

A PHILO-ANTHROPOLOGICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF MAN FROM OTHER BEINGS IN THE UNIVERSE: A SCHELERIAN PERCEPTIVE

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Abstract

*Philosophical anthropology is concerned with the questions of what man is and his place in the universe. Philosophers, thinkers, and intellectuals of all ages have provided a variety of answers to these questions. Man has been defined as "a rational animal," "God's image," and "a recent evolutionary product on our planet." According to Max Scheler, these three views are incompatible with one another and thus lack a unified view of man. He believes that the true nature of man remains unknown to us. In light of different philosophers' conceptions of man, this study exposes and evaluates the concept of man against the backdrop of Scheler's philosophical anthropology. The work examines Max Scheler's concept of man as presented in his book *man's place in nature*, as well as references to other relevant materials. The significance of this study is that it allows man to gain a better understanding of himself from Scheler's perspective. The researcher employs the analytic method of research. The researcher discovers during the course of this work that man can only actualize his being when he emerges from the illusions of his impulses into his conscious self.*

Keywords: Philo-Anthropological, Differentiation, Man and Universe.

Introduction

The question of what man is and where he fits in the universe is central to philosophical anthropology. Philosophers, thinkers, and intellectuals of all ages have provided a variety of answers to these questions.

Max Scheler observes that these perspectives are incompatible with one another and that the true nature of man remains unknown to us. As a result, various philosophers, theologians, and scientists' answers to what man is and his place in the cosmos are limited and unsatisfactory. According to Scheler, the limitations of these answers stem from the fact that man has only been studied in parts rather than in his entirety. In this regard, Scheler observes that, as valuable as the special sciences dealing with man such as psychology, physiology, biology, and so on are, they tend to conceal rather than reveal his nature. Because of the partiality of the responses thus far, a wholistic definition of man remains elusive. Can philosophical anthropology provide the sought-after wholistic definition based on these partial answers? Max Scheler believes so.

Man and its various definitions

The issue of man's unique nature and place in the universe is not a new one in the world of philosophers, scholars, and intellectuals. To name a few, philosophers such as Plato,

Aristotle, St Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, Hegel, Friedrich Nietzsche, Ernst Cassirer, Martin Buber, Ortega Y Gasset, and Jean Paul Sartre have addressed this issue. As a result, it has been articulated from antiquity to the present. However, some of the above-mentioned philosophers' definitions of man will be considered.

Plato (1967) defines man as a being composed of the body and the soul. In his *REPUBLIC*, Plato notes that "this composite structure of body and soul is called a living being" (Plato, 1967, p. 496). Despite this composite structure, Plato sees man essentially from the point of view of the soul because, for him, the soul is the principle or indispensable part without which one cannot talk of man, and thus this part that is indispensable defines man (Plato, 1967, p. 807). This is because, according to Plato, man is essentially made up of three parts: the soul, the body, and the mind. Plato believes that the intellectual or rational part of man's soul allows him to realise himself as a man. This demonstrates that the higher one's intellectual level, the more one becomes what one is supposed to be, namely man. Given this, it is clear that for Plato, man is primarily the soul due to the soul's rationality or intellectuality.

Unlike Plato, Aristotle (1975) considers the body to be an essential part of man. For him, man is essentially made up of body and soul. The soul plays the role of the form in man. It does not appear to be incorruptible, that is, capable of escaping the corruption of the body and thus immortal, as Plato believed. Aristotle's conception of the soul as the form of the body suggested an organic unity of man, which could be defined as a "rational animal" (Aristotle, 1975).

In viewing man as a union of soul and body tainted by original sin and motivated by the happiness principle, St Augustine (1958) drew on scriptural as well as philosophical sources. Augustine, inspired by Plato, maintained the same dichotomy between soul and body, the reduction of man to soul, and the complete autonomy of intellectual knowledge with regard to any contribution of the body. Augustine also believes that every living creature [man] has both a soul and a body. He claims that the soul is unquestionably superior to the body of these two components. Augustine maintains that even when the soul is vicious and weak, it is superior to the healthiest and strongest body. Since, according to Augustine, the soul is better than the body and higher by nature, he asserts that the soul is better than the body, just as gold, even when dirty, is worth more than a sliver or lead, however pure (Augustine, 1958, p. 474). Augustine also describes man as "the image of God." "When God created man in his own image, He endowed him with a soul so endowed with reason and intelligence that it ranks man higher than all the other creatures of the earth, sea, and air," he writes (Augustine, 1958, p. 265). Augustine maintains that "we ourselves can recognise in ourselves an image of God, in the sense of the Trinity," bolstering the idea of man as an image of God, a being created by God in his image and likeness (Augustine, 1958, p. 235). For him, it's just an image, and a very distant one at that. As a result, there is no issue of identity or consubstantiality with God. Nonetheless, it is an image that, by nature, is closer to God than anything else in all creation, and one that can be perfected into a still closer resemblance through transforming grace... 235 (Augustine, 1958).

In his definition of man, Aquinas (1939) praised the efforts of his predecessors Plato and Aristotle. He maintained that Plato's anthropology was in significant agreement with faith but lacked philosophical depth. Philosophically, Aristotle's concept of man was superior, but it was incompatible with Christian revelation. In the same vein, he agreed that man is fundamentally made up of body and soul. Following Aristotle, Thomas contends that man is not essentially the soul, but rather that there is a profound and substantial unity between the soul and body. As a result, for Thomas, body and soul are so intertwined that the soul cannot be found in any part of the body. As a result, the soul is present in the entire body as well as in each individual part of the body.

Thomas, like Augustine, believes that man is an image of God (Aquinas, 1939, p. 373). He, on the other hand, sees God as a kind of prototype for man. He maintains that unless the image is perfect in every way, it is not equal to its prototype. Because finite man cannot be perfect, he will always be an imperfect image of God.

Descartes (1993) believes that man is "a thinking thing," and thus asserts in his *MEDITATION*, "I am therefore precisely nothing but a thinking thing; that is, a mind, or intellect..., yet I am a true thing and am truly existing; but what kind of thing? I have already said it: a thinking thing" (Descartes, 1993, p. 19). He maintains that his thinking self is distinct from his physical self. The essence of man is that which is distinct from his body and thinks independently of the body.

Descartes later realised that the thinking thing makes use of the body because sensation is experienced through the body. Descartes writes in this regard, "nature also teaches not merely that I am present to my body in the way that a sailor is present in a ship, but that I am most tightly joined and, so to speak, commingled with it, so that I and the body constitute one single thing." For if this were not the case, I, as a mere thinking being, would not feel pain when the body is injured; rather, I would perceive the wound through pure intellect, just as a sailor perceives whether anything in his ship is broken through sight. And, instead of having mixed feelings of hunger and thirst, I should recognise when my body requires food or drink. For clearly, these sensations of thirst, hunger, pain, and so on are nothing more than a confused mode of thinking resulting from the union, or commingling, of the mind and the body (Descartes, 1993, p. 53). As a result, man is a composite of body and soul for him.

Hegel (1953) sees man as a synthesis of nature and spirit, the essence of which is spirit. Hegel asserts in his work *REASON IN HISTORY* that man is "part nature and part spirit, but his essence is spirit" (Hegel, 1953, p. xxv). In light of this emphasis on spirit, Hegel considers man to be a spiritual being. Thus, as man grows spiritually, he becomes more conscious of himself; and as he becomes more conscious of himself, he becomes himself. According to Buber (1968), man is "the creature capable of entering into living relation with the world and things, with men both as individuals and as many, and with the 'mystery of being,' which is dimly apparent through all this but infinitely transcends it" (Buber, 1968, p. 16). Through this living relationship with things, one's life becomes open to another, allowing one to experience the mystery of the other being within the mystery

of one's own. This conception of man implies that man is a social being who discovers himself through interactions with others.

An Exposition of Max Scheler's philosophical anthropology

Because of the various approaches to him, man as a being in the cosmos has been understood differently. In this regard, Scheler (1962) maintains in his *Man's Place in Nature* that there are three irreconcilable ways of thinking about man in the Western world. He defined these three traditional ways of thinking about man as "the Jewish-Christian tradition, the Greek tradition, and modern science and genetic psychology" (Scheler, 1962, p. 5). According to Scheler (1962), the ideas of man as "an image of God," a "rational animal," and a "evolutionary animal" are incompatible. "As a result, we have scientific, philosophical, and theological explanations for man." As a result, we lack a unified concept of man (p.5).

Max Scheler began by discussing the nature of man in relation to animals and plants, as well as man's unique metaphysical place in the universe, in order to arrive at a unified definition of man. According to Scheler, the word man has a "deceptive ambiguity" in this context (Scheler, 1962). According to Scheler (1962), man has been referred to as "a being that is part of the world of living things in general" (p.7). For him, man represents the specific morphological characteristics of a subclass of vertebrate and mammals, which is why the human species [man] is simply another branch of the animal kingdom in scientific discourse. However, according to Max Scheler, "regardless of the specific form of this conceptual model, the living being described as man is not only subordinate to the concept "animal," but occupies a relatively small corner of the animal kingdom (Scheler, 1962).

Man, on the other hand, is fundamentally different from anything found in the animal kingdom or among living things in general. In fact, it denotes a set of characteristics that must be distinguished from the concept "animal," which encompasses all mammals and vertebrates. In this sense, according to Max Scheler, man is "much opposed to *infusorium stentor* as to the chimpanzee, although it is obvious that man resembles the Chimpanzee" (Scheler, 1962).

For Scheler, man on this level must have a different meaning and an entirely different origin than the former, which examines man as a being who is a part of the world of living things in general (Scheler, 1962). As a result, Scheler maintains that the essential nature of man is this second concept of man, which examines man not as a being that is part of the world of living things in general.

The differentiation of Man from other beings in the Universe

In contrast to the naturalists' or evolutionists' views of man, which reduced man to the level of psychic or natural being (animal and plant), Scheler maintains that there is something unique to man that is not based on intelligence. It would be a mistake, according to Scheler, to think that the new element that gives man his unique characteristics is nothing more than a new essential form of being added to the previous

stages of psychic life-the vital impulse, instinct, associative memory, intelligence, and choice; in other words, an element that still belongs to psychic and vital functions and capacities and falls under the jurisdiction of psychology and biology (Scheler, p.36). Scheler, on the other hand, claims that "the nature of man...exceeds the capacity for choice and intelligence and would not be reached even if we were to enlarge these powers in a quantitative sense to infinity" (p.36).

Scheler refers to this new element, this new principle as "the spirit" (p.36). According to him, this spirit makes human life highly independent of drives and independent of attachment to environment, in sharp contrast to essentially environment-stricken animals. The spirit, according to Scheler, "is not a principle found within the domain of psychic life because it transcends what we call life, even life in man" (p.36). The spirit, according to Scheler, is a new phenomenon that cannot be derived from the natural evolution of life but, if reducible to anything, leads back to the ultimate Ground of Being, of which life is a particular manifestation (p.36).

Scheler contrasts this new principle (spirit) with the Greek "reason," which "in the total universe in which man alone of all creatures participates" (p.5). Scheler defines the spirit in such a way that it includes reason but much more than reason, as he writes: The term spirit encompasses the concept of reason, which includes intuition of essences as well as conceptual thought and a class of voluntary and emotional acts such as kindness, love, remorse, reverence, wonder, bliss, despair, and free decision (Scheler, p.36).

Scheler refers to a person as the centre of action in which this new element or principle, spirit, appears with a finite mode of being. According to Scheler, a person is "that unity which exists for acts of all possible essential differences in so far as these acts are thought to be executed" (Scheler, 1973. p.382).

In this regard, a person becomes the spirit's focal point of action. As a result, a person is a being with a spiritual nature. He becomes immaterial in his spiritual nature, whether completely immaterial, with no extrinsic dependence on matter, or partially immaterial, with some extrinsic dependence on matter. We have pure spirit in the first place, and spirit in matter in the second (Donceel, p.448). However, this is the fundamental concept of "man": he is a spiritual being. As a result, it is this spirit that enables man to transcend himself, which is lacking in other beings (animal and plant) in the universe.

Furthermore, man gains tremendous freedom as a result of this spirit. As a result, freedom is yet another title for man's unique nature. Aside from all special organisation, the core of his nature is this movement (transcending or freedom), this spiritual act of transcending himself... Scheler (1973, p.289). Also, according to Scheler, if we place at the centre of this concept of spirit a special function of knowledge that it alone can provide, then the essential characteristic of the spiritual being, regardless of its psychological make-up, is its existential liberation from the organic world, its freedom and detachability from the bondage and pressure of life, its dependence on all that belongs to life, including its own drive-motivated intelligence (Scheler, 1962. p.37).

Only man has the capacity (of freedom) to separate the drive from instinctive behaviour and to separate the state of pleasure from functional enjoyment due to the presence of the spirit in him. Man, as a "freedom" animal, can be said to be "more or less than an animal, but he is never simply an animal" (Nota, 1983, p.159), but a spiritual being who is no longer a subject to his drive and environment, thus he is free, objectifies his world, and can go into "world openness" (Scheler, 1962. p.37).

Objectification

Objectification is one of man's basic characteristics. In this regard, man is the only being in the universe who objectifies his surroundings due to the presence of the spirit within him. According to Scheler, man is capable of expanding his environment into the dimension of a world and resisting objectification through the power of the spirit. According to Scheler, man is capable of objectifying his own physiological and psychological states, as well as every psychic experience and vital function. To determine this, Scheler claims that "spirit belongs to a being capable of strict objectification" (Scheler, 1962. p.37). Insofar as man is a spirit bearer, Scheler believes he "must have reversed, dynamically and in principle, its relationship both to external reality and to itself as compared with the animal, including its intelligence" (Scheler, 1962. p.37).

Objectification implies a liberation of spiritual knowledge from the confines of narrow environmental pleasures and interests. Detachment from the environment is required in order to achieve an unlimited expression of man's interest to the point of being open to the world. As a result, "becoming human is to acquire this openness to the world by virtue of the spirit" (Scheler, 1962, p.39), rather than being limited to a limited field of interaction as in animal life.

Scheler claims that animal has no object, in contrast to man's objective nature as a being with an unlimited world or who can turn his world into his own test. For him, an animal lived ecstatically immersed in its environment, which it carries with it like a snail's shell. In fact, an animal lacks the ability to transform his environment into a world and is incapable of resisting its strong drives. This act of objectification, however, is unique to man. It is the most formal category of the spirit's logical aspect.

Objectification is sought first and foremost as a human value. It is a prerequisite for inventiveness and a means of creative behaviour diversification. Instead of seeing and relating to things solely in terms of predetermined needs, as animals do, man sees and interacts with them in a variety of ways. Objectification is a form of detachment from reality that is so far for a being that it could be properly described as a universalization of attachment, because it expresses man's unbounded appetite for a being that extends beyond the points of interest given in animal knowledge. Because of man's objective knowledge, it is obvious that only man has the ability to objectify or transform his environment.

As a result, man is the only "protestant" who does not submit to the dominance of his environment. He is not constrained by his surroundings because he can exhibit behaviour

that is visible to the rest of the world to an infinite degree. Thus, "to become human is to acquire this openness to the world through the virtue of the spirit" (Scheler, 1962. p.37).

Self-consciousness

According to Scheler, another characteristic of a spiritual being is self-consciousness, which is solely an essential nature of man that is given as a result of the presence of the spirit. Self-consciousness, according to Scheler, is an act of "concentration," a meta-reflex action in the central psychic switchboard. It is a "reflexive act," which means that man's consciousness is capable of reflecting perfectly upon itself; thus, it is conscious of being conscious and aware of being aware.

An animal according to Scheler, hears and sees without realising it. Regardless of an animal's psyche's functionality and usability, Scheler maintains that it is not a potential psychologist or physiologist. Even though an animal is conscious, it is not self-conscious, so it is unaware that it is conscious of itself. In fact, Scheler simply states that an animal is not self-conscious. It does not own itself, is not its own master, and is not aware of its own existence. As a result, the animal does not experience its drives as its own, but as a dynamic push and pull emanating from the environment. Scheler believes that the animal's environmental factors are determined by attraction and repulsion, just as the monkey who jumps hither and yonder lives in successive states of ecstasy. It lacks a will that outlasts drives and their changing states, preserving a sense of continuity in the variations of psychophysical conditions.

Furthermore, Scheler discovers fully developed categories of thing and substance in man due to the presence of the spirit in him, which an animal lacks. According to Scheler, animals lack the ability to coordinate visual and kinaesthetic space, or the objects revealed in each. In fact, he believes that all animals, whether highly developed or not, lack a centre that connects all of the psychological functions of seeing, hearing, smelling, and grasping, as well as the various things coordinated with them, into a unity that belongs to the same concrete object. Animals, on the other hand, lack the unifying principles of time and space, whereas man unifies his space and time through the power of the spirit. This unifying principle in him enables him to have a unified intuition of space in tactile, visual, auditory, and spatial dimensions. In terms of this unifying principle, man can substitute his own heart emptiness for the "infinite emptiness" of space and time (Scheler, 1962. p.45). As a result, he can recall the past, the present, and the future and project them into the present.

Insofar as man is a bearer of spirit, Scheler claims that he can only participate in the acts of the super-individual spirit through some kind of identification. Scheler, on the other hand, proposed such a spirit on the basis of the essential bond between fact and idea, implying that there is a self-realizing order of ideas independent of human consciousness that could be attributed to the ultimate Ground of Being as one of its attributes. For him, man participates in such an order in three ways: in an order of essences, where the spirit is intellect; in an objective order of values, where the spirit expresses itself in love; and in a teleological order of the world, where the spirit expresses itself in action (Scheler, 1962.

p.48).

To emphasise the peculiarity of "spirit," Scheler considers "ideation" to be a specifically spiritual act (Scheler, 1962. p.48). Ideation, according to Scheler, is independent of the number of observations and inductive inferences made. He believes it is a completely different act from all practical intelligence. Scheler also claims that it (the act of ideation) is the act that truly defines the human spirit. To view the essence, this act is a turning away from reality, contingent "being so now and here." For Scheler, Buddha's conversion is a perfect example of an act of ideation. In the case of Buddha, Scheler believes he said emphatically "no" to reality. Buddha knew this, according to Scheler, when he said it is wonderful to look at the things of this world and tremble at them, and when he developed his technique of de-actualizing the world and self (Scheler, 1962. p.52). Scheler speaks of the "ascetic" act of "de-realisation," and claims that if existence is "resistance," it can only consist in the suspension, in the removal of that life-drive, in relation to which the world above all appears "as resistance," and which is also the condition of all sense-perception of the accidental here-now-then. However, in his opinion, this act can only be performed by that being known as "spirit," because only spirit in its pure "will" form can affect the derealisation of the "feeling-drive-centre," which Scheler regards as the mode of access to the "being real" of the real. Thus, man is revealed to be the living being capable of being "ascetic" in its approach to life (Scheler, 1962. p.54). As a result, he is able to suppress his own vital drives and deny them the sustenance of perceptual images and representations. When comparing ascetic man, who is a spirit bearer, to an animal, Scheler observes that an animal always says yes to reality, even when it avoids and flees it. Man, on the other hand, is the being who says no to reality; thus, he is the epitome of a protestant.

Evaluation

According to the above explanation of Max Scheler's concept of man, the hallmark of his philosophy of man is an attempt to stem the rising tide of evolutionary naturalism, and scientific philosophy in general. His philosophical anthropology, as a prominent figure among anti-naturalists, was intended to provide an alternative and acceptable definition of man to the special sciences' theory of man. Scheler, the most ardent opponent of the evolutionary theory of man in biology and other sciences that studied man in parts rather than whole, declares that "the increasing multiplicity of the special sciences that deal with man, valuable as they are, tend to hide his true nature more than they reveal it" (Scheler pg.6). This, however, demonstrates the nature of man at the time Scheler was philosophising. Thus, special sciences such as biology, psychology, physiology, and medicine, to name a few, provided partial definitions of man's nature. As a phenomenologist, I have no doubt that Scheler's man is to be addressed from his essence rather than the "debased" conception of naturalists or evolutionists who placed man on the same level as the animal with no essential difference. According to Scheler, even though man shares some characteristics with other beings in the universe, he is not limited to those characteristics such as vital impulse, instinct, associative memory, and intelligence, and thus he has an ontological status that distinguishes him from other beings in the universe (Scheler, pg.35).

When considering the evolution of man from his biological psychological nature, it is clear that the great advancement of science revealed numerous different aspects of man: biological, psychological, and so on. In reality, this assumption had only deepened the study of single sections of a whole, as previously mentioned, the analysis of determined "slices" of man's complex reality. As a result, it was felt necessary to consider a human being as a whole, synthesising, harmonising, and integrating the findings of scientific research in order to unite all the various aspects and obtain a new image of man. The distinctiveness of philosophical anthropology stems from this assumption: the need to investigate the inner and profound aspects of man. Max Scheler investigates the essence and essential constitution of man, as well as his psychic and spiritual natures, in order to arrive at this conclusion. Thus, Scheler's philosophical anthropology arose, on the one hand, from the need to consider the human being as a whole, as a unit of meaning, and, on the other hand, from finding itself at the crossroads between philosophy, natural science, and the science of man, it re-elaborated a theory that would help the human being to better understand himself and identify the distinguishing characteristics of his existence.

To better understand man, Scheler never shies away from asking what man is, what his nature is, and where he fits in the world. Scheler, on the other hand, investigates this through a rigorous and thorough comparison of man and animal. As a result, Scheler developed a new theory about the human being. As a result, Scheler established a new concept of man, as well as a new science of man that was beneficial to humanity.

Regarding man's bio-psychic nature, he agrees that it is the nature that man shares with other beings in the universe. This, however, implies that Scheler accepts the naturalists' definition of man, even though he believes that man transcends the nature posited by the naturalists. Indeed, it is clear that Scheler's man emerges from the naturalists' perspective. That is, it begins with impulse and progresses to the spiritual. In this regard, the naturalists' view of man serves as a foundation for Scheler's conception of man. Nonetheless, Scheler did not confine man to the realm of naturalists. As a result, he goes on to say that man is a spiritual being who, by virtue of the spirit within him, transcends even life itself. Man, according to Scheler, transcends not only himself but also his environment and can project it into world openness. However, man's transcendent act becomes his essential nature.

After emphasising the spiritual nature that makes Scheler's man a spiritual being, one can assert that man is a spirit in matter, with the spirit manifesting itself in the body. As a result, man is both spirit and body. As a psychic being with other beings in the universe, man is subject to all the laws of matter, implying his reliance on impulse, instinct, associative memory, and intelligence. As a result, man is still a natural animal operating in space and time. As a spirit, man exists above space and time, fully present to himself and capable of assimilating the rest of the cosmos and assimilating it with himself. However, because man has spirit, he is the master of the universe because he is no longer limited to natural things. He projects himself, lives an infinite life, and transforms his surroundings into whatever he desires.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, Scheler's philosophy of man is one that encourages self-actualization and self-realization. It enables man to transition from being a slave to his environment, self, and life to becoming master of the same. Clearly, no one in our world today doubts that man, above all other beings in the universe, has conquered and transformed nature, his environment, and the world at large. Man has constructed bridges, aeroplanes, and houses, among other things. In fact, man, unlike other beings in the universe, has objectified his environment and is constantly self-conscious of what is going on around him. In fact, man has accomplished a great deal in this universe because of the "spirit" he possesses.

Finally, according to Scheler's view of man, man has conquered his environment, nature, and world, but man, as we can see today, remains a problem to himself. As a result, he has not conquered himself.

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