

## **From a Non-Formal Ethics of Values in Scheler to the Thresholds Zones in Waldenfels: Ethical Implications of the Understanding of Personality**

Márcio Junglos  
Universidade do Contestado

### **Abstract**

This research intends to develop the ethical implications of the concept of personality through the phenomenological approaches of Scheler and Waldenfels. For both philosophers, an ethics based on a moral formalism would be very pernicious to the concept of personality and even for ethics itself. For ethics, it would bring a kind of arbitrariness and for the person a sort of depersonalization. In order to advance a concept of ethics grounded on the values of a person, Scheler introduces the idea of God's love for us as intuitively given atwart the values of holiness itself. From this given intuition, Scheler will build up the idea of good in itself as a model, so that a person could form a good personality through an accurate rank of values. Waldenfels would say that even the personality grounded on such mystical experiences would have the consequence of a depersonalization of the person in his relation with the other, the world, and with himself. Waldenfels will find, through a genealogy of the constitution of order thresholds zones that will prevent a borrowed concept of personality only from an inside, or an outside. As an open process of what happen with us, the personality cannot be static, but latent as it is done responsively.

**Keywords:** Scheler, Waldenfels, personality, ethics, threshold, responsivity

### **1. The givenness of values and its bearers**

Max Scheler, in his book (*Formalism*), makes a criticism of Kant's erroneous identification of goods with values, and Kant's opinion that values are to be viewed as abstracted from goods (Scheler 1973, 9). Nevertheless, Scheler agrees with Kant's

rejection of all ethics of goods and purposes as having false bases. For Scheler, according to Kant (Kant 2011, 17), if we consider a dependence on goods from the relation to a realm of existing goods or evils we, also, need to affirm that the goodness, or depravity of the will is dependent on their particular contingent existence of this realm. For Kant, it would be an absurdity. All ethics would be based on historical experience so that it would be impossible to follow all its changes. For example, if a thing changes in the realm of things it would necessarily change in the realm of goods. We would be faced with the “relativism of ethics” (Scheler 1973, 10).

Scheler says the insight of Kant posited that the ethics must exclude as presuppositions all the concepts of good and bad and all values of a no-formal nature. Notwithstanding, by correctly setting aside actual goods in the foundations of ethics, Kant, also, excludes from consideration the values which represent themselves in goods (Scheler 1973, 11). Also, every no-formal ethics would be characterized as an ethics of goods and purposes (Scheler 1973, 12).

For Scheler, a value cannot simply be derived from characteristics and properties which do not belong to the sphere of “value-phenomena.” (Scheler 1973, 14) Scheler writes: “The value itself always must be ‘intuitively given’ or must refer back to that kind of givenness.” (Scheler 1973, 15) As an example, it would be senseless to ask for the common properties of all blue or red things, since they have nothing in common except their blueness or redness; so, it is senseless to ask for the common properties of good or evil. That means, if a fire extinguisher loses its chemical inside or even loses its color outside, red will be always red. The same happens with good and evil, no matter if we become more tempered or nicer, or even if the legislation constantly change its rule; the value will always have its own distinct relation as value-qualities independent of a realm of goods that can suffer change in history.

Going ahead, Scheler says that “all values are non-formal qualities of contents possessing a determinate order of ranks with respect to higher and lower.” (Scheler 1973, 17) To attest that the values have specific contents and a determinate order, he concludes that values are true objects (Scheler 1973,

19), and are different from things and feelings. For example, independent of the disposition of color and objects of a masterpiece, and how we feel about it, the value of it will not be measured by the intensity of colors or the level of feelings about it. Goods, like a masterpiece, are thoroughly permeated by values. Thus, it is given in its way of appearance with its own internal order. As the object appears independent of the content we ascribe to it, so the good appears independent of our conception of the realm of goods. We can say that the objects is the bearer of meaning and not that the meaning is the bearer of the object. In the same way, we can say that the goods are bearers of values.

The value “good” (Scheler 1973, 25) appears, by way of essential necessity, on the act of realizing the value which is the highest. The value “evil” is the value that appears on the act of realizing the lowest value. First, that means that morally good is the realizing act which agrees with what is preferred. Second, the act realizes a positive value within the higher level of value-ranks. The purest good is given in the act of that kind of willing which occurs immediately prior to a choice. Different from Kant, Scheler conceives good and evil as values of the person and not exclusive to a fulfillment of a law or will. Scheler says: [For Kant], “the value of the person is determined by the value of the will, and not the value of the will by the value of the person”. (Scheler 1973, 28) Scheler will not say that the bearers of moral values are the concrete acts of the person, but the directions of his moral “to-be-able-to” (Scheler 1973, 28-29) which precedes any idea of duty, and yet is the condition of the possibility of duty. In conceiving the goods and evil the values of a person, Scheler amplified the moral values as belonging to the person, including will and deeds.

The phenomenology of values and even the phenomenology of emotive life are completely independent of logic, having an autonomous area of objects and research (Scheler 1973, 64). If it would be dependent on logic, the nature would be a thing controlled, would be considered as hostile, and as having a chaotic disposition. A phenomenology of values presupposes a cognition of the essence of good, not the presupposition of it, but the cognition of its givenness in its

interconnection. The interconnections are given like essences (Scheler 1973, 68) and not as a product of understanding. They are not made, but intuited. For Scheler, the a priori of the value-content as the content of essences of the world is opened up (Scheler 1973, 73), and the distinction between “thing in itself” and “appearances” breaks down. Thus, the value-content has its own interconnection (logic). For example, the value cannot be based on the necessity of an ought. On the contrary, only what is good can become a duty; it is because it is good that it is necessary ought. It is the oughtness that must be founded in values (Scheler 1973, 82).

The height of a value is “given” in its essence through the act of preferring (Scheler 1973, 87) that is different from “choosing” in general. The act of preferring occurs in the absence of all conation, choosing, and willing. For example, when I prefer love, instead of hate, it will not be a matter of choice, but an attitude of living in the act of love.

The values are higher the more they endure and the less they partake in extension and divisibility. As Scheler says: “A value is enduring through its quality of having the phenomenon of being able to exist through time, no matter how long its thing-bearer may exist.” (Scheler 1973, 91) The values are higher the less they are founded through other values and the deeper the satisfaction connected with feeling them. For example, I love is absolutely higher than I am feeling good today, because it causes a deeper satisfaction connected with feeling. Thus, when I am feeling good I not necessary need to have love for it, but when I love, the “feeling good”, may be one of the bearers of this loving feeling. The values are also higher the less the feeling of them is relative to the positing of a specific bearer of feeling and preferring. According to Scheler: “The essential (i.e., original) characteristic of a “higher value” is, then, its being less “relative”; of the “highest” value, its being an ‘absolute’ value.” (Scheler 1973, 99-100) The value must be considered higher as the more absolute it can be seen. We can perceive that some values are independent of all other values (self-values) and others possess phenomenal relatedness to other values (consecutive values) which is necessary for their being (Scheler 1973, 103).

According to Scheler, the laws that we have in our minds are not given as laws in the form of perception, of being conscious of, but they are experienced as fulfilled or broken in the execution of acting (Scheler 1973, 141). For example, the acting artist is controlled by the aesthetic laws without applying them. The acting criminal breaks laws and experiences himself as breaking them. In both cases, it is not necessarily a thought for the realizing act, they are recognized in practice. They must be confirmed in practice. As Scheler says: "Confirmation lies, rather, as a fact between the moral tenor and a deed, that is, the deed is experienced as a confirmation of the moral tenor in a special and practical experience of fulfillment." (Scheler 1973, 120) No one will be judged for having bad thoughts (we have them all the time) but by their fulfillment into practice. The basic moral tenor possesses a realm of no-formal values which is independent of all experiences and any success in deeds. These values are objectives and they are given a priori.

### *The feeling as bearers of values*

The morality must be based on values that are objects and not in blind subjective imperatives, or on the disapproval or approval of the usefulness in society, as the utilitarianism would believe. Also, the disapproval or approval must be grounded in values. We cannot try to find a logic that measure all the values through conscience, or that is based on useful economy, for the values itself already have its own logic.

It cannot be said that the value-judgments express an *ought-connection* (Scheler 1973, 183), a should-be, instead of an ontological connection, saying that good and evil just would represent different kinds of this ought. For example, this picture is beautiful, doesn't mean that it should be beautiful. In the same way, this is good doesn't mean it should be, because good is good by itself as the beautifulness has its own aesthetic value as well. The moral values and the aesthetic values as another's values have its own onto-logical connection; they don't need any ought-connection to prove its essence.

According to Scheler, neither the concept of duty, nor of norm can serve as a point of departure for ethics. Much less can they function as a measure (Scheler 1973, 190) for the establishment of the possible distinction between good and evil. The concept of duty brings a necessitation that is subjectively conditioned, and not founded objectively in the essential value of the matter of fact. As Scheler says: “The mere ‘from within’ does not give the idea of duty any higher dignity (Scheler 1973, 193)”. The idea of a measurement or a foundation of values from inside brings an element of *blindness* (Scheler 1973, 192) that can shorten the surpass of the values itself.

For Scheler, every ought has its foundation in values, but values are not founded in the ideal ought. From this comprehension, Scheler draws two important axioms: “The being of a positive value is itself a positive value; the being of a negative value is itself a negative value.” (Scheler 1973, 206) The evaluation of values is due by itself and not by an internal law that comes from within. The idea of duty should be place in an attitude founded on values and not in a duty that is floating in the air (Scheler 1973, 211).

As the values have its own givenness and they are given in feelings, it does not follow that the values exist only as they are felt or can be felt (Scheler 1973, 244). The feelings are bearers of values and not their essence.

The history of philosophy has caused a prejudice in making a division between reason and sensibility (Scheler 1973, 253). In doing so, the rational was constituted as absolute and a priori; whereas, emotions was constituted as relative and empirical. Interpreting Pascal, Scheler says that the “reason of the heart” (Scheler 1973, 255) shows the givenness present in the feelings. Thus, Scheler will uphold a priori non-formal (material) on the feelings, with its interconnections, so that they can bear the values in its essences. What we feel, we feel immediately. That “what” (Scheler 1973, 259) of the feeling is a value-quality that comes over us as its manner of givenness. We are not previously conscious of feeling itself, but there is an execution of feeling that requires an objective reflection that should be based on the value-quality itself and not on the feeling-state (the intensity we feel it).

It is not the changing ideas about values (e.g. love and justice) that must be investigated, but the forms of moral attitudes themselves and their experienced order of ranks. Also, it is not the action that is considered noble or useful, or conducive to well-being, but the rules by which such values themselves were preferred or placed after (Scheler 1973, 302). Scheler writes: “The rules of preferring that belong to an old ethos are not abolished as a new ethos *grows*. Only a relativizing of the whole of the old ethos occurs.” (Scheler 1973, 305) Scheler, with this phenomenological view, tries to avoid relativism and absolutism. Absolutism by its formalism disregards a no-formal givenness of values and the relativism disregards the a priori of value itself. Both absolutist and relativist ethics disregard a priori givenness of values.

Taking the values as the base, the execution of all willing based on loving, for example, is always pleasant, and all willing based on hate is always unpleasant. It doesn't matter if I feel pleasant when my hate is satisfied or unpleasant when my love is not corresponded. That appears as a paradox that Scheler tries to solve, considering the fact that there is a conterstriving against positive values felt as positive values and that there is a striving for negative. According to Scheler, we need to look for the essential condition of it. First of all, the values that we are talking about are values of a person. Thus, the self-destructive character of evil rests on the idea that the evildoer must destroy himself and his own world. That means that this false value is self-destructive and, for this reason, will destroy the character of a person, and will pervert the feeling that accompanied it. Therefore, concludes Scheler: “Every preferring of a higher value to a lower one is accompanied by an increase in the depth of the positive feeling. Every placing after of a higher value is accompanied by an increase in the depth of a negative feeling.” (Scheler 1973, 356) That follows necessary that, if the value is good it will be accompanied by positive feeling and if it is not good, although it will cause a transitory pleasure, the feeling will be in its nature a negative feeling. Thus, the paradox is solved by the nature of the value itself that will always invoke positive bearers (feeling), and the

feeling, in turn, will reveal a true nature of the values that our subjective cannot reveal.

For Scheler just a good person is truly blissful (Scheler 1973, 359). The blissfulness is a value of a person and can produce virtue. Thus, happiness cannot be based on the will; we cannot chose to be happy, or conceive pleasure as a way to be happy, or even find in revenge a satisfaction that lead us to happiness. The blissfulness is a feeling of the good person. Even if trouble comes or misfortunes, etc., a good person will not lose the feeling that he is doing the right thing. An example would be the early Christians when they were about to be killed by the lions in the Coliseum, before their death, they would sing psalms of joy.

### *Formalism and Person*

Scheler conceives a degradation (Scheler 1973, 371) of a person an ethics based on formalism, because it subordinates a person to the formalism, to an impersonal *nomos* under whose domination he can become a person only through obedience. What should be a person in Scheler's conception?

The person is an essential unity, a concrete essence (Scheler 1973, 383) of being of acts of different essences that, per se, precedes all essential act-differences; it is the foundation of all possible essential differences. That means that a person is not an empty "point of departure" (Scheler 1973, 384) of acts, but he is the foundation, a concrete being. It follows as well that, abstract act-essences can be considered concrete only by belonging to the essence of the person. So, a moral that are not based on a concrete person is abstractly floating in the air.

The person is not behind or above acts, but experiences himself (Scheler 1973, 385) only as a being that executes acts in the way his whole person is contained in every complete act, varying together through every act, but without being exhausted in his being through the act itself. For Scheler, the identity of a person lies in this becoming different through a quality direction. According to Scheler, we cannot grasp the nature of a person considering just past experiences, because

the person lives his existence in the experiencing of his possible experiences (Scheler 1973, 386).

The ego for Scheler is a function and is perceived in inner perception, consequently, it is an object because it is perceived, whereas the person is not perceived, because he lives in his act and the act cannot be grasped, or to be an object of inner perception. As Scheler writes: "First, all functions are ego-functions; they never belong to the sphere of the person. Functions are psychic; acts are non-psychic. Acts are executed; functions happen by themselves." (Scheler 1973, 388) That does not mean that acts are psychic, but that both act and person are psychophysically indifferent (Scheler 1973, 389). Therefore, a person can perceive himself as well as his lived body, and the exterior world, but that does not imply that a person can become an object of representation or perception.

Then, Scheler presents certain characteristics of the person. To be a person it is necessary to have a sound mind so that someone can "be-able-to-understand" (Scheler 1973, 478) in a certain way that he can execute intentional acts that are bound by a unity of sense. A person that is not able-to-understand cannot be considered a person, because he cannot exercise his autonomy as a free bearer of values. That means, for example, children during their early years, people with mental problems cannot act as a concrete person in concrete acts. Next, Scheler brings the idea of belonging. A person who experiences his lived body as yours, as belonging to himself is a person. The concept of person with the idea of "belonging" (Scheler 1973, 489), phenomenologically, forms a condition for the idea of property. That implies that a slave cannot be a person, because he is unable to perform his freedom as having a lived body and property. The slave is not able-to-do just because he is a property of the master. This idea of person will drive Scheler to the conclusion that the personality can be conceived beyond an ego-being and a soul. For example, slaves, as well as children both have an ego-being and a soul, but it does not follow that they also can be characterized as a person.

*Intersubjectivity based on the concept of person*

The person is the touchstone of all ethical ideas. This peculiar individual value-content is the basis, and should be, for all ethics concepts. This source is based on the God's love for us: "[...] so to speak, which God's love has of me and which God's love draws and bears before me insofar as this is directed to me." (Scheler 1973, 390) This is intuited as a good-in-itself that the historicity, logical argumentation and knowledge cannot extinguish. It can lose its base and be conducted to mistakes if, otherwise, our concept of person would be based on an objectivism of any kind.

According to Scheler, the understanding of the good-in-itself is good-in-itself for me, in the sense that it brings this good for me. Scheler designates this value-essence as well as "personal salvation" (Scheler 1973, 489). This personal salvation does not mean that I do not need others, but the other person can show me the path to my salvation through his love for me and my love for him. This reciprocal (Scheler 1973, 535) love serves as the foundation of solidarity (Scheler 1973, 512) that is the base for a community of love. For Scheler, all of society must be based on the principle of solidarity, which in turn reveals the individual value-content of a person. This idea intends to avoid an ethic based on institution, state, a singular person as the ideal person, law and everything that is not essentially based on the person as good-in-itself. For Scheler, any kind of foundation that is not based on the individual value-content of a person, even if we base the foundation on a collective idea of a community as ideal one, we are causing a depersonalization of the person and that will be based instead on a kind of an ultimate formal ought.

The idea of reciprocity is not connected essentially with interest, contract or an object of will, but it rests on the acts that require as ideal correlates responses of love (Scheler 1973, 535-537). The one who loves not only can bring salvation to himself in realizing a positive-value, but also, in loving, becomes a bearer of such value for the beloved. That means that responding love, as love, also bears the positive act-value of love (Scheler 1973, 537).

A concrete person that is loved by God, with God's unchangeable love, through his intimate relation to God, brings about the most indivisible value, called holiness. The value of holiness brings the love that I experience in God to concrete acts. Through these concrete acts we realize ourselves as a person in loving others. This solidarity propitiates the very idea of a person as having an intimate sphere as a social one (Scheler 1973, 561).

When a person becomes a bearer of the love in the act of loving, he also can become a model in the sense of this value. "And we have maintained that the divine goodness itself becomes indirectly a possible model-content only in the forms of these types of the value-person." (Scheler 1973, 590) This means, if these types and their ranks are "fulfilled" (Scheler 1973, 589) in factual models it also follows that they are objectively good, and if that does not happen, they are bad. Here, we will find the necessity of the effectiveness of models (Scheler 1973, 583) realized by a concrete person based on the God's love for him, and, through his concrete actions, can be able to become a bearer of such values. In becoming a bearer he also could become a model. This model is not to be obeyed or imitated, but considered as a bearer of the truly model that we can find intuitively in God through the highest value of holiness. For Scheler, it does not mean we can grasp the essence of God's Love, but in becoming a bearer and not a mere copy, we can share through the value of holy the experience we have with God.

Even though Scheler avoided the reduction of the concept of person to an oughtness, he still reduced it to the essence of God's love for us. That means that without God, a person would not exist, much less an acting person. This idea would be very tempting for theologians who conceive of God as the creator of all things. Nevertheless, despite our belief that a thing was created by God; it does not follow that this thing is essentially connected to the Creator; the creature may have a total different identity. We are not saying that the phenomenological mystical experience would not influence a person in his concrete actions; we are saying that it would be very problematic to reduce all ethical achievements considered

good to a mystical experience. We are not saying that we could not have religious ethics based on such individual or collective experiences; we are saying that a descriptive theology would be arbitrary for the ethos of a people, for the concept of personality, and even for the religious mystical experience itself.

Scheler places all possibilities of the good of our phenomenological relationship with God's love for us. Again, we are not saying that we cannot build religious ethics based on a mystical experience that influences our concrete acts, we are saying that it could contradict the idea of the personality itself. In other words, so many things can influence the personality, like institutions, ideologies, religions, cultures, laws and so on. However, all these factors influence our personality but do not exhaust the personality itself. How could we conceive the concept of personality without it be attached or reduced to a law, to God, to a sound mind, or to possession?

## **2. The thresholds**

Analyzing the genealogy of order, Waldenfels also develops a concept of personality neither borrowed from outside (God, laws, institutions...), nor from inside (subjectivity), but through an open process whereby the personality will constantly be faced with thresholds revealing its margins, its twilight zones. The margins will disable a static personality because leaves the personality itself responsive. As responsive it comes before our will or thought, it develops from its way of givenness. Waldenfels recognizes the outside and inside influences on personality, but the personality has also a surplus, a doubleness that goes above-and-beyond.

According to Waldenfels, there is a surplus and a decorative exuberance despite all functionality in our actions, when we cook, play soccer or swim, for instance, we can overpass a mechanical activity. Waldenfels quotes André Leroi-Gourhan in his work "Gesture and speech" to show a kind of functional plasticity we have:

"There always remains a certain 'functional plasticity' (G&S 301) and an 'envelope of style', whose particularizing effects lead to the

omnipresence of 'aesthetics' (G&S 299ff.). 'The purest art always plunges deepest; only the uppermost tip emerges from the plinth of flesh and bone without which it could not exist' (G&S 273) (Waldenfels 1996, 8)".

Waldenfels is interested in the possibilities that emerge from the threshold of our lives. These thresholds are deeply imbricated in our being so that they are unavoidable (Waldenfels 2006, 39-45) and force demand challenges upon our safe ground. Normally, we establish a comfort zone that prevents us to see the thresholds that surround us. It is easy to lose sight of the thresholds when we walk through the streets of our cities, performing the common daily activities. For example, going to the bakery, going to the supermarket, working in our jobs, walking our dog, etc., but if instead, we go to a forest everything becomes different. The straight street well signposted and organized disappears and our points of reference used to indicate the roads, are no longer present. We are in a wild place. It is no less different in our megalopolis, and even in the cities we don't know quite well. Easily, it shows the chaos of their economic and social architectural structures. Nevertheless, we don't need to go to a forest and to another city to experience the thresholds. They are connected with transition experiences (Waldenfels 1996, 11) like falling asleep and awakening, health or sickness, leaving and arriving. Our comfort zone provides a logic that blurs this threshold area through a science of cause and effect, constructing instead a kind of transition synthesis.

For Waldenfels, the thresholds represent a gap whereby our logic cannot reach. This gap brings new possibilities that a one-sided logic is unable to demonstrate. This gap or fissure will be transformed as a field, area or even a zone of exploration by Waldenfels.

From a safe ground we cannot take possession of what lies beyond the threshold (Waldenfels 1996, 12). What lies beyond offers possibilities that are accessed by its own way of givenness and that can be covered by our one-side objectivity. Through this threshold zone, Waldenfels will reveal some ethics consequences that we can find in the dynamism of a responsive ethics. The responsive movement occurs in my relationship

with the world and this relation is asymmetrical (Waldenfels 1996, 18), because when I respond, I precisely do not do the same thing as the other person does. The action of response celebrates always a bodily encounter (Waldenfels 1996, 23). What comes towards me reveals its originality, its own form, its own weight, its own movement, its own temporal rhythm, and its own surrounding world (Waldenfels 1996, 22).

In the responsive event there is certain order which is not an objective order elaborated by our subjectivity. Waldenfels will call this the order of the responsive rationality (Waldenfels 1996, 24) because it plays a role in our own rationality, but it is not rationalized. This responsive rationality happens during an event (action) and affects the actual order. Something comes to our mind, it questioned us, and we precisely don't know how to answer it, like a religion experience or simply a material experience like encountering a smell, or just viewing a landscape. This something remains noticeableness and questionableness so that we can say it is smelling, seeing or thinking, but when we say it is smelling this "it" already brings an interpretation. Waldenfels is not proposing a chase of something free of interpretation, but he tries to see through the responsive movement a possibility that does not encapsulate the richness of the event himself.

### *The marginalization of orders*

When a question comes to our mind, how is an order formed? Waldenfels calls our attention to the terms relevancy or importance. For Waldenfels, three directions of reference are open to us: (a) emergence – something sets itself off from a background; (b) appearance – something presents itself to someone; (c) concomitance – something occurs with something else (Waldenfels 1996, 31).

With the first point (a) something sets itself off from a background because it is important and attracts our attention. Here exists a threshold between the known and the unknown. Nothing until now can be considered a matter of logical determination, because the event just happened toward me. The second relation (b) something appears important to

someone. Before we can make it a theme, it is first a spontaneous occurrence (Waldenfels 1996, 32), a form of self-organization not controlled by an ego. The third relation (c) reviews the occurrence of the things. In the occurrences of things (the relation from one thing to another thing), something becomes important only when it becomes a theme within a context already established where it can be reserved. Waldenfels writes: "The thematization that brings something into the center of focus creates contexts and has a marginalization as its reverse side." (Waldenfels 1996, 34) The regulation of coherence and continuation, and the repression of others reveals selections and exclusions so that a possible change of theme immediately colors its surrounding field.

The margin concept allows Waldenfels to push to the edge the established field such that a new possibility can arise. The event itself brings such originality that happens inevitably towards us. This event cannot be graspable, and always will remain somewhat marginal. That means, this margin concept, in its givenness, is not a new established order in the field (or a new field itself), but represent how an order comes to being. The event that brings the possibility of order in a certain field is itself inevitable and marginal. The constitution process of the order itself will leave always the field open to a new constant process. Thus, a definitive order contradicts its own process. The process itself with its margins gives birth to new orders, and these new orders carry margins so that another order can arise.

As the "lifeworld" cannot be controlled in its givenness, we find through order an illusion that believes that would be possible to form a set of norms capable of arresting the margins itself, normally we characterize it as something pure, such as pure order, pure reason, pure fact, etc. In the attempt to make something more pure – with no margins – we seek greater generalization concerning our rules. The more general the norms become, the more strongly they tend toward the negative form of coercion (Waldenfels 1996, 49).

Selections and exclusions represent the existent tension in the pursuit of the building structure of orders. Important and unimportant emerge in our interaction with the event that

comes inevitable towards us. It follows that orders take part constantly in our actions, but it does not follow that they are definitive once they appear. The orders that arise through the existent tension in selections and exclusions produce their own boundaries (Waldenfels 1996, 51).

For Waldenfels, the origin of the order does not emerge from a kind of teleological order in the cosmos whereby laws are not to be enacted, but discovered (Waldenfels 1996, 53). A cosmos as a total order means that everything fits within it. Thus, the lower beings subordinate themselves to the higher, according to the degrees of perfections and values are found better than others, and that the concept of person is tied to the order of the cosmos or to a god, and not to his “lifeworld”. If we remove the margins we fragment the self in his essential way of living, and consequently we impose instead another personality borrowed from the law, from a god or even from the nature. Disregarding the intertwining of the person with the world, with the other, himself and even with his mystical experiences, and be unable to look for its margins that emerge from such experiences, would conduct us to a depersonalization of the person. A universal point of view is merely chosen (Waldenfels 1996, 62), so that we can follow it or not. Moreover, there is no universalization without facing its margins and thresholds, it exercises pressure by subjecting everything to that viewpoint, disregarding the one-sidedness and origin of this viewpoint. When limited fields of experience and ways of life expand, and combine into a cosmic universal order, no room is left for a personality in its threshold, creativity, and spontaneity. No room is left outside the limits traced by the universalization itself.

Waldenfels is not stepping out of reason, but he tries to show its threshold in the sense of even searching an amplification of our capacity of perceiving and helping the problem of conceiving the morality as an open relational process with the world, the other and even with ourselves. Husserl in the paragraph 53 from his book “Crisis” speaks that the subject is “swallowed up” (Husserl 1976, 180) in his constitutive process. That means there is a split of the self in the sense of its constitutive developments. Waldenfels speaks of a doubling of

the subject (Waldenfels 1996, 80). Both Husserl and Waldenfels are striving against an objectivism that is imposed against the self whereby creating a kind of imputation of a personality.

The person characterized as having the right and duty, guiding itself autonomously by such universal moral guidance, and that denied certain genealogical ontology becomes merely a descendant of an ancient substance or a substrate that determines the basis of everything (Waldenfels 2006, 123). The person cannot be seeing just from his group, institution, the rules he follows, or the creed he believes. The person should be seeing in his original presence as an unrepeatable one, a double one, a mysterious one (never completed deciphered), skilled, creative, provocative, rational and emotive, the one that can trace rules and go beyond. The person must be seeing by its marginal side. The mask (persona) in its outside must face the inside whereby the inside and outside are intertwined, and the person appears with his claims (*Ansprüche*), claiming his presence as interrogative and responsive.

### *The twilight zone*

For Waldenfels, the twilight zone of any order allows a criticism upon the order so that it shows its thresholds. It does not mean that Waldenfels defends a kind of chaos, but he tries to review the genealogy of every order, the variety of claims, and the dynamicity of our response through them. An order does not need to end a process or to be self sufficient to be validated, but it has margins that can serve as a new and continuous reflection. This twilight zone of order makes, simultaneously, experiences possible and prevents them, building up and demolishing, excluding as it includes, rejecting as it selects (Waldenfels 1996, 110). The shadow's side is not a negative (Waldenfels 1996, 112) thing, but something is co-experienced in the power and powerlessness of our imbricated experiences.

The twilight zone brings a fissure that means that the context exists, but not a closed one, instead an open process which allows a generative milieu. The questions and answers (Waldenfels 1996, 113) that emerge in their heterogeneity cannot be oriented teleologically toward a comprehensive goal,

because the established connection between them is located prior to the truth claims and consensus demands. For Waldenfels, we cannot determine a clear boundary between what would be a question and what would be its answer. It is not a matter of choosing the right answer for the right question, nor to decide which one would come first, or which time would be properly fitted. The inevitability of the claims has its original interrogations whereby we are intertwined responsively. At this pre-level, belonging to the event itself, we cannot establish landmarks in order to determine the course of what happens.

The reason alone comes too late. It does not mean that reason is out of the event, but it is together with what escapes from itself. It also does not mean that the pre-objectivity could be characterized as a moment of chaos before a moment of order, but we can find a constitutive property of a responsive rationality (Waldenfels 1996, 114) that reveals a twilight zone, appearing as a pre-rationality, ungraspable which comes without we want or project it; it comes responsively. It has its own way of givenness, its own logic. It is not represented as a teleological order in the cosmos whereby everything would be fitted together, but this givenness breaks the endless cause and effects chains, just because it presents an unclear time line, an unclear light (twilight), bringing new possibilities which an established order had banished. There is not a creative universe in a teleological order; there is not a personality from borrowed patterns, nor ethics from moral laws, or divine purposes. The reduction of ethics to a god, to a law or to patterns reveals only a kind of depersonalization.

What we cannot see, hear, say, or do, in the way of its givenness, can be comprehended only in the very saying, seeing, hearing and doing, and has nothing to do with dumbness, blindness, deafness, and inaction. It is rather a currently embodied determinate “over-and-beyond” (Waldenfels 1996, 122). It is neither a *laissez faire*, nor a closed order; it is rather an open process that, through its thresholds, we can see possibilities, creativity, and the responsive person. Waldenfels brings an invitation to speak across the threshold without abolishing it (Waldenfels 1996, 131), because a responsive rationality carries the possibility of an open rationality as well.

### 3. Conclusion

Scheler and Waldenfels provide a great contribution to the concept of personality. Waldenfels would not conceive a rank of values (Scheler), because that would blur the threshold of what happens, the event itself. A rank of values would presuppose an ethics whereby a person should fit in order to be a good person. For Waldenfels, there are always margins that bring news possibilities for the development of ethics that is not tied to a rank of higher or lower values. There cannot be determinism of values without a history of values. It does not mean that there is not good or bad for Waldenfels, but that there is a genealogy of good and bad that would be not developed through a teleological way. Through a process of inclusion and exclusion the order brings together a history of its margins that cannot be forgotten.

Scheler and Waldenfels try to avoid formalism as a presupposition of ethics, noting an inescapable arbitrariness in a moral governed by a written law or even internal autonomous law. Scheler seeks to place the higher values whereby are the base of ethics, on the idea of God's love for us that, through a intimate relation to God, brings about the most higher value, called holiness. The value of holiness brings this relations experience to God into concrete acts where an individual can realize oneself as a person, sharing with the others love in a reciprocal way, through the solidarity of love for the sake of a collective salvation. Thus, the source of ethics would be based on God's love for us intuitively given by the value of holiness. Waldenfels would try to show that the process itself, the process of moral order, and human conceptions of ethics, through its genealogy, can reveal an open process done responsively that prevents any attempt of determinism, objectivism and subjectivism. Waldenfels does not say that a religious mystical experience cannot bring benefits for humankind or that it would not influence our personalities. Waldenfels, through the idea of the twilight zones, demonstrates that the personality is not tied exclusively to God, to institution, or to a moral law.

This work propitiates us to explore a concept of personality based on a concrete person that lives with other persons. The personality is intertwined with the others personalities, with himself and with the world. Nevertheless, Waldenfels shows that, despite these imbrications, there is an originality in each person that is given in the intersubjective event itself in its relation with the world that discloses its

margins, otherness, preventing a closed conception of personality. The responsive personality is a latent one.

## REFERENCES

Husserl, Edmund. 1976. *Die Krisis der Europäischen Wissenschaften und die Transzendente Phänomenologie: eine Einleitung in die Phänomenologische Philosophie*. Edited by Walter Biemel. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.

Kant, Immanuel. 2011. *Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals: a german-english edition*. German text from the second original edition (1786), edited by Jens Temmermann, translated by Maty Gregor and revised by Jens Timmermann. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Scheler, Max. 1973. *Formalism in ethics and non-formal ethics of values: a new attempt toward the foundation of an ethical personalism*. Translated by Manfred S. Frings and Roger L. Funk. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Waldenfels, Bernhard. 1996. *Order in the Twilight*. Translated by David J. Parent. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press.

Waldenfels, Bernhard. 2006. *Schattenrisse der Moral*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.

**Márcio Junglos** is Professor of philosophy at the Universidade do Contestado (Brazil) and Visiting scholar at the Phenomenology research center – PRC in Carbondale, Illinois (US). He is performing research in the phenomenology of inclusiveness. He recently published “Consequencias inclusivas na fenomenologia de Husserl, Merleau-Ponty e Waldenfels” (*Intuitio* 6) and “Racionalidade e ontologia: perspectivas ético-inclusivas na filosofia de Mead, Merleau-Ponty e Waldenfels” (*Kínesis* 5).

### Address:

Márcio Junglos  
Universidade do Contestado  
Campus Concórdia  
Rua Victor Sopelsa, 3000, Bairro Salete  
Concórdia – SC – CEP 89700-000 / Brazil  
E-mail: [revjunglos@yahoo.com.br](mailto:revjunglos@yahoo.com.br)