for the individual members, restricting them, fragmenting them, and leaving them resentful.

Our intuitive sense of home will object, however, that the family is different from other institutions. While it shares institutional structure, the glue that holds the intimate group intact is of a different kind. The glue that holds the homespace together is not desire for profit, ideological vision, or political agenda, but love, the defender of homes, the healer of rifts, the welder of societies. Love causes the home to be greater than the sum of its parts, because its binding force is a shared ethos that puts aside self-interest for the benefit of the beloved. The home, our intuition argues, has greater durability than other institutions, because its amatory glue is more binding and can endure the most challenging political, economic, and social upheavals and the onerous weight of its structural form.

If we are to resolve the paradox of intimate violence, we must be ready to test that glue. We must locate the problematic aspects of love that undermine the care, selflessness, and empathy we expect it to nurture at the homespace and learn what causes love to fall short of our towering expectations. To understand love's dangers and pitfalls, let us turn to those useless philosophers and see what they can tell us about the dangers of love.

3. Dark horses, split creatures and rape in the garden

Plato warns us that love is a passion that by its very nature, runs to excess and overflows the banks of reason. In the *Phaedrus*, Plato shows love's inexorable draw largely befalls the ignoble horse of appetite. Enormous nobility of heart and reason are required to keep that lusty steed under control. Plato tells:

> When the driver [reason] beholds the person of the beloved, and causes a sensation of warmth to suffuse the whole soul, he begins to experience a tickling or prickling of desire, and the obedient steed [the noble white horse] constrained now as always by modesty, refrains from leaping upon the beloved. But his fellow, heeding no more the driver's goad or whip, leaps and dashes on, sorely troubling his companion and his driver. . . . The driver [recalling the form of beauty enthroned by the side of temperance] in awe and reverence . . . falls upon his back, and therewith is compelled to pull the reins so violently that he brings both steeds down on their haunches, the good one willing and unresistant, but the wanton sore against his will. [Again and again, the struggle continues until the driver] jerks back the bit in the mouth of the wanton horse with an even stronger pull, bespatters his railing tongue and his jaws with blood and forcing him down on legs and haunches, delivers him over to anguish. (Phaedrus 254)

The *Phaedrus* figures love, in all its many forms, a madness, albeit a madness heaven sent, but the horse tale warns us that the driver's control is tenuous at best. As the dark horse seeks his own gratification, the beloved's specificity virtually disappears once her beauty has stimulated the fleshy madness.

In the *Symposium*, Plato reveals other problematic aspects of love, by recounting two myths of origin, always the most telling source of truth for the

Greeks. First, comic poet Aristophanes tells a tragic tale of love's beginning. His speech, delayed by a fit of hiccups, emphasizes the contingent nature of love, caught up in hiccups of fleshy existence. He frames love as a consolation for a cruel punishment Zeus assigned human beings, long ago in human time. At this early time, humans were round little cheeky creatures, descended from the sun and moon. In their arrogance, they rolled up Mount Olympus and set upon the gods. So Zeus split the sorry little creatures in two, physically and psychologically collapsing their possibilities for happiness. Ultimately, taking pity on their desperate 'questing and clasping' after their lost unique other half, Zeus shifted around their fleshy bits so that they could come together in love, and find temporary respite from the tortured longing that composed their daily lot.

Aristophanes does not have the final word on love, but Socrates surprises his friends by claiming to know the truth about love, which he relates in the form of a second origin myth, told him by the priestess Diotima. *Eros* was conceived on the day of Aphrodite's birth, thus his destiny—to yearn after the beautiful. But the conception was an act of deception, as the crafty vagrant goddess *Penia* (Need or Poverty) took advantage of the resourceful god *Poros* (Plenty, Abundance or Cunning) passed out in drunken slumber in the garden of the heavens. After his father, then, the love child is a mighty hunter, gallant, impetuous and artful, but apparently not too wise for all his craftiness, and after his mother, he is homeless, drifting and rootless, and lurking in doorways, he often gets the better of the unwary.

Thus, love, explains Socrates, though born of divine parents, is no god, and does not belong to the realm of the perfect, because perfect things are happy, complete, and self-sufficient. Love is a daemon, a half-god and bastard waif, that comes to life through deception and folly and is destined to longing and wandering after beauty and self-fulfilment. Love's purely futuristic disposition decided, Diotima then constructs an elaborate ladder, categorizing love's offspring, ascending from the particular body to the universal form of Beauty—the everlasting, eternal wholeness in which all beautiful things participate. As the ladder of love lifts mortals toward beauty, at ever more rarefied heights, lovers desire and produce offspring, with which they are never satisfied.

The two myths sketch love's tragic truths but then the sultry veil of *mythos* is abruptly pierced by the stark revealing light of *aletheia*, with the raucous arrival of the love-torn and heartsick Alcibiades, staggering drunk and agonized by his love for Socrates. Alcibiades *shows* us what the myths only intimated: love is excruciating! Beautiful (*kalos*) as he is, adorned in ribbons and crowned in ivy and violets like some forest nymph, Alcibiades is nonetheless ugly and shameful (*aiskuros*). Torn and tormented by the misery of unreciprocated longing, he is clearly headed for disaster. He speaks repeatedly of shame (*aiskuron*), and we, the audience, know where his agonized yearning will lead: disgrace, deception, treachery, and finally murder are the offspring of Alcibiades' love.

Wild horses, divine madness, split and tortured creatures, festival miscarriages of reason, drunken folly and crafty deceit—surely no rational being in his right mind would soberly choose this fate. Plato warns that love is a misfire of reason, a hunger that drives the most resourceful to disadvantage, despair, folly and infamy.

4. The vulgar, the honour-seeker and the philosopher

Aristotle continues the meditation, refusing the daemon not only divine status, but unqualifiedly beautiful offspring. All human beings love and seek the good, he agrees with Plato. But what we love, the object of our desire, is often perverse and cruel. For Aristotle, as with Alcibiades, if we don't get our loves right, then our lives are degraded and shameful.

Aristotle captures the problem in his study of the members of the polis (*NE* I.4). There he sorts the classes of the city according to their loves. The most vulgar and ignorant, he explains, 'identify the good with pleasure, which is the reason why they love the life of enjoyment' (*Metaph.* 1095b15-17). The pleasure-seekers, which compose the mass of humanity, are for Aristotle comparable to beasts. Many, even in high places, he asserts, fall into this bestial category, 'shar[ing] the tastes of Sardanapallus' (1095b23), the last king of Assyria (7th century BCE), legendary as a profligate, who spent his life in wanton self-indulgence and met his shameful end in an orgy of destruction.[8]

The mass of the populace are lecherous pleasure-seekers. Aristotle goes on to further divide the human kinds: 'People with superior refinement and of active disposition identify happiness with honour,' desiring to be held in esteem, at least by 'men of practical wisdom' (1095b24-30). The honour-seekers follow their love-object into the political life. While politics is a prestigious endeavour that can bring great acclaim among one's peers, honour turns out to be a faulty love-object, because it leads the lover to place his happiness outside his own

control and into the hands of his fickle countrymen.

Honour is a love-object that renders the lover needy and indigent, so Aristotle counsels toward a higher love, one that grants self-sufficiency: the lover of wisdom enjoys the highest of callings, the contemplative life (1177a20). Aristotle reasons: since happiness is 'activity in accordance with excellence,' and contemplation is the activity of the best and noblest part of us (our intellect) seeking the most excellent of objects (wisdom), then the philosophical art is the most excellent of activities and the best use of a human life, and wisdom the best love to be had.

For Aristotle, it is not love *per se*, but right love that leads us to mirror the happiness of the gods. Love begins to look like the 'neutral goods' Plato illuminates in the *Euthydemus*. Using wealth, health, and good looks as his examples, Socrates explains:

> the truth is that in all those things which we said at first were good, the question is not how they are in themselves naturally good, but this is the point it seems. If ignorance leads them, they are greater evils than their opposites, inasmuch as they are more able to serve the leader which is evil; but if intelligence leads, and wisdom, they are greater goods, while in themselves neither kind is worth anything at all. . . ['neutral goods' are] [n]either good or bad, except [for] these two [wisdom and ignorance] and of these wisdom is good and ignorance is bad. (*Euth*. 281d)

For Aristotle, we are destined to the yearning that drives us to shameful acts only where love is vulgar and ignorance leads our choices. If we can but get our loves in line with excellence and wisdom, we can make our way to the good life of human flourishing.

But why is it that some people choose inappropriate loves, thus acting contrary to their own best chances for happiness? Aristotle is seriously concerned about this problem, locating people's '*injustice* toward one's self' in the tendency to act 'in contradiction of impulses really their own' (*NE* V.97). The soul's impulse is toward happiness, so self-love, if it is tuned aright, should lead one to love those things that cause the soul to flourish. In a telling insight (for this study), Aristotle concludes: a 'defect' in character must explain the contradiction of a love that intends good but actually commits harm.

5. Prophets and cowards

Aristotle avoids the excesses of Plato's dark horse by morally neutralizing love, recommending we choose our loves carefully, forsaking divine excesses for the self-sufficient love that leaves us tranquil, cut loose from the fickle opinions of our fellows and released from our maddening passions. But for many readers, Aristotle's view of love is *intuitively* out of whack. As much as we favour tranquility rather than chaos in our lives, tranquility is the last thing we crave in our love-lives, which we hope and expect to exceed the mundane. The love that is most generally coveted is the love that drives us to madness and interrupts our routine reality in the 'shallow end' of human existence.

Kahlil Gibran, the famous American-Lebanese philosopher-poet who won the hearts of the 1960s hippie culture, captures succinctly the distinction between love's perilous yearning and the passionless everydayness of ordinary life. In his book *The Prophet*, which remains one of the most extensively published works of the past century, the prophet Almustafa delays his departure from the people of Orphalese by answering their questions and counselling on a number of philosophical topics. On the subject of love, he advises:

> When love beckons to you follow him,
> Though his ways are hard and steep.
> And when his wings enfold you yield to him,
> Though the sword hidden among his pinions may wound you.
> And when he speaks to you believe in him,
> Though his voice may shatter your dreams as the north wind lays waste the garden.

The prophet departs from the traditional philosophical warnings, counselling not against ruin; rather, he counsels embracing it, abandoning oneself to the devastation of a love that lays the lover waste and bare. Love, agonizing and ruinous as it is, is no less natural and elemental than the north wind, no less ambiguous than the spiky-tipped, downy wings of a bird, and no less desolate and precipitous than rocky crags. The prophet reserves his warning only against the cowardly prudence that would rob us of love's wounding reality. Almustafa concludes:

> But if in your fear you would seek only love's peace and love's pleasure,
> Then it is better for you that you cover your nakedness and pass out of love's threshing-floor
> Into the seasonless world where you shall laugh, but not all of your laughter, and weep, but not all of your tears.

The longing for escape from the 'seasonless world' of budgets, grocery runs, and carpools explains why people keep coming back for more, even when love spirals out of control, ravages their peaceful existence, wrecks their best-laid plans, and leaves them pierced and bleeding. Gibran echoes Shakespeare's call to self-abandonment in love, in his Sonnet 116:

> Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove:
> O no! it is an ever-fixed mark

> That looks on tempests and is never shaken . . . .
> Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
> But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

6. Tragic heroes, cynics and sado-masochists

The poets tell us love is worth the agony, because pain makes us feel alive. Julia Kristeva, psychoanalyst and philosopher, no doubt in her practice constantly witnesses the self-abandon with which people betray their best interests and throw themselves over the maddening abyss for the tortuous thrill of love. In her *Tales of Love*, she echoes Plato's mythical accounts of unbridled passion. She tells:

> Love is a time and a space within which 'I' assumes the right to be extraordinary . . . equal to the infinite space of superhuman psychisms. Paranoid? [this question remains unanswered, but asked, it has made its point] I am, in love, at the zenith of subjectivity.[9]

For Kristeva, the daemon performs his classic mediating role; he lifts the lovers up, opens them to their divine aspect, enlarging subjectivity beyond its normalized bounds. Love, bound up with promises, hopes, and dreams, draws the future into the present, catapulting its victims into a 'future perfect' where they 'will have been' happy someday.

The longing, which is felt in the presence of the beloved, represents for the psychoanalyst, not only an enlargement of subjectivity, but an escape from the bounds of the limited self, a discharge of the suffocating pressure of duties and responsibilities and projects, where life is ever weighted by rules, expectations and conventions. Love acts as catharsis to the discipline of routine, passion to the reasons of customs and habits and schedules—festival to the mundane.

However, the release that breaks the lovers free from the everyday also ruptures the bounds of propriety and decency that hold the civilized world intact. In ancient Athens, festival released wives and children from the enclosure of the household; it released slaves to the sovereignty of command; it released cult enthusiasts to their orgiastic rites—ritual madness, trances, strange prophecies, speaking in tongues, bloody mutilations and dismemberments of animal (and occasionally human) victims, and devouring the torn bodies.

Ancient festival was so dangerous, so wild, that it appeared to threaten to devastate the artefacts of civilization, upset the customs, laws and polite social codes and scatter individual existences. But in reality, the festival expelled the frustrations of everyday life and then gathered the group together again in solidarity, ultimately confirming the everyday. The very rites of dance and song, drink and drug, and rituals of murder and plunder, which lifted the people into a shared experience of ecstasy and released their pent-up energies and frustrations, also confirmed the community's traditions and institutions, because the final episode of the festival always returned people to their routine places and duties, refreshed, renewed, and reunified. Slaves went back to the fields, wives to the kitchen, children to the nursery, and men to their duties in the *ekklesia*, the Areopagus, and the *agora*, everyone once again satisfied with the conventional order of their world.

The modern fragmented world enjoys no more shared communal festivals. Isolated individuals are left to find, in any way they can, ecstatic release from the shallow concerns of their daily lives, growing shallower by the day under the influence of a globalizing industrial capitalism. Love's passion is one of the few remaining escapes from the vapid barrenness of consumer culture. Thus we are more vulnerable than ever to the seductive siren song of an overwhelming experience of love, as we crave release from our mindless addictions to the commodities and technologies that increasingly control our lives, our identities, and our destinies. Thrill-starved fools, we crave a blazing encounter with the daemonic indigent wanderer. But will the love we crave leave us ruined and homeless at the close of the festival, or will it return us to the everyday rejuvenated and newly committed, and confirm and preserve the institutions that give order to our fragile existences?

The psychoanalyst's prognosis for love is not favourable. In her meditation upon *Romeo and Juliet*, Kristeva allows but three fates for lovers. None of the three is anything akin to what we intuitively know as love and none gives the lovers their happy ending at the family table. Kristeva charges Shakespeare with choosing the easy way out of love's dilemma, preserving the lovers' passion by killing off the lovers before their love wanes or sickens.

Kristeva grants us a glimpse of the lovers' destiny, had they lived and fulfilled their deepest wish—to marry and spend their lives together. Following the lovers down the path not taken, she reveals to us a split in the trail, where alternative fates await our lovers at the end of passion's road. Both are deeply tragic destinations.

> Either time's alchemy transforms the criminal secret passion of the outlaw lovers into the banal, humdrum, lacklustre lassitude of a tired and cynical collusion: that is normal marriage. Or else the married couple continues to be a passionate couple, but covering the entire gamut of sadomasochism . . . . Each acting out

> both sexes in turn they thus create a foursome that feeds on itself through repeated aggression and merging, castration and gratification, resurrection and death. And who, at passionate moments, have recourse to stimulants—temporary partners, sincerely loved but victims still, whom the monstrous couple grinds in its passion of faithfulness to itself, supporting itself by means of its unfaithfulness to others.[10]

A 'tired and cynical collusion'—many will recognize the model. Passion is gone but life drones on—mortgages, car payments, PTA meetings, then alcohol-sopped middle age, greying or balding hair, sexual dysfunction, perhaps extramarital affairs and red sports cars to quell the regret, religion to soothe the shame, elaborate funeral plans and smiling photos in the family album to repair the family story. No plays will be written, no bards will sing to lament this commonplace tragedy.

Sado-masochistic frenzy? In this model, passion is kept alive, but beware the Dionysian frenzy as lusty madness swells toward release. Love's addictive quality is constantly refuelled in aching episodes of silence, coldness and sexual withholding, ruptured by teary explosions, hysterical accusations, and finally passionate renewal—'make-up sex.' Withheld love is crushing, but *eros interruptus* is far more addictive than requited love, so when the torture stops, the payoff comes in emotional hard currency, high doses of endorphins. Crisis junkies, this couple breaks the rules of festival discharge; they bring love's orgiastic excess into the space where it is forbidden— the mundane everyday.

There is danger in this festival, as love's swelling pressures, like molten subterranean fluids, desperately seek release. The mounting emotional energies and psychological torment of withholding can discharge in any number of forbidden ways, including physical and sexual violence. This kind of love-addiction is the hardest to break, because as the cycles of cruelty spiral, so too does the emotional payoff of reconciliation. Few outside the relationship can understand why the two sickened lovers keep coming back for more. And they do tend to come back again and again, because the addiction is so compelling, so powerful a temptation; few besides alcoholics and other addicts will understand the inexorable will to self-destruction that an unwise love can bring.

A loveless cynicism or a twisted sadomasochistic pathology—is Kristeva's dual-tracked tragedy exhaustive of love's possibilities?[11] Must Eros be always entangled with Thanatos, as Kristeva believes, after Freud? Is there no love that doesn't sicken, collapse our well-being, murder our dreams, and tear at the fabric of family life and societal harmony? Kristeva, the analyst whose vocation exposes her to a constant stream of couples in crisis, holds out no such hope for lovers. In the fleshy world of her vocation, Aristophanes and Alcibiades have it right—love is a daemonic torment that devours the couple's well-being, pits them against each other, and lands them in shame and horror.

7. The barefoot baker

Kristeva warns against the love addiction that Gibran celebrates. Yet it is precisely this reckless love that Hollywood is fond of presenting to its public. The 1987 romantic comedy, *Moonstruck*, is a typical romantic comedy that celebrates the painful longing of love, while leaving the starry-eyed audience with the promise that, if we just hang in and endure that torture, our love will triumph in the end. Ironically, what distinguishes this film from other less clever love tales is that it brings about the desired happy ending, through the argument that love is not about happy endings.

Alcibiades' role is in this movie is played by the love-torn and wretched young Italian baker, Ronny (played by Nicholas Cage), who spends much of the film pleading with his brother's fiancée, Loretta (played by Cher), to abandon her plan for a safe and predictable future with Johnny, a wealthy and respected man, and follow him, the crippled baker-nymph, along the path of barefoot, penniless, aching passion. Loretta resists Ronny's advances, with the good-sense Italian suspicion that bad choices will bring her to a bad end. But Ronny, recalling us to Alcibiades, cries out in tortured longing:

> Loretta, I love you. Not like they told you love is. Love don't make things nice; it ruins everything. It breaks your heart. It makes things a mess. We aren't here to make things perfect. The snowflakes are perfect. Not us! Not us!

Then he raises himself up like a Greek god, drunk in the garden, and wails the ugly truth about love that Plato's myth only intimated: *We are here to ruin ourselves, to break our hearts, to love the wrong people, and die!*

This romantic comedy ends with everyone gathered around the family table, kibitzing and hugging and shouting and eating, and ultimately working things out to everyone's satisfaction. Even Ronny's brother, the loser in this match, sits to table happy enough. The ending fulfils the promise of festival, while confirming an admirable quality of homely life—families can endure a heck of a lot of deceit and betrayal and agony without abandoning one another. But a deeper truth haunts this happy ending: it is Ronny's agonized dialogue that we

remember long after the credits have rolled. While we all desire peace and stability in our lives and seek happy, secure futures through well-laid rational plans, it is Ronny's divine madness that we most desperately crave. 'Moonstruck' love confirms the *intuited* ideal that love's suffering leads to redemption, if we can but stick it out. But the figures on intimate violence in every society reveal that happy endings are largely fictional.

8. Danish dreamer and Russian sceptic

Before we close the book on love, let us turn to a final philosopher. Soren Kierkegaard, in one of the few treatises that bear his name, meditates on love's various aspects and sorts out its Janus faces. He challenges my dark conclusions here by asserting in the opening pages of *Works of Love*, 'To cheat oneself out of love is the most terrible deception; it is an eternal loss for which there is no reparation'.[12] He identifies 'deceivers' who will feign to heal their love-struck neighbours of their sickness, but just as we know love by its fruits (we hear Diotima's voice resonating here), we will recognize these deceivers by the fruits of their lying discourse: 'by the bitterness of [their] mockery, by the sharpness of [their] 'good sense,' by the poisonous spirit of [their] distrust, by the penetrating chill of [their] callousness.'[13] I guess I've been told, I tell myself, as I see *my* reflection in the mirror Kierkegaard holds up for the sceptical deceiver.

Maybe I must give love a final hearing before declaring it a wayward and dangerous emotion. Maybe I cannot see what love most truly is because as Kierkegaard states: 'Love itself is in a certain sense in hiding' and '[t]he hidden life of love is in the most inward depths, unfathomable' (p. 26-27). As the quiet lake invites one to peer into its murky depths but veils its secrets in a mirror of darkness, so does love's 'mysterious ground' prevent us from seeing its source (p.27).

We don't know what love is directly, according to Kierkegaard, but it comes in varied grades, which reveal themselves by their fruits. On Kierkegaard's terms, the love against which the philosophers rail and which the poets enthusiastically celebrate is of an inferior type; we can know it by its wounded fruits, which smoulder in 'the quiet fire of secret pain.' Erotic love is a deceptive breed of attachment, because it masquerades as love of other, but it is actually a form of self-love. Intoxicated (like *Poros* in the garden of the gods), it targets a particular favourite (as did *Penia*)—the friend or the beloved. Love *in distinction* is a degraded love that forsakes its duty to the law of love which Christians know grounds communal life: 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Matthew 22:39).

Neighbour-love is a superior love, though sober and uncelebrated; it 'holds itself down to earth' and 'like a pick, [it] wrenches open the lock of self-love and thereby wrests it away from a man' (p. 33-34). But isn't this neighbor also mine, a mere reflection of me? Kierkegaard dissents: '*Neighbour* is precisely what philosophers would call the *other*,' he tells; '*neighbour* means *all* [human beings] (p. 37).

Thus, the Danish Christian philosopher offers an insight into the dangerous love that plagues the homespace. The insight is that the love the poets eulogize, the same love that maims and kills in the homespace, is an imposter-love, a pretender that deceives by appearing as other-related, but actually turns back on the self, attaching only to *my* favourites, to *me*. Erotic love so quickly fades for the same reason that it grows ugly and possessive, demands unreasonable tokens of allegiance, and finally turns vicious: because the lover's goal in ascending to its lofty heights has nothing to do with the good of the beloved; Eros coils back on itself, as its increasingly rarefied works more subtly conceal their inner truth: love's offspring reflect the creator; the lover and not the beloved is the father of the beautiful.

Just as Kierkegaard offers us insight into the destructive love that plagues the homespace, he also offers us an antidote to that dis-ease. For Kierkegaard, loving the neighbour provides the model for love, because the neighbour is the radical other—the one we hardly know at all. 'Love the neighbour as the self' does not simply mean love the stranger as the favourite. It means love the favourite as a stranger. When a beloved is received as a radical other, nothing can be taken for granted.

For Kierkegaard, love of the stranger trumps love of self and love of favourites, as the exemplary love that informs how all relations should unfold. But this exemplary love is itself modelled on a deeper archetypal ground. The hidden source of love at last emerges from the secret depths: it is God's love for the defective human creature. Leo Stan, in his brilliant study of Kierkegaard, explains this perfect love of the imperfect: 'The miracle of Christianity lies in the unmistakable profile of every face, loved before anyone else by an absolute Other (who would have many reasons to fall out of love).'[14] If God can love us, as faulty as we are, then surely we can love our neighbours as ourselves and our beloveds beyond our self-reflection.

Perfect love loves not on the basis of the beloved's worthiness but in spite of her unworthiness. Made in God's image, humans are but a shadowy reflection of the original, so we often get our loves wrong, entangled in our self-interests, contradicting our own

happiness in the process. But for Kierkegaard, we are granted a powerful exemplar in the god who created us. Ugly, round, cheeky, little creatures, we may roll awkwardly all over the place, getting into all sorts of mischief, but unlike Zeus, Kierkegaard's exemplar does not strike us down and condemn us to a life of suffering; he shows us the way by unconditionally loving our ugly little misshapen forms. If we can but perfectly love the imperfect, cast off our intuited ideals about faultless partners and seamlessly ordered homespaces, we may be better able to secure the good that the ancients declare our first love and the source of our happiness.

But does the model hold up against the sceptic's pessimistic scrutiny? Are we imperfect creatures really capable of this Godlike love or is the Dane a starry-eyed, love-sick dreamer? With Fyodor Dostoevsky, I wonder about our human ability to accomplish this Godlike task: 'One can love one's neighbours in the abstract, or even at a distance,' asserts Dostoevsky, 'but at close quarters it's almost impossible.'[15]

Dept of University Studies,
North Carolina A&T State University,
Greensboro, NC
wchamblet@yahoo.com

Notes:

1. Charles E. Scott, *The Time of* Memory (Albany: SUNY Press, 1999), p. 7.
2. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, Alfonso Lingis, tr. (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univrsity Press, 1969), pp. 131-32.
3. Ibid., p. 153.
4. S. Dingfelder, "Violence in the Home Takes Many Forms" in American Psychological Association's *Monitor on Psychology* Vol. 37, No. 9.
5. Canadian Women's Foundation report at www.cdnwomen.org/EN/section05/3 5 1 1-violence facts.html (retrieved August 16, 2011).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. We know of Sardanapallus mostly from the Greek writer Ctesias of Cnidus, in his *Persica*, a work now lost, but its contents known from later compilations and from the work of Diodorus (II.27).
9. Julia Kristeva, *Tales of Love*, Leon S. Roudiez, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 5.
10. Ibid., p. 217.
11. The figures on intimate violence suggest that a good portion of those marriages left standing suffer the sadomasochistic pathology, rather than the cynical collusion that Kristeva describes. Statistics Canada Divorce Rates study at (retrieved August 16, 2011) revealed that in Canada first marriages have a 50% chance of ending in divorce, risk increasing with each successive marriage (72% for second and 85% for third marriages). One short year after separation, 50% of the children of these broken families never see their fathers again. Moreover, couples cannot save their love or avoid the violence that infects it by avoiding the institution of marriage; the Statistics Canada study revealed that young lovers (15 to 24) in young relationships (3 years or less) are the most susceptible to intimate violence, people in common-law unions have very high vulnerability for violence, and the violence tends to follow the victims even after separation and divorce. American divorce rates are only slightly better; Jennifer Baker of the Forest Institute of Professional Psychology in Springfield, Missouri reports at (retrieved August 16, 2011).
12. Soren Kierkegaard, *Works of Love* (New York: Harper Perennial, 2009), p. 23.
13. Ibid., p. 25
14. Leo Stan, *Either Nothingness or Love: On Alterity in Soren Kierkegaard's Writings* (Saarbrucken: VDM Verlag, 2009), p. 11.
15. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (New York: Barnes and Nobles, 1995), p. 219.

BOOK REVIEWS

Wendy C. Hamblet
Punishment and Shame: A Philosophical Study
Lexington Books, Maryland, 2011.

Emotions run high when crime and punishment are on the agenda. Question the point or purpose of prison and accusations of wanting to abandon punishment entirely soon follow. What alternative is there? Why not just free all the child-murderers and rapists? Where point-scoring politics and the tabloid mentality rule, philosophers may justly fear to tread.

Wendy Hamblet's *Punishment and Shame* is braver, and better, than that. It returns punishment to the heart of moral discussion and, in doing so, offers a timely reminder. Whatever our principles, the *practice* of justice expresses no absolute values, no 'timeless, self-evident truths'.[1] Legal and penal institutions are products of particular societies; they serve the political and economic ends of those societies. Hamblet aims to shine the light of social and political history upon the 'origins of modern ideas about justice, crime, and punishment.' Do so, she suggests, and we will be forced to re-examine the relation between criminality and poverty. We will be forced to recognise that institutions of punishment serve power and wealth first.

This analysis of the factors shaping modern attitudes to punishment distinguishes Hamblet from Foucault. He identified the spread of enlightenment ideals as crucial to the shift in 'penal temper' from medieval to modern. The rise of humanism saw public torture abandoned and punishment hidden 'behind prison walls, in ship galleys, and in the fields of far off colonies.'[2] Hamblet, however, finds a more obvious reason for change. A 'stark economic pragmatism underlies the modern penal revolution.' And it started a hundred years earlier than Foucault realised. Not nineteenth century humanism, but eighteenth century economics changed our moral sensibilities. The 'new sense of shame' attached to punishment and to the agents of punishment had more to do with wasting valuable resources. Offenders were saved from the gibbet by the realisation that better use could be made of them. They were a cheap and inexhaustible source labour much needed on plantations in the New World. That, Hamblet argues, is what caused the use of torture as punishment to decline.

Sharpening the point, she recalls Aquinas' definition of punishment as an evil perpetrated by legitimate authority. The nature and acquisition of legitimacy raise disturbing questions here. That, in turn, challenges us to rethink more than our approach to punishing those who stray. It challenges us to rethink the ways we judge the perpetrators of legitimate evil and, moreover, the society on whose behalf they act.

Hamblet traces modern penology to its socio-political foundations in ancient Greece. Several thousand years may have passed but little, it seems, has changed. Institutions of punishment and, more importantly, attitudes towards them run on the same 'economy of vengeance'[3] by which the aristocratic Achaeans lived. Drawing on Homeric myth and classical tragedy, she deftly paints a picture of Greek princes, simultaneously hot-headed and thin-skinned. Sensitive to the least slight or insult, humiliation before their peers was the most serious offence. Restitution meant revenge. Anything less would be complete social downgrade. For rash actors whose value-system was encoded in a cult of hero-worship, death was preferable. Not, of course, as preferable as the death of the offender and, quite possibly, all their kith and kin. Legends often tell of blood feuds engulfing whole clans and lasting for generations.

Oddly, the desire for revenge and its tendency to excess was, Hamblet argues, grounded in a cosmology of balance. Balance was the essential structure of all existence, defining the natural world, human society, and the individual. Justice meant ensuring the frequently fractious personal, social, and political forces in which society coheres remained in equipoise. Then, as now, criminal acts were those which disturbed that. So much is clear from current arguments for retributive justice and capital punishment. These, too, define justice as a matter of 'setting things right', 'restoring the moral balance'. Their mistake, however, is to reject the idea that restitution is owed to the victim; it is (as David Oderberg puts it) 'to society and to the moral law itself' that compensation is due.[4] But this only obscures the complex dialectic Hamblet reveals and, consequently, the ambiguities in our modern 'economies of punishment'.

The wellspring of tragedy lies in the original offence. The real risk to society, however, is not the offender but the victim. The desperate need to throw off the shame of being *made* a victim will, in the end, destabilise society as it pulls everyone else into a maelstrom of bloody vengeance. Here is the (legitimate) evil inherent in the justice system. And the mitigation of that evil, Hamblet suggests, is why ancient Greek justice focused almost entirely on the

victim. The offender, the reasons and cause of his actions, were not particularly relevant.

Trial by jury was vital to controlling the economy of vengeance. It embodied an important change in the 'penal temper' of the Greeks. *Lex Talionis* was seen to be inadequate. The dignity and nobility of justice could afford – even, to some extent, consisted in – the exercise of leniency. This is not to suggest that punishments were never handed out. Rather, it reminds us that the Greeks had a keen eye for human psychology. Enabling the victim to take his case before a jury of his peers was vital in restraining bloodthirsty impulses. Simply having the opportunity to say one's piece, as it were, could do much to restore dented honour. Publicly refuting disgrace and, crucially, public recognition of that, was at least as important as any actual punishment.

This is true even today. 'Victim Personal Statements' (called 'Victim Impact Statements' in the USA and Australia) are read to the courts following a guilty verdict or plea. They give victims an opportunity to explain publicly how they feel, how the crime has affected them. As a detective constable recently explained to me, this ensures that the victim and *not* the criminal has the last word. The psychological importance of this is, I suggest, undeniable. It gives the victim back some degree of control (or at least appears to) so alleviates the potentially debilitating sense of *being* a victim, of being the object another's actions and of being unable to act. This, in turn, minimises the victim's need to reassert his agency through extreme or violent *re*action

Psychologically valuable this may be, but vengeance remains the operative principle. Politicians know what the public wants (or what the media tells them): harsher sentences served under harsher conditions. The common belief in the UK is that prisons are, in reality, holiday camps wherein the dregs of society live in luxury. (A prison officer friend assures me this is not true.) We should, perhaps, be more concerned about the dehumanising effects of both the conditions and the belief that calls for them.

The driving force behind all this, Hamblet suggests, is shame. The purpose of our penal institutions has been to mitigate the shame of the victim by transposing it onto the offender. With it, however, goes the dehumanisation that put society at risk in the first place. Vengeance becomes the operative principle of an individual who is already – by his actions – outside the moral framework of society. This can only exacerbate the destructive impulses which first drove those anti-social actions, so puts society at even greater risk.

Consequently, the logic of retributive justice is fatally flawed. The offender demonstrates a lack of concern for the security of others and the stability of society. In exchange for their inhumanity, the penal system dehumanises them further. 'Give them a taste of their own medicine; teach them the lessons of life in civilised society'. So goes the wisdom of 'traditional' moralists. For this to work, however, the offender must already understand the moral significance of inhuman treatment, recognise that it is morally wrong. For shame to be constructive, that is, the moral lesson must already have been learned. For 'Shame is the guardian at the gates of excellence, patrolling the moral borders *from within* the hearts and minds of the already converted.'[5] It follows that harsh treatment is most likely to work on those disinclined to break the law in the first place.

This, in essence, is Hamblet's lesson. It is not, however, a call to abandon punishment or free child-murderers and rapists. It is rather, a call for a 'Revolutionary Penology,'[6] one offered by Plato.

Retributive justice fails because it places the emphasis on the victim, so institutionalises destructive, anti-social behaviour. An eye – at least – for an eye. According to Hamblet, Plato reformulates the idea of justice, placing the emphasis on the offender. Criminality is a symptom of an unhealthy soul, one out of balance, not with society or other individuals, but with itself. Performing unjust actions, not suffering them, is what harms the soul: the good man can never truly be harmed by the bad. Thus, criminal acts serve only to make the sickness worse, driving the offender further from a healthy and just society, isolating him from the nurturing and moral care he needs. The proper response is to prevent the offender from harming himself further. True justice, therefore, 'acts as a medicine for vice'.[7]

Good medicine can take many forms. Plato, Hamblet tells us, runs the gamut, recommending 'everything from kindness to cruelty…[to heal] the perpetrator's soul.'[8] The offender must be brought to 'hatred of iniquity and love of right – by acts we do or words we utter, through pleasure or through pain, through honour bestowed or disgrace inflicted'.[9] In short, any means necessary, even the 'most final curative.' (Hang some sense into them, as the old Monty Python joke goes) Arguably, a terminal illness brought to a swift conclusion is a blessing to the sufferer and to those upon whom he is a burden. One might do as much for a beloved pet, why not for a human being whose sick soul is incurable? Pragmatism, not principle, is the key to this reform.

Ultimately, then, the question is, just who stands in greater need of Plato's 'therapeutic justice'? The

answer, I suggest, is clear. Evil requires a curative, doubly so when evil is institutionalised and revenge used to support claims to legitimate authority. The only legitimate purpose of punishment is to guide the offender towards a 'better moral understanding.'[10] That, Hamblet argues, requires a fundamental change in our attitude and approach to punishment. If our judicial and penal institutions are to embody the 'therapeutic' good Plato offers, then we must give up righteous vengeance. A notion rooted in the birth of Western civilisation cannot help but express the most infantile and destructive instincts. It leaves us no option but to lash out childishly at any slight or insult. But now, as Hamblet and the ancient Greeks have shown, it is time society grew up and took its medicine.

Simon Smith

Notes

1. This and next, *Punishment and Shame*, 9; hereafter, *PS*.
2. This and next, see *PS*, 3, 8-9.
3. *PS*, 7.
4. See, Oderberg, D. *Applied Ethics*, 148-9 (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
5. *PS*, 116.
6. *PS*, 103.
7. *Gorgias*, 478de; quoted *PS*, 94.
8. *PS*, 107.
9. *Laws*, 9.862d, quoted *PS*, 107.
10. *PS*, 105.

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FEFT = *Full Employment and Free Trade* (London, C.U.P., 1945; 2nd ed. 1948)
KB = *Knowing and Being* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1969)
LL = *The Logic of Liberty* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1951)
M = *Meaning* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1975)
PK = *Personal Knowledge* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1958)
SFS = *Science, Faith and Society* (London, OUP, 1946; 2nd ed. U. of Chicago Press, 1964)
SOM = *The Study of Man* (London, Routledge; Chicago, University of Chicago Press; 1959)
TD = *The Tacit Dimension* (London, Routledge; New York, Doubleday; 1966; reprinted Gloucester, Mass., Peter Smith, 1983)

Also:
SEP = *Society, Economics and Philosophy: Selected articles by Michael Polanyi*, ed. R.T. Allen (New Brunswick, NJ, Transaction Publishers, 1997).