

ZACHARY DAVIS

## SCHELER ON THE EMBODIMENT OF VALUE

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THE great difficulty in Scheler insistence upon a dualism between spirit (*Geist*) and urge (*Drang*) is not that there are two distinct and irreducible aspects at play in being human. Feeling states such as shame demonstrate through the experience of conflict that spirit and urge are in fact distinct.<sup>1</sup> The difficulty of the dualism concerns rather the manner in which spirit and urge relate to one another,<sup>2</sup> a relation Scheler calls spiritualization. Spiritualization is the process wherein spirit comes to direct and guide the movement of urge, the process wherein the deeper spiritual values are realized in the activity of living. As embodied, spiritual beings, humans are the place, the “*Treffpunkt*”, where spiritualization happens. It is, however, quite unclear how the process of spiritualization can happen, if, as Scheler maintains, spirit is powerless<sup>3</sup> and urge is indifferent and thus blind to the deeper spiritual values.<sup>4</sup>

This central difficulty in Scheler’s late work has attracted much attention in the secondary literature.<sup>5</sup> I do not wish to enter into this important debate here. My interest is the relation the lived body, understood as an expression of the basic life-urge, has to the deeper spiritual values and in particular what it means for the lived body to be indifferent to these values. As there are experiences like shame wherein the lived body is in conflict with spiritual person, there are also experiences like bliss wherein the body takes genuine joy in the realization of the deeper spir-

<sup>1</sup> M. SCHELER, *Über Scham und Schamgefühl*, GW X, 68.

<sup>2</sup> See A. SANDER, *Askese und Weltbejahung: Zum Problem des Dualismus in der Anthropologie und Metaphysik Max Schelers*, in G. PFAFFEROTT, *Vom Umsturz der Werte in der modernen Gesellschaft*, Bonn 1997.

<sup>3</sup> M. SCHELER, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, GW IX, 45.

<sup>4</sup> M. SCHELER, *Erkenntnis und Arbeit*, GW VIII, 348.

<sup>5</sup> For further clarification on this debate, see Z. DAVIS, *Scheler and the Task of Human Loving*, in L. EMBREE, I. COPOERU, *Phenomenology 2008*, Bucharest 2010.

itual values such as goodness, justice and the holy. The relation, therefore, of the body to the deeper values is ambiguous and as a consequence radically contingent. Since Scheler rejects any teleological account of the human being<sup>6</sup> as well as any logos to human history,<sup>7</sup> there is no way to predict in advance whether the relation between spirit and the body will be one of harmony or disharmony, of violence or peace. The only certainty is that each individual and collective person must contend with this ambiguity and remain open to the diversity in which the deeper values are embodied in a finite person and in a culture.

### 1) *The Lived Body*

With his increasing interest in ontology, Scheler only sparingly makes use of the term lived body (*Leib*) in his later work. He prefers rather to use such terms as urge, life, *Alleben* or living being (*Lebewesen*). This preference stands in stark contrast to earlier works such as *Formalism* wherein the lived body takes a central role in his analysis. Scheler's change of emphasis and terminology runs the risk of a conflation of the meaning of particular notions. For instance, the dualism Scheler maintains between spirit and urge cannot be rendered as a dualism between the person and the lived body. A person is for certain a spiritual being and the lived body is a particular manifestation or product of urge.<sup>8</sup> However, as it is possible to say that a finite person has a lived body, it is not possible to say that spirit has urge. The finite person is already a unity of spirit and urge, a unity that can be experienced as one of harmony or disharmony. This unity is only experienced by a person with a body. Although the relation between spirit and urge is not identical to the relation between person and lived body, it is possible to clarify structural aspects of the lived body by making use of Scheler's analysis of urge. How the lived body participates in the movement of the life urge illustrates the relation the lived body has to value.

All forms of life, whether vegetative, organic or animal, participate in the basic vital urge. As Scheler attempts to demonstrate in *Die Stel-*

<sup>6</sup> P. BLOSSER, *Is Scheler's Ethic an Ethic of Virtue?*, in P. BLOSSER, E. SHIMOMISSÉ, L. EMBREE, H. KOJIMA, *Japanese and Western Phenomenology*, Dordrecht 1993, 147-159.

<sup>7</sup> M. SCHELER, *Probleme einer Soziologie des Wissens*, GW VIII, 27.

<sup>8</sup> GW VII, 121.

*lung des Menschens im Kosmos*, life has evolved into ever more complex and intelligent forms. The phenomenon of the lived body appears first at the level of organic life that has the power of self-movement. Urge operates under the basic principle of least effect, the attempt to maximize reality and minimize strenuous energy output.<sup>9</sup> This principle manifests itself in living beings as particular drives. Common to both plant and animal life is the urge for growth and reproduction.<sup>10</sup> Vegetative life, however, is dependent upon outside forces and beings such as pollinators to reproduce and thus express the life urge in a passive manner. Living beings with the freedom of self-movement are able to express the life urge on their own accord.

The power and freedom to move, compelled by the basic life urge, gives rise to the most rudimentary form of consciousness, the “I can”. For non-spiritual beings, this “I can” is not a form of self-consciousness, where a being is able to reflect on itself as a conscious being, but rather an awareness of itself as being compelled, as in need. Here we have the birth of the ego in its most primitive form. For Scheler, the ego is not an accomplishment of spirit, but of life, the subject of the life-urge. Accompanying the consciousness of being compelled is the experience of resistance. Resistance is experienced as the suffering of not being able to fulfill the urge, as the experience of something other prohibiting the urge to be. This experience gives rise to not only the awareness of that which is other, but also to the consciousness of one’s lived body.<sup>11</sup> Resistance is a privileged experience, an experience accessible only to a living being, a being that has a body.

Scheler is careful to distinguish between the lived body (*Leib*) and the physical body (*Körper*). In contrast to a mere physical body, there is an essential relation between the lived body and the ego.<sup>12</sup> This relation is shown, as Scheler notes, in the so-called double sensation of touching one’s own body. There is the sensation of touching a physical body, e.g., my finger. Yet, immediately given in this touching is the awareness that it is my finger that is not only touching but is also being

<sup>9</sup> *GW XI*, 186.

<sup>10</sup> *GW II*, 14.

<sup>11</sup> *GW IX*, 15.

<sup>12</sup> *GW II*, 402.

touched.<sup>13</sup> The identity of one's lived body with one's physical body such as one's hands and feet is not fixed and continues to be reconstituted. Not only does this process of identification take place, as is the case with the newborn, in the realization that this hand that I see before me is indeed my hand,<sup>14</sup> but also in the case of particular instruments that may become a part of a limb.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, regardless of how sedimented this identity between one's lived body and one's physical body becomes, the lived body is irreducible to the physical body. Every sensation felt by an organ of the body assumes the lived body as its form.<sup>16</sup> While a particular sensation may be localized on a specific part of the arm, it is the lived body that is touched. The whole of the lived body is, in other words, assumed in every part of one's physical body.

The notion of lived body allows Scheler to reject the traditional philosophical dualism between the physical and the psychic. For Scheler, it is possible to distinguish between a physical and psychic or mental (*seelisch*) experience. Yet, this distinction does not assume a dualism between the body and the mind (or soul). Rather this distinction concerns a difference of regard, whether we attend to the inner or outer aspect of the experience.<sup>17</sup> Any part of the lived body has its own inner condition, which is part of the whole psychic being of the individual.<sup>18</sup> In the evolution of life, there is a degree of complexity and quality in the development of the lived body and psychic being. The same cannot be said of the person, which does not admit of degree. While there may be a disembodied person such as God, gods or angels, there is no disembodied soul or mind. «The lived body belongs not coincidentally, but rather necessarily and essentially to the soul of the human being».<sup>19</sup>

A living being has both an inner and outer awareness, an awareness of one's psychic states expressed as drives and an awareness of one's

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 400.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>15</sup> *GW VIII*.

<sup>16</sup> *GW VII*, 44; *GW II*, 401.

<sup>17</sup> *GW X*, 337.

<sup>18</sup> *GW XII*, 159.

<sup>19</sup> *GW VI*, 262.

body in relation to other bodies. Both forms are a form of body consciousness. The relation of the lived body to itself and to other physical bodies is ecstatic and thus has no sense of the self as self. Self-consciousness is an achievement reserved for persons alone, for it assumes the act of objectification and ideation.<sup>20</sup> However, bodily consciousness is distinct from mere vital consciousness,<sup>21</sup> which is the awareness of being compelled by the live urge, an awareness of being and becoming. The difference between vital and bodily consciousness concerns the individuality of the sense of consciousness. For vital consciousness, there is no distinction between self and other; there is no other. Evidence of such consciousness can be found in the phenomenon of *Gefühlsans-teckung*, a distinct feeling type that is associated with a certain mass or herd mentality.<sup>22</sup> As Scheler writes, «the revolutionary masses and their movement demonstrate the same condition of collective frenzy in which the body-ego and spirit-ego are simultaneously taken up in a passionate vital movement of the collective whole».<sup>23</sup> Bodily consciousness assumes an awareness of oneself as an individual, as a being distinct from other beings. There is, thus, a distinctive type of individuation that takes place at the level of the lived body. In respect to psychic, vital feelings such as hunger, it is not simply a feeling of being hungry, but rather a feeling of I am hungry in contrast to the hunger of fellow living beings.

Individuation is necessarily a relation with otherness. To have a lived body is to be with others. It is for this reason that Scheler asserts that the awareness of the outer world precedes the awareness of the inner world.<sup>24</sup> Living beings come into contact with one another through movement, spontaneous movement motivated by the life urge. Scheler rejects Kant's depiction of space and time as forms of intuition. For Scheler, spatiality and temporality are forms of activity.<sup>25</sup> In this re-

<sup>20</sup> *GW IX*, 40.

<sup>21</sup> *GW VII*, 45.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 25-29.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>24</sup> *GW VIII*, 375.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

spect all living beings have a sense of space and time. Spirit, according to Scheler, is both aspatial and atemporal. As spiritual beings, we can comprehend the meaning of space and time, and in the case of modern science work with concepts of empty space and objective time. Yet, both space and time are existentially relative and thus assume the activity of the lived body in activity. Empty space and objective time are abstractions from the lived body's experience of movement (spatiality) and change (temporality). The lived body, thus, undergoes a process of self-spatialization and self-temporalization as it is compelled by the life urge to act. It is also the case for Scheler that all living beings have a consciousness of aging and consequently that their time will come to an end.<sup>26</sup> A living being not only has its own space in the form of its lived body, but it also has its own time.<sup>27</sup>

The traditional dualism between the body and the mind harbors the prejudice that the body requires some guiding principle to give it form and a distinct course of development, which we could call intelligence. Kant expresses this prejudice in the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* when he claims that experience without concepts is blind. For Scheler, the lived body not only develops its own consciousness of space and time, but its course of development. Living beings have their own form and integrity. The life urge that compels the living being to become is not a chaotic or random impulse to be. It is a striving to know, to learn, to become more intelligent.<sup>28</sup> The form of intelligence that is developed in the lived body is not conceptual, but it does assume the development of associations. There is a coordination taking place through the lived body so that the different sensations and experiences work together to make sense of the outside world.<sup>29</sup> Every past experience is "in" the ego, the psyche of the lived body.<sup>30</sup> These past experiences, according to Scheler, do not develop a general disposition in the

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<sup>26</sup> See M. SCHELER, *Tod und Fortleben*, GW X, 16-35.

<sup>27</sup> GW XII, 154.

<sup>28</sup> GW VIII, 65.

<sup>29</sup> GW II, 465.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

living being, but are in the immediate past of the present experience.<sup>31</sup> Every experience takes place in the context of the entire life of the living being, a part within a greater whole.<sup>32</sup> Through the growing associations and dissociations with the past experiences over the course of life, the living being learns what to expect and how to be more fully. Causality and similarity are not a priori categories of the understanding, but are discovered and as a consequences are existentially relative to the lived body.<sup>33</sup> Throughout the course of the life of a living being, these associations become “functionalized” and regulate the course of life.

In respect to living beings, it is necessary to speak of a continuum of intelligence, of a living being exhibiting higher or lower levels of intelligence. As Scheler comments, the difference between the inventive intelligence of Thomas Edison and the intelligence found in animal life is a difference of degree, not of kind.<sup>34</sup> The tendency in Scheler is to use this continuum found amongst all living beings as an opportunity to describe the unique qualities of spirit and thus the person. This tendency has created the unfortunate impression of a hierarchy between life and spirit, which only seems to reinstitute the traditional hierarchy assumed in the dualism of body and mind. Scheler’s late work, *Erkenntnis und Arbeit*, demonstrates that this is a false impression. Much of the attention *Erkenntnis und Arbeit* has received is due to its critique of American pragmatism.<sup>35</sup> However, the majority of the work is dedicated to showing the so-called relative correctness of pragmatism and how the lived body makes a unique contribution in the formation of practical knowledge and cognition.

There are two contributions the lived body makes. The first concerns the experience of reality. Reality is given solely in the experience of re-

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<sup>31</sup> Scheler also accounts for memories that are no longer in the immediate present, but are called upon by present experiences. There are both immediate and mediated memories, memories that are present to us and memories that are awakened (*ibid.*, 434).

<sup>32</sup> *GW* II, 424.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 445.

<sup>34</sup> *GW* IX, 99.

<sup>35</sup> Z. DAVIS, *The Possibility of Phenomenology. Scheler’s Confrontation with Pragmatism*, in M. GABEL, M. MÜLLER (edd.), *Erkennen – Handeln – Bewähren, Phänomenologie und Pragmatismus*, Nordhausen 2015, 118-133.

sistance, an experience touched upon above. Spirit only grasps the essence and never the existence (*Dasein*) or reality of a being. Only the body through the resistance experienced by the drive structure has access to what is and what is not the case. It is only in the interaction between the ideas of spirit and the sense of reality of the lived body, what Scheler describes as a growing identity,<sup>36</sup> that our knowledge of the world is that of the world that exists. Whether the deeper spiritual values and ideas become realized and come to have efficacy in the world depends on the work of the lived body. Spirit does not have a privileged position in this respect.

The second and related contribution of the lived body is perception. Spirit does not perceive the world, but rather conceives and understands it. It is the lived body that perceives the world through its sense organs. Perceptual activity is for Scheler not merely the result of stimulus imposing itself on the organs that gives rise to a particular response. At the level of the lived body, perception is relation between the projection of a trans-conscious image (*Bild*) by the lived body and the stimulus of the object perceived. The relation is thus not merely physical, but also psychic. A living being has a “mental” image of things, the things that it desires in its question to fulfill the life drives. These are the images used in the fantasy life of living beings, projections used to compel the living being to act. The purpose of these images is practical and throughout the practical life of the living being, they become more and more refined through success and failure. Images do not convey the sense or essence of a thing. They do provide a form to the things a living being perceives. What is given perceptually to the lived body is not a chaotic bundle of stimulus, but a world that makes sense, a world that has a distinctive form that the lived being navigates as it attempts to satisfy the life drives. This practical form of the world is inaccessible to spirit and one that the lived body must teach.

## 2) *The Lived Body and its Environment*

Driven by the urge to be and become, the lived body inhabits and makes sense of the world in which it lives. Bodily consciousness is not self-consciousness, but an ecstatic consciousness. The intelligence the

<sup>36</sup> GW VIII, 360.

lived body exhibits in its activity and its temporal-spatial embodiment is formed from the practice of living, an intelligence always relative to the life drives of the body. A living being has no desire to know “what” the world means. It only desires to learn how to better predict and manipulate what is to come in order to live more fully.<sup>37</sup> Ecstatic consciousness is a bodily awareness of one’s place in the world of fellow living and non-living beings. My focus thus far has been on the accomplishments of the lived body in order to understand more fully the depth and activity of the ecstatic consciousness of the lived body. The development of this consciousness in the living being is inextricably bound to the world that it inhabits. I would like to shift the focus to the place in which the living being exists. An investigation into the world of the living being clarifies the relation the lived body has to value.

Strictly speaking, the lived body does not have a world, but rather lives in the environment (*Umwelt*). World is the object correlate of the person and is the totality of objects and their essential relations, a network of signification, essences and ideas.<sup>38</sup> Not only can the person make things in the world an object of reflection, but also the world in its totality. An environment is a milieu, the milieu of the lived body.<sup>39</sup> A milieu is the world of practical value that is experienced as effective.<sup>40</sup> It is never an object of reflection. Rather it is that which is of interest, that which either grabs or repels our attention in the practice of living. The environment is not that which the lived body senses or perceives, nor is it the sum of all past and present perceptions. As Scheler writes, we as living beings can only sensibly perceive that which belongs to the milieu.<sup>41</sup> Everything that belongs to the milieu, the environment in which we live, is already charged with meaning and purpose. To have a body is to be engaged with one’s surroundings.

Scheler’s rejection of the mechanistic view of nature is a rejection of a model of interaction wherein the body’s senses are reacting to a barrage of stimulus. In its place, Scheler attempts to develop a dynamic

<sup>37</sup> *GW VIII*, 243.

<sup>38</sup> *GW II*, 381.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 158.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 156.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 162.

theory of matter that understands all environmental interaction as an interplay of centers or fields of force.<sup>42</sup> Even at the most basic level of the lived body's relation to the environment, basic sensation, there is an admixture of stimulus and attention.<sup>43</sup> Both the so-called subject and so-called object, the lived body and the environmental thing are active in the perceptual experience. What is given in the milieu is determined by what is of interest to the life drives and the impact of the external force centers and fields.<sup>44</sup> The milieu of the same forest, for example, will be quite different for the hunter and the hiker.<sup>45</sup> It is a difference of what the living being attends to in its environment. A living being has interest and it is that which is of interest that grabs the attention of the living being. For Scheler, there is both an active and passive attention, an attending to of which a living being is either consciously or unconsciously aware. All active attending assumes a passive attention. A living being is already being drawn and repelled to objects in its environment before it is actively aware of these objects.

The environment of the living being is always thus given in relief. A living being does not comprehend the objects as they are in themselves or in their essence. That which the living being attends to is that of which is of interest. The interest of the living beings determines the field in which attention oscillates. What a living being attends to in its environment, i.e., what is given, is at the mercy of the vital interest. As if imprisoned, there is no escape for the living being from its bodily drives.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, the living being only attends to that which is of vital interest.

There is an ambiguity in Scheler's work regarding the relation between the lived body and values. On the one hand, as I have already noted, Scheler declares that the life drives and necessarily attention is value blind.<sup>47</sup> On the other hand, he describes the milieu of the living

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<sup>42</sup> *GW VIII*, 333.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 364.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 289.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 341.

<sup>46</sup> *GW II*, 160.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 160.

being as a field of expression, expressing that which is and which is not of interest, which is of value to the living being.<sup>48</sup> An environmental thing can only grab the attention of the living being if it is of value. The only way to make sense of what Scheler means then by the value blindness of the life drives is to understanding this form of blindness as an inability to distinguish between the lower and deeper values. As Scheler says elsewhere, the life drives are not value blind, they are value indifferent.<sup>49</sup> All that is of interest is relative to the value of life. The relief of the milieu is structured in accord with what is given as more or less of vital importance. Objects, for instance, are given to the lived body as something to eat.<sup>50</sup> Yet, the living being is indifferent to whether there is any moral significance to eating this object. In themselves, deeper spiritual values such as goodness, truth and justice are of no value to the lived body.

The relation the lived body has to value is not an intentional relation where the lived body knows or comprehends the value of life itself. The relation is one of co-feeling and identification.<sup>51</sup> As Scheler writes, «we feel in the feeling of life our life itself».<sup>52</sup> There is a relation of vital sympathy between the lived body and the environment, or rather between the lived body and other living beings. It is a vital comprehension that the beings in one's environment are not merely objects, but fellow living beings.<sup>53</sup> Vital sympathy grants the lived body access to the life of other living beings, comprehending the joy and suffering of fellow living beings. Yet, as Scheler remarks, this vital grasping is not moral. «We feel the Japanese earthquake and in the world war, in the Russian starvation a God who screams out and suffers. This God is neither good nor evil. The world, its becoming lived body, is for us a simple expression of its condition».<sup>54</sup> However deeply a living being may grasp the

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<sup>48</sup> *GW IX*, 274.

<sup>49</sup> *GW VIII*, 348.

<sup>50</sup> *GW IX*, 29.

<sup>51</sup> *GW VIII*, 53.

<sup>52</sup> *GW II*, 342.

<sup>53</sup> *GW VIII*, 279.

<sup>54</sup> *GW XII*, 25.

suffering of a fellow living being, this grasping does not provide any moral direction for action. Joy and suffering function only as directives for the drive for growth and continued existence.

The lived body is and at the same time has a relation to value, the value of life. Its understanding of value is both dynamic and emotional.<sup>55</sup> This emotional understanding and relation to value is much different from the relation spirit has to value. Values are disclosed to the person in the act of love, an intentional act that opens the spiritual being to the depth of value. In his later work, Scheler described this form of spiritual loving as *agape*, in contrast to *eros*. *Eros* is the form of loving in which living beings participate in and relate to the lives of fellow living beings. It is not intentional, but dynamic – a form of communication that connects and exists between lived bodies. The lived body is compelled to be and become by the basic life urge, but it is compelled erotically. As I have shown, the life urge is not blind and develops every more intelligent means by which to become and fulfill the drive to be. Yet, intelligence and success are not measured quantitatively, as if a living being desires merely to exist. The vital sphere has its own qualitative distinctions. Erotically, a living being is drawn to ever more heroic, ever nobler expressions of life and is repelled by the mundane. «The *eros* of *Alleben* strives and tends to produce something new, something better, something more beautiful than it once was».<sup>56</sup> While *agape* or spiritual love strives for the good, *eros* or vital loving strives for the beautiful.

A lived body inhabits an environment of value depth and it embodies the ever-deeper qualities of life as it strives for the beautiful. This striving is indifferent to the deeper spiritual values and it is the task of the finite person to guide and direct the course of life so that expressions of beauty are not in fact evil. The lived body may not have access to the deeper spiritual values, but it does have access to the felt experience of life, i.e., existence and reality. Both are experiences to which spirit has no access. Hence, it is the lived body that gives the finite being a place and time on earth. This is a place and time where the acts of persons have an effect on other living beings, an effect that brings about actual suffering and joy. *Eros* may not have a moral compass, but it must con-

<sup>55</sup> GW VIII, 279.

<sup>56</sup> GW VII, 121.

tend with other living beings in its attempt to reach ever-deeper expressions of beauty. Embodiment means to live with the pain others.

### 3) *The Lived Body and Spirit*

The tension that Scheler describes in the finite person between spirit and life, between *agape* and *eros* is the tension between the good and the beautiful. Spiritualization is the process by which the life drives of the lived body come to be directed by the deeper spiritual values, a process wherein the beautiful becomes the good and the good becomes the beautiful. How such a process is possible is made ever more difficult to understand as we investigate the erotic nature of the lived body. Spirit has no power on its own to bring about the deeper values. It relies on the effective power of life. The only power spirit has at its disposal is the power to entice life as the carrot before the horse. However, spiritual values are only enticing to the body if they offer a more robust vital existence, if they offer greater depth in beauty.

Scheler's early account of virtue does provide at least an initial clue as to how the body may be enticed by that which the spiritual values have to offer. «The good», as Scheler writes in his essay on virtue, «becomes beautiful the easier it becomes».<sup>57</sup> In his *Formalismus*, Scheler goes to great lengths to distinguish his value theory (and virtue theory) from what he calls eudaimonistic ethics. There are two criticisms in particular that directly relate to the problem of the relation between the good and the beautiful. The first criticism is pedagogic difference. How does the good become easier? Scheler rejects the common eudaimonistic account that moral action becomes easier through a process of habituation and training through practice. In order for the good to become beautiful, the body must take an interest in the good. Practice and habit cannot create such an interest. They may create a reliable person, but not a virtuous person.

Eudaimonism suffers, according to Scheler, from the mistaken pedagogical view that a teacher awakens the student's interest in an object by increasing the attention the student pays to the object, as if interest was a consequence of constant and continual exposure. This is the most «confused theory of education possible». The pedagogical goal is to

<sup>57</sup> M. SCHELER, *Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend*, GW III.

demonstrate that the object is of interest. The attention to the object will increase on its on.<sup>58</sup> Constant repetition and habituation do not create the desire for the good. Virtuous action assumes that action realizing the good is given to the body as beautiful, as something that is qualitatively more robust and vital. It is the positive experience of value in the act itself that increases the “I can”, the freedom and power to act for the sake of the good.<sup>59</sup> It only becomes easier for the body to act for the sake of the good if the body has a positive, i.e., beautiful experience in the good. This cannot be obtained through continued practice, naively hoping that after a certain number of trials, the beautiful will be realized. Or in short, good works do not make the person good.<sup>60</sup>

The second criticism is related to the first and concerns the feeling of joy or happiness. For Scheler, eudaimonism takes happiness as the goal or purpose of an action. Educating the person through habituation supposedly cements a reliable manner in which to realize the *telos* of the human being. Following Luther, Scheler rejects such a conception and holds that joy is the source from which all moral action springs.<sup>61</sup> Moral action does not bring about happiness, but rather the good person acts out of joy and this feeling of joy is an essential moment of every good being and life.<sup>62</sup>

The good or virtuous person, thus, feels no tension between the obligation of goodness and the erotic drive for beauty. Happiness in respect to the resource of the good act is meant as a feeling of bliss or *Glückseligkeit*. It is relative to the deepest spiritual values, the value of the holy. A characteristic of the feeling state that accompanies the deepest values is that it is indivisible and non-localized.<sup>63</sup> There is not a place in the body where one feels bliss. Bliss is experienced throughout the body. The embodiment of the deeper spiritual values manifests itself in the emotional life of the person, in the feeling of bliss and joy that radiates

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<sup>58</sup> *GW* II, 160.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 526.

<sup>60</sup> *GW* VI, 76.

<sup>61</sup> *GW* II, 332; *GW* VI, 75.

<sup>62</sup> *GW* VII, 76.

<sup>63</sup> *GW* II, 111.

throughout the body. It is not a matter of training the body to act in the right way at the right time. Rather it is accomplished through the body's participation in the feeling of bliss.

If the feeling of bliss that accompanies moral goodness is experienced as an embodied person, it still remains unclear how such a bodily experience is possible. What is it about the moral experience that entices the lived body? Why would the lived body be erotically drawn to moral goodness? The only way to answer this question from within the framework of Scheler's thought is to show that the deepest spiritual values offer a living being the deepest feelings of vitality. This would mean that the most profound experience of the heroic is found in action such as moral action. As evidence, Scheler can only point to the moral exemplars throughout history, exemplars who live the moral life with a feeling of elation and bliss. This was certainly Scheler's response to Nietzsche in *Ressentiment* when he speaks of the heroic nature of the Christian virtues.<sup>64</sup> It is only in modern asceticism, Christianity after the Protestant Reformation, where we find the denial of erotic beauty and pleasure in the moral act. The early practice of Christian asceticism, according to Scheler, emphasized the greatest amount of pleasure in the smallest of acts.<sup>65</sup>

I have only emphasized the embodiment of moral experience up to this point. There are of course other spiritual values such as the cultural values. It would be possible in a similar manner to describe the feeling of joy related to, for instance, the experience of a work of art. In what way does the lived body experience a piece of music or a painting? Does such an experience offer a deeper sense of the vital? These are not experiences that I can explore in any depth at this time. Nonetheless, the argument that I have made up to this point following the thought of Scheler would necessitate that the lived body can indeed find such heroic value in the work of art, yet perhaps not as deep a vital value as in moral experience or even in religious experience. These experiences would all be considered ways in which the body recognizes the depth of spiritual values, not as such, but as that which offers greater vitality.

The direction of my analysis regarding the relation between spirit

<sup>64</sup> M. SCHELER, *Das Ressentiment im Aufbau der Moralen*, GW III, 70-95.

<sup>65</sup> GW III, 130-131.

and the lived body has been from “*von oben nach unten*”, from the depth of the spirit to the vitality of life. It is also possible to explore the relation in the other direction, “*von unten nach oben*”, the manner in which the deeper spiritual values are realized in practice. Such an investigation is not concerned with how spirit entices or inspires the lived body, but how spiritual values are taken up through tradition or what Scheler calls the group soul (*Gruppenseele*). This process of realization from the bottom up, so to speak, is a consequence of sharing in a collective whole with fellow finite persons.

Tradition, as Scheler defines it in *Formalismus*, is a type of transfer of experience that is neither the inheritance of a psychic disposition nor the conscious communication or teaching.<sup>66</sup> It is rather a transfer that takes place by participating in activities with others. Through traditional practices, the spiritual structure particular to that community is transferred.<sup>67</sup> Each and every collective whole has its own unique structure and style of lawfulness that lives in the thoughts and actions of its members.<sup>68</sup> These collectivities can be as small as an individual family or encompass a history of a certain culture such as the “West” or “East.” Although it is possible to discover the objective *ordo amoris* (or perversion of it) in every collectivity, each collectivity has its own unique way in which it expresses the *ordo amoris*. Tradition is the manner in which this style of valuing is transferred from member to member.

Scheler uses the notion of a group soul to clarify what type of transfer takes place through tradition. The transfer is not spontaneously executed, as if the transfer was an intentional act executed by a particular member. It executes itself impersonally and anonymously through the activities themselves.<sup>69</sup> Scheler has very little more to say on this impersonal transfer of a spiritual structure. What he assumes is the erotic relation or vital sympathy linking lived body to lived body. As I noted above, past experiences remain in the lived body and form the context in which a living being exists. Even for non-spiritual beings, these past experiences inform the present and form what Kant might call categories of the understanding. The process of identification that takes

<sup>66</sup> *GW* II, 49.

<sup>67</sup> *GW* VIII, 26.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 55.

places erotically between lived bodies not only communicates particular emotions such as joy or sorrow, but also ways of sensing and moving through the environment. A spiritual structure is also a way of seeing the world, but is informed also by ideas and essential relations between ideas. Cultural practices presuppose this spiritual structure and consequently communicate this way of being in and comprehending the world in activity of participating in a certain practice. Yet, this communication is impersonal or, as I would prefer to describe it, erotic. In this manner, lived bodies transfer spiritual content to other lived bodies through the vital sympathy linking them in practice as they share an environment. This transfer is a transfer of the embodiment of a spiritual structure, of a style of valuing and thinking. The group soul is an impersonal transfer of a very personal style of being. Such a transfer only takes place between bodies living, working and feeling with one another.

Embodiment is the process in which the lived body comes to inhabit the world in which it exists. This world, as Scheler as shown, is saturated with value and value depth. Despite its indifference to the deeper spiritual values, the lived body has a crucial role in the way in which an individual person and a group of persons develop their own unique *ordo amoris* and, consequently, their own style of being in the world. Scheler's insistence upon a powerless spirit in his late work was in part due to his great disappointment that the spiritual institutions like the church and the leading intellectuals of the time failed to bring about a genuine cultural renewal in Germany and in Europe as a whole. It became all too clear that a cultural renewal could not take place solely "*von oben nach unten*". A renewal requires also the movement from below. It is the finitude of the human being that makes the realization of spirit possible. This does not mean that spirit ought to be devalued for the sake of the elevation of the vital. Such a position, for Scheler, fueled the devastating violence of fascism in Europe.<sup>70</sup> The task rather is to discover the manner in which spiritual values are embodied, how the body can be erotically inspired by the value depth and how this depth is lived with other finite beings.

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<sup>70</sup> GW IX, 155.

**ABSTRACT**

In this paper, I examine the relation between the lived body and the deeper spiritual values. The dualism in Scheler's thought between life and spirit requires that the embodiment of value not be thought in terms of the spirit's mastery over the body or the body's ability to recognize the depth of spiritual values. As I argue, embodiment must be understood in two respects. First, there is a process of embodiment that takes place primordially at the emotional level of existence, the level wherein the lived body experiences a deeper, more heroic vital existence through the realization of spiritual values. The second process concerns the role of tradition. It is through shared cultural practices that the spiritual structure and *ordo amoris* comes to be erotically shared and embodied by finite persons.

There are three sections of this paper. The first describes the meaning and development of the lived body in Scheler's work. Section two investigates the relation the lived body has to its environment. The third and final section illustrates how the lived body comes to embody the deeper spiritual values.