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MAX SCHELER'S *ORDO AMORIS*
IN ALBERT CAMUS'S PHILOSOPHICAL WORK

GENERALLY, Albert Camus's name is not mentioned in historical overviews of the French phenomenological movement.¹ The Nobel prize-winning novelist has been defined as an «Algerian Zarathustra»² for his Mediterranean Nietzscheanism tinged with Neo-platonism, or a «personal thinker» concerned with the practical questions of life experience, and has been associated with Husserl and Heidegger's existentialist-phenomenological tradition for his criticism of rationalism and his refusal to transcend what is “given”.³ Nonetheless, there is a persistent difficulty in tracing the theoretical import of Camus's thought, which depends less on the author's alleged philosophical incompetence, than on the critics' neglect of what I argue to be a crucial source in the genesis and development of his ethical and political reflection: Max Scheler's emotional phenomenology.

Camus cites Max Scheler among his most relevant readings between 1930 and 1936, even though he offers no further reference as to what he had actually read at the time.⁴ He probably became familiar with the phenomenologist's work while he was preparing his exams in Morals and Sociology at the University of Algiers. Scheler was the first German phenomenologist to be acknowledged in France: invited to the Pontigny Decades in 1924, this original thinker, who admired Bergson and whose phenomenological approach, indebted to Husserl and Pascal,

¹ H. SPIEGELBERG, *The Phenomenological Movement. A historical introduction*, The Hague/Boston/London 1982; C. DUPONT, *Phenomenology in French Philosophy: Early Encounters*, Dordrecht/Heidelberg/New York/London 2014.

² M. ONFRAY, *L'ordre libertaire. La vie philosophique d'Albert Camus*, Paris 2012, 16; A. MÜNSTER, *Albert Camus: la révolte contre la révolution*, Paris 2014.

³ A. SAGI, *Albert Camus and the Philosophy of the Absurd*, Amsterdam 2002, 26, 47.

⁴ *Questionnaire de C. A. Viggiani (1958)*, in A. CAMUS, *Œuvres complètes*, IV, Paris 2008, 643. References to Camus's texts are taken from A. CAMUS, *Œuvres complètes*, vol. I, II, Paris 2006 (abbreviated in text as *Œuvres complètes* I, II); vol. III, IV, Paris 2008 (abbreviated in text as *Œuvres complètes* III, IV).

merged Nietzsche and Saint Augustin, had intrigued the French, especially the personalist and christian intellectual milieu since the 1920s.⁵ In the early 1930s, they were mainly acquainted with his phenomenology of love: *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, published under the title *Nature et formes de la sympathie* in 1928, *L'Homme du ressentiment*, the French translation of Scheler's phenomenological study of resentment published by Gallimard in 1933,⁶ and *Amour et connaissance*, which appeared three years later in a collection of essays, translated by P. Klossowski under the title *Le sens de la souffrance*,⁷ all deal with the question of the *ordo amoris* and its aberrations.⁸

It is not surprising then to find two annotated copies of *Nature et formes de la sympathie* and *L'Homme du ressentiment* in the catalogue of Camus's private library. While the writer's notebooks attested that he had read the work on *ressentiment*, as well as Georges Gurvitch's *Les tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande* (1930),⁹ a large section of which was assigned to Scheler's emotional phenomenology, between 1939 and 1943;¹⁰ Camus made no explicit mention concerning the study on sympathy. I argue that the genealogical investigation into the editions of these two texts¹¹ provides relevant evidence for reassessing the role of Scheler's emotional phenomenology as a crucial, although still largely unexplored source in the genesis of the French writ-

⁵ O. AGARD, *Max Scheler entre la France et l'Allemagne*, «Revue germanique internationale» [En ligne], URL: <http://rgi.revues.org/1119>.

⁶ M. SCHELER, *L'homme du ressentiment*, Paris 1933, transl. by P. J. de Menasce of *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*, in M. SCHELER, *Vom Umstrurz der Werte*, Leipzig 1919.

⁷ M. SCHELER, *Le Sens de la Souffrance; suivi de deux autres essais*, Paris 1936. The volume contained: *Le sens de la souffrance* [*Der Sinn des Leidens*], *Repentir et renaissance* [*Reue und Wiedergeburt*], *Amour et connaissance* [*Liebe und Erkenntnis*].

⁸ See M. FRINGS, *The "Ordo Amoris" in Max Scheler*, in F.J. SMITH, E. ENG (edd.), *Facets of Eros: Phenomenological Essays*, The Hague 1972, 41.

⁹ *Œuvres complètes* II, 872.

¹⁰ *Œuvres complètes* II, 981, 986.

¹¹ M. Lefebvre's translation of M. SCHELER, *Nature et formes de la sympathie*, Paris 2003 [1928] (abbreviated in text as NFS), and on *L'Homme du ressentiment*, Paris 1958 [1933] (abbreviated in text as HR).

er's philosophical essays,¹² *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942) and *L'Homme révolté* (1951). In particular, while it is generally accepted that Camus wrote his essay on revolt, first published in 1945 under the title *Revue sur la révolte*, as a critical response to Scheler's analysis of resentment, I suggest that he does so from the standpoint of the German's phenomenology of love. In Camus's first philosophical work on the Absurd, Scheler's book on sympathy, and especially his notion of *ordo amoris*, provides the theoretical framework within which the French writer rethinks Nietzsche's ethical and political project of overcoming nihilism.

Camus uses the term "nihilism" to denote an attitude of criticism, denigration, spitefulness¹³ that invalidates the conflictual *inter pares* relationship between self and other by disparaging the opponent and reducing him to a non-human or sub-human object of domination. From the 1930s on, Camus identifies nihilism with «romanticism», namely an attitude of *ressentiment*.

A passionate reader of Nietzsche throughout his entire life¹⁴ and a regular reader of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, he probably became aware of Scheler's phenomenological and sociological study of resentment through Bernard Groethuysen's 1935 review of *L'Homme du ressentiment*.¹⁵ Echoes of the opposition between the «romantic man» and the artist, that Groethuysen identifies in Scheler's work respectively with the man of *ressentiment* and the phenomenologist, resound in Camus's 1936 dissertation on *Métaphysique chrétienne et néoplatonisme*.

Groethuysen associates «romanticism» with the contemporary scientific and rationalist thinking that devaluates the world, thus justifying its endless exploitation, and with the utilitarian attitude of the modern

¹² See I. S. FIUT, *Albert Camus: Phenomenology and Postmodern Thought*, in A.-T. TYMIENIECKA (ed.), *Analecta Husserliana. Phenomenology and Existentialism in the XXth Century*, vol. 104, Dordrecht/Heidelberg/London/New York 2009, 341-54; and S. NOVELLO, *De l'absurde à l'amour. La "révolution" éthique de Camus entre Nietzsche et Scheler*, in È. MORISI (éd.), *Camus et l'éthique*, Paris 2014, 117-30.

¹³ *Œuvres complètes* IV, 583.

¹⁴ S. NOVELLO, *Albert Camus as Political Thinker. Nihilisms and the politics of contempt*, New York 2010.

¹⁵ B. GROETHUYSEN, "L'homme du ressentiment" par Max Scheler, «Nouvelle Revue Française», 257 (1935), 308-10.

bourgeois individual, that is to say with a type of man who is affected by *ressentiment*. Scheler defines resentment as a «désordre du sentiment personnel»,¹⁶ a psychological self-poisoning that is determined by the «rumination» of an affective reaction which is directed against the other (hatred, desire of revenge, jealousy, envy, malice¹⁷), and that, being denied outward expression and action, penetrates deeply into man's heart provoking a perversion of his capacity of perceiving values and formulating value judgments. The artist, instead, *loves* the world: he is identified with the phenomenologist, who de-realizes and frees the world from the delusions of resentment and goes back to the “things themselves”.¹⁸

In his 1936 dissertation, Camus investigates the novelty of Christianity from a phenomenological perspective, interpreting the Christian “revolution” of Western civilization as a radical change at the «*sentimental level*»,¹⁹ that is to say a displacement of the *sensibility* of the Greek type of man to be replaced by the Christian type.²⁰ What is interesting to observe in the young student's appropriation of the phenomenological approach is the resolute identification of the Greek sensibility, emblematically expressed by Plotinus' philosophy, with the phenomenologist's sentimental attitude of love of the world. Plotinus is defined as the *artist-philosopher* who transfers in the intelligible «cette extrême *émotion* qui saisit l'artiste devant la beauté du monde». ²¹

Camus subscribes to Nietzsche's interpretation of Christianity when he opposes the «romantic» Reason of the Gnostics, whose devaluation of existence he roots in a sentiment of hatred of the world, to Plotinus' mystical Intelligence. Camus, who reads Plotinus through the Bergsonian and phenomenological spectacles of Émile Bréhier, describes the Neoplatonic Reason as a sort of «intuitive art»: far from identifying a

¹⁶ HR, 22.

¹⁷ HR, 14.

¹⁸ B. GROETHUYSEN, “*L'homme du ressentiment*” ..., 309.

¹⁹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 999.

²⁰ *Œuvres complètes* I, 1076. For a more detailed analysis of the echoes of Scheler's emotional phenomenology in Camus's juvenile work, see S. NOVELLO, *Albert Camus as Political Thinker*, 58-68; and Id., *De l'absurde à l'amour...*, 125-6.

²¹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 1042.

kind of *poiesis* or demiurgical action upon the world to submit it to its domination, this type of thinking «se réfléchit sur le cristal du monde, comme l'art du statuaire se devine dans une glaise même ébauchée».²²

Now, the French author establishes a connection between the artist's intuitive thinking and the sentiment of love, which exceeds the master-slave relationship that Nietzsche detected in the Platonic-Christian notion of the Will, and discloses a different sensibility towards existence, that considers the world as «le cristal où se joue la divinité».²³ Camus traces this loving attitude at the core of his decision to become an artist: in 1935, he founds his work of art on the «bizarre sentiment» that brings together the son and his mother, and which is said to constitute his entire *sensibility*.²⁴ In a juvenile fragment, probably contemporary to his dissertation, Camus identifies the mother with the Plotinian image of crystal that exceeds the categories of rational thinking,²⁵ thus suggesting a correlation between the emotional attitude of the son towards his silent and almost deaf mother and the phenomenologist's loving attitude towards the world that exceeds *ressentiment*.

As critics have pointed out, in the beginning of Camus's work was not the Word.²⁶ For both the French writer and Scheler,²⁷ in the beginning was emotion. In 1958 Camus writes that his work «n'est rien d'autre que ce long cheminement pour retrouver par les détours de l'art les deux ou trois images simples et grandes sur lesquelles *le cœur, une première fois, s'est ouvert*».²⁸ I suggest that Scheler's notion of *ordo amoris*, developed in his phenomenological works on sympathy and resentment, constitutes the missing theoretical link that allows us to re-

²² *Œuvres complètes* I, 1047.

²³ *Œuvres complètes* I, 1055, italics mine.

²⁴ *Œuvres complètes* II, 795.

²⁵ «Mère, tu es pure comme un cristal. Tu n'as rien, ni beauté, ni richesse, ni complication de l'esprit. Ton cœur, ton corps, ton esprit tout se confond car tu n'es qu'indifférence [...]» (*Œuvres complètes* I, 95).

²⁶ È. MORISI, *Albert Camus, le souci des autres*, Paris 2013, 120 ff.; P. GROUX, *L'Absence de la philosophie dans «Le Premier Homme»*, in A.M. AMIOT, J.F. MATTÉI (édd), *Albert Camus et la philosophie*, Paris 1997, 68, 72, 78.

²⁷ G. CUSINATO, *Etica e cura del desiderio*, «Thaumazein», 2 (2014), 49.

²⁸ *Œuvres complètes* I, 38, italics mine.

interpret Camus's philosophical thought, and especially the transition from the irrationalist perspective of the juvenile writings to the ethics of solidarity of his later works, shedding a new light on the philosophical import of the notions of "absurd" and "revolt".

The methodological remarks of his first philosophical essay, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*, published by Gallimard in 1942, reflect Scheler's phenomenological work. Sympathy, rather than the rationalist «dialectique savante et classique», is the appropriate tool to tackle what Camus considered to be the fundamental question of philosophy, namely the problem of suicide.²⁹ He replaces the sociological durkheimian approach to suicide with Scheler's phenomenological perspective, investigating the relationship between the act of taking one's life and the personal «value-ception»³⁰ concerning the valuelessness of existence.³¹ The French author traces the roots of suicide beyond reason, in «the heart» of man.³² Thus, the aim of the philosopher is not to explain this type of action, but to understand it, merging evidence and lyricism, clarity and emotion.³³

The pages of *Le Mythe* echo Scheler's argument in *Nature et formes de la sympathie*: the phenomenologist draws attention to sympathy as providing a non-conceptual, pre-logic³⁴ form of knowledge, that is to say independent from representation³⁵ and conveying the matter (i.e., values and qualities) of someone else's feelings. Sympathy is associated with «affective intentionality», namely, with the capacity of sentiment to *refer* to something, i.e. a psychic state or a relation to value.

Moreover, Scheler distinguishes «pure» sympathy from empirical sympathy,³⁶ defining the former as an *a priori* act that is intentionally

²⁹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 221-2.

³⁰ M. FRINGS, *The Ordo Amoris in Max Scheler*, in F.J. SMITH, E. ENG (edd.), *Facets of Eros: Phenomenological Essays*, The Hague 1972, 42.

³¹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 223.

³² *Œuvres complètes* I, 222.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *NFS*, 136.

³⁵ *NFS*, 135

³⁶ *NFS*, 142.

oriented toward the essence and value of the *alter ego* and is capable of re-directing the individual subject's will, activity and psychic experience.³⁷ Identified with affective *participation*, sympathy indicates the disposition of an individual to overstep the limits of one's self and situate himself in the presence of another. Scheler defines the sympathetic attitude in terms of world-*openness* of a man's heart to indicate a change of affective orientation that reveals the *a priori* value of the other, as opposed to a solipsistic or egocentric disposition, in which the subject merely projects his/her own feelings onto another. Sympathy is, therefore, the source of understanding,³⁸ which dissolves the solipsistic delusion by allowing the sympathetic actor to put himself in the place of another's individuality while preserving the awareness of a plurality of existences.³⁹

Scheler's analysis of sympathy is inseparable from that of *ordo amoris*. In its objective sense, this "order of love" denotes the personal hierarchy of *a priori* values, which the phenomenologist represents as a mould or capsule in which the subject is immersed during his or her entire existence. The "world" or the "self" are but an individual's peculiar environmental structure that contains only those items which are perceived through the "openings" of the personal value-structure.⁴⁰ Things are literally caught sight of as specific types-of-value and enter the subject's personal environment according to the attraction or repulsion they arouse in the individual. Directed by the preference of certain types-of-value over others, attraction and repulsion allow the phenomenologist to seize the personal *ordo amoris* of a human being, and «whoever has the *ordo amoris* of a man, has the man himself».⁴¹

According to Scheler, the *ordo amoris* determines the possible that

³⁷ NFS, 121-23: «[notre attitude sympathique varie] indépendamment de toute action extérieure. [...] il suffit dans d'autres cas d'un événement insignifiant pour que, sans aucune excitation extérieure appréciable, *notre âme s'ouvre* pour les douleurs et les joies humaines et reste dans cet état pendant des semaines et de mois» (*ibid.*, 124).

³⁸ NFS, 153.

³⁹ NFS, 158.

⁴⁰ M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris*, in D. R. LACHTERMAN (ed.), *Selected Philosophical Essays*, Evanston 1973, 100.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

can happen to a man in space (his moral environment) and time (his fate). In the *coincidence of man and world* the phenomenologist traces that unity of pervasive meaning which he calls a man's "fate", that is to say «the manifold possibilities within the "scope" of the experience of the emotional coherence of man and world *in* which any real happening first takes place». ⁴² Rooted in the subject's psycho-vital processes, fate is brought forth in the act of looking back over one's entire life-time or an important part of it. Now, a person can stand below his fate, immersed in it like a fish in an aquarium and incapable of recognizing it, or he can stand above it and, by recognizing it, resist it and eventually change it. ⁴³

In the opening pages of *Le Mythe e Sisyphe*, Camus draws our attention to the intentionality of emotional life by focusing on what sentiments *refer to* outside and beyond rational knowledge:

les *sentiments* profonds signifient toujours plus qu'ils n'ont conscience de le dire. *La constance d'un mouvement ou d'une répulsion* dans une âme se retrouve dans ses habitudes de faire ou de penser [...]. Les grands sentiments promènent avec eux leur univers, splendide ou misérable. Ils éclairent de leur passion un monde exclusif où ils retrouvent leur climat. [...] Un univers, c'est-à-dire une métaphysique et une *attitude de l'esprit*. ⁴⁴

Camus roots the peculiar *ethos* of a man, namely his preferences and value judgments, in the emotional sphere. Sentiments determine the specific experiential structure ("universe") of an individual, whose habits, judgmental acts and conduct are directed by attraction and repulsion. The act of killing oneself is the confession that life is *not worth living*. ⁴⁵ Camus traces the emotional root of suicide ⁴⁶ in the «incalculable sentiment» ⁴⁷ of the absurdity of existence, which coincides with the

⁴² M. FRINGS, *The Ordo amoris...*, 43.

⁴³ M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris ...*, 106.

⁴⁴ *Œuvres complètes* I, 226, italics mine.

⁴⁵ *Œuvres complètes* I, 223.

⁴⁶ «Le ver se trouve au cœur de l'homme» (*Œuvres complètes* I, 222).

⁴⁷ *Œuvres complètes* I, 223.

recognition that the mechanical gestures that compose a man's habits⁴⁸ and the reasons that make sense of his everyday life, that is to say his environmental structure and fate, are but revolting (*écœurant*) «idols» or fictions.

The author defines the sentiment of absurdity as the *divorce* between man and his life, between the actor and his décor.⁴⁹ It is disclosed by a state of weariness tinged with surprise (*étonnement*) that inaugurates a movement of awareness («mouvement de la conscience»)⁵⁰:

[I]e climat de l'absurdité est au commencement. La fin, c'est l'univers absurde et cette attitude de l'esprit qui éclaire le monde sous un jour qui lui est propre, pour en faire resplendir le visage privilégié et implacable qu'elle sait lui reconnaître.⁵¹

I suggest that we interpret the sentiment of absurdity as a mode of affective intentionality that perceives a *disorder* or a short circuit between the hierarchy of values that constitutes a man's "world" – what Gabriel Mahéo identifies as the objective sense of the genitive *ordo amoris*,⁵² which is also an order that culture and education contribute in moulding – and the personal affective movement that exceeds such a world. Read as a subjective genitive,⁵³ Scheler's notion draws our attention to love as a dynamic process that evades the categories and logical rules of reason, and is directed *beyond* the set of values and preferences that constitute a single man's environmental structure and fate.

The German phenomenologist defines love as a «tendency» or «act» of self-transcendence that places the lover beyond his/her own self and seeks to lead each thing in the direction of its peculiar «perfection of value».⁵⁴ Love refers to and makes values visible with an evidence that

⁴⁸ *Œuvres complètes* I, 228.

⁴⁹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 223.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 227.

⁵² G. MAHÉO, *Le libre jeu de l'amour et de la raison*, in G. MAHÉO, E. HOUSSET (éd.), *Max Scheler. Éthique et phénoménologie*, Rennes 2015, 144.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris ...*, 109.

is incommensurable with the evidence of reason⁵⁵ by opening the lover's «spiritual eyes»⁵⁶ in an attitude of participation.

Far from being conceived as a fixed form of contemplation of given values, love is an uplifting and constructive action in and over the world.⁵⁷ By insisting on the dynamic aspect of this trans-rational «movement» that creates new values in the sense that it brings about the elevation of the object of love towards higher values,⁵⁸ Scheler identifies the peculiar “order” of love in Pascal's *logique du cœur*,⁵⁹ which founds the sentimental “postulates” of a single man's conduct as well as of an entire civilization.

In his 1936 dissertation, Camus writes that Plotinus' attempt to cast the sentiment of love in the logical forms of a «mystic Reason», which exceeds and is irreducible to the philosophical Reason of the Platonic-Christian tradition, anticipates and somehow coincides with Pascal's «heart».⁶⁰ Plotinus represents the Greek type of man for whom beauty indicates both an *order and a sensibility*,⁶¹ that is to say what Scheler calls the *ordo amoris*.

In his 1942 essay on suicide, Camus identifies the absurd with a sort of therapeutical process that shatters the “idols” and brings about an affective re-orientation, an “order of *love*” beyond the “romantic” constructions of Reason, producing a new form of knowledge – what he calls the “absurd thought”. In *Le Mythe*, he significantly resorts to Husserl's notion of intentionality in order to circumscribe this notion, insisting on the similarity between the “absurd thought”, that brackets off the «idols» of philosophical Reason (i.e., notions of culpability,

⁵⁵ NFS, 290.

⁵⁶ NFS, 303.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ NFS, 297.

⁵⁹ G. GURVITCH, «L'intuitionnisme émotionnel de Max Scheler», in ID., *Tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande*, Paris 1949 [1930], 75, 81. By identifying revolt with love, Camus does not subscribe to Gurvitch's interpretation of Scheler's phenomenology as a form of emotional intuitionism, entailing a «purely passive apprehension of moral values» (*Ibid.*, 70n).

⁶⁰ *Œuvres complètes* I, 1041.

⁶¹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 1042.

freedom,⁶² power), going back to things themselves and restoring the world's innocence outside and against traditional metaphysics,⁶³ and the phenomenological attitude: «Penser, c'est réapprendre à voir, diriger sa conscience, faire de chaque image un lieu privilégié».⁶⁴

The «absurd thought» entails the act of “taking an interest” in the phenomenological sense,⁶⁵ that replaces the demand for explanation typical of scientific thinking with that for understanding each aspect of existence,⁶⁶ and the romantic exhortation to realize the impossible with the invitation to exhaust (*épuiser*) the possible.⁶⁷ Beyond the initial de-realizing process of expulsion of all value judgments in favor of purely factual judgments, the sentiment of absurdity inaugurates a dynamic process of affective re-orientation and expansion of the axiological domain that results in the constitution of a new personal and objective “order of love”, or what he defines as the “absurd universe”. As Camus wrote in 1943, «[m]ême par-delà le bien et le mal, il y a des actes qui paraissent bons ou mauvais et surtout il y a des spectacles qui paraissent beaux ou laids» and living always entails a more or less elementary

⁶² The notion of freedom (*liberum arbitrium*) implies the metaphysical fiction of the Will that, according to Nietzsche, is moulded on the vertical master-slave relationship of dominion, inscribing violence at the heart of all pedagogic and political, especially revolutionary action. Camus identifies the «absurd freedom» in the rejection of the power relationship that disparages the other (see S. NOVELLO, *Albert Camus ...*, 81-108).

⁶³ Camus seems to merge the phenomenological approach with the Nietzschean motive of the fidelity to the earth. He calls «good nihilism» the *tabula rasa* of all the moral, social and political constructions of the Western tradition brought about by the absurd (*Œuvres complètes* I, 320, 883), to distinguish it from the Platonic-Christian «romantic» interpretation, rooted in *ressentiment*, and from the «absolute nihilism» of contemporary political ideologies, that demolish the idols of Metaphysics, but preserve a resentful attitude towards existence (i.e. totalitarian ideologies).

⁶⁴ *Œuvres complètes* I, 248.

⁶⁵ M. SCHELER, *Amour et connaissance*, in ID., *Le sens de la souffrance*, traduit par P. KLOSSOWSKI, Paris 1936, 176-8 (English translation *Love and Knowledge*, in H. BERSHADY (ed.), *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing. Selected Writings*, Chicago-London 1992). Cfr. *Œuvres complètes* I, 248-9.

⁶⁶ *Œuvres complètes* I, 249.

⁶⁷ *Œuvres complètes* I, 217.

form of value-judgment.⁶⁸

In the rewrite of the Greek myth of Sisyphus that closes his essay on suicide, Camus turns the tragic hero into the emblem of a spiritual attitude of *reverence* and participation in the life of the world, that evokes Scheler's phenomenological attitude. Condemned to the infernal torment of endless labour, Sisyphus is the «absurd man» who transcends his fate and environmental structure and creates his own «personal destiny»,⁶⁹ by *exceeding* the productive model of action and the master-slave relationship of dominion. Sisyphus is powerless, yet by contemplating his tormented existence he becomes aware of his “fate”, thus, placing himself above it, not by an act of will but by a gesture of love, that opens his spiritual eyes (*clairvoyance*) and heart to the innumerable facets of reality, bringing about what Scheler designates as a condition of «world-openness»:

l'homme absurde, quand il contemple son tourment, *fait taire toutes les idoles*. Dans l'univers soudain rendu à son *silence*, les milles petites voix *émerveillées* de la terre s'élèvent. Appels inconscients et secrets, invitations de tous les visages [...]. S'il y a un *destin personnel*, il n'y a point de destinée supérieure.⁷⁰

Beyond the verbosity of the fictions that are constructed by philosophical Reason, Camus places the silence of the heart, which exceeds the distinctions of intellectual logic and joins the in-different silence of the mother in his lyrical essays and novels, from *La Peste* to the unachieved autobiographical work *Le Premier Homme*. In this novel, the mother «isolée dans sa demi-sourdit , ses difficult s de langage, belle certainement mais   peu pr s inaccessible et d'autant plus qu'elle  tait plus souriante et que [*le c ur du fils*] s' lan ait plus vers elle», embodies a life without *ressentiment*.⁷¹

In Camus's work, the interplay of the images of “silence”, “mother” and “crystal” allows us to trace the common emotional root of the «absurd man» and the philosopher-artist in what the French author defines

⁶⁸ *Œuvres compl tes* I, 321.

⁶⁹ *Œuvres compl tes* I, 304.

⁷⁰ *Œuvres compl tes* I, 303-4, italics mine.

⁷¹ *Œuvres compl tes* IV, 774-5, italics mine.

as the Greek sensibility, which he identifies with the phenomenological attitude. Sisyphus represents the “yes-saying” or loving attitude towards existence as opposed to the “nay-saying” attitude of the Nietzschean men of *ressentiment*. By transcending his fate, the tragic hero is happy⁷² – according to Scheler, happiness is rooted in the sentiment of love and world-openness.

Now, in the closing lines of *Le Mythe*, Camus associates Sisyphus' *absurd* “order of love” with the value-judgment «*tout est bien*». ⁷³ *Omne ens est bonum*: in his phenomenological work on sympathy, Scheler detects in this formula the utmost expression of the Greek attitude of joyous participation to the existent,⁷⁴ as well as of the mother-child relationship,⁷⁵ which he considers to be different examples of what he calls the «affective fusion» or contagion (*Einsföhlung*), namely a condition of emotional oneness that erases the distinction between the other and one's self. Scheler distinguishes affective contagion from sympathy in the proper sense, which he also names as «affective participation» to emphasize the «postulate of the reality of the other».⁷⁶ According to the phenomenologist, this postulate was first introduced into Western civilisation by the Christian “revolution” in the understanding of love.

I believe that Camus's identification of the sympathetic attitude of the phenomenologist/absurd man with the Greek sensibility expressed in the judgment *Omne ens est bonum* cannot be ascribed to a mere misreading of Scheler's text, but manifests the author's critical position towards the analysis of love and its *disorders* that is formulated in *Nature et formes de la sympathie* and in *L'Homme du ressentiment*.

From his juvenile work to the 1951 philosophical essay *L'Homme révolté*, Camus aligned with Nietzsche, who saw in the Christian notion of love the sublimation of the judaic hatred. According to the author of *The Genealogy of Morals*, this sentiment – that Scheler considered to be a perversion of a man's *ordo amoris* – infused the categories of Christian morality, transposing the vertical master-slave structure of domina-

⁷² *Œuvres complètes* I, 304.

⁷³ *Ibid.*

⁷⁴ *NFS*, 180.

⁷⁵ *NFS*, 203.

⁷⁶ *NFS*, 205.

tion in the relationship between God and the creation. The world is submitted to the notion of “guilt”, that strips it of all positive value (*omne ens est malum*) and justifies its ex-termination.

Following Nietzsche, Camus defines Christianity as a «philosophy of injustice»: ⁷⁷ by drawing attention to the correspondence between the master-slave, the judge-culprit and the executioner-victim relationships, he traces in hatred and contempt of man and the world the sentimental postulate introduced by the hegemonic Christian “revolution” of morality that still founds contemporary power politics and especially the justification of capital punishment in the Western system of justice. ⁷⁸

While sharing Scheler’s account of love, Camus resolutely rejects its «theistic premise» in *Nature et formes de la sympathie* as a form of «philosophical suicide», namely a position that is inconsistent with the phenomenological perspective, ⁷⁹ producing a delusory interpretation of existence that bears the marks of *ressentiment*. According to the French author, not only the world-openness of the absurd attitude can reveal and elevate the value of the existent without having to resort to God, ⁸⁰ but the Christian notion of love denotes an affective disorder or a loss of world-openness.

In *Le Mythe*, Camus roots the Christian notion of eternal or *total* love in the pathological selflessness of a mother or a lover, whose heart is dry (*sec*) and removed from the world, and who divert their attention from all personal life in an exclusive “romantic” form of affection that devaluates the existent. ⁸¹ This perversion of love is metaphorically represented by Don Juan’s Stone Guest. ⁸² Contrary to Kierkegaard’s Don Giovanni, Camus’s seducer is an «absurd man» who rejects both the hedonistic imperative and the suicidal self-oblivion of the romantic lover as egoistic attitudes that negate the self-other relationship, reify-

⁷⁷ *Œuvres complètes* III, 332 n.

⁷⁸ *Œuvres complètes* III, 75.

⁷⁹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 238 ff.

⁸⁰ *Œuvres complètes* I, 304.

⁸¹ *Œuvres complètes* I, 270.

⁸² «Tous les pouvoirs de la Raison éternelle, de l’ordre, de la morale universelle, toute la grandeur étrangère d’un Dieu accessible à la colère, se résument en lui» (*Œuvres complètes* I, 271).

ing and devaluating existence. A phenomenological interest in exhausting the innumerable possibilities of relationships with other persons inspires Don Juan's generous and vital love,⁸³ which recalls Plato's *Eros*⁸⁴ and creatively reintroduces value in the nihilistic *tabula rasa* of the absurd,⁸⁵ culminating in «a morality of sympathy».⁸⁶

In Camus's view, affective contagion does not describe the Greek attitude, but rather the Christian one that cuts the Western civilisation off from its emotional roots and turns man into a «citadel» or a «stone»⁸⁷ in an extreme act of defense against a personal God-Judge that uses evil as a form of punishment. In *L'Homme révolté*, the immunitarian paradigm⁸⁸ makes its first appearance in Epicurus and Lucretius' ascetic quest for the individual's «deaf and blind [...] immortal death» to the world,⁸⁹ and culminates in two metaphysical rebels, Stirner and the Marquis De Sade, whom Scheler also mentions in his book on sympathy to illustrate the egocentric disorder of heart,⁹⁰ namely a solipsistic and auto-erotic attitude that is blind and impenetrable to the other's person and to his value. Camus draws attention to the correlation between power⁹¹ and total «renunciation»,⁹² that elevates the solitary individual⁹³ above his fellow men negating the world-openness and exceedingness

⁸³ «de l'amour, je ne connais que ce mélange de désir, de tendresse et d'intelligence qui me lie à tel être» (*Œuvres complètes* I, 270).

⁸⁴ *Œuvres complètes* I, 270.

⁸⁵ Don Juan's love recalls Scheler's notion of "sexual love", namely a dynamic principle of value-creation that transfigures and ennobles life, transcending the instinct of reproduction and conservation of the species. Cf. G. ΜΑΗΕΟ, *La question de l'amour chez Max Scheler : par-delà l'activité et la passivité?*, «Bulletin d'analyse phénoménologique», VIII 1 (2012) (Actes 5), 478-498.

⁸⁶ *Œuvres complètes* I, 269.

⁸⁷ *Œuvres complètes* III, 85.

⁸⁸ See R. ESPOSITO, *Immunitas*, Torino 2002.

⁸⁹ *Œuvres complètes* III, 86-7.

⁹⁰ *NFS*, 141.

⁹¹ *Œuvres complètes* III, 274.

⁹² Scheler detects in «renunciation to one's self» the pivotal aspect of the master-slave relationship (*NFS*, 114-5).

⁹³ *Œuvres complètes* III, 115.

of the human person vis-à-vis of the biological dimension, to which violence aims at reducing him.

In his novel, *La Peste*, that Camus started writing at the same time as his essay on revolt, inspired after reading Scheler's phenomenological analysis of the aberrations of the *ordo amoris*, the metaphor of contagion is used to denote the retreat of the self from the world. Associated with nazi terror and the Second World War,⁹⁴ the "plague" refers to an axiological infection of the heart,⁹⁵ an attitude of closure to the value of others that is widespread among contemporary men and women, who accept to live in a murderous political system founded on capital punishment, that devaluates human life to the point of rationally justifying and administrating its extermination.⁹⁶

In his essay on revolt, Camus identifies «pure revolt» – as opposed to empirical revolt, in its historical and metaphysical forms, from Rousseau, Hegel, Nietzsche and the dandies to Russian individual terrorism and totalitarian rationalist forms of state terrorism, that culminate in the murderous devaluation of life – in the phenomenological *ordo amoris* understood as an active and creative movement of love that elevates the value of the human being.⁹⁷ The rebel is defined as a man «who says *no*» but whose refusal *is not* a renunciation: like Sisyphus, he is also «a man who says *yes*»,⁹⁸ namely who judges that «*Omne ens est bonum*». The first formula echoes Scheler's definition of man as an "ascetic of life" (*Neinsager*),⁹⁹ suggesting that revolt has to do with the capacity of man to transcend his fate as well as his own self. The rebel exceeds the ego-centric and materialistic "individual" of rationalist and liberal thinking¹⁰⁰ in an attitude of world-openness: the metaphysical import of

⁹⁴ *Œuvres complètes* II, 286.

⁹⁵ *Œuvres complètes* II, 112.

⁹⁶ *Œuvres complètes* II, 204-10.

⁹⁷ To underline this point, Camus cites a quote from Meister Eckhart («il préfère l'enfer avec Jésus que le ciel sans lui», *Œuvres complètes* III, 76; *Œuvres complètes* III, 328-9) taken from Scheler's book on resentment (*HR*, 83, n. 1).

⁹⁸ *Œuvres complètes* III, 325, italics mine.

⁹⁹ «l'étrange ascèse de la révolte» (*Œuvres complètes* III, 68).

¹⁰⁰ *Œuvres complètes* III, 326-7.

revolt, that challenges the relationship between man and the sacred,¹⁰¹ lies in the fact that the rebel is taken out of his solitude.¹⁰²

In the capacity for sympathetic relationships, revolt brings about the ex-centricity or the «horizontal transcendence»¹⁰³ of man, which consists in the possibility of creating new values (transvaluation) without resorting to God or to Reason. Against the existentialist and historicist claim that reduces values to sheer products of human frenzied activity, revolt indicates in a «strange love»,¹⁰⁴ that reveals and augments the value of existence¹⁰⁵ and founds human solidarity, the new “order” or *measure* for morality and justice beyond the nihilistic disorder of Western civilization. Camus traces the essence of this peculiar transformative movement¹⁰⁶ in artistic creation and in a form of political action¹⁰⁷ that evades power politics and refuses to justify murder, preparing the *renaissance*¹⁰⁸ of the «first man» (*premier homme*)¹⁰⁹ beyond the man of *ressentiment*.

To conclude, my aim has been to demonstrate that Scheler's *ordo amoris* is a crucial «active tool»¹¹⁰ in Camus's hands, with which he moulds the key-notions of his ethical and political thought. This provides an opportunity to reassess his philosophical work as an original contribution to what Spiegelberg calls the «productive phase»¹¹¹ of the French phenomenological movement.

¹⁰¹ *Œuvres complètes* III, 330.

¹⁰² *Œuvres complètes* III, 333; cfr. *NFS*, 123-4.

¹⁰³ *Œuvres complètes* III, 326 n.

¹⁰⁴ *Œuvres complètes* III, 322.

¹⁰⁵ *Œuvres complètes* III, 77, 329.

¹⁰⁶ *Œuvres complètes* III, 70; cfr. *NFS*, 304.

¹⁰⁷ *Œuvres complètes* III, 337.

¹⁰⁸ *Œuvres complètes* III, 77.

¹⁰⁹ See S. NOVELLO, *De l'amour du monde ou "Le premier homme" d'Albert Camus*, in Y. FRACASSETTI BRONDINO (éd.), *Albert Camus, mémoire et dialogue en Méditerranée*, Cagliari 2015, 213-44.

¹¹⁰ H. SPIEGELBERG, *The Phenomenological Movement...*, 426-7.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 427.

ABSTRACT

Generally, Albert Camus's name (1913-1960) is not mentioned in historical overviews of the French phenomenological movement. The purpose of this study is to reassess his philosophical work as an original contribution to the French Phenomenology of the 1940s and 1950s by exploring the role that Max Scheler's phenomenology of love played in the genesis of Camus's essays *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (1942) and *L'Homme révolté* (1952).

Critics have inexplicably neglected the import of Scheler's phenomenological work in Camus's philosophical and sociological studies in Algiers between 1930 and 1936. By examining the French reception of Scheler's works, and especially the editions that were published between 1928 and 1936, the author traces in *Nature et formes de la sympathie*, M. Lefebvre's translation of *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, and in *L'Homme du ressentiment*, the 1933 translation of *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*, two essential sources that directly and indirectly contributed in shaping the theoretical framework within which Camus developed his ethical and political thought.

Detailed textual analysis confirmed that, from 1936 onward, the French writer moulded his understanding of philosophical reflection on Scheler's emotional phenomenology, which he read through Groethuysen and Nietzsche, separating the analysis of love and *ressentiment* from its theistic perspective and tracing in the sentiment of love and world-openness the condition for re-founding ethics beyond Western rationalism and contemporary political nihilism.

The author concludes that in order to fully understand Camus's popular notions of "absurd" and "revolt" one must take into account Scheler's analysis of the *ordo amoris* and its *perversions*, of which the French writer's philosophical essays should be recognized as giving a personal interpretation. For this reason they deserve mention and further study among the most significant works of the Twentieth century French phenomenological movement.