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SPECIAL THEME

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Traces of the Person: Max Scheler's and Paul Ricoeur's Attempts on Personal Ethics

Abstract To encounter a fellow-being does not mean only to see her face, to notice the color of her eyes, but to meet her eyes and to be addressed by her. *Who* one is irreducible to any objective property or value, and likewise cannot be comprehended through propositional statements in the manner of "talking about …" something. Rather, such comprehension demands an account of giving way to the appearance of the other *as* other. This account, prominently linked to E. Levinas' "ethics as first philosophy," has also been developed as phenomenological personalism. While Max Scheler developed his "Ethical Personalism" within his material Value Ethics, his Philosophy of Fellow-Feeling and in his late Philosophical Anthropology of human spirit, Paul Ricoeur develops his personalism through different approaches: from his early attempts on need and desire as the affective basis of our values to the perspective on the particular way we lead our lives in narratively constituting our personal identity, and finally to his concept of recognition. Reconstructing personalism as a philosophy of discovering the other person in her otherness and as a concept of social practice are the aims of this paper.

Keywords Scheler, Ricoeur, person, fellow-feeling, narrativity

"Personalism dies, but the person will return," Paul Ricoeur provocatively formulated (Ricoeur 1983) to characterize a tendency in Continental Philosophy that runs counter to Deconstructivism. Even if personalism has been deplored for its metaphysical background, the notion of person still seems to be more appropriate to our dealing with each other than the notions of consciousness, subject or even the individual—at least from a phenomenological point of view

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that poses questions as to how it comes that somebody—a "Who" not a "What"—is able to appear as a character, identifiable not only in her appearance but as somebody responsible, somebody whose words and deeds can be counted on. The dominant strain through Scheler's works is his meticulous description of the particular way a person is given both to herself and to others. Scheler's way always leads to the concrete person, given in immediate experience before we intentionally capture objects of perception, given in our motives of understanding ourselves and others. These motives characterizing our style of both affectivity and activity are founded in such values that give meaning to our bearings, words and deeds. Scheler's critique of *Formalism in Ethics* and his attempt to found *Non-formal Ethics of Values*—a two-volume project he began in 1913, the second part of which would be published 1916 during World War I—bears the subtitle *A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*. Also, his fundamental belief of person as a ontologically unique category is explicated in his book on sympathy.

Comprehension of the uniqueness of a person—in comparison to any other appearing "object"—can be gained through reduction of our common experiences and looking for those foundations by which experience of the other person becomes meaningful. Scheler's phenomenology thus draws on the foundational role of the mutual intercourse of persons in their irreducible otherness to each other: We are only irreducibly ourselves as being other. In this context, Scheler reduces our perceptional attitudes to the material offspring of our acts—acts conceived in a broad range of meaning: from affective states as need or pain[1] to desires and choice, from intellectual to emotional and sympathetic acts. There is nothing and nobody behind these acts—no thing-like substance, ego or any static essence. Yet, there is the person: "the person *is* and experiences himself only as a being that *executes acts*, and he is in no sense 'behind' or 'above' the execution of acts, like a point at rest" (Scheler 1961, 4). Not rationality, but the emotional horizon of value feeling founds all our acts and makes us transcend our otherwise fixed stance towards world and fellow persons. For this reason, the hidden source for overcoming a fixed and substantial identity is the person.

This notion of difference in being other to each other gives rise to a concept of alterity, and this is what links Scheler to Paul Ricoeur: In the latter's work *Oneself as Another* from 1990 (Ricoeur 1992) he reshapes his conception of expressing and communicating personality in a theory of narration.[2] Narration is

[1] Two affective registers Ricoeur will distinguish rigidly in their structure of displaying values on an affective—bodily—basis (Ricoeur 1966, 105ff.). We will return to this concept of Ricoeur's writings from 1950 on the voluntary and involuntary intentionality of values later.

[2] For a detailed reconstruction and interpretation of the developments in Ricoeur's anthropology from a symbolic to a narrative order, cf. Greisch (2009).

not only the medium of expressing but also of reflecting the temporal life of persons. Ricoeur explores narrative identity as a third way between the empirical and the transcendental access to the person, not only to analyze the constitution of personal reality but also to interpret the meaningful reality of collective identities. Narration displays the person without objectifying it. Oriented towards other persons, narration does not simply ascribe a certain identity to them, but is always and already pre-predicatively (prior to a particular story) and pre-reflexively (prior to a particular plot) about myself being with others, entangled in their (hi)stories; further, narration may transcend a given reality to explore possibilities against sheer facticity. This transcendence—yet in a slightly different mode—also characterizes Scheler's notion of a person.

The ethical impact of Ricoeur's narrative concept of persons' "narrative traces" is bound to the recognition of others, as he develops further in his late book, *Parcours de la reconnaissance*, from 2004 (Ricoeur 2007). As a structure of personal experience, narration puts an ethical demand on us, which is both pre- and descriptive.[3] We will follow these approaches to the person from Scheler to Ricoeur with a focus on Ricoeur's later works since it is here that he stresses the notion of alterity and its ethical demand in personalism more strongly than in in his early works on the affective basis of being an incarnated person (*Philosophie de la volonté*). We will begin with elements of Scheler's phenomenological critique of the transcendental concept of the person as developed by Kant as the rational "logical ego." Scheler's critique that Kant's formalism is incapable of doing justice to the person leads to his own "material" phenomenological perspective on feeling and empathy. From this second step, we will turn to Ricoeur's narrative concept of personal identity which will finally lead us to the question of recognition—sketching out an ethics of passivity, and enabling us to reach a responsible freedom.

1 Unveiling the Person

A person is, as Kant puts it, "to himself, on the one hand phenomenon, and on the other hand, in respect of certain faculties the action of which cannot be ascribed to the receptivity of sensibility, a purely intelligible object" (KRV A546/B574).[4] This leads us from the empirical status and the sensible nature

[3] Cf. Ricoeur (1992, chapter 6.2): Narrative theory is a hinge between a theory of action and ethics insofar as the fable of narratives both ascribes to their figures what they are doing and ascribes deeds to these very figures. Thus, narratives shed new light on the relation of actions to their actor, as narratives develop their meaning not only by basic actions but by contexts of deeds beyond mere causal consequences.

[4] Translation here and following: Norman Kemp Smith (Kant 1965).

of ourselves as things among the things of the world which we perceive and with which we share perceptibility, to the transcendental status of the person: to our being subject, or the logical[5] "thinking substance," the "unity of consciousness which precedes all data of intuitions, and by relation to which representations of objects" is alone possible (KRV A 107). By virtue of this unity of consciousness we are persons, beings completely different in rank and dignity from any other thing. Against this concept of "rational personality" Scheler claims that there is no unity prior to what is immediately experienced in affectively lived experience; phenomenologically the person is "the immediately coexperienced *unity* of *experiencing*" (Scheler 1973, 371) in any singular act of experiencing. Such a "concrete person" in flesh and bones, in her prior bodily affectivity and activity, is more than a subject of rational activity. To capture this, Scheler focuses on the full range of our act-life and what founds its unity: "*The being of the person is therefore the 'foundation' of all essentially different acts*" (Scheler 1973, 383).

What qualifies the identity of this concrete person in experiencing her acts is never a transcendental function. This only leads away from the ways a person is revealed to us. We can only get an understanding of, or access to, her unity, her motives that make her appear as this specific person ("character" for Ricoeur), through her dealings with change in her course of life. Thus, we have to become aware of the temporality giving way to the appearance of our act-life: "Identity lies solely in the qualitative direction of this pure becoming different. In trying to bring this most hidden of all phenomena to givenness, we can guide the reader to the direction of the phenomenon only by ways of images"—yet: which kind of images? Scheler continues:

> Thus we can say that the person lives *into* time and executes his acts into time in becoming different. But the person does not live within phenomenal time, which is immediately given in the flow of inwardly perceived psychic processes, nor does he live in the objective time of physics. In the latter there is nothing like fast and slow, endurance […], or the phenomenal time dimensions of present, past, and future, because the past and future points of phenomenal time are treated "as" possible points of the present. Because the person lives his existence precisely in the *experiencing* of his possible *experiences*, it makes no sense to try to grasp the person in past lived experiences. (Scheler 1973, 385f.)

[5] Kant does not think of *res cogitans* as substance in the Cartesian sense of immortal soul, but as category only in the sense of a logical substratum, as logical unity, a logical ego (KRV A 355/428).

A person is never a simple point of departure of acts, but always already presents contexts of acts; an example of this is what we recognize of a person in her biography or her "stories." "[A] glance at the person himself and his essence immediately yields a peculiarity for every act that we know him to execute, and the knowledge of his 'world' yields a peculiarity for the contents of his acts" (Scheler 1973, 386). Thus, a person is a unity due to her life-story towards which all her acts culminate. By her life-story a person is phenomenologically given in the full range of her acts. Also, the stories of others with whom a person is entangled constitute the givenness of her as unity; in this multiplicity of stories, she is given in the temporality of becoming, change and consolidation of meaning in this development, as these stories unfold and vary: *A person is a unity in becoming into time, time as the horizon of her unity is co-constituted with her and those others she deals with*. This notion marks the transcendence of a person which correlates her with the world and makes the person the instance that unveils world to herself and to others.

The acts of the person belong to a world of depth and amplitude; this world is grace to the person's ability to transcend any random appearance—phenomenologically: givenness—we associate with her. This ability of transcending reality and even objecting to a reality, a reality putting the person under the spell of necessity, Scheler names "spirit" (*Geist*) As spirit, the person is psychophysically indifferent, and also indifferent to the modal difference of real vs. possible or the simply imaginable. In his last work, *Man's Place in Nature,* Scheler concretizes the spiritual person as the "protestant of life": She is able to bracket all that resists her possibilities of transcendence, her possibilities of becoming into time. Yet, spirit itself is weak; it is not able to consummate anything within the world that achieves the aims of our impulsions and drives. Spirit may only guide these natural and psychic forces.

The only positive stance of spirit is to experience the unity of acts it conceptualizes yet does not carry out—for example in a story of what might have been and which becomes real now in telling or reading the story. Thus, what can be said of a person is that she exists in the execution of *intentional* acts; this is the "essence" of a person (Scheler 1973, 389f.) as she appears to us not in her effects, but rather in her intentions, in what she unveils to us. The person always is fully given, yet is capable of becoming other. Her identity is only founded in a unity of acts over time which can be, for example, conceived in presenting a story; she transcends a finite setting of her acts because the story always can be retold or continued.[6] In order to appear, a person needs a specific worldly substrate: This is narration. It is also in narration that the affective closure of our body is transcended: As incarnated being, my body sets limits to my giving way

[6] Cf. for such transfiniteness of spirit, see Scheler (1973, 392).

to appearance. E.g., I cannot distance myself from my feelings within the affective framework wherein I bodily live them. It is only by imagination that I can understand and explain them in the framework of needs, desires and their value to my live (Ricoeur 1966, 99). Yet, this imaginative transcendence has to be realized within the sphere of the world, towards others.[7] Yet, let us first come to the affective constitution of values in fellow feeling, within a community of persons.

2 Community of Persons—Fellow Feeling and Embodied Ethics

Scheler's work on fellow feeling also starts with the methodology of phenomenological reduction to the concrete: the vivid signs of expression and their manifestations, i.e. the lived body. The body displays a symbolic, not a causal relationship between inner experience and expression:

> It is rather that the same basic sense-data which go to make up the body for outward perception, can also construe, for the act of insight, the expressive phenomena which then appear, so to speak, as the "outcome" of experiences within. For the relation here referred to is a *symbolic*, not a causal one. We can thus have insight into others, insofar as we treat their bodies as a *field of expression* for their experiences. (Scheler 1954, 10)

Such symbolic relation is no result of an act of inference, but its experience is directly given to us in expressive phenomena and their primary "perception": "In" the blush we perceive shame, "in" the laughter joy or embarrassment. Being confronted with expressions—again—means to transcend mere facticity as in bodily appearance. Rather, expressions become the symbol of the act of the person, e.g. the clasped hands symbolize the pleas of the supplicatory in her

[7] Ricoeur will only develop this point in his later works. Because of my focus here, I will concentrate on them and develop the notion of affectivity with Scheler in the following. What—in Ricoeur's *Philosophie de la volonté*—bears a similarity to Scheler's philosophy of emotions and their function of founding values. Is his notion of the materiality our personality bears an embodied one; it is a source for our intentional motives prior to transcendental unity of self-conscious willing or rational judgment: "But the adherence of need to the most underivable bodily existence cannot make it into a motive like the others. Need is the primordial spontaneity of the body; as such it originally and initially reveals values which set it apart from all other sources of motives. Through need, values emerge without any having posited them in my act-generating role […]. Before I will it, a value already appeals to me solely because I exist in flesh; it is already a reality in the world, a reality which reveals itself to me through the lack" (Ricoeur 1966, 94).

individual acts (Scheler 1954, 75).

The significance of this so-called fellow-feeling in conceiving the person in her expressions lies "in its disposing us to realize, that independently existing persons in mutual relation to one another are by nature *predisposed for a communal mode of life*" (Scheler 1954, 66). In fellow-feeling, a unitary field of meaningful appearances is predisposed. "It is this natural predisposition which is intuitively grasped in fellow-feeling as a harmonious fulfillment of human worth" (Scheler 1954, 66). Yet, there is a twofold movement of the expressive person, as she does not only transcend towards a communal world, but also withdraws to her own personal world where her expressions and not visible. Her body in its affectivity closes her to the world as the body gives way to a shared openness.[8] This is the twofoldedness of the essential individuality of the person: her self-awareness and the awareness others may gain of her. Recognizing her means, on the one hand, to sympathize with her in experiencing her meaningful acts, on the other hand, there is the absolute privacy of this person we cannot fully gain access to. It is this reverse movement of embodied personality that maintains the uniqueness and otherness of the person. Scheler's way to gain a sense of expressive acts is—in a good phenomenological manner—to gain descriptive hints in the varieties of experiencing the other person.

Scheler differentiates four modes of fellow-feeling, according to different intersubjective relations: Immediate community of feeling (feeling *with* someone), fellow-feeling *about* something, mere emotional infection, and true emotional identification (Scheler 1954, 12). They assume a certain foundational order: *Feeling with* someone is a spontaneous act of unitary feeling in a unitary state of emotional consciousness, for example, the sorrow parents share as they are standing at the grave of their dead child. This *immediate community of feeling* is the foundation of fellow-*feeling about* something, where the intentional object is already mediated and somewhat abstracted: The notion "Imagine how they might feel!"—accompanied by a little report on those parents as one may see them standing with stern faces and weeping—is an example for this mode. We only can feel *about* it if we have experienced this feeling before and thus can experience an inner resonance. *Fellow-feeling with* and *about* something has to be differentiated from mere *emotional infection* as we experience it, for example, in mass-panic—a feeling which too often proves to be manipulable. *Feeling about* and *feeling with* are foundational for true *emotional identification* (or *true fellow-feeling*) as an act where the person in the reality of her spiritual personality—is given. "Foundational" does not mean that emotional

[8] A movement which is also developed by Ricoeur in his third chapter on the affective perspective of human character in *L'homme faillible* (Ricoeur 1960).

identification is later in time because it is richer in experiential implications; in fact Scheler does not talk about the genetic order of fellow-feeling, but of the phenomenological order by which the essential features of a person are given to us in her twofold transcendence: In feeling with and about we come to a point where the inaccessibility of a person's privacy, of her "intimate personality," is understood. Only then we reach a new quality of emotional attunement. True emotional identification is only meaningful if it is linked with the highest values of love, or hate—towards an intimate personality we recognize as inaccessible to us: We will never be able to neglect her uniqueness since we never will possess all of her depth and riches—just as no one will be able to do this with ourselves. We may identify with the other, but will never be able to equate her or us to anybody else in a similar situation.

Such emotional identification is radically different from the other forms of fellow-feeling, since it is neither temporary nor simply a conscious or unconscious reproduction of somebody else's expression; neither is it mere identification with another. Explained in terms of phenomenological reduction, we do not only gain theoretically, but become aware in emotional identification *in concreto*: it is the center of intentional activity itself, the unity where all our acts towards fellow persons recognized as persons become possible (Scheler 1954, 33). Such insight works as an a priori blue-print (*Leitbild*), since it only is liminally reached in encounter with the beloved person as our love becomes more individual and more stable (Scheler 1954, 122). "Blue-print" does not mean "type," but unique example, an individual general, and only develops in ongoing experience: a practical experience both in our everyday life and in our analytical stance as phenomenological philosopher, anthropologist or social scientist. Thus, a phenomenological method becomes part of experience and part of our freedom (Scheler 1954, 130).

The more deeply we get to know another person, the more individual and unique she becomes, the more we lose interest in the roles defining her as a social self varying in different contexts. The relation with this person only relies on the two of us, and thus is self-subsistent (Scheler 1954, 121); it no longer relies on any outspoken commitment or proof, but is based on trust in each other—as there is no other proof of our faith than our sheer belief. Such trust is only reached in self-forgetfulness, since we no longer harbor doubts. As long as we compare ourselves with others we will not bridge the divide between individuals in their inaccessible uniqueness, on the one hand, and the customary measures on the other hand; we will only be able to draw an analogy from my individuality to the individuality of the other. Unlike this comparative stance of inferring states of mind from myself to others, true fellow-feeling provides a shared stance of ego and the other that nevertheless is not sameness in its

immediate givenness for our mutual experience: Such primordial givenness—before it becomes mere self-evidence (and therefore a basis for error)—is neutral to any distinction between self and other since it opens to a cosmos of incomparable co-givenness, which is brought about by the "Person of Persons," i.e. God.

> There is one particular kind of communal relation which stands out as a condition, both fundamental and supreme, for the ideally possible occurrence of all the others, namely the community of each person with God as the Person of Persons; a community based upon the religious acts of love, awe and fear of God, the sense of individual and collective responsibility towards Him or of guilt, gratitude, etc., in His regard. (Scheler 1954, 230)

In this theistic account, the individual does not only exist for the sake of the whole. Rather, a personalistic view has "the person and the whole exist on their own, yet also for one another, though never merely for one another, since both exist together for God as a Person, and it is only 'in God' that they too can exist for one another" (Scheler 1954, 231). In experiencing such communal relation, in intuiting such emotional union, we also become able to differentiate anew a horizon of this or that shared situation: As somebody learning a foreign language cannot do so only by acquiring a knowledge of individual words but needs insight into the character of the language, its structures and meaning-units, as well as how this language sounds to a native speaker (Scheler 1954, 250), we have to be open to the ultimate cosmos of shared meaning in order to discern individual perspectives that are not only interchangeable but have a right and a meaning of their own. Phenomenologically speaking, there is an "absolute" givenness of a last horizon providing meaning, which cannot be objectivized. And this context figures the *absolute* person, the horizon of values expressed in true emotional identification that meets the person in her fullest concretion—both as a character opened towards us and as the intimate person we never will be able to fully meet. God in His transcendence stands for this.

Eugene Kelly remarks that Scheler's notion of the person as the unity of her act-life shows inconsistencies, especially for the possibilities of a person's self-givenness. On the one hand, according to Scheler, persons cannot be understood along the lines of objects in an intentional givenness; neither can they be understood in a way similar to substances subsisting in time. On the other hand, Scheler refers to persons in a highly substantive way (Kelly 1997, 113), transcending time and space, e.g. persons are "not in time," alluding to a substantial being above time. Kelly comes to the solution the Scheler must accept a dynamic kind of substantiality which gives the person the phenomenality of a

"trace of essence";[9] her character bears—to quote Scheler in German—a *Wesenszug*, which she executes in time, making herself appear in time always absconding a finite substantiality—I will come back to this figure of the trace—also part of the title of my article—later.

Scheler needs recourse to the idea of God to avoid solipsism and to open the person to intersubjective experiences (Blosser 2002, 60). To avoid objectivation, he focuses on the mutual encounter of a plurality of persons (Scheler 1973, Pt. 3). This mutual encounter starts with the encounter between myself and another. Experiencing oneself as a person is only possible in the face of others, in the face of their commands, their responsiveness, and their care. God—as Scheler conceptualizes Him—encircles the totality of the intersubjective sphere of individual persons and their respective worlds.

To develop this idea of a community of persons who remain strangers to each other in their incarnated affectivity, but which may share a cosmos of values and meaning, we will now turn to Paul Ricoeur's theory of narrative identity, which helps to maintain not only the identity of a community under the head of "the person of Persons," but also an identity of persons different to each other: a community of strangers, of alterity. Here, Scheler's community of feeling "in God" is exemplified by the realm of stories. Nevertheless, also for Ricoeur, there is a demand for a realm transcending our everyday encounters.

3 A Narrative Mode of Empathy

For Ricoeur, the potential of narrative does not only lie in describing or in highlighting certain events of our lives. Also, it does not only constitute meaning, but changes—re-figures as Ricoeur puts it—meaning and thus even further expresses our individual and shared identities. The fundamental operation of narratives in such a broad sense is not reducible to story-telling, but it means—to Ricoeur—"emplotment" of meaning. Narration mediates between individual events and a story (a plot), it mediates between an individual and a shared perspective, between the discordant or singular events and the concordance of a life (Ricoeur 1992, 142): Our experiencing time in its discordance is structured as we find and narrate a plot for it. Ricoeur develops this notion of the fundamental narrative character of a life shared with others

[9] Cf.: "The problem is one of identifying the human person as a trace of essence, but still as essentially temporal, unlike other essences, which are unchangeable, or subject to mutation only in their relationship to a knowing subject" (Kelly 1997, 127f.). This refers to Scheler: "For wherever we meet with signs or traces [of an individual self and the unity of his actions], in a work of art, for instance, or in the felt unity of a voluntary action, we immediately encounter in this an active individual self" (Scheler 1954, 242).

further to an ethical claim of recognition. Recognition provides a framework for our fragile personal identities. Ricoeur always stresses such vulnerability of the person, which is due to vulnerability of the narrative identity, since narrative identity is easily manipulated through ideologies which ascribe to persons a certain role (Ricoeur 2004, 104), a particular "official history" by means of intimidation or seduction.

Ricoeur develops his concept of the person through a dialectic inherent in the very notion of identity: identity as sameness (*idem*-identity) and as selfhood (*ipse*-identity). Mutually, these two stances play a role in constituting, expressing, developing and maintaining the identity of a person within the course of her life—with and against what she is doing and what is happening to her, in the interplay of acting and suffering. Both aspects of identity can blend into one another, on the one hand due to the fact that they can get confounded by our analysis, and on the other hand due to the fact that they are irreducible to each other and thus cannot be distinguished within a foundational order. Thus, identities can be misconceived and the personal integrity of an identity is vulnerable.

Idem-identity is prominent where sameness persists in time when "a person is recognized, re-identifies as the same"; it means "the set of *acquired identifications* by which the other enters into the composition of the same," including "values, norms, ideals, modes and heroes *in* which the person or community identifies itself" (Ricoeur 1992, 121). *Ipse*-identity refers to the ability to keep one's word over time (Ricoeur 1992, 165)—despite the changes in desires, opinions or habits. This also holds for the identity of groups and of institutions, since to live with one another requires the institution, providing the power to act in concert and helping to ground justice (Ricoeur 1992, 194).

Narratives come into play with these two notions of identity as soon as we share a common world, and share a lived experience of this community; and this sharing already holds prior to its articulation and manifestation in language. Phenomenologically, this shared experience can be made explicit through the reduction of different layers of identity which form a common world and give way of differentiations of this communality. E.g., reduction becomes a matter of hermeneutics in interpreting foundations for sharing a particular perspective on the world (the horizon for the genesis resp. institution of meaning) and in interpreting foundations for the differences within instituted meaning. Narration grounds observation of other persons and of me as I or others reflect the role or the image I display to others. Thus, it grounds and exhibits experience and assures our dealings with the world, others, and history, since, through narration, mere happenings in their contingency become bound to a personal actor—a character. Character and plot become related and will be a point of reference for

the re-enactment of events within history.[10]

Yet, the problem arises of how to conceive what remains untold: the narratable, or what Scheler calls the intimate person. "[W]e do not have access to the temporal dramas of existence outside of stories told about them by others and by ourselves" (Ricoeur 1984, 74). Referring to the example of a psychoanalytic cure, Ricoeur draws on the interpretative force that develops in story telling: "[T]he narrative interpretation implies that a life story proceeds from untold and repressed stories in the direction of actual stories the subject can take up and hold as constitutive of his personal identity" (Ricoeur 1984, 74). There is a background of untold stories from which the told ones resonate. Untold stories are already at work, and live latently ready to be narrated, or, put differently: What remains untold in experience demands a narrative, and the narrative continues the untold stories. That is: Narration itself serves as reduction, as Scheler figured the reductive process in the different foundational levels of fellow-feeling. Accordingly, Ricoeur develops different levels of narration as they structure the development and variation of identity within our communal world.

Narratives differentiate our practices of acting and suffering into a pre-ethical habit of receptivity and responsivity, of listening and of answering, out of which persons can be recognized in their uniqueness and alterity. This habit is a mimetic one. I not only imitate in narrating and re-enacting what has happened, but I understand the plot by interpretation, by refiguration. Also in listening and in reading a story, I gain self-awareness of the story and what is beyond the frame of the narrated story, since I have to understand the plot—what happens to others. This is due to signs and symbols I have to adopt from the (cultural, social, situative etc.) background of the story and the one telling it and connect to my present situation. Such shifts of interpretative registers demand a setting *enjeu* of imaginative variations.[11]

From this mimetic re-enactment, Ricoeur develops his model of narrative identity between sameness and selfhood. If I could fully understand the feelings of others, if I could fully occupy their position and perspectives, there would be

[10] For example, in myths of foundation, the fusion of different cultures is figured in an event of giving a rule to a community, as Aeneas came to unite the Italian tribes after a series of battles culminating in a last battle with a decisive victory. Here, in the Roman tradition of foundational myths, enemies are recognized and integrated into a new order of peace. The identities of different groups are now figured by their loyalty to the uniting power, which is ascribed to a person and his act legitimating his power, but then may be reenacted by a institution—a code of law, a government, etc.

[11] As Ricoeur puts this in *Du texte à l'action*, to understand oneself means to gain understanding in the horizon of a text: to receive the conditions of possibilities of a self other than the self, that starts to listen or to read (Ricoeur 1985).

no intersubjective sphere, no communal room, no place for objectivity in sharing feelings and knowledge with others. Being irreducible to another, a concrete and singular person does not imply a radical difference, but implies speaking and acting to each other *as others*. Identity and also subjectivity are constituted by a transfer of meaning within experience: "the term *ego* … is transferred analogically from *me* to *you* in such a way that the second person signifies another first person" (Ricoeur 1991, 239).

Ipse-identity draws on the ability to keep one's word over time, which means that others can count on me. I am accountable for my words and deeds (Ricoeur 1992, 165). I am responsible, which means my identity requires commitment in front of others; I have to respond "to the question 'Where are you?' asked by another who needs me. The response is the following: 'Here I am!' a response that is a statement of self-constancy" (Ricoeur 1992, 165). Such responsiveness is the source for any narration with an ethical demand: thus, narratives gain a prescriptive character. Since all stories are questionable, they demand "Where are you?" they demand one's word in order to retell and to re-appropriate these stories in face of the Other and others as they found a community. Stories multiply themselves not randomly but under an ethical premise in order to testify "Here I am," "This I am" or "I can stand in for you telling your story which might be unnarratable by yourself!" One has to gain a stance between identification, misappropriation and assignment of self and other.[12]

Ricoeur's model of narrative identity and narrative access to the person also draws from theological premises, yet not as they figure an absolute foundation of a community of persons in God as the "person of persons" (as for Scheler), but in Ricoeur's highlighting of the asymmetric dialogical character of narration: Narration means instruction—to be passive as I listen to the other. Narration is a special kind of conversation wherein one cannot correspond directly, may it be with God or may it be the intimate person. Thus, the beginning of a narration, the beginning of listening to somebody other than myself to which I might be able to respond, figures like a gift, like a generosity I cannot exert myself to obtain. Further, Ricoeur draws from examples of biblical genealogical narratives where God provides a horizon of meaning wherein what is not present can and may appear and demands interpretation. God is named as somebody incomprehensible, yet, in the Gospel narrative, as providing the meaning of this history, e.g., the

[12] As Fritz Breithaupt puts this, narratively mediated empathy starts with taking sides with one character in a conflict which conflict is enhanced as the peripety comes to a close. Here, the appropriation is not so much identification—a loss of one's self to identities of others—, but means to gain a self-reflective stance that learns to judge and evaluate the subject of empathy. On the one hand, such narrative empathy lives from alterity, on the other hand characteristic for narrative empathy is a fresh self-assignment in the end, where full identification with the other comes to a decline (Breithaupt 2012).

history of release and rescue, or most important, of narratives starting with foundational incidents legitimating the course of history. In "naming God" (Ricoeur 2005, 167), I and we become part of this history, I am—we are—addressed as bearer(s) of this particular history. I experience myself as I am addressed by God, and to be summoned as a listener and to re-appropriate myself as somebody addressed runs counter to self-constitution and means a rupture with my stable identity.

4 Ethics of Recognition in Commemorated Stories—Passive Ethics of Non-Resistance

Narration is not simply memory—memory, in fact, can become abused as Ricoeur develops in *Memory, History, Forgetting*, referring to the ideologizing strategies of collective memory. Against this trait, narration also may obey a directive to remember *justly*, to "work through" the past and the potential abuses of the narrated collective memory. Here, remembrance is not recollection, but means to establish a relationship between the past, present, and future. "The duty to remember consists not only in having a deep concern for the past, but in transmitting the meaning of the past to the next generation" (Ricoeur 2004, 9). Duty to remember is not enforced by sanctions, but by responsibility, by an obligation to be responsible to and for the dead. The "duty of memory is the duty to do justice, through memories, to an other than the self" (Ricoeur 2004, 89).

In commemorating I gain a heritage I share with others with whom I can exchange memories. This demands encountering the other in her transcendence—in her double transcendence to the world and from the world in the person's privacy. As Scheler put it, to encounter the other as other and as stranger, as someone I can encounter empathetically, yet whom I never can experience as she does herself. There is always the intimate person which cannot be fully appresented. Thus, narrations and what they present as identity (*idem*-identity) have to be worked through again and again in order to recognize someone—a person—as another than myself and also as an alterity within time (*ipse*-identity). Yet, narrativity as a bond with others remains fragile:

> In the test of confronting others, whether an individual or a collectivity, narrative identity reveals its fragility. These are not illusory threats. It is worth noting that ideologies of power undertake, all too successfully, unfortunately, to manipulate these fragile identities through symbolic mediations of actions, and principally thanks to the resources for variation offered by the work of narrative configuration, given that it is always possible … to narrate differently. (Ricoeur 2004, 104)

Narrations enact and justify our values, they provide frameworks for action and for evaluating action; thus, they also testify and commemorate injustice within our own (egocentric) frames of values. Narrative recognition means to listen to and to acknowledge the life-stories of others without reducing them to our own perspective. The claim for recognition which is imposed on us also is a claim for a particular style thorough which our stories are expressed and presented, which gives significance for understanding *why* something came about. It is a moral task to create a space for recognition as we encounter each other as persons with still unnarrated stories. Narration by itself cannot solidify this fragility through intersubjective face-to-face-communication, but needs institutions to provide this space of interpersonal[13] visibility and recognition.

Thus, narrative access not only to the person, but to social frameworks, the historical frameworks in which persons appear to each other, may provide a discourse on our notions of identity. Max Scheler's "postmodern ethics"—as Michael Barber (2002) sees Scheler's theory of the person—similarly provides a critical stance against the totalizing powers of foundational narratives, against the mythical character they may gain as they function as justification for collective identity. Scheler's critique runs against false spiritualization of the person: Emotions, convinced of their own righteousness, may fall prey to resentment, the egocentricity of which only transcends through extraordinary acts of sympathy (e.g. love and hatred as provoking a response from the other as other). Such acts shatter our notion of the order of the everyday, by which we understand ourselves and others under the auspices of a totality we have imposed on our feelings. Scheler writes:

> What is essential for "understanding" is that out of the *spiritual center* of the other, which is co-given in intuition, we experience the acts of the person (speech, expressions, deeds) with respect to us and the environment as intentionally *directed* toward something, and that we re-execute such acts, i.e., that we "rejudge" his spoken propositions and the corresponding judgments, "refeel" his feelings, and "relive" his acts of will, and that we attribute to all of this at once the unity of some "*sense*." Of course, this "rejudging, refeeling, and reliving" is not a "co-judging" in the sense of "agreeing with" or making the same or similar feelings. It is only a reforming of the "sense" contained in a number of acts with random temporal distribution of their execution, acts that are directed toward *changing variations of sameness*. This continuity of sense in the course of the acts of the other is, in all understanding, the continuous intuitive background of acts of comprehension. (Scheler 1973,

[13] For the concept of "interpersonality," meaning a public space in the sense of Hannah Arendt (Vollrath 1987, 259f.).

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What we intuit is that the person as free spiritual essence is unpredictable: She evades our control, she evades the violence we impose on her by framing her with some predisposed knowledge— as we do when ruling on the person as on a matter of fact (*Herrschaftswissen*). Against this scientific manner of ascribing certain properties and a certain character to a person, metaphysics as *Bildungswissen* comes into play*:* It alone defends the type of knowing that makes it possible to apprehend the essence of the person yet not reduce it to an object of science's mastery and instrumentalism. Yet, metaphysics also stands against dogmatism.

> By "instrumentalism" I understand that approach which, instead of allowing methods to be directed in accord with their object, claims that it is the *methods* which first *procure* the objects […]. In contradiction to this principle of instrumentalism stands the position that one can only call that thinking "correct" which leads to the *truth* and which itself proceeds according to propositions or axioms which are *evidently* true. (Scheler 1960, 221)

In order to gain the "essence of a person"—the "trace of essence" (cf. above)—one has to minimize such "principles of truth" while nevertheless being aware of their status as a medium through which world and other persons are primordially given. Yet, they never pertain fully to the person, at least not in their highest form; they pertain to spirit which grounds our ability to be emotionally and empathically open to the world. Thus, a philosophical and metaphysical approach to the person is indeed the essential by which human spirit, personhood, is defined—independent of the drives and forces of life. We have to be aware of the attitude of phenomenological reduction in the "hermeneutical" position we take in everyday-life, which defines us by individual and communal narratives. Narrativity is both for Ricoeur and for Scheler not simply an uncontested anthropological framework, but has to itself be reduced when encountering the other person.

Scheler's critique of spiritualism aims at mutual learning processes between cultures, especially between the West and Asia, and he pays special attention to the (Buddhist) ability of "endurance," of care for the soul, of non-resistance, of passivity (Scheler 1960, 143). There, one does not neglect drive-factors and individual selfishness—claiming to be accountable as a stable will—one does not eradicate such drives identified as alien to reason, as alien to goodness (a tendency of active resistance so easily falling prey to resentment), but takes another stance: the negating stance of spirit, uttering a *non fiat* and the *non non fiat* against blind willing. This ethical stance of spirit—the spiritual person—can

guide the drives in formulating always negatively an admonition (*non fiat* or *non non fiat*) to impede action in order to listen to the person I am responsible for, for whom I finally have to act. Thus, through spirit we care for the other person.

Yet, the limits of our spiritual capacities have to be critically taken into account: through narrative reflectivity (Ricoeur) and by asceticism (Scheler) towards an unconditioned other. For both of these notions of personalism, the act of recognition of the person without a finite substance is central. The person can only be represented in her traces as they differ from each other and as they are modified as in telling and re-enacting stories: There is recognition of the person mediated in the discordance of many voices, but there is also recognition of a metaphysical grounding as Scheler claims for philosophical knowledge against any pragmatic and technical one, and as Ricoeur claims concerning recognition as we passively receive the gift of listening to a story in order that we might answer with our own. Only under the claims of recognition and responsibility is personalism taken seriously as a "style of appearance" rupturing our everyday knowledge and habits: as a philosophy of otherness, as a practice towards a community of strangers that may encounter each other.

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