

**BEYOND NIHILISM?  
—  
ONKRAJ NIHILIZMA?**

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# PHAINOMENA

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## BEYOND NIHILISM? — ONKRAJ NIHILIZMA?

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## PHAINOMENA

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**TOWARD AN APPRAISAL OF SCHELER'S THOUGHTS  
ON THE MODERN SCIENTIFIC  
WORLDVIEW AND THE HUMAN BEING  
IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CROATIAN PHILOSOPHER  
BRANKA BRUJIĆ**

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*Abstract*

The aim of the paper is to highlight some aspects of Scheler's thoughts on the modern *ethos* and his conception of man, rooted in his notion of the person. In order to demonstrate this, the main part of this work presents the interpretation of Scheler by the Croatian philosopher Branka Brujić. By explicating the main points of her interpretation, it is argued that Scheler's thought has relevance today. The other anchor of this paper is another Croatian philosopher, Željko Pavić, who has criticized Scheler's



philosophical anthropology and the notion of man. The aim is to show that this critique opens a way to understanding Scheler's position more clearly, which can be done by Brujić's reading of Scheler that links the entirety of Scheler's thought with the critique of the modern *ethos*. The contribution wishes to show that Croatian philosophy has a worthwhile interpretation of Scheler's philosophy.

*Keywords:* Branka Brujić, person, Željko Pavić, Croatian philosophy, *ethos*.

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**Na poti k ovrednotenju Schelerjevih misli o modernem znanstvenem svetovnem nazoru in o človekovem prebivanju. V interpretaciji hrvaške filozofinje Branke Brujić**

*Povzetek*

134 Namen prispevka je poudariti nekatere vidike Schelerjevih misli o modernem *ethosu* in njegovega pojmovanja človeka, utemeljenega na ideji osebe. Da bi to dosegel, osrednji del pričujočega dela predstavlja interpretacijo Schelerja spod peresa hrvaške filozofinje Branke Brujić. Z razjasnitvijo pglavitnih potez njene interpretacije želimo pokazati, da je Schelerjeva misel relevantna tudi danes. Drugo jedro članka predstavlja misel še enega hrvaškega filozofa, Željka Pavića, ki je kritično osvetlil Schelerjevo filozofsko antropologijo in njegov pojem človeka. Smoter tega dela prispevka je razgrniti, da takšna kritika razpira pot k jasnejšemu razumevanju Schelerjevega stališča, kar je mogoče storiti s pomočjo branja Schelerja pri Brujićevi, ki celoto Schelerjeve misli poveže s kritiko modernega *ethosa*. Članek želi demonstrirati, da znotraj hrvaške filozofije obstaja dragocena interpretacija Schelerjeve filozofije.

*Ključne besede:* Branka Brujić, oseba, Željko Pavić, hrvaška filozofija, *ethos*.

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## Introduction

In Croatian philosophy, there is a relatively small number of authors who have dealt with Scheler's philosophy, but almost all of his essential ideas have been covered.<sup>1</sup> When it comes to his other ideas, some of the authors have analyzed Scheler's thoughts on the scientific worldview, its connection to the modern *ethos*, its impact on the answer to the question of what it means to be human, and its reductive view of the human being, as the core of Scheler's thought. This point is probably most emphasized by Branka Brujić, the author who extensively studied Scheler's philosophy and claimed that Scheler's concept of the *ethos* is the most important piece of his thought.<sup>2</sup> Brujić explicitly links Scheler's thinking with the critique of the modern "techno-scientific" *ethos*, as she puts it.

However, the authors of the Croatian philosophical tradition have also critically analyzed some aspects of Scheler's thought concerning his conception of the human being and his ontology. In this regard, this paper will focus on the views of Željko Pavić, who criticized Scheler's philosophical anthropology partly by taking up Heidegger's critique of Scheler, Husserl's anti-psychologistic notion of intentionality and his own phenomenological interpretation of the essence of the world as the basis of reality and the interpretation of the human being.<sup>3</sup> Pavić's critique is examined, because it highlights the most important part of Scheler's thought, which makes the critique of *ethos* possible, and it is shown that, from the viewpoint of Scheler's thought, this critique can be viewed as a strength.

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1 Cf. Dretar 2024, 131–168.

2 Cf. Brujić 1984, Brujić 1985, Brujić 1994, Brujić 1996, and Brujić 2010.

3 Cf. Pavić 1989.

Thus, taking Pavić's interpretation into account, it is argued that, based on some aspects of Brujić's interpretations, Scheler's views may have ontological credibility in today's world. In this way, Pavić's critique actually reveals a crucial point in Scheler's overall philosophical project. In order to show this, the focus of the paper is narrowed to the topics listed, but it is important to note that they are far more complex as they are interwoven with the entirety of Scheler's thought. The aim of this paper is thus twofold: 1) to shed light on some aspects of Scheler's philosophy in light of Croatian interpretations, and to show its importance, as it can clarify the intention of Scheler's thought; and 2. to show why Scheler's thoughts on modern man are still important today. The second point can be made only by answering the critique made by Pavić and assessing the meaning of the term *ethos*, as it was analyzed by Brujić.

### **1. Pavić's critique of Scheler's philosophical anthropology and his view of the human being**

136 According to Pavić, modern philosophical anthropology and its founder, Max Scheler, do not approach the question of the human being from the correct point of view and therefore arrive at a relative definition of the human being, derived from the natural sciences and their technical reduction of both the human being and the world. This interpretation of Scheler's thought is negative, as it asserts that Scheler's account is not ontologically precise from the outset and reduces the human being to the historical conditions of the modern world. In this respect, Pavić begins his argument by stating that the fundamental question of philosophical anthropology: "What is man?", is misguided from the get-go. The most ontologically problematic aspect of this argument is that the problem of the world becomes insignificant, since the human being and its essence are presupposed as a given object of primary analysis, and the methodology is flawed, because it attempts to combine scientific and philosophical, speculative views.<sup>4</sup>

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4 Cf. Pavić 1989, 239. It is important to note that the full extent of Pavić's interpretation of Scheler cannot be addressed here. Pavić's critique is grounded in his phenomenological assessment of the concept of the world and should be read in that context. However, it

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Without going into all the details of Pavić's interpretation, since it is part of an entire book with a complex phenomenological argument about the concept of the world, it is important to note that he claims:

To question the essence of the human being *without* the world, to separate it from its world source (reality), necessarily leads to an approach, in which man functions as an "item" (a thing, an item without the world), an "object" of scientific research and *for subjective purposes* (to make the paradox even greater). (Pavić, 1989, 240.)

However, according to Pavić, this is precisely what philosophical anthropology does, and Scheler's thinking is no different, which leads to the opposite of what it claims. According to the result of philosophical anthropology, man should be an open being, independent of the constraints of an already realized world, and never truly defined. But this, so the claim goes, is wrong from the outset, because it presupposes the human being as an already determined object, which is then derived from the world as it is now, in the current historical context, dominated by the techno-scientific worldview.<sup>5</sup>

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This is the point, at which Pavić primarily criticizes Scheler's conception of the primacy of the human being, focusing on the anthropological notion of "distance." Distance implies that man is not, and cannot be, together with the world that constitutes his being.<sup>6</sup> Thus, from Pavić's perspective, it can be inferred that philosophical anthropology views man as distanced from his original connection to the world—a situation that is itself a product of the modern scientific worldview—, and seeks to ground the notion of man in experimentally repeatable phenomena. At the same time, philosophical

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is considered here, because it reveals a crucial aspect of Scheler's thought. This critique can, therefore, be addressed from within Scheler's thought, as demonstrated through Brujić's analysis. In this way, it is possible to clarify Scheler's aims, without necessarily defending his position. Ultimately, two opposing philosophical positions remain, which cannot be compared here. To understand Pavić's critique and compare it to Scheler's thought, one should consult Pavić's entire book and its broader phenomenological context. The aim of this paper is, therefore, limited to explicating Scheler's position through Pavić's and Brujić's interpretation of Scheler's notion of man and *ethos*.

5 Cf. Pavić 1989, 242–245.

6 Cf. Pavić 1989, 241–242.

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anthropology claims that man is a unique, unrepeatable being who cannot be reduced to anything else.<sup>7</sup> Thus, uniqueness is regarded as an essential characteristic of the human being, while Pavić argues that the world itself is the fundamental phenomenon that is unrepeatable. “The world is essentially unique: the only thing that is repeatable is the uniqueness.” (Pavić, 1989, 243–244.) To illustrate his point, Pavić asserts that man is a “cosmo-ontological” being, and cites Eugen Fink who stated that the world is the primary medium of everything that appears and can appear, and is therefore the “truth of being” in Pavić’s words. In other words, everything that appears is first grasped as a thing belonging to a world, which means that philosophical anthropology, whose primary object of analysis is the human being distanced from the world, begins with a factually reduced world and not with authentic being.<sup>8</sup> The world itself, Pavić claims, can never be exhausted, since it is always a unique historical event; therefore, man cannot be analyzed within the horizon of an already created world of things and culture. Thus, philosophical anthropology misses the point, because it regards the techno-scientific worldview as absolute, rather than as a particular historical instantiation of the world. Since the being of the world is an ever-repeating uniqueness, the world itself can never be objectified, nor can it be fully known.<sup>9</sup> That is why, ultimately, as Pavić shows, Scheler’s human being is not truly a worldly being, but rather a being belonging to its environment.

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Pavić’s critique centers on Scheler’s definition of man as an object within a concrete world, followed by his elevation above this world, which only obscures the essence of the human being.<sup>10</sup> According to Pavić, distance presupposes the human being within the horizon of an already actualized world. In Scheler’s anthropology, distance implies that man is not a being grown into his environment like an animal, but rather a being “open” to the world.<sup>11</sup> Pavić argues that this notion is crucial for Scheler’s anthropology, yet it is also its weakest point. Man is a worldly being, a spiritual being capable of reflection

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7 Cf. Pavić 1989, 242–243.

8 Cf. Pavić 1989, 242–243.

9 Cf. Pavić 1989, 243–244.

10 Cf. Pavić 1989, 245–246.

11 Cf. Pavić 1989, 244–245.

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who uses this power to take control of his environment.<sup>12</sup> This definition relies on a preconceived notion of man as a subject, regardless of how much Scheler distances himself from these views. In other words, man's belonging to a world grants him the ability to transcend his immediate surroundings and exercise mastery over them. Pavić concludes that Scheler cannot claim the human being is truly a worldly being, because in this way it is only open to other environments.

This becomes clear in Pavić's views on Scheler's concept of spirit and "ideation," and this is where the main part of Pavić's argument lies, as he examines Scheler's view that the human being is organically incomplete. Pavić examines the standard view held by modern philosophical anthropology that originates from Scheler. According to this view, the human being is organically "stunted" and must replace his organs with tools. This means, according to Pavić, that tools are "copies" of organs used to take control of the reality, surrounding the human being. Thus, although the human being can grasp the world as spirit, it returns to the world as an environment to control. In this way, according to Pavić, the human being in Scheler's account is not truly a worldly being; rather, it is a practical creature that tends to control reality. This means that, for Scheler, the human being cannot escape its biological reality, because its spirit, having no energy of its own, is derived from it and then, in the form of grasping the world and developing tools to replace organs, is used by it.<sup>13</sup> This occurs, because the spirit itself is merely a product of the human's organic deficiency. The spirit can only suppress and redirect human animal urges and is therefore merely a conscious expression of life, which is seen as an "*instinctive lust for the inorganic*" (Pavić 1989, 246). Therefore, from Pavić's account, Scheler's definition of the human being can be seen as the result of the aforementioned combination of natural-scientific and speculative reasoning. By conflating these fundamentally different lines of argumentation, Scheler's philosophical anthropology, according to Pavić, aligns with the modern scientific worldview, in which technology is the master, while the human being is regarded merely as practically intelligent—that is, the master of nature. In

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12 Cf. Pavić 1989, 244–245.

13 Cf. Pavić 1989, 246–248.

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this way, the human being objectifies the world around it and becomes an object itself.

To conclude his critique, Pavić refers to Heidegger's *Being and Time* (*Sein und Zeit*; 1927), where Heidegger considers anthropology as dubious, because it presupposes a subject. Pavić also notes that, for Scheler, personality is viewed as something real, but Husserl's and Heidegger's analyses show that intentional acts are not something real or psychic.<sup>14</sup> That is why Scheler's anthropological claims are flawed, as the human being and its acts are presupposed and then derived from reality as it is. Pavić thus emphasizes that Scheler's philosophical anthropology misses the essential question, since it accepts the modern world and its presuppositions as given and attempts to philosophically justify them. In Pavić's view, Scheler simply adopts the scientific definition of the human being as an animal, and the concepts of "ideation" and spirit are then subsumed within it. In this way, Scheler already assumes a scientifically reduced world as the basis of his thought and adds his phenomenological thought on top of it. According to this reading, Scheler simply connects his notion of spirit with  
140 the human being as an animal, and the sphere of personality is also viewed as psychologically real, which means that Scheler is already locked into a metaphysic he is trying to transcend.<sup>15</sup>

From Pavić's perspective, it appears that Scheler potentially transposes the modern scientific definition of the human being into his philosophical definition. As will be shown later through an analysis of Brujić's view, this is part of the point that Scheler is actually trying to make. Since Pavić references Heidegger and his claim that anthropology is untenable, because it presupposes an acting subject without ontologically questioning it, Željko Senković's

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14 Cf. Pavić 1989, 249.

15 This paper deals with Pavić's specific interpretation of Scheler's philosophical anthropology, which can be accompanied by Brujić's account of Scheler's philosophy and anthropology. As we attempt to show, these two views combined may show why Scheler's position has value today. Given the scope of this paper, Scheler's vision of philosophical anthropology cannot be adequately reconstructed. For an overview of Scheler's concept of philosophical anthropology and its connection to Scheler's phenomenology, cf. Frings, 1996, 11–25, and Pivčević 2014, 93–102. For an overview of philosophical anthropology as a discipline and the differences between Scheler, Plessner, and Gehlen, cf. Fischer 2009, 153–170.

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analysis of Heidegger's and Scheler's questioning of the human being becomes relevant. Senković agrees with Heidegger that Scheler's thought offers rushed metaphysical solutions and that Heidegger is partially right in criticizing his anthropology. However, Senković notes that Heidegger did not consider Scheler's metaphysical views, which are grounded in the abovementioned interplay of drive and spirit. Most importantly, it is precisely the modern *ethos* that led to such an analysis of the human being and the world:

Modernity has opened a new order of knowledge (that is knowledge/word and thing—in Foucault's sense). Being is no longer present (that is, it cannot be thought) in the manner of a primal self-revealing (*physis*), nor as God's creation; rather, the whole of being is brought into relation with the human being. (Senković 2011, 531.)

That is why Senković concludes that Scheler sought to show the roots of all sciences and to connect all knowledge with metaphysics, considering a kind of “meta-anthropology” as a link between the metaphysics of science and metaphysics as a unifying knowledge of being as it is.<sup>16</sup> Setting aside these metaphysical questions, the main point is that Scheler's questioning of the human being takes place within the horizon of modernity, and it is argued here that this is its strength, and that Scheler's thought can be assessed without reference to his later metaphysical thought.

In his introduction to Scheler's thought in the book *The Phenomenological Movement*, Spiegelberg notes that, although Scheler made some brilliant phenomenological insights, he mostly tends to produce negative results. This means that Scheler often seems to show only what a certain phenomenon is not, rather than providing a positive account of what it is.<sup>17</sup> Spiegelberg also contends that, given Scheler's notion of intuition, this negative description of phenomena is partly necessary, since it is impossible to give a full account, because one can only fully grasp phenomena intuitively. In the context of this paper, these characteristics of Scheler's thought are to be regarded as a virtue, especially in relation to his concept of the person as the essence

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<sup>16</sup> Cf. Senković 2011, 530–531.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Spiegelberg 1994, 301.



of the human being. It will be argued that Scheler's concept of the person, in its negative denotation, reveals the openness of the human being and its intrinsic irreducibility. This insight not only demonstrates the relevance of Scheler's thought for today's world, but also shows how human subjectivity is bound by the historical moment and where its potential for freedom lies, thus revealing Scheler's unique metaphysical position, which is neither relativism nor straightforward essentialism.

## **2. The critique of the modern *ethos* and the meaning of philosophical anthropology, as seen by Branka Brujić**

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In her paper "The Historical and Philosophical Roots of Philosophical Anthropology as an Orientation of Contemporary Philosophy,"<sup>18</sup> Brujić outlines a brief history of philosophical anthropology and surveys the basic views of Scheler, Gehlen, and Plessner. Her most important claim is that philosophical anthropology advances beyond the systems of classical German idealism by not only analyzing the world, but also by examining the way the world and man are co-dependent in shaping each other.<sup>19</sup> As previously stated, it is evident that the aim of philosophical anthropology is not to define the human being from the standpoint of an already existing world, but to demonstrate that the human being and the world are built together.<sup>20</sup> Brujić's point is that, according to philosophical anthropology, one cannot be considered without the other, since they always imply each other.

This will be the central focus of the present paper, and it is clearly the main point of Scheler's philosophy as recounted by Brujić. This thought is also linked to Brujić's interpretation of Scheler's concept of *ethos*, which illustrates how a particular human being and its world are formed together within a given time period. Brujić's analysis of philosophical anthropology can address Pavić's critique, because it demonstrates how philosophical anthropology is rooted in Scheler's earlier notion of phenomenology and the ethics of value, as well as its original meaning. On the basis of such a reading, it is thus shown

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18 Cf. Brujić 1984.

19 Cf. Brujić 1984, 453–457.

20 Cf. Dretar 2024.

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that Scheler's notion of intentionality is "realistic" in a specific way that differs from "reality" in the psychological sense that Pavić and Heidegger appear to attribute to Scheler.

Already in her brief overview of Scheler's thought, Brujić connects Scheler's phenomenology of love and ethics of value with his philosophical anthropology. Brujić explains that, for Scheler, emotions are the primary intentional acts, because what we experience is guided by values. This simply means that there is no act that is value-neutral, since it is not possible to truly see, think, or judge something—or to have any act toward or intend something—without attributing value to it.<sup>21</sup> The primary experience of value, as Brujić states, is experienced subjectively, but the values themselves are not products of our subjectivity; rather, they belong to the experienced phenomena themselves.

It is precisely this point that is crucial for the understanding of philosophical anthropology as described above, since it redefines the fundamental subject-object relation. This is evident from Brujić's account of Scheler's concept of intentionality, for which the term thus-being (*Sosein*) is crucial. The thus-being of an object corresponds to acts aimed at the essence or value of a phenomenon, and, as Scheler claims, these are not ideal but rather "with things."<sup>22</sup> For Brujić, this means that essences and values form the thus-being of phenomena and can be intentionally grasped. She concludes that values and ideas are in this way both in the mind and in things.

This analysis is further developed in a later text by Brujić entitled "The Historical *Ethos* as Opposed to the Absolutely Set Freedom".<sup>23</sup> There, Brujić explicitly states that for Scheler, "values are not made by man, they are rather at the intersection of reality (*ens reale*) and man" (Brujić 1994, 74). In this way, she states, emotions are intentional acts that precede thinking and volition, and they are the primary givers of reality. This is why emotions in Scheler's philosophy have an ontological grounding, since they frame the world. Therefore, it is impossible to experience something without a modality of value being present, one that enables and frames experience.<sup>24</sup> Thus, Brujić

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21 Cf. Brujić 1984, 458.

22 Cf. Brujić 1984, 458.

23 Cf. Brujić 1994.

24 Cf. Brujić 1994, 75.

concludes that without these spiritual emotional acts, which are not ideal, it would not be possible to grasp the meaning of a phenomenon. With this, one can appreciate Scheler's concept of love, for he claims that love is the interest in value, the "movement" that leads man to the values of an object.<sup>25</sup>

This conception of love has crucial consequences for Scheler's metaphysics, as shown in Brujić's text on philosophical anthropology. She calls love the "ecstatic emotional act," which is spontaneous and allows a being intentionally to leave the confines of its own being so it can participate in the thus-being of another.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, with the abovementioned definition of thus-being in mind, only through emotions can one be connected with the world, since they ground all other acts. This is because, as stated, one can only intentionally grasp something that one values in some way. Thus, Brujić concludes that love is the foundation of all representational acts and judgements about the world, and is therefore beyond reason and will.

144 In order to fully understand this, it is important to note another aspect of Scheler's thoughts on values and love, as analyzed by Brujić. Firstly, there exists an act in opposition to love, namely hate. In contrast to love, which seeks higher values, hate seeks lower values and makes a man's "cognitive eye blind" (Brujić 1984, 459). In conclusion, Brujić shows that love and hate, by directing our emotions, determine the scope of what can be experienced at all. If love and hate select emotions according to their height, it means that there is a hierarchy of values. Brujić thus describes Scheler's famous hierarchy of values, ranging from lower to higher values. Scheler ranks them from the lowest to the highest: "values of pleasure (or luxury values), values of usefulness (or civilizational values), values of the noble (overall development and welfare), spiritual values or values of culture, values of the holy or religious fundamental values" (Brujić 1994, 76). Furthermore, Brujić states that these "modalities" of values fall into three kinds: vital values, spiritual values, and religious values. As will be shown later, this hierarchy is important for understanding Scheler's critique of modernity.

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25 Cf. Brujić 1994, 76.

26 Cf. Brujić 1984, 458–459.

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This brings Brujić to the definition of *ethos*, which she claims is one of the central terms in Scheler's philosophy.<sup>27</sup> To put it simply, *ethos* is, for Brujić, a system of concrete valuing that is both personal and collective. She defines it as follows, connecting it to the *ordo amoris*, that is, the structure of loving and hating:

*Ethos*—the complex of embodiments of the values of a socio-historical unity (such as a historical epoch, a particular people, or other possible forms of manifestation of a socio-historical entity), as well as the qualitative orientation of the acts of an individual person (a value-persona)—rests upon a certain order of love and hate (*ordo amoris*). This order is the key to understanding both every socio-historical unity and the individual person, since in their actions, intentions, moral conduct, etc., there is expressed, however indirectly, a distinctive *ethos*, that is, the *ordo amoris*. (Brujić 1994, 77.)

In relation to an earlier statement that emotions and values have a cognitive role, it becomes clear why the definition of *ethos* is the central point of Scheler's philosophy, according to Brujić. By *ethos*, understood as the individual and common structure of valuing, the world for man appears, and its expression is guided by this structure. This is why Brujić concludes that *ethos* is always a specific "style" of relating to the world and the standpoint a man adopts toward it. Since Scheler believes there is a hierarchy of values, ordered according to the described modalities, a concrete *ethos* at a given time is a concrete realization of these value modalities that differs among various social groups and, within these groups, among individuals.<sup>28</sup> Thus, Brujić states that there are as many possible combinations of the realization of this value structure as there are social groups and individuals, but they can never express every aspect of the hierarchy. Therefore, according to this account, a given *ethos* is dominated by certain value modalities, which is crucial for understanding Scheler's critique of the modern *ethos*. Because of this definition of *ethos* and its connection to the person, Brujić presents Scheler's philosophy as a critique of a particular *ethos*,

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27 Cf. Brujić 1994, 77, and Brujić 2010, 35.

28 Cf. Brujić 1994, 77–78.

namely that of the modern worldview and its technical-scientific reduction of the world and man.<sup>29</sup>

Before engaging with Brujić's analysis of Scheler's thoughts on man and modernity, his concept of the person should be briefly outlined. As can be seen from the citation above, *ethos* and *ordo amoris* are always described as being personal. This has a very specific meaning in Scheler's philosophy and is from the outset connected with his hierarchy of values and the notion of *ethos*. It is well known that Scheler defines the person in *Formalism in Ethics and the Non-Formal Ethics of Values (Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*; 1913/1916). In short, this definition aligns with what Brujić wrote about the connection of acts, thus-being, and the priority of emotions as intentional acts. Scheler believes that intentional acts are the core of experience and cannot be understood in terms of the object–subject relation, since they simply occur. This leads him to the definition of the person as the sphere of intentionality that is the basis of all acts.<sup>30</sup> Scheler further argues that the person and the human being cannot be viewed as either object or subject, because its intentional unity precedes everything that can be objectified. That is why the person is the individualized “executor” of acts or the individualized activity of intentionality, which cannot be addressed within the subject–object framework.<sup>31</sup> Again, one must keep in mind what was said above: the primary acts here are emotions, which ground all other acts. In this way, the person can be viewed as our individualized collection of acts that guide our other acts or is, rather, guided by the *ethos* or our order of loving and hating.

However, if the person is merely the endless execution of intentional acts, how can one access their own person? This problem is addressed by the process of “ingathering,” as described by Wei Zhang in “Max Scheler's Socratesism. An Introduction of a Phenomenological Normative Ethics.”<sup>32</sup> Zhang regards Scheler's ethics as being Socratic, in the sense that it should reveal how one ought to live their life. This perspective is based on the analysis of personality

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29 Cf. Brujić 1984, Brujić 1985, Brujić 1994, Brujić 1996, Brujić 2002, and Brujić 2011.

30 Cf. Scheler 1973, 383.

31 Cf. Scheler 1973, 384–386.

32 Cf. Zhang 2021.

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that cannot be referred to as an object, an “I,” or an “ego.”<sup>33</sup> What is important for this work is how Zhang’s analysis shows what personality means for the actual human being and how it can be reached, if it is not an object or an ego. The question arises immediately: what does that really mean for someone, and how does one view their personality, in order to make something of it? In his argument, Zhang analyses simple sentences, such as: “I do something”, and reveals that it is not the “I” but rather me as a person who acts. In referring to ourselves linguistically, we are trying to capture the act, which is objectified by the sentence, but what we mean is the very act of doing something—the acting out of an act itself, which cannot be objectified.<sup>34</sup>

According to Zhang, this is connected to the contemporary definition of self-consciousness, and from this it follows that reflection cannot be the basis of self-consciousness; rather, it is self-consciousness, or the person, that is the foundation for reflection on acts. Scheler, therefore, shows that the “ego,” the “I,” or consciousness can be grasped as an object through an activity that grounds, precedes, and enables it, which is crucial for his understanding of what it means to be human and how to know oneself.<sup>35</sup> Zhang then describes Scheler’s concept of “ingathering,” which is a way to reach one’s personality and experience it, so that one can be with one’s very core. In this way, the human being is not a static point, but a never-ending flow of different acts that can be revealed in the process of “ingathering.” On “ingathering,” Zhang writes:

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Such a “self-ingathering” refers to the expansion of a phenomenology of “having oneself” (*Sichselbsthaben*) (Scheler 1973a, 420), or “self-identification” (*Selbstidentifizierung*) as Scheler talked about elsewhere: in the execution of acts, a “self-identification” is taking place at the same time, that is, one attributes or “self-ascribes” this execution of acts to an “executor of acts” (person). It is this “executor of acts” living in each of his acts who permeates every act with his peculiar character. In each present execution of acts, there remains “lived life” made possible by retention. Although the person is not the “lived life,” he lies in each of his present executions of acts

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33 Cf. Zhang 2021, 143–146.

34 Cf. Zhang 2021, 144–145.

35 Cf. Zhang 2021, 146–147.

and ascribes this “lived life” to himself. Therefore, “self-ingathering” or “self-identification” basically means that, with present acting, the person himself “partakes of” or “participates in” the “halo” (including retention and protention) of this execution of acts, in and through which he lives. (Zhang 2021, 147.)

148 It is also important that Zhang notes how this concept is invoked by Scheler regarding the person, even in his anthropological text *The Human Place in the Cosmos* (*Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*; 1928). This is significant, because it shows that the person, as described above, plays a crucial role in Scheler’s later thought, which is criticized by Pavić. In connection with Scheler’s notion of *ethos*, it could be argued that within Scheler’s thought this critique reveals a sort of strength. From this definition of the person, it becomes clear why the notion of *ethos* is important, for Brujić states that *ethos* is always personal. Thus, *ethos* frames the world, before we can reflect on it, which means we are always given a perspective that is historically conditioned. The process of “ingathering,” as described above, reveals how *ethos* shapes our everyday experience and how it can be experienced. In this sense, Zhang’s analysis shows how the concept of the person can be used as a tool to question ourselves and our world. This aligns with Brujić’s thought and her claim that, for Scheler, the world and the human condition each other. More importantly, only now is it possible to show the extent of Scheler’s critique of modern *ethos*, as interpreted by Brujić, because it has been demonstrated how life is dictated by the connection between intentional acts and values.

### **3. The human being and world as a thing to be exploited: On the modern *ethos***

Brujić notes that the structure of love and hate of a single person defines the possibilities of their desires and thus opens the “playing field” for their potential valuation and actions. However, as a spiritual being, a person is defined by core values of the spirit, which are founded in the genuine act of love, according to the aforementioned hierarchy of values.<sup>36</sup> Brujić claims that Scheler did not

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36 Cf. Brujić 1985, 99–100.

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specify exactly how his ideal *ordo amoris* should appear, but we can infer that it is the act of the person, that is, spiritual values, that should guide it. This is also concluded by Scheler's later anthropology and metaphysics, which aim to sanctify the world by making the highest value of the holy real and thereby enact God's order in the world—Scheler's metaphysical solution.<sup>37</sup> The details of Scheler's metaphysical solution are not essential for the claim made here; it is only important to note that, for Scheler, personality is the goal of ethics, and that one should know one's personality and be guided by its values.<sup>38</sup>

This then raises the problem of modernity, whose *ethos* appears to lower the human being to the level of the practical, that is, to the needs of the body. Brujić demonstrates this by explaining how, according to Scheler, this *ethos* is connected to the capitalistic will to power and the modern conception of science. She shows that this view is connected to Scheler's early work, *Ressentiment*, in which he demonstrated that modern civil society and work within this society have directed man's *ordo amoris* toward the values of pleasure. However, in relation to modern work, this means that man's only worth is measured by the usefulness he produces as a working human being.<sup>39</sup> Brujić describes this briefly, concluding that Scheler criticized modern man, but in his later work, notably in *Cognition and Work* (*Erkenntnis und Arbeit*; 1926), he was critical of the modern *ethos* as a value order. The crux of this critique, as Brujić sees it, lies in Scheler's identification of the modern *ethos* as a fusion of industrialized technology with modern natural science. This aligns with the stated primacy of the lowest values in the modern *ethos*, since industrial production seeks only to create new needs to be exploited.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Cf. Brujić 1984, 462–464, Brujić 1994, 80–82, and Brujić 1996, 169–172. It must be said that Zhang points to the inner values of the person as Scheler's Socratic answer to the question of morality and that they are posited as an "ought"; cf. Zhang 2021, 149–158. In another article, Zhang also shows what Scheler's principle of solidarity means and how it is connected to the concept of the person and the hierarchy of values. This also explains the connection of the concept of the person to Scheler's view of the community and other people, but goes beyond the scope of this contribution; cf. Zhang 2018.

38 Cf. Zhang 2021, 149–158.

39 Cf. Brujić 1985, 100.

40 Cf. Brujić 1985, 100.

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Scheler's critique of *ethos* is summarized by Brujić in three crucial points: 1) the aim of modern natural science is mastery over nature, in order to control it; 2) this type of knowledge is formed within an *ethos* that governs the values and interests of society; and 3) this is also the *ethos* of modern philosophy, including Bacon, Machiavelli, and even Kant.<sup>41</sup> For Scheler, thus concludes Brujić, the will to power, evident in the tendency to seek mastery over nature and characteristic of the modern *ethos*, is a limited form of knowledge that does not follow the revelatory nature of love, because it limits knowledge to the lowest of the values, thus confining the possible scope of the world. It is in capitalism that this connection between technology and science occurs, and the capitalist can thus be seen as the embodiment of the modern *ethos*, taking full advantage of mastery over nature and the will to power.<sup>42</sup>

150 This line of thought is further examined by Brujić in her text "The World of Work and the Process of Historicity in the Thought of Max Scheler."<sup>43</sup> Here, Brujić again asserts that Scheler challenged the view that natural science is neutral. Modern capitalist and technological control of the world fits within the framework of modern natural science. This is because, in essence, it is a mode of knowledge that disregards the essential characteristics of the objects it grasps and focuses on the accidental thus-being of phenomena.<sup>44</sup> Simply put, science reduces the essence of phenomena to that of real objects, as they are accidentally given, and thus constructs a system that aims to control objects as real. Brujić writes that the main point of the "formal-mechanistic" model of science is not to grasp the truth of nature, but to mathematically construct laws that better control nature. In this way, it becomes clear why there is not a single model of nature. The point is that science produces models that best account for the accidental thus-being of the world; these are symbolic, mathematically constructed models that can be increasingly optimized. Thus, the model that can produce the most—in the sense that it best fits the needs of production and environmental control—is the best model, and science is always evolving.<sup>45</sup>

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41 Cf. Brujić 1985, 100–101.

42 Cf. Brujić 1985, 94–97.

43 Cf. Brujić 1996.

44 Cf. Brujić 1996, 157–158.

45 Cf. Brujić 1996, 159.

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The motivation of certain scientists does not matter; they may love knowledge, seek profit, or pursue other goals, as Brujić points out. The core issue lies in the modern conception of science and its knowledge as the will to control the world. Therefore, Brujić notes that the current political and technological context of the modern world exploits this tendency. Science is thus not neutral.

The article “The Will to Power and the Technical-Working World”<sup>46</sup> can be read as the culmination of Brujić’s engagement with Scheler. Here, she analyzes how Nietzsche influenced Scheler’s philosophy and how Nietzsche’s views on modernity shaped Scheler’s critique of the modern *ethos*. The first half of the article focuses on Scheler’s earlier work on *ressentiment* and how Nietzsche’s views on morals influenced Scheler’s own moral philosophy. Thus, it is shown that Scheler’s concept of *ethos* as the “factual evaluation of the basic kinds of values” forms the basis of the human being in the world and governs its historical development.<sup>47</sup> The remainder of the first part shows Scheler’s distinctive incorporation of Nietzsche’s notion of *ressentiment* as one of the ways morality forms within society. Without going into detail, Brujić describes how the modern *ethos* results from *ressentiment* and its inversion of the value hierarchy, making the values of sensory pleasure the highest. In this way, the civil society of the modern world values only what can be used practically and reduces the human being to a worker, neglecting spiritual values.<sup>48</sup> In the second half of the text, Brujić focuses on Scheler’s later thoughts in his sociology of knowledge, where Scheler describes how science is not merely the application of neutral knowledge of nature, but already a modern metaphysical idea. The shift, therefore, occurs in the metaphysics that shape our world, as Modernity is defined by the will to power, in contrast to the contemplative world of ancient Greece and the Middle Ages.<sup>49</sup> According to Scheler, as read by Brujić, the emergence of capitalism and modern civil society, as well as the rise of technical sciences aimed at controlling nature, cannot be explained by sociology, but rather by this shift in the metaphysical perspective, through

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46 Cf. Brujić 2002.

47 Cf. Brujić 2002, 118–119.

48 For a detailed overview of Scheler’s views on *ressentiment* and how it shapes the modern *ethos*, cf. Brujić 2002, 120–127.

49 Cf. Brujić 2002, 129.

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which we view the world. Thus, without philosophy and the metaphysics of nature, modern science could not exist.<sup>50</sup>

The aim to control nature through a “formal-mechanistic” model has already been described, but here Brujić discusses the crucial points, at which philosophy of nature transformed from the Middle Ages to Modernity:

1. The category of quantity gains primacy over the category of quality; the category of relation takes precedence over the category of substance and its accidents; natural law suppresses the determining character of form. 2. Whereas in the Middle Ages forms were ontic and given by God, in modern metaphysics they come to be understood as primarily forms of thought given to the human being. Closely connected to this is the determination of the character of pure concepts of understanding in Kant, which he established as formal conditions of experience. 3. Modern philosophy grounds science by establishing the methods of new scientific inquiry, by assigning different meanings to traditional philosophical concepts, and also by treating the knowledge obtained through a formal-mechanistic framework for understanding nature as being ontologically absolute. (Brujić 2002, 131.)

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Furthermore, Brujić states that later, in his reflections on philosophical anthropology, Scheler claimed that the view of nature governed by the modern metaphysics of nature is merely a historical articulation. Here, the concept of *ethos* comes into play again, and Brujić connects it to Scheler’s notion of metaphysics and man as the center, in which all the ideas of the world interplay.<sup>51</sup> Brujić thus emphasizes that *ethos* shapes the way the world appears to us and that values are neither accidental nor subjectively conditioned. Values reveal the “intersection of man and being” and can be seen as the product of man’s relation to the world, through which he gains access to it.<sup>52</sup>

This covers the full meaning of *ethos*: it frames and provides a fundamental attitude toward the world. It seems that the modern *ethos*, therefore, narrows

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50 Cf. Brujić 2002, 131.

51 For the indication how Brujić connects Scheler’s abovementioned ideas of *thus-being* with his concept of philosophical anthropology and value, cf. Brujić 2002, 134–137.

52 Cf. Brujić 2002, 137–138.

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the world, failing to reveal its full loving potential, which Brujić highlights. This also points to the main concern of Scheler's anthropology as she sees it. The scientific view of the human being is inadequate, because it does not account for the spiritual nature of the human being.<sup>53</sup> This was shown in the brief overview of Scheler's thoughts on the modern *ethos*. However, the metaphysical and religious views of the Western world are, according to Brujić's analysis, also false. Scheler then enters metaphysics, which will not be explicated here, but is analyzed by Brujić. Simply put, Scheler believes that man can intentionally, since he is connected to essences and values through the thus-being, enact the absolute order of God in the world.<sup>54</sup> Brujić also stresses that this is not a finished or predetermined process, but is actually open and governed by man, who, by being connected to the world and the realization of values, moves history. However, this process is tied to the movement of love, which moves toward higher values—a process stunted by the will to power of the modern scientific worldview. As much as history seems to be open-ended in Brujić's reading, it seems that Scheler's solution lies in metaphysics governed by the spiritual goals of God's love.

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Leaving this aside, how does Scheler's view of *ethos* relate to the problems raised by Pavić's analysis? Does it not support Pavić's argument that Scheler's concept of man is derived from the modern *ethos* and, although it distances man from it, ultimately derives him from the presuppositions of the modern world? Does Scheler not simply retreat into speculative metaphysical solutions that serve as patches to a growing wound?<sup>55</sup>

However, given the very definition of the person, as demonstrated by Zhang, the concept of *ethos*, and the premise of the co-determination of the world and man in philosophical anthropology, as shown by Brujić, one can reach a different conclusion. Using this terminology, Scheler reveals the limits

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53 Cf. Brujić 1984, 460.

54 Cf. Brujić 1984, 460–462, and Senković 2011, 529–532.

55 This point can be further supported by Kangrga and his negative assessment of the hierarchy of values. Kangrga claims that Scheler transforms everything valued in the modern civic society of his time into everlasting values with a “magical wand”; cf. Kangrga 2004, 411. According to Kangrga, Scheler simply took what was valuable in his time and constructed a hierarchy of values from it.

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of the modern *ethos*, and even if we do not attribute merit to his metaphysical solutions, we can state the following: Scheler, in line with Spiegelberg's thoughts, has shown, in a negative sense, where the limits of the modern scientific worldview lie by criticizing reductive theories of man.

As can be seen from Brujić's and Zhang's analyses, man cannot be objectified, and the world cannot be viewed merely as an object to be controlled. In the modern world, this results in the enslavement of the very lens—the *ordo amoris*—, through which we perceive the world. The point of Scheler's thought, as inferred from Brujić's reading, is that it demonstrates the need to reconceptualize the being of both man and the world. This returns to Brujić's point about philosophical anthropology: its basic claim is that man and the world co-found each other.

154 In this sense, Pavić's critique is correct in that Scheler's definition of man is partially conditioned by the modern scientific worldview. However, as Brujić shows, Scheler's philosophy reveals the limitations of such a worldview and places it in a historical context. This means that Scheler's philosophy serves as a genealogy of the world of his time, which is perhaps why Brujić insisted that *ethos* was the central concept of Scheler's thought. If read in this light, Scheler's philosophy can help us see what was, so we can understand how we arrived at our present situation. Even if we accept that Scheler adopted the scientific definition of man and attempted to connect it to his phenomenology of the person and *ethos*, we can still interpret it as a guide to how the scientific worldview falls short in strictly defining man, and how a philosophical questioning of the same problem cannot reach a certain firm ground and remains an ongoing process.

## Conclusion

This work aimed to highlight certain aspects of Branka Brujić's interpretation of Scheler's philosophy. Brujić's reading of the concept of *ethos*, within the context of the main points of Scheler's entire philosophy, potentially addresses a significant question raised by Željko Pavić. In this way, it becomes evident that the Croatian interpretation of Scheler, although not extensive, offers perspectives that critically examine some of the central claims

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of Scheler's thought. Pavić's questioning thus reveals a tension within Scheler's philosophy that can only be resolved by considering the nuances of Scheler's phenomenology. This underscores the significance of Brujić's work, since her extensive study of Scheler's concept of *ethos* approaches it from the perspective of Scheler's philosophy as a whole.

It may be argued that Brujić's interpretation of Scheler merits recognition. Her reading is important, because it highlights the complexity of Scheler's philosophical thought and the relevance of his concept of *ethos* for today's world. It may be claimed that his concept of modernity demonstrates the consequences that the modern *ethos* continues to produce in our world. In this way, Scheler's philosophy can be read without its metaphysical and religious connotations, serving as a guide to understanding who we are today by reflecting on who we were yesterday. Likewise, Scheler's negative description of the concept of the person does not show what the human being should be, but possibly points in the right direction by showing what the human being is not.

Thus, from Brujić's work on Scheler, it can be concluded that his thought was grounded in the notion that the way the world appears to us depends on the current *ethos*, and in this sense his thought remains valid, even if we exclude his metaphysics. That Scheler defines man through a scientifically reduced world should then be seen as a symptom of the times, in which he lived, showing what man was then. In this way, Scheler's philosophy appears to be in line with Hegel's famous words about philosophy and Minerva's owl.

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