

Robert Zaborowski (University of Warmia & Mazury/IHN PAN)[♦]

PLATO AND MAX SCHELER ON THE AFFECTIVE WORLD*

Abstract. After presenting Plato's (mainly the *Phaedrus*) and Scheler's (in his *Formalism in Ethics ...*) views on affectivity, differences and similarities between the two are listed. It turns out that Scheler's model is closer to Plato's than Scheler himself believed. Both of them were sympathetic to a hierarchical approach in regard to affectivity. Lastly, Scheler's defective knowledge of Plato's view on affectivity in the *Formalism in Ethics ...* is discussed.

Key-words: Plato, Max Scheler, emotion, affective world, affectivity, hierarchical approach, depth.

1.

I have decided to compare Plato's and Scheler's views on the affective world because they share a common feature, crucial by itself, to my mind, to grasping affectivity accurately. Yet, there is a little use of this feature and rare mention of Plato and, independently, of Scheler in current studies on the emotions. Plato is often taken either to have ignored the issue of affectivity or to have misunderstood it¹. As for Scheler, he is not quoted, e.g. neither by de Sousa in *The Rationality of Emotion*, nor Damasio in *Descartes' Error*, nor Goleman in *Emotional Intelligence*, nor LeDoux in *The Emotional Brain*, to mention only four of the top books in the field². To go to one more example,

[♦] Address for correspondence: IHN PAN, Nowy Świat 72, 00-330 Warsaw, Poland. Email: thymos2001@yahoo.fr.

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¹ Examples are numerous. See e.g. K. Scherer, *Plato's legacy ...*, p. 1: [t]his note argues that the Platonian distinction between cognition, emotion, and conation has outrun its utility and may, in addition to provoking futile debates, seriously hamper progress towards urgently needed integrative approaches to the study of mental activity. – characteristically and typically, there is no mention of Plato's work/s in *References*.

² As a simple anecdote I want to tell that when I was visiting the Swiss Center for Affective Sciences in 2007 and asked a person working there about Scheler (I suppose a Ph.D. student or maybe a junior researcher) she asked me if I meant Scherer – a prominent researcher in this field and a project leader at this centre. When I clarified that I was asking about Max Scheler, the person told me she did not know who Max Scheler was.

in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, according to the index, Scheler is referred to once, in K. Mulligan's paper¹. As for Plato, though he is treated in a historical way by A. W. Price², nowhere else³ in the volume are Plato's views used for the sake of, as it is nicely put by C. Gill, *advancing the theory of emotion*⁴. In this context a very surprising thing is that in M. Ratcliffe's paper, in the same handbook, there is a question of *draw[ing] a distinction between the intensity or strength of an emotional state and its depth*⁵, an idea patently Schelerian⁶, with no mention of Scheler whatsoever.

This is to show that Plato's and Scheler's approaches are poorly known, this being true not only of historians of philosophy but also of philosophers and psychologists working currently on affectivity, not to speak of the general public. There can be an explanation of that, namely that neither Plato nor Scheler has set out his philosophy of affectivity explicitly or in a separate chapter as, e.g. Aristotle, Aquinas, Descartes, Spinoza or Sartre did. Plato's as well as Scheler's views on affectivity have to be extracted from their writings and, in large part, reconstructed. I do not believe, however, that such a state of affairs is a sufficient reason for silence over or a deformation of either's opinions.

2.

Let me start by saying that, as for Plato, my interpretation of his views on affectivity differs from the standard interpretation. I don't agree that Plato, I quote,

[...] proposed what may be called 'the negative view of emotion' [...] According to the negative view, emotions usually affect reasoning for the worse.⁷

Obviously, one could object that because of the *usually* the claim is not too strong. But if so, and if *negative* means only *negative sometimes*, what does it mean? And why make of this claim a first sentence of a paper but not provide any textual support for it?

My shortest response is that in Plato affectivity as such is neither positive nor negative, since for Plato all is evaluated as positive or negative by its

¹ See K. Mulligan, *Emotions and Values*, p. 480, n. 11. In fact Scheler is referred also next to Brentano and Husserl by A. Hatzimoysis, *Emotions in Heidegger and Sartre*, p. 216 and in other footnotes (p. 486, n. 31, p. 487, n. 35, p. 488, n. 36, p. 489, n. 38, p. 490, n. 40, p. 493, n. 47) in Mulligan's paper.

² See A. W. Price, *Emotions in Plato and Aristotle*, pp. 122–130.

³ Although there are several hints of Plato, e.g. R. de Sousa: *The Mind's Bermuda Triangle ...*

⁴ C. Gill, *Stoicism and Epicureanism*, p. 143.

⁵ M. Ratcliffe, *The Phenomenology of Mood and the Meaning of Life*, p. 350.

⁶ See e.g. M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 330: *the facts [examples follow] are not simply similar types of emotional facts which differ only in terms of their intensities [...] sharply delineated differentiations [...] phenomenal character of the "depth" of feeling to be essentially connected with four well-delineated levels of feeling [...]*.

⁷ D. Evans, *The search hypothesis of emotion*, p. 179. If you take into account that this is a highly quoted paper, you may better consider how much the claim can be spread out.

relation with wisdom or ignorance¹. Thus there are positive as well as negative emotions but also positive as well as negative courage or moderation, according to whether it is related to wisdom or ignorance, which only are, respectively, positive and negative – in themselves². The best known examples are fear³, pleasure⁴, and also, but for a different reason, madness⁵. I was once told that the claim about the negative character of emotions amounts to nothing more than to a not–univocally–positive role of emotions in human life. I am not sure if this is indeed what Evans meant, and even if he did, why should we call it *negative* and not simply an *ambivalent* view of emotion?

I like also calling attention to the *Phaedrus*, the dialogue which is not as frequently analysed in the context of affectivity, surely much less than the *Republic* is. This is a pity because the *Phaedrus* is commonly believed to be posterior to the *Republic*, but also because in the *Phaedrus* Plato offers a description of how affectivity together with other faculties (or dynamisms) works in a specific situation. Plato presents us the allegory – alas, some will say – of the chariot. It is composed of the charioteer and two horses who are not, as it is accepted commonly and as I do not believe, images of reason, emotion and desire, but – this is the point I cannot but stress strongly – images of three combinations or linkages, each of the three containing or consisting of what we call thought, emotion and volition (or, alternatively, cognition, affect, and conation). Suffice it to follow Plato's text, in which he provides us with a fine and intricate description of each element when the lover's soul is considered while approaching the beloved. As a matter of fact,

– the charioteer not only sees (253e5: ἰδὼν τὸ ἐρωτικὸν ὄμμα, 254b5: ἰδόντος δὲ τοῦ ἡνιόχου, also through his memory, 254b6 & 254b7: εἶδεν [...] ἰδοῦσα δὲ), has a perception (this is a general way of speaking, seeing being a species of a genus perception, 253e6: αἰσθήσει), has a memory (254b5: μνήμη) as well as an intuition (254e7: προνοία), but also experiences bodily sensations such as warming (253e6: διαθερμύνας τὴν ψυχὴν) and tickling (253e6: γαργαλισμοῦ). He has emotions that can be unfolded on more than one level: on the one hand, he feels a nostalgia (more precisely goads of nostalgia, 253e6–254a1: πόθου κέντρων – which is a combination of bodily sensation and a psychic longing), on the other hand – through his memory (sic!) – he experiences fear (254b7: ἔδεισέ) and a holy awe (254b8: τε καὶ σεφθεῖσα),

¹ See Plato, *Euthydemus* 281e. Plato modifies his approach in the *Philebus* but in the way that doesn't concern my argument.

² For more see R. Zaborowski, *Some remarks on Plato on emotions*.

³ Plato, *Protagoras* 360b: *Now, in general, courageous men do not feel base fears, when they fear, nor is there anything base in their boldness? True, he said. And if not base, then it must be honorable. He admitted this. And if honorable, then good? Yes. And the cowardly and the bold and the mad, on the contrary, feel base fears and base boldness?* (Lamb's transl.).

⁴ Plato, *Gorgias* 495a: *the distinction between the good and bad sorts of pleasure* (Lamb's transl.).

⁵ Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a: *For if it were a simple fact that insanity is an evil, the saying would be true; but in reality the greatest of blessings come to us through madness, when it is sent as a gift of the gods* (Fowler's transl.).

– the white horse not only has a sensation of sweating (254c4: ἰδρῶτι), feels several emotions, e.g. respect/fear/shame (254a2: αἰδοῖ), shame and amazement (254c4: αἰσχύνῃς τε καὶ θάμβους), but it is also able to control itself (254a2: ἑαυτὸν κατέχει), and it stops willingly (254c2: ἐκόντα),

– the black horse not only perceives the beauty (254e8: ἴδη), experiences pain (254c5: τῆς ὀδύνης, 254e5: ὀδύνας) as well as such emotions as pleasure (254a6–7: τῆς τῶν ἀφροδισίων χάριτος), anger (254c7: ὀργῆ), and fear (254e8: φόβῳ), but it is also said to experience the same experience several times (254e5: ταῦτόν πολλάκις πάσχων), furthermore it is certainly a subject of memory (254d4: ἀναμνήσκων). Given that it blames the charioteer and the white horse for their breaking an agreement it must include a minimal degree of pondering (254a6: μνείαν ποιῆσθαι). Unlike the white horse, it is not willing to refrain (254c3: ἄκοντα). Yet, it must also be capable of understanding the charioteer's orders and intention and their content since it ends by following the charioteer's intention¹.

As I understand the allegory, none of the three elements involved is simple by virtue of being only either reason or emotion or volition, and – not less important – none of the three, say functions or types of acts, is ascribed to only one element (or part) of the soul. Accordingly, it is better to assume that Plato conveys a hierarchical structure of several kinds of thoughts (reasonings), memories, deliberations, passions, emotions, feelings, wills, desires etc. Obviously thoughts (reasonings), memories, deliberations, passions, emotions, feelings, wills, desires of the charioteer differ from thoughts (reasonings), memories, deliberations, passions, emotions, feelings, wills, desires of the white and of the black horse. So much for Plato.

3.

Scheler importantly stresses the role of emotion in human life and valuing the world. He calls his position *emotional intuitionism* and *non-formal apriorism*². In his *Formalism in Ethics ...*, more especially in a section on *The Stratification of the Emotional Life* (pp. 328–344), Scheler sets forward a fourfold model of affectivity, with four well-delineated levels of feelings. For this reason it is clear that his model is hierarchical indeed. Yet, when it comes to more detailed description of the four levels, one realizes that the presentation of levels is sketchy. For example, Scheler characterizes the first and the second level of the emotional life to a much larger extent than the third and the fourth level. He uses also vague distinctions. To give one example, he writes:

¹ More could be said, since there are also sets of two of these elements, then the whole soul is considered, and, finally, the lover himself.

² M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. xxiii.

Even vital feelings are much less [sic!] subject to practical and arbitrary changes, and psychic feelings still less [sic!] so.¹

Attempts at a more systematic presentation of what can be proposed as a reconstruction of Scheler's approach were published in 2011² and 2014³. In what follows I draw on the former reconstruction. Fig. 2⁴ lists features as given by Scheler for each level. It is visible that they are not described equally and that for features listed in last three rows there is no name for the feature. It may well be that the last row, given for only one level (*spiritual feelings are absolute, not relative*), and the one concerning the *relation to the person* ought to be merged into one; then this would yield a full scale of the feature. But there are still four rows remaining incomplete. Empty boxes could perhaps be completed with the proviso that this is a post-Schelerian addition and with a hope that the addition is complying with Scheler's mind. For instance, spiritual feelings are, I would risk inferring, not subject to attention at all. Scheler is laconic, too laconic, I would say, also in providing for the four levels examples of particular feelings within their groups (see Fig. 1). A series of *sensible pleasure, joy, happiness, and bliss*⁵ is the only one given in full. Yet, no group term for them is given.

Fig. 1

feelings	sensible	vital	psychic	spiritual
[joy]	(sensible) pleasure	comfort, joy	happiness	bliss, spiritual joy(?)
[sadness]	pain, displeasure		sadness, woe, grief, sorrow	despair, spiritual sorrow(?)
[love]		passionate love, vital sympathy		spiritual sympathy(?)
fear		fear		
etc.				
etc.				
etc.				

¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* ... , p. 336. In the *Preface*, p. xxxiii, Scheler alludes to *the laws of the "levels of feelings"* – but in the book these laws are hardly set forward or clearly listed and it is difficult to know about their formulation.

² See R. Zaborowski, *Max Scheler's model of stratified affectivity*

³ See S. Sánchez-Migallón & J. M. Giménez-Amaya, *Phenomenological analysis of the emotional life* ... , pp. 56–57.

⁴ After: R. Zaborowski, *Max Scheler's model of stratified affectivity* ... , p. 30.

⁵ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* ... , p. 241. S. Sánchez-Migallón & J. M. Giménez-Amaya, *Phenomenological analysis of the emotional life* ... , p. 56 give: *sensitive pain and pleasure, sensualism* for the 1st level, *fear, expectation, tiredness, freshness, daze, consternation, aversion and sympathy, like and dislike, appetite, vigour, oppression, angst, shame, lust, sexual attraction* for the 2nd level, *sadness, enjoyment, melancholy, be content, be fortunate or unfortunate* for the 3rd level, and *blessedness, desperation, calmness, peace of mind, serenity* for the 4th level.

Fig. 2

	sensible	vital	psychic	spiritual
localization and extension	[1] in specific parts of the body	in the total extension of the body, no special place, 'whole' body	no body–relation	no body–relation
form and intentionality	[2] (always) a state, never a function or an act, no intentionality, <i>dead state</i>	having a <i>functional</i> and <i>intentional</i> character	an ego–quality, not a state or function	never a state
relation to the person	[3] indirect, felt through the organic unit whose state it is	attached to the body–ego	immediate	
spatiotemporality	[4] actual, some time and some place, there is no <i>post–feeling</i> , <i>pre–feeling</i> and <i>fellow feeling</i>	can be recollected, participate in <i>post–feeling</i> and <i>fellow feeling</i>	can be brought to mind, extensionless and placeless	extensionless and placeless, does not participate in <i>post–feeling</i> and <i>fellow feeling</i>
duration	[5] punctual, no continuity of existence and of development, lack of duration	continuity of existence and of development	subject to their own laws of oscillation	
impact of attention	[6] the least disturbed (even increased) by attention, decreased by absence of attention	disturbed when attention is directed	dissolve completely when attention is directed, and increased by lack of attention	
subject to will/control	[7] subject to arbitrary change and practical control	less subject (to a limited degree: by some kind of practical measures)	even less subject, i.e. possessing their own endurance and rhythm of fading away	not subject at all, unconditioned and unalterable, taking root in the person himself, cannot be produced and merited

		possesses a positive direction		
	simultaneous to and consequence of stimuli, pointing to the value of what is present, feelings of contact	anticipating a value of stimuli, pointing to the value of what is coming, feelings of distance		
				absolute feelings, not relative

From a multilevel point of view several affective phenomena can be taken into consideration while in a one-level model they are usually ruled out. If we adopt a vertical perspective, then we better see how, to use Scheler's words, *each* [horizontal approach] *contains something correct as well as something incorrect*¹. Complexity and diversity of affective phenomena can be spelled out also as *heterogeneity within homogeneity*. Several affective phenomena present a common denominator. Differences within the same group, e.g. between liking and love or pleasure and happiness, are explicated by terms of different levels. A further task is to work out Scheler's model in detail. Only when it has been elaborated in depth, will it be plausible to investigate to what extent this intuition can advance the theory of affectivity.

4.

A reading of Plato's and Scheler's texts uncovers how much their opinions on affectivity are similar. In essence they are both vertical, that is hierarchical, that is multi-levelled approaches: in Plato as regards the whole of reality, affectivity included, and in Scheler in what concerns more particularly or explicitly the affective world. When Scheler speaks about *such a finely differentiated language as German*², it can easily be paraphrased by *such a finely differentiated language as Greek*. For it is clear that if one goes to the chariot's description in Greek, he has, for instance, different kinds of fear (in translations these distinctions sometimes disappear). The Greek lexemes are the following: ἔδεισέ τε καὶ σεφθεῖσα for the charioteer's memory, αἰδοῖ for the good horse, φόβω for the bad horse, and αἰδουμένην τε καὶ δεδιῶσαν for the lover's (whole) soul. The thing to be observed and that cannot be denied is that species of fear vary according to subjects. In other words, we have as many species of fear as we have subjects in our passage.

¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 263.

² M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 330.

Next, it is interesting that – as we know from Homer for instance¹ – φόβω is a more physical and less psychological fear than ἔδεισε and, on the other hand, σεφθεῖσα has a more spiritual character than αἰδοῖ. If we accept these distinctions, we are to agree that the order of fears conforms to the order of the soul's parts or, in Scheler's terminology, to levels of affectivity. Thus, the most physical fear of the bad horse represents the lowest part of the soul, then the psychological fear of the good horse represents the middle part of the soul and, finally, the spiritual (or religious fear) of the charioteer corresponds to the highest part of the soul doubled by another kind of fear (ἔδεισε), less physical and more psychological than φόβω². And, as Plato says, the whole soul, i.e. the lover's soul, is described in terms of αἰδουμένην τε καὶ δεδιῶσαν, which means that the fear or fears experienced by the whole soul are closer to those of the charioteer (ἔδεισε but not σεφθεῖσα) and the good horse (αἰδοῖ) rather than that of the bad horse. On the one hand, the whole soul of the lover and the charioteer, but neither the white nor the black horse, are ascribed two kinds of fear, on the other, of the whole soul's two fears one is common with the charioteer, while the other with the good horse. This can mean that, at least as for experiencing fears in the given situation, the very core of the lover is situated between the middle and the highest level of his psyche³.

This is how we arrive at the issue of the blending and coexisting of several affective phenomena within the same subject at the same moment. According to Scheler:

*the special kind of difference is made evident by the fact that both types of feeling can coexist in one and the same act and moment of consciousness, and this most clearly when they possess different, i.e., both positive and negative, characters. This is most clear in extreme cases. A human being can be blissful while suffering from bodily pain.*⁴

In the *Phaedrus*' allegory, something similar comes about: the charioteer and the bad horse are as different as Scheler's *positive and negative characters*. But Plato's description is richer in the sense that not only two simultaneous but as many as three different feelings of three different levels are grasped in their *coexistence*. For instance, fear and awe felt by the charioteer, shame and wonder of the good horse and anger of the bad horse are three simultaneous

¹ See R. Zaborowski, *La crainte et le courage dans l'Illiade et l'Odyssée*.

² See also M. Burnyeat, *The passion of reason in Plato's Phaedrus*, p. 257: [...] *the bad horse can be humbled, its desire for sexual possession replaced by fear of it (254e): a fear which corresponds to moral shame in the good horse (aidoumenēn with 254ac) and to the charioteer's reverence for the divine (deduian with 254b)*. Unfortunately, Burnyeat says nothing about the fear of the whole soul of the lover.

³ Compare M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 383: *We can now enunciate the essential definition [...] the person is the concrete and essential unity of being of acts of different essences which in itself [...] precedes all essential act-differences (especially the difference between inner and outer perception, inner and outer willing, inner and outer feeling, loving and hating, etc.) [...]*.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 330. Please remark that the two experiences are not only of different characters but also, or first of all, of different levels. See below, M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 331.

but different experiences of the three different levels of the same soul in the same moment¹. Scheler claims that

[...] they do not blend into the unity of a total feeling–state. Nor are they different from each other merely by virtue of differences among their objective correlates.²

And this is what accords well with Plato’s description above, because the lover whose the soul’s elements are depicted is in a conflict, call it inner or mental. If they were blended, the lover would present a consistent picture. This seems to be the case in the end, as soon as either the charioteer’s and the good horse’s feelings wane or the bad horse’s feelings vanish. Scheler says:

*The fact that there is no blending into one feeling, as in the case in feeling of such diverse levels of depth, points to the fact that feelings are not only of different qualities but also of different levels of depth. It is impossible to be simultaneously woeful and sad: one feeling is always the result.*³

When it has to do with qualitatively different feelings and of different levels, e.g. being *happy in spirit* while *sad in flesh*, “*serene*” and “*calm*” while *experiencing a serious misfortune*, *enjoy[ing] the bouquet of the wine* while *being unhappy*⁴, *be[ing] disgusted by a meal* even when [...] *extremely hungry*⁵, this is easy to see. But what about a case not mentioned by Scheler and mentioned by Plato – what if at two or three levels there happen simultaneous feelings of similar character, say, pleasure plus joy plus happiness? Do they blend? Or are they still distinct but it is only harder to see them as such because of their qualitative similarity? It can be that though externally they look as one, they remain nevertheless distinct.

Scheler doesn’t consider this situation and we don’t know if his claim of no blending includes qualitatively similar feelings as well. As for Plato, it seems that there is a possible blending only when two distinct levels are concerned with the same affective state (which, according to Scheler’s more well–delineated affective levels, is probably impossible). Then, in Plato, we meet a dual number, a hardly accidental solution, e.g. when the charioteer and the good horse are both angry with the bad horse (254b: ἀγανακτοῦντε) or when they both simulate forgetting (254d: ἀμνημονεῖν προσποιουμένω). I take the dual form to be Plato’s deliberate move to underscore a similarity, a blending even, of the charioteer’s and the good horse’s feelings.

¹ See Plato, *Phaedrus* 254b–c.

² M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 331.

³ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 331.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 331.

⁵ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 246. See an example of drinking in Plato (*Republic* 439c–d), followed by Leontius (*Republic* 439e–440a) in whose case both feelings have motivational force and, therefore, their simultaneity leads to an inner conflict. This is used by Plato to introduce a third element: *to thumoeides* (the spirited).

A *prima facie* distinction between Plato's and Scheler's models is the threefold vs fourfold structure. But, in fact, Plato's three levels can or should be completed by a fourth one, namely body, which would be a fine equivalence for Scheler's first level, i.e. sensibility. For example, dizziness is given by Scheler as an example of vital feeling¹. Dizziness is, therefore, a feeling of the second level. Since for Plato dizziness is a paradigmatic example of *pathos*², linked with a wonder, a parallel I would suggest to draw is the following:

Fig. 3

	Plato	Scheler
1 st level	body (<i>soma</i>)	sensible feelings
2 nd level	<i>pathos</i> , (<i>to epithumetikon</i> , the black horse)	vital feelings
3 rd level	<i>thumos</i> , (<i>to thumoeides</i> , the white horse)	psychic feelings
4 th level	(<i>to logistikon</i> , the charioteer)	spiritual feelings

The major difference is that while in Scheler features of levels are disjunctive, in Plato the higher level contains levels of the lower one plus something else³. For instance, the charioteer representing the highest of the soul possesses somatic features, e.g. warming and tickling, alongside typically spiritual, to follow Scheler's terminology, acts, e.g. intuition, holy awe. But the lowest of the soul, i.e. the bad horse, though possessing bodily features, e.g. physical pain, has no spiritual elements. Its anger (254c7: ὀργή), for instance, is a different one from the charioteer's anger, shared by the good horse (254b1: ἀγανακτοῦντε).

Finally, Plato takes events as they happen to occur. For instance, his description of the affective intricacy in the *Phaedrus* is explained by means of an inner conflict between three different dynamisms, while in Scheler, it seems to me, intricacy is simply stated as ontological without discussing the dynamic implications of it in detail. Plato indicates that of the three two can be of similar tendency while in Scheler there is no such detailed analysis as to consider a particular occurrence and how it is linked to all four affective levels. He simply gives several examples of two conflicting emotions and limits himself to state that (i) since they are of different levels, there is no contradiction in it, (ii) they can be contradicting only if they are of the same level. Both statements concur with what can be inferred from Plato's

¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 342.

² See Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d–e: dizziness (σκοτοδινω) related to wonder (τὸ θαυμάζειν) being a kind of *pathos* (τὸ πάθος).

³ This can be explained by means of the notion of *novum* as elaborated by N. Hartmann, *New Ways of Ontology*, p. 88: [...] the law of novelty [...] The elements penetrating "from below" are not sufficient for the uniqueness of the stratum. They merely furnish a presupposition. The essential character of the stratum depends on its own categories, that is, on those by which it differs from the lower stratum.

description, i.e. (i) this is not the charioteer or the good horse or the bad horse who simultaneously moves forward and moves back, and (ii) the conflict in the soul is a result of one element moving forward and the other moving back. This is to say that Plato distinguished three elements and takes all of them to the same degree into account. Scheler distinguishes four levels but doesn't use all of them in a description of a particular affective event.

5.

By means of a coda I would like to say a word on Scheler's reading of Plato or, more precisely, Scheler's reading of Plato's views on affectivity¹. Scheler's recurrent claim in the *Formalism in Ethics ...* is that:

*Since its introduction by the Greeks, the term reason, or ratio – especially when placed in opposition to so-called sensibility – has always designated only the logical side of spirit, not the non-logical a priori side.*²

Speaking about the Greeks is too general, since it takes Greek philosophers as different from the point of view of the philosophy of emotion as Parmenides and Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics³ and the Neoplatonists. A second point is that *reason* and *ratio* surely were not introduced by the Greeks but, if at all, rather some equivalents of these concepts, for the simple reason that these words are not Greek. Hence, I wonder who (as authors) and what (as concepts) are exactly meant by Scheler. From what Scheler says in the last section of the *Formalism in Ethics ...* one could infer that by *reason* he means *nous*, since he says: “*man*” = *bearer of νοῦς* (anima rationalis)⁴. But then this is all the more confused, because *nous* is not an exact equivalent of *reason*, unless you want to understand it as broadly as Descartes' *cogito*, meaning not only cognition but also perception and feeling⁵.

¹ I have limited myself to what Scheler expresses in this respect in the *Formalism in Ethics ...*. I am well aware that in *The Nature of Sympathy* for example, Scheler is respectful towards Plato's conception of Eros, e.g. p. 117: *Plato calls Eros a 'generation' – but a 'generation in beauty' – and sees in the sexual urge only a technical arrangement on the part of nature to make this 'generation in beauty' possible [...] the 'creative Eros' at the heart of things [...] human love [...]*. But my point is a general theory of affectivity and in setting it Scheler made injustice to Plato – as far as I know he didn't revoke his opinion concerning Plato's *negative* approach in this respect.

² M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, pp. 63–64.

³ This claim can be true about the Stoics but in this case, i.e. in what concerns the Stoics, M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 346 offers an interesting interpretation of *apathy*: *the Stoics [...] who considered apathy, i.e. the deadening of sensible feelings, as something good*. Scheler is unique, as far as I know, in understanding *apathy* as limited to only one kind of affectivity. I am not sure if all feelings banned by the Stoics, e.g. envy, shame, hatred, anger, love (for more see DL VII, 111–115), are understood by them in the way Scheler understands *sensible feelings*.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 524, n. 172. I say *could infer* because the footnote is about Aristotle.

⁵ See R. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia* II, 28 & 29 & R. Descartes, *Meditations metaphysiques* 22 & 23.

Scheler speaks also about

[...] *the final dismissal of the ancient prejudice that the human spirit is exhausted in the contraposition of "reason" and "sensitivity" [...] groundless dualism*¹.

Once again, it would be interesting to know who and where and by what term/s did introduce that kind of *groundless dualism* in Greek philosophy. We read also:

*Until recent times philosophy was inclined to a prejudice that has its historical origin in antiquity. This prejudice consists in upholding the division between "reason" and "sensitivity," which is completely inadequate in terms of the structure of the spiritual.*²

Recurrence of Scheler's pointing to antiquity proves it to be not fortuitous. The quotes above mirror his opinion on that epoch. However, since they are all-inclusive and provide no corresponding Greek terms, they are rather what he calls himself, when speaking about others:

*presuppositions [...] without foundation [...] and from a historical point of view [...] uncritical assumptions [...] borrowed without scrutiny [...]*³.

As for Plato we meet the following claim:

*Plato, too, fell victim of the deception of the ancient and historically very effective division of spirit into "reason" and "sensitivity".*⁴

Again, no reference to Plato's text is provided. It is therefore impossible to see which passages of Plato Scheler has in mind and what words used by Plato he takes to mean *spirit*, *"reason"*, and *"sensitivity"*. Usually, we hear rather about body/soul (or body/mind for some), i.e. the *soma/psyche* dichotomy in Plato as well as about an inner division of the soul (or mind).

Given that in the above passages characteristically no reference is provided, unlike in other cases (for instance Kant), I wonder if Scheler's knowledge of Plato's views on affectivity is not a second hand knowledge. If so, then Scheler himself is a victim of the phenomenon he speaks critically about, i.e. being a victim of a *historically very effective* but false reading of Plato⁵. It seems that Scheler simply reproduces a cliché, even though elsewhere he calls Plato – together with Aristotle – [t]he great progenitors of

¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 64.

² M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 253.

³ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 241.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 166.

⁵ Perhaps Scheler didn't read the *Phaedrus* enough. For example, he writes: *Thus the sense of smell diminishes more and more – so also memory, as writing and printing are employed*. But this is a relatively well known picture about writing as a danger to memory from Plato's *Phaedrus* (275a) and Scheler makes no reference to it. Scheler alludes to the *Phaedrus*, but vaguely, in *The Nature of Philosophy ...*, p. xlix (*Preface to the 2nd edition*).

European philosophy¹ and makes a remark about *Platonic requirement that in philosophy the whole man, not only his isolated intellect or isolated sensibility, etc., should seek participation in Reality*².

That being said, I think that it is not Plato who fell victim of the deception of the ancient and historically very effective division of spirit into “reason” and “sensibility”, as claimed by Scheler, but these are rather interpretations of Plato in ancient and modern times which fell so. More especially, when Scheler says that: [...] *no one distinguished the strata of the emotional life*³, he is exaggerating a bit or is patently wrong because, as I have tried to demonstrate, for Plato the personality (or self or soul) includes several (three) stratal parts or kinds of functions or elements which are active simultaneously, and which are sometimes in agreement, sometimes in disagreement. In this sense, according to Plato, to use once again Scheler’s words, [t]he person, is, rather, *the immediately coexperienced unity of experiencing* [...]⁴. As Plato shows, a person or psyche can coexperience several experiences at the same moment⁵.

Scheler’s views on the Greek tradition have been discussed by Paul Crittenden⁶, whose aim is to question the view, expressed by Scheler, that *the whole of western philosophy, from ancient Greek thinking onwards, has been caught up in a division between reason and sensibility* [...]⁷.

He discusses the claim at length in chapters 5 & 6 of his book. Crittenden’s conclusion is that: [...] *the Scheler/von Hildebrand characterisation of the Greek tradition is mistaken* [...]⁸. Yet in arguing he mainly relies on J. Cooper’s analyses (e.g. p. 120), much more than he discusses Plato’s texts. Crittenden recognizes the importance of the *Phaedrus*⁹, but limits himself to talking about *the doctrine of eros in the Symposium*¹⁰ and refers to one

¹ M. Scheler, *The Nature of Philosophy* ... , p. 77.

² M. Scheler, *The Nature of Philosophy* ... , p. 90.

³ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* ... , p. 357.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* ... , p. 371.

⁵ Which are not limited, as it is shown in the chariot’s description, to affective experiences only. Compare M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics* ... , p. 386: [...] *every experiencing [...] every concrete act always contains inner and outer perception, lived-body consciousness, loving and hating, feeling and preferring, willing and not willing, judging, remembering, representing, etc.* One may want to think about R. Descartes, *Meditationes de prima philosophia* II, 28: *Res cogitans. Quid est hoc? Nempe dubitans, intelligens, affirmans, negans, volens, nolens, imaginans quoque, & sentiens.*

⁶ See P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*. I thank Michael Stocker for telling me about this work.

⁷ P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 1.

⁸ P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 220.

⁹ See P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 121: *Thus the Scheler/von Hildebrandt claim that the Greek tradition has no place for affectivity in the mind falls at an early stage of Greek philosophy, for it is already present in Plato’s thought in the Protagoras before being modified and developed in the Republic, the Symposium and the Phaedrus.* See also p. 9.

¹⁰ See P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 121: [a]s the moving force of the soul, eros is portrayed as active in all basic forms of desire, but above all in the life of the mind in the knowledge and love of eternal beauty.

passage from the *Republic*¹. The *Phaedrus* is left unconsidered. Nor Crittenden shows that Scheler scarcely refers to Plato's texts. This is what I am doing in this paper.

In his attempt at a comprehensive account of Plato's view on the emotions Crittenden is a rare author. More often, Plato is read in a similar way to that in which Scheler read him. Most recently, Michael Slote opposed, though without putting their names together, Plato and Scheler. On the one hand, he speaks about

*almost all previous Western philosophy [...] assuming
or saying that mind and emotion can be separated*²,

on the other, Scheler is given as an exception to this tendency.

6.

In terms of conclusion four historical points are to be made: (i) Plato's views on affectivity are generally deformed by interpreters³, (ii) Scheler is unfair in reporting Plato's views on affectivity and, in consequence, he doesn't use them properly, (iii) Scheler himself is poorly used for advancing the theory of affectivity, (iv) finally, Plato's approach anticipates Scheler's by its being hierarchical and, for this reason, to use Scheler's words, Plato *cast[s] further light on [Scheler's] own positive propositions*⁴.

Next, another three points should be made: (v) the hierarchic approach to affectivity is rare, (vi) the hierarchic approach to affectivity is supported by Plato and, independently of him, by Scheler, (vii) Plato and Scheler are useful in advancing the philosophy of affectivity to anyone who believes, as I do, that the hierarchic approach to affectivity is an illuminating one. The last point is the most important and if the condition is satisfied, then Plato and Scheler can be stimulating in further research on affectivity. If not, they are only figures in the history of the philosophy of emotions.

The hierarchical approach is fruitful by itself since it lets us avoid downward as well as upward reductions of the realm of affectivity which should be limited neither to sensible nor mental. An immediate benefit of the vertical approach is a possibility of encompassing several and often heterogeneous kinds of affectivity. This is, however, probably only the first step and, as can be inferred, the levels of affectivity are further divisible into sub-levels. For Scheler makes the following distinction as regards purely psychic feelings:

¹ See P. Crittenden, *Reason, Will and Emotion*, p. 119: [...] *Plato says that: 'the three parts of the soul have also, it appears to me, three kinds of pleasure, and similarly three desires and governing powers'* (Rep. 580d6–8).

² M. Slote, *A Sentimentalist Theory of the Mind*, p. 86. See also p. 238: *Perhaps Western philosophy and philosophers have been unwilling to see the mind as essentially involving emotional factors because of their general tendency to devalue – and even fear – (the) emotion(s)*.

³ A remarkable exception is Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 1a2æ 34.3: *Plato held neither with the Stoics, who asserted that all pleasures are evil, nor with the Epicureans, who maintained that all pleasures are good; but he said that some are good, and some evil [...]*.

⁴ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 5.

Increasing proximity to the ego [is] expressed, e.g., by
 “I feel sad,” “I feel sadness,” “I am sad” [...]¹.

The idea of sub-levels of a level, i.e. of an inner differentiation of levels, is also that of Plato, for he refers in his allegory to subjects within elements of the soul, such as the memory of the charioteer, the psyche of the charioteer, and the psyche of the white horse². A similar differentiation of second degree was considered also from a different angle by the neurologist John H. Jackson. In 1884 he insisted on “shallows” and “depths”³ and, later on, on *more or fewer “layers”*⁴. He wrote explicitly:

*There are really subdegrees or subdepths of the
 second depth, and no doubt of the first and third
 depth [...]⁵.*

This looks as if a deeper intuition about the structure of the affective world were emerging before the first had been thoroughly explored.

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¹ M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics ...*, p. 342.

² See R. Zaborowski, *Two Neglected Details in Plato’s Chariot Allegory*.

³ J. H. Jackson, *The Croonian Lectures on Evolution and Dissolution of the Nervous System*, p. 660.

⁴ J. H. Jackson, *The Croonian Lectures on Evolution and Dissolution of the Nervous System*, p. 661.

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