SUSANNE MOSER (Vienna)

A personalist versus a rationalist theory of virtues

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to make visible Max Scheler's great contribution to philosophical research on virtues and values, and to re-integrate it into the current discourse. Christoph Halbig's marginal reference to Scheler provides a good opportunity for this. Since both authors pursue completely different objectives, the question arises as to how much of Halbig's approach to a theory of action can be reconciled with Scheler's personalist understanding of virtue. While Halbig seeks criteria for assessing the actions of others, Scheler points to the empowerment supplied by virtue itself. The author argues that Scheler already anticipated some ideas, which has led to a new awareness of virtues in contemporary psychology.

Keywords: Max Scheler, Christoph Halbig, ethics, action theory, virtues, values, feelings

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Introduction

In recent years, one can observe a revival of the concept of virtue, taking place not only in philosophical discussions, but also in moral psychology, theories of action, and economics. In increasingly complex situations, it becomes more and more important for people to have qualities of character that help them act appropriately. The ability and power to act well was originally defined under the concept of virtue. It was only later that virtue was reduced to morality, which led to its becoming increasingly obscure, if not disparaged. Max Scheler makes this clear when he speaks of virtue as an "old maid" – an analogy which was not entirely groundless, especially considering that, during the Victorian Age, the concept of virtue was reduced to chastity alone.

> And yet, in other times, for instance, in the heyday of the Middle Ages, as well as among the Hellenes and Romans before the Imperial Period, this old, rambling, toothless maid had been a most graceful, attractive and charming character. (Scheler, 1919, 13)

One often thinks of the term "virtue" as referring to a troublesome effort, and forgets that it originally meant a "blissful knowledge of the power of the good", something that goes far beyond fitness and capability (ibid. 14).

In today's public debates, virtue is not unlikely to provoke controversy. While some praise it as a major factor of *Authentic Happiness* (Seligmann 2002), others warn of the danger of virtue-terror (Sarazin 2014). Thus, the question arises as to what value virtue has at all, and where the limits of a virtue ethics lie.

In his book *Der Begriff der Tugend und die Grenzen der Tugendethik* (*The Notion of Virtue and the Limits of the Virtue Ethics*), published in 2013, Christoph Halbig argues that the full meaning of virtue for ethics can be understood only through an axiology of virtue. It is necessary to clarify "what virtues are, and what their value is" (Halbig 2013, 17). Hence, Halbig refers to Max Scheler, whose main concern had been the rehabilitation of virtues as values: "Undoubtedly, the focus of Scheler's argument is the effort to rehabilitate virtue as a central intrinsic value" (ibid, 66).

In the following, I aim to make visible Scheler's great contribution to philosophical research on virtues and values, and to re-integrate it into the current discourse. Halbig's marginal reference to Scheler provides a good opportunity for this. I shall point out that both authors pursue completely different objectives, which raises the question as to how much of Halbig's approach to a theory of action can be reconciled with Scheler's personalist understanding of virtue. While Halbig seeks criteria for assessing the actions of others, Scheler points to the empowerment supplied by virtue itself. In this context, I would like to show that Scheler already anticipated some ideas, which has led to a new awareness of virtues in contemporary psychology. Based on the comparison between Halbig and Scheler, the tension present in current discussions can be clarified: If virtue is not understood as a joyous self-empowerment, but as a possibility to judge others, it can become a kind of terror virtue. My reflections will be embedded in constant reference to Aristotle and his understanding of virtue.

Halbig's Rationalist approach to Virtues

Halbig's research on virtue is action-based. He is intent on determining whether an action is praiseworthy or not. Firstly, he finds a criterion for the assessment of actions: an action is virtuous when it is an appropriate response to an intrinsic value. For Halbig, virtues are "intrinsically valuable attitudes to other intrinsic values" (Halbig 2013, 18). To argue this, he approaches virtues from their opposite, from the perspective of vices. For Halbig, an appropriate answer on the issue of values cannot be obtained in this per-

spective. Because in the instances of vice, either the value is lacking, as in the case of indifference or recklessness, or the response rejects the value character of its objects, as in the case of malice. For example, someone was delighted by an evil deed, a sadistic or cruel man enjoyed the suffering of others, a cynic distorted the good he found in his environment, making it appear ridiculous and trying to unmask it as a subtle form of evil (ibid., 193).

The examples Halbig gives point to the need for emotional responsiveness. The virtuous person must have the needed sensitivity in order to at all be able to grasp certain values. However, the author leaves us in the dark as to how this is will come about. He also indicates that a demand or an appeal comes from the values we have grasped, resulting in the need for a particular reaction or response. The appropriateness of this reaction, Halbig believes, is the why the virtuous are admired and praised. The exercise of virtues deserves appreciation, in the sense that it represents "the appropriate answer to a real value" (ibid., 46), which, for its part, represents the "standard for the correctness of this reaction" (ibid., 44).

Halbig assumes that virtues are responses to values. For him, these values are touchstones and standards by which we orient our actions. Moreover, the virtuous person must respond in the correct way, which means he must respond appropriately to the given values. Halbig assumes that we do not invent values, but find them. Virtues are a kind of telescope with which we grasp these values.

We do not consider virtues as a headlamp that penetrates a world that would otherwise have no moral qualities at all; we consider them as a telescope and a source of energy that traces and strives, and is admirable for these reasons. (Copp/Sobel 2004, 552, cited after Halbig 2013, 361)

Halbig is a value realist. He sees virtues in terms of their ability to grasp values that are given – not invented or created by men. How exactly this is to be understood, he does not clarify. He is somewhat clearer as to his intentions: he wants to go beyond the scope of duties and into the area of value. He is looking for evaluation criteria for moral action, which cannot be comprehended in terms of the concept of duty (Halbig, 2013, 362). He believes that in virtue, he has found a concept that can criticize omission, "even if the law is not violated and duty is not unfulfilled" (ibid., 363). He elucidates this by the following example: whoever has decided to donate to a particular charity can fulfill the imperfect duty of charity. If he does not recognize the need of the neighbor, he cannot be accused for this lack as representing a violation of duty. He deserves criticism, however, because he has fallen short of the ideal of charity (ibid., 362).

A further criterion of whether or not an action is praiseworthy is its being guided by reasons based on values[1]: the "reasons for grand and for generous actions are both based on the value of the well-being of others" (Halbig 2013, 170). The honest man is characterized by orientation towards the value of truth. He will act in accordance with reasons such as, "this is simply wrong", "it is a pity that he has pretended to consent to the decision of the boss", "the truth must come to light" or "he should encourage his children to express their opinions openly" (ibid., 151). The examples that Halbig gives us are statements about something or someone, requests and appeals to do something. In all cases, an external assessment is made – in one case guided by an ideal; in the other, by certain reasons. The double meaning of virtues – as qualities of a person and as orientation points in the sense of an ideal, does not come into view at all.

In addition, Halbig underestimates the connection between emotions and values when he assumes that values provide reasons for virtuous praxis (Halbig 2013, 151). Here we are left with the impression that a person considers situations purely rationally in the light of values from which he derives reasons leading him to virtuous actions. This impression is strengthened by the fact that Halbig emphasizes the conceptual connection between the ethical virtues and the intellectual truths: an honest man must at the same time make sure that his convictions are really justified. In addition, if called on to do so, he must be able to defend his convictions against objections (ibid., 81).

But this is not always the case with values. Oftentimes, we are not aware of values, they lie like the hidden part of an iceberg, under the threshold of consciousness, and are only visible when they are violated. It that case, we react mostly emotionally. And even if we are aware of our values, we often fail to justify or explain them. When asked why truthfulness is good and lying is bad, an interviewee replied to this large-scale question, "I don't know. It just is. It's just so basic. I do not want to be bothered with challenging that. It's part of me. I don't know where it came from, but it's very important." (Bellah 1987, 27)

Halbig is convinced that Scheler would share his assumption that virtues are intrinsic values (Halbig 2013, 66). However, Halbig does not go further into Scheler's philosophy, but uses it to criticize certain philosophical positions, especially Thomas Hurka's assumption that there is an axiological subordination of the virtues to values.[2] For Halbig,

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[1] Halbig's approach to virtues is based on investigations published in his book *Praktische Gründe und die Realität der Moral* (Practical Reasons and the Reality of Moral). There he comes to the conclusion that "practical reasons are generally based on values" (Halbig 2013, 170).

[2] "Hurka formulates this subordination by the so-called axiological principle of comperativity: 'The value of a virtuous attitude towards a good or an evil is always less than the 'positive or negative' value of this object itself. '"(Halbig 2013, 65)

Scheler attributes to the virtues an axiological superposition over their objects, as the experienced power has a higher value than that to which it empowers. The example of the cowardly soldier who is yet able to throw a hand grenade at the last moment, thereby saving his comrades, is revealing in this respect. The soldier, according to Halbig, has done the right thing, but is not virtuous, because he was not aware that he had the ability to risk his life for someone else (ibid., 61). Thomas Hurka, by contrast, sees this soldier as courageous, even if the act occurred "out of character". While Halbig points out that "the cowardly soldier who rescues his comrade has, indeed, acted out of character - and therefore cannot prove himself brave in the act. With Max Scheler it must be remembered that virtues are personal values, in so far as they represent directions of the (moral) person's 'moral' ability. The cowardly soldier lacks such a skill, and he cannot manifest it in the individual act." (ibid., 61) Halbig likewise seek a connection between the virtues and the person, but it does not become clear what he means by saying that virtues are "the perfections of a person" (ibid. 359). In fact, he is not interested in "the being of the person, but in her probation in action" (ibid., 361). The way of acting, he points out, is orientated to ideals, which open up a dimension of evaluation that goes beyond what is purely compulsory.

Scheler's personalist approach

In *Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend,* Scheler regards virtue as a "*quality of the person* himself" (Scheler, 1919, p. 15).[3] Scheler argues that we very often consider virtue with regard to its usefulness for others: one calculates the advantage of the skills and abilities of a person, mostly depending on the context in which they are used, whether it be the family or the nation. Virtue, however, is not there for the "enjoyment of others, but [is] a free ornament of its bearer"[4] (ibid., 15). For Scheler, virtue is "a lively consciousness *of power for the good*, completely personal and individual" (ibid., 16)[5]. This self-empowerment, this "experienced power", is a greater good than that "to which" it empowers. As virtue grows, it always becomes easier to achieve for the virtuous person. "Goodness becomes beautiful by becoming easy."[6] (ibid., 17) Scheler accuses Kant of reducing virtue "to a mere effect of

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[3] *The Rehabilitation of Virtue* has not yet been translated into English. All the translations in this article are mine. In the footnote, I give the respective German text.
[4] Die Tugend sei je doch nicht da für die "Nutznießung anderer, sondern ein freier Schmuck ihres Trägers."
[5] "Tugend hingegen ist als ein lebendiges *Machtbewusstsein zum Guten* ganz persönlich und individuell."
[6] "Das Gute wird schön, indem es leicht wird."

obliging willingness" (ibid., 16). In the moral law and duty, Kant sees only "non-personal surrogates for lacking virtues"[7] (ibid., 17).

It is no coincidence that Scheler published his essay *Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend* together with his essay *Ressentiment* in the volume *Der Umsturz der Werte*.[8] Scheler's reference to Nietzsche is unmistakable. Like Nietzsche, Scheler is concerned with overcoming *ressentiment* and enabling self-empowerment. In contrast to Nietzsche, however, he sees in Christianity not a cause of *ressentiment* but a possibility for overcoming it. Virtue, which he understands in a Christian way as "the free gift of grace" (ibid., 15), is for Scheler the key to self-empowerment, and not, as in Nietzsche, an instrument of manipulation used to weaken others.

In *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values,* Scheler develops his concept of virtue, which is in contrast to the formal ethics of Kant. Scheler argues that Kant understands virtue only as "the *sediment* of individual dutiful acts" (Scheler 1973, p. 28). But we cannot speak of duty unless we are able to do what we should do. "The to-be-able-to concerned *precedes* any idea of duty." (ibid., p. 28) For Scheler, virtue is a foundation of the moral value of *all* moral actions. The theory of virtue precedes the theory of duty (Scheler, 1973, p. 28). The Kantian moral law and duty are only imperfect surrogates for missing virtues. Scheler rejects Kant's view that one can speak of virtues only when they are connected with sacrifices: "Kant makes the moral value of an action dependent on its *cost*, on the *sacrifices* made by the one who acts." (ibid., 228) For Scheler, Kant is the victim of a kind of value-illusion based on *ressentiment*, i.e., to hold that something is more valuable because it requires more effort, and more labour to achieve (ibid., 228). The morally superior person is, in any case, the one who achieves these contents with the least trouble, and who has the least resistance to do good. "He who has the least resistance against the good is the best." (ibid., 230)

For Scheler, however, an additional aspect of virtue, besides the to-be-able-to, is the ought. One can speak of virtue only if there is an ought, otherwise "there would be no virtue but solely 'proficiency'" (ibid., 206). Virtue is not the "aptitude for anything, but willing and doing something that is given and experienced as ideally obligatory" (ibid., 238). Scheler distinguishes between the ideal ought and the ought that contains a claim or an order. "Whenever we speak of 'duty' or 'norms', we are concerned not with an 'ideal' ought, but with a specification of it as something that is *imperative*." (ibid., p. 203) This may be the inner command of self-obligation, or external acts such as "command", "advice", or

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[7] "Das sogenannte Sittengesetz und die Pflicht sind hingegen nur unpersönliche Surrogate für mangelnde Tugenden."
[8] The overthrow of values

"recommendation" (ibid., 205). Thus, speaking about virtues, we must be aware of both their sides, the "to-be-able-to" and the oughtness:

> It is from the situation in which something is given as an (ideal) ought and, at the same time, as something that 'can' be done, that the concept of '*virtue*' springs. Virtue is the immediately experienced *power* to do something that ought to be done. (ibid., 205)

For Scheler all oughtness must have a foundation in values (ibid., 82). The ought, on the one hand, can be based on the "insight into objective values" (ibid., 490), but also on the "evidential insight" into the "individual value-essence" of the person (ibid., 489). For Scheler, the "person-value is higher than all values of things, organizations and community." (ibid., XXIV) The human person is the bearer of the values of virtues as well as of the values of the person himself (ibid., 100). The peculiar individual value-content of the person is the basis on which a consciousness of an individual "ought" is built, "the evidential knowledge of a 'good-in-itself' but precisely in the sense of a "good-in-itself-for-*me*" (ibid., 490). The ought comes to this person as a "'call', no matter if this 'call' is addressed to others or not" (ibid., 490). Scheler emphasizes that there is in no case a neglect of universal values, for "interpenetration of universally valid moral values with those of individual validity can yield complete evidence of the good-in-itself" (ibid., 493). According to Scheler, all false individualism is excluded by the fact that there is an original co-responsibility of each person for the whole (the solidarity principle). Scheler thus places the concern for the community "at the living *center of the individual person*" (Scheler, 1916, XII).

For Scheler, virtue is necessarily connected with an appeal directed towards the person, and which contains a certain ought. The essential point is that the person concerned must be able to comply with this requirement. Virtue is the guarantee that the person can actually realize what he/she is called upon to do. Scheler's approach is personalist inasmuch as the person is the highest authority as to what is good for him/her; yet he/she does not fall into subjectivism. Rather, Scheler is concerned with the mediation between universally valid and individual values, which leads him to the conclusion that I have to realize the "good-in-itself- for-me" (Scheler, 1973, p. 534). In this sense, virtue is the ability to fulfill what is given to me as a personal "ought". Thus, virtues empower us to respond to the individual call we receive.

Emotions

Halbig mentions that the virtue of compassion is an emotion, but he is not further interested in the connection between virtues, emotions and values (Halbig 2013, 32). In

contrast, Scheler stresses the importance of feelings and emotions; for him, the being of feelings and emotions is the "'sign' 'of the *being* and the *non-being* of values'" (Scheler, 1973, 355). Emotional life differs for Scheler according to the different levels of values: feelings and sensations are at the level of the pleasant, vital emotions at the level of the vital, and emotions, as responses to values, are at the cultural level. We are happy or sad about something, touched by or excited about something. If we are happy, angry or sad about something, this "about" indicates that the objects here are not simply comprehended, but are in front of me "charged with value-predicates, which are given in feeling" (ibid., 258). Importantly, for Scheler these value-qualities are given in a special way by intentional feeling, which is totally different from mere feeling-states. This kind of "feeling originally intends its own kind of objects, namely values." (ibid., 258) Value-qualities demand certain qualities in the emotional reactions of response. If these demands are not fulfilled, then we suffer: for example, we are sad when we cannot look forward to a worthy event, or cannot mourn as required by the death of a loved one. In order to understand the life of the psyche, one has to study this interconnection of meaning between value-complexes and emotional reactions. Scheler speaks here of the appropriateness of emotions. Both "too much" and "too little" may be out of place. For Scheler, the appropriate reaction depends on the concrete situation, which has to be studied through empirical research. For him, the understanding of the life of the psyche life belongs to the realm of psychology, not philosophy. In contrast to the Aristotelian understanding of virtue, Scheler does not speak of virtues at this level of emotions. At this point, it seems to me important to refer both to contemporary research on emotions and to the Aristotelian point of view.

In contemporary philosophical research, there are many discussions on the connection between emotions and values (Moser 2014). In *The Rationality of Emotion,* Ronald de Sousa shows that emotions are rational inasmuch as they are appropriate responses to axiological qualities. In my comparison between De Sousa and Max Scheler, I point out that Scheler understands emotions as appropriate responses to value-qualities, given by intentional feeling, whereas De Sousa assumes that the emotions are direct answers to value-qualities. Kevin Mulligan has recently supported Scheler's viewpoint (Moser 2015, 234).

Halbig's understanding of virtues as appropriate responses to values seems to me to belong to philosophical research on emotions, since he often connects virtues with emotions. I would like to quote one of his examples.

"The fact that someone deliberately expresses an untruth is undoubtedly a suitable object of certain attitudes (anger, willingness to disclose the lie, etc.) of an honest man. (ibid., 54)

He gives us here the example of anger as a response to the felt violation of the value of honesty.

Aristotle supposes a fundamental connection to exist between virtues and emotions. He emphasizes that the virtue of a human character is in many ways bound to emotions (1178a15). One has to deal appropriately with the existing emotions. Aristotle does not reject them; on the contrary, he points out that it is very important to have emotions, i.e., to have fear in case of danger or to be angry when we are disregarded. Fearlessness would lead to foolhardiness, and the lack of anger would indicate weakness. The emotion shows us something important, it serves as a warning signal. Someone who has no fear would react foolhardily and would not long survive. For Aristotle it is very important to be emotionally sensitive. We are responsible for developing our emotional life by developing the appropriate sensitivity and responsiveness need for proper reaction. This is what Aristotle points out when he says,

Speaking generally, it is not the case, as the rest of the world think, that reason is the principle and guide to virtue, but rather the feelings. (Aristotle 2015, 1206b17-19)

In *Magnia Moralia*, Aristotle points out that the impulses must come from affectivity. That is why it is so important that the feelings be in the right condition. The rational element, that is, reason or logos, is then the instance, which gives the consent. If, on the other hand, the impulses originate only from reason, feelings do not necessarily follow, but often oppose.

Wherefore a right disposition of the feelings seems to be the principle that leads to virtue rather than the reason. (ibid., 1206b25-27)

Thus, Aristotle does not see a general struggle going on between reason and feeling, as does Kant, but embraces emotionality, which for him is oriented towards the good. He emphasizes that it is very important to cultivate the right feelings, not to reject them. To have feelings at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way, is what is both intermediate and best, and this is a characteristic of virtue.

While Aristotle assumes that virtues - at least to a certain extent – can be achieved through education and habit, Scheler understands virtue as a kind of reversal and transformation of the whole person. The transformation of the person, which takes place through virtue, is regarded by Scheler as "the extreme opposite of all habit" (1919, 14). In this

sense, Wolfhart Henckmann points out that Scheler has a "trans-ethical understanding of virtue" (Henckmann 1998, 128).

Scheler assumes that a person's constitution is decisive for the way the person experiences the world. At the value-level of the person, Scheler refers to spiritual feelings that are no longer conditioned by value-complexes exterior to the person. "Bliss and despair appear to be the correlates of the moral value of our personal being." (Scheler 1973, 343) It is the being and the self-value of the person himself that is the foundation of bliss and despair. In despair, there lies at the core of our personal existence an emotional "No!"; in bliss, an emotional "Yes!" These spiritual feelings, which Scheler distinguishes from purely psychic feelings, take possession of the whole of our being. The problem is that these spiritual feelings cannot be produced or merited by our conduct. Thus, they are trans-ethical, in the same way as the virtues. In *Zur Rehabilitierung der Tugend,* Scheler speaks similarly of virtues. These are the inner wealth and abundance of a person, from whom they emanate like light. They cannot be produced but are "the free gift of grace". We can only be open to them (Scheler, 1919, 16).

At this point, I would like to refer to a recent study in positive psychology that involves an exploration of positive emotions, as well as positive character traits; the latter include the virtues and everything that strengthens human virtues, which in turn stimulate positive emotions (Seligman 2002). In his book *Authentic Happiness. Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment*, Seligman complains that the focus in literature has always been on negative emotions. He sees one of the reasons for this in the culture of suspicion, which goes back to Freud, among others, and involves the widespread assumption that behind a person's every good deed there must be some hidden negative motivation. However, in research data, there is not the slightest indication that human strength and virtue stem from negative motives. Rather, the strengthening of the virtues not only involves positive emotions, such as confidence, hope, or trust, but leads to permanent fulfillment. Seligman assumes something like a transformative force in virtues, which is not only situated at the level of action, but on the level of the person. Believing that happiness and joy can be achieved at the level of action, without developing virtues, leads people to starve in the midst of abundance.

In a sense, Scheler's approach is similar to Seligman's. Both locate virtue at the level of the person, no matter how great their differences may be. Both emphasize the power that emanates from virtue and its great importance for a life in abundance. Both are for the strengthening of the positive emotions and both are convinced that only in this way is a sustainable overcoming of pathological phenomena possible. Scheler could thus easily be regarded as the precursor of a positive psychology

Orientation towards the Good

For Halbig, the virtuous person is in a continuous maturing process in his orientation towards the good (Halbig 2013, 362). Through education and exemplary behaviour, we learn to assign appropriate values to certain good things. Thus, the reference to the good comes into being through our relation to things that are good. The appropriate appraisal of basic good things is not due to a reflection on them, but rather to the experience of exemplary and virtuous ways of dealing with them (ibid., 365). The moral development of children does not depend on the practice of abstract duties, but on living models, by which they can orient themselves. Here, Halbig is very close to Aristotle, for whom the role model of the good man plays a central role in capturing the good: for those things are valuable and pleasant, that are such to the good man (*spoudaios*) (Aristotle 1176b25). Aristotle points out that it is important to be virtuous even in order to be wise, because only the virtuous person choses the right things, which wisdom helps him to realize (ibid., 1145a5). Thus, only the good man can be wise, for it is impossible to be practically wise without moral virtue (Aristotle, 1144a35). Just as different things seem valuable to boys and to men, so too should they be different for bad men and good men.

Halbig, like Aristotle, emphasizes the connection between good things and the good. The example adduced by Halbig suggests that children get their orientation towards the good by learning how to deal with good things, which are presented to them as good and desirable by their parents. Aristotle also points out that only the role model and the virtuous can show us what we should strive for. There is, however, a great difference between the Aristotelian ethics of good things and Scheler's ethics of values. Scheler rejects, similarly to Kant, any ethics of good things and purposes, and any ethics based on inductive experience, whether this experience be historical, psychological, or biological (Scheler 1973, 45). Whether someone acts in a morally righteous way or not depends, according to Scheler, on that person's values. The moral differences between individuals lie not in the purposes they intend or in the goods they choose, but in the value-contents and their relations, which "form the possible field for the positing of purposes" (Scheler 1973, 42). The person of high moral standing follows in his/her inner conations an order of preference oriented towards the objective order of non-formal value-ranks. "This order of preference becomes (...) the inner rule of automatism of conation itself." (ibid., 43) From what has been said so far, it is clear that Scheler sees the morally good and virtuous in the realization of the higher – if possible, the highest – value of the objective order (Schleissheimer 2003, 127).

In order to actually realize this moral good, one must have the ability to do so. Here Scheler refers to Martin Luther, who was convinced, that "man can will the good and can

do good (...) only if he possesses the consciousness of the power and the ability for the good" (Scheler 1973, 236). On the other hand, we have the peculiar consciousness of an obligation to do something when we become aware of an ability and a power. Scheler points out that through every singly moral act of positive value, the ability for the good increases:

> In other words, there is an increase in what we designated as the virtue of the person (which is very different from the habituation and practice of actions related to the virtue in question), which is the experienced power to realize the good that ought to be." (ibid., 537)

The peculiarity of this ability is for Scheler manifest in the special kinds of contentment, joy, and pleasure that we take in the mere to-be-able-to-do-something (ibid. 232). "Every preferring of a higher value to a lower one is accompanied by an increase in the depth of the positive feeling." (ibid., 356) Every preferring of a higher value to a lower one makes a subsequent similar preferring easier.

Virtue and Happiness

Halbig assumes it is very difficult to be both virtuous and happy. He emphasizes that Nietzsche held "not without reason, the thesis that we are actually the victims of our virtues" (Halbig 2013, 242). It is true that virtues can lead to happiness; however, the sacrifices often required of the virtuous can make it impossible for them to lead a life of happiness (ibid., 358).

For Scheler, on the contrary, happiness is the root and the source of virtue. "Happiness is therefore in no way a 'reward for virtue', nor is virtue the means to reach blissfulness" (ibid. 359). Spinoza had already seen this connection, when he asserted, "Blissfulness is not the reward of virtue; it is virtue itself." (ibid., 235)

In my opinion, we can understand Scheler's concept of virtue only by referring to his concept of love and happiness, which he developed in *Ressentiment.* In this work, he points out the large difference in the "directions of its movement" between the Ancient and Christian views of love (Scheler 2010, 30). While love in Antiquity was understood as a striving from the lower to the higher, from the imperfect to the more perfect, love in Christianity is conceived of as a gift of God and thus as "a source of power" (Moser 2014, 25). Here there is a "reversal in the movement of love" (Scheler 2010, 31). The criterion of love is that the noble stoops to the vulgar, the healthy to the sick, the rich to the poor, the Messiah to the sinner. There is no longer any "highest good" independent of, or beyond, the act and movement of love. In my opinion, Scheler equates virtue with this power we obtain from

God's love, which enables us to act in a way that makes us, and the people around us, happy. For Scheler, virtue is not a bulwark against negative emotions, but the enabling power towards the good. Thus, it is no accident that Scheler mentions Spinoza, who assumes that the more the soul rejoices in divine love, the more power it has over its affects, and the less it will suffer from bad affects.

Thus, because it enjoys this divine love, the soul has the power to inhibit bad desires (Spinoza 1994, 296). Scheler concludes that one should live a life of joy and not prohibition. Instead of "you shall not," it would be better to point out, "you can." Hence, we should not try to reform a drunkard by means of admonitions and prohibitions:

> We can accomplish the reform by encouraging him to develop new interests as well as his latent faculties, by pointing to the positive aims of life in whose pursuance a drunkard's vice disappears and is, as it were, covered up. (Scheler 1973, 235)

In this respect too, Scheler can be considered a pioneer of positive psychology.

Conclusions

Both Halbig and Scheler regard virtue as an intrinsic value, as a value appreciated for its own sake, and not because of its usefulness for some other purpose. While Halbig mostly argues in terms of action, Scheler pursues a personalist approach. For Scheler, the virtues are values of the person and occupy the highest place in the person's value order. Halbig understands virtues as appropriate attitudes with regard to other, intrinsic values. The answer to the questions as to what values are and whether there is such a thing as a value order, he leaves open, to be given through a general theory of values. Although Halbig is convinced that Scheler would agree with Halbig's own approach to values, we are confronted with two completely different approaches here. Scheler's considerations of virtue are embedded in a comprehensive theory of value, while Halbig does not really attempt to clarify the concept of value. This is evident particularly in the problem as to how we can grasp values, how they are given to us.

Both Halbig and Scheler are value realists. They assume that values are not constituted or invented by the subject, but are detected and found. But while Scheler develops a subtle value-acquisition theory in which he assumes that we have a certain kind of feeling that opens up values to us, this topic remains completely unclear in Halbig. The latter offers grounds for the assumption that virtues make us grasp values when he uses the metaphor of the telescope helping us to discover values. Virtue, however, is not merely a means of grasping values, but a special constitution of the person comprising the person's whole

striving power. While Scheler develops a differentiated theory of emotional life, in which the connection between feelings and values becomes visible, Halbig does not really bring into discussion the role of emotions for the acquisition of values. Although he often refers to emotional responses in his examples, the connection between emotions and values is not further investigated, the way it is in current philosophical research on emotions.

Halbig explicitly argues that Scheler shared the basic assumptions of his theory, understanding virtues as attitudes intrinsically valuable with regard to other intrinsic values. But even Halbig's choice of conceptuality indicates that he wants something different than Scheler. While Scheler wants to point out that virtue is a source of power to realize the values that are important for the person, Halbig wants to develop assessment criteria for human attitudes. In virtues, he believes to have found the criteria for judging behaviour beyond moral duty. However, since the criteria of an objective hierarchy of values are lacking here, there is a risk this will lead to moralization and virtue terror. Going through the world with the disposition of criticizing the behaviour of others, but without having a clear value-order, can lead to a diffuse moral overload.

For Scheler virtues are qualities of the person, while in Halbig's understanding, virtues are attitudes of the person towards other values. He is not particularly interested in the person per se. Therefore, it is difficult for him to explain the relationship between person and virtue, and to understand the perfection of the person, to which he refers at the end of his book. The understanding of virtue as attitude, and the metaphor of the telescope, suggest that Halbig understands virtue as an ability to orient oneself towards an ideal, and not as a particular quality of the person him/herself. In my view, the greatest difference between Halbig on the one hand, and Scheler and Aristotle on the other, lies in the understanding of the latter two that the virtues are, in a way, transformers that encompass the entire human being and change it sustainably. For Scheler, the essence of virtue lies in the development of the whole person, in the realization of his/her individual calling.

While Halbig understands the virtues as a telescope serving to discern ideals or values far removed from us, for Scheler, they are an expression of the inner abundance of the person. Here Scheler is close to Aristotle, who equates virtue and goodness in a person. What we do depends on our goodness. This is why Aristotle gives so much weight to education and role models. Virtue is anchored in the person, and not in an ideal. Whereas Aristotle posits virtues at all levels of striving, Scheler locates them only in the person. While Aristotle, in a perspective "from below", understands the virtues as the right way of dealing with emotions, Scheler aims to change the entire person "from above". Both emphasize the great importance of emotionality for the virtues.

Aristotle sees the irrational part of the soul as the leader of the virtues and therefore points out the importance of the right kind of emotional constitution. Scheler, by contrast, assumes there is a special way of grasping the values, which is through intentional feeling. A person's virtue is, for Scheler, a kind of gift, a bestowed grace that empowers the virtuous person to accomplish the good. Scheler's approach to virtues is embedded in his comprehensive metaphysics, in which an inner connection exists between the divine, bliss, and the virtues. Halbig, on the other hand, proceeds from a rational theory of action, in which values are the sources of reasons.

For Scheler, as for Aristotle, virtue is connected with a joyous feeling, i.e., a blissful awareness of one's consciousness and power to do what is good. Both Aristotle and Scheler are interested in the person's reaching the highest possible level of values, connected with the highest kind of happiness. For Scheler, this form of life is totally personal and individual, and can vary widely from person to person. His interest is not so much in the case of a well-functioning polis; on the contrary, he desires a form of society in which the individual good can co-exist with the good of society and with the in-itself good.

While Aristotle assumes that virtue is acquired through habituation and education, divine grace plays a role here, according to Scheler. Halbig follows Aristotle in also assuming virtues are acquired through education and role models. By contrast, he regards the connection between virtue and happiness as problematic. He sees the joy associated with the exercise of virtues as connected with the sacrifices they demand. Thus, he follows Nietzsche's view that virtues are more useful to the others than to their bearer. However, Aristotle and Scheler, quite independently of their metaphysical conceptions, can be seen as precursors of positive psychology in their assertion that virtues promote positive emotions, which help us not only to lead a happy and long life, but also to have a protective shield against fate in difficult times.

Dr. Susanne Moser, Institut für Axiologische Forschungen, Wien /
Karl Franzens-Universität Graz, susanne.moser[at]univie.ac.at

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