

The Love-Reason Separation and the Crisis of Modern Culture: Towards the Phenomenology of Religion

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Here are two questions to be answered:

- 1) What role does the separation of emotion from rationality play in the supposed conflict between science and religion?
- 2) What is the relationship between love and science? Does love play a role in science?

In this paper, I am simply trying to set a proper answer for these two questions which are definitely relevant to each other. My answer, however, is a kind of indirect, though, specific one, since I will deal with a broader and somewhat deeper area of investigation which is called "the modern crisis of culture". This latter, which according to an accurate phenomenological definition of the phenomenon "culture", belongs to the sphere of ethics, seems to involve all types of conflicts among different aspects of humanity, including its demands for both religion and science. However the crisis in question, in turn, has its roots in a very fundamental separation between emotion and rationality upon which, one can say, the whole history of Western philosophy has been built.

According to the above, my claim would be that the love-reason separation in ancient Greek philosophy, as the prologue of Occidental way of thinking, is what has been led to the crisis of culture in the modern world. This crisis is the ground of the various conflicts and contradictions among different aspects of that mode of being, called *human* being, including the conflict between religion and science which has been always the main matter of debates among European elites since early modern times.

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Further, being originally pertinent to the ethical domain, as to be shown through a phenomenological subtlety, this fundamental crisis brings up the problem of values as the core of ethics. This, in turn, suggests the essential demand for constructing a value theory in order to overcome the crisis. Here my argumentation on this claim will be performed in four steps: First, in order to prepare a proper definition for the so-called “modern crisis of culture”, I will take a phenomenological approach towards the phenomenon of culture to show its deep and inherent connection to the sphere of ethics, employing Husserl’s account and definition of the phenomenon in question. Then I will offer a critical analysis of the word “crisis”, employing its etymological history in order to characterize the particular sense in which one may talk of the modern crisis of culture. In the third step, I will briefly discuss the issue of how the “crisis of culture” results from the love-reason separation in Ancient Greek philosophy. And my final argument will be devoted to answer the question of how and in what sense there could be a possibility for surpassing the crisis, which then can clear the ground for an authentic phenomenology of religion. I will employ some of Max Scheler and Kierkegaard’s insights in these two last steps.

A. What is the Phenomenon of “Culture” in General?

In order to be able to talk about the crisis of culture and its contextual grounds, we should first critically ask if there exists in fact such a crisis at all. This question, however, demands the preceding clarification of what is generally meant by the “crisis of culture”, as it has emerged in the history of modern philosophy, especially in the language of twentieth century philosophers. This crisis was cognized particularly well in the phenomenological movement started by contemporary German philosopher, Edmund Husserl, and his philosophical concerns about the crisis of humanity, and specifically “European” humanity.

Here there are two phenomena to be clarified: “crisis” and “culture”. As mentioned before, I will start with the phenomenon of culture to which the crisis refers. Now, due to his accuracy as well as his phenomenological approach, which is my elected approach in this paper, I would prefer to employ Husserl’s definition of culture, as offered in his *Kaizo* articles².

². *Kaizo* articles are three articles written by Husserl during the period from 1923 to 1924 “concerning the ethical task that must be undertaken by practical reason, namely, that of establishing and developing a rational, a priori science of the socio-ethical sphere”. “Introduction to Husserl’s

There, he passionately warns about the occurrence of the crisis in European culture, and announces the urgent need for its “renewal”, a concept upon which, he raises and develops his phenomenology of culture.

According to Husserl's phenomenological description, “culture is society viewed as an interrelated cluster of values”³. This interrelated cluster of values, which for him is considered as the regulative norms of human communities, is the main characteristic of such communities as distinct from animal communities which “live under mere instincts”⁴. Hence “culture is not [just] a general multiplicity of social activities and achievements, coalescing into a general type and fusing into unities of developing cultural forms, but rather a unified and unifying norm guides all these formations, [and] mints for them, rules and laws”⁵. Here are some points in this definition to be discussed:

First, as the usage of the concepts of “value” and “norm”, given in the full sense of the word “norm” suggests, for Husserl culture in its deepest and most fundamental sense is an “ethical domain”.

“Renewal: Its Problem and Method” in *Husserl: Shorter works*, by Jeffner Allen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 324. They all share the same theme, namely the urgency of the renewal of the European culture, and are well-known as “Kaizo articles” since they first appeared in *The Kaizo-La rekonstruyo*, a Japanese periodical. The Japanese title “Kiazo” itself means “to reconstruct” or “to reform,” *ibid.* “Of the three, only the first was published in German and Japanese; the next two appeared only in Japanese translation and thus were not even available in German until Nenon's and Sepp's edition of Husserl's essays and lectures between 1922 and 1937. The three articles are now in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 3-43. Only the first has appeared in English translation: “Renewal: Its Problem and Method,” in *Husserl: Shorter works*, trans. Jeffner Allen, 326-331”. Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 454, note 4. According to the editor's comments in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, xivf, there has also been found the well-written drafts of two other articles “that were to follow in the series but were never completed and submitted” to *Kaizo*. Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 306. However, these two unpublished articles are also in *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 43-72, after the three published ones. There are some references to the English translation of the first *Kaizo* article, namely, “Renewal: Its Problem and Method,” in the current paper, as well as some indirect references to two unpublished articles through Welton's translations and quotations in his book, *The Other Husserl*.

³. Edmund Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, ed. Thomas Nenon and Hans Rainer Sepp (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 59, translated and quoted in Donn Welton, *The Other Husserl: The Horizons of Transcendental Phenomenology* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 309.

⁴. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 59, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 309. Also see *ibid.*, 455, note 20.

⁵. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 63, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 309.

Further, this “ethical domain” itself should be considered in an “absolute” and “unique” sense of the word “ethical”, which means that it should not be understood as a counterpart of different aspects of what is commonly understood as human culture such as art, religion, politics and intellectual achievement⁶. But rather it dominates all aspects of human life and manages all these “continuing activities of communal life”⁷ in a coherent and unifying way. Husserl asserts: “throughout all the types of acts of consciousness there runs a normative consciousness interwoven with them”⁸. This normative consciousness is just like a conductor of an orchestra, whose direction results in a lilting harmonious tune produced by the band of all these different dimensions of one whole called a “tradition”. In this sense, culture is the “normal ethos” of a human community, ruling it towards “the best possible” way of life in its particular “homeland”⁹.

Secondly, as the usage of the phrase “developing cultural forms” in the aforesaid definition suggests, culture is not something stable or pre-given which is practiced in a static way by the subsequent generations of a given community. But rather it should be understood as a kind of dynamic process in which, through the “continuing activities” of the members of a community, some possible themes among others are intended, chosen, appropriated and finally formulated as specific “cultural forms” of that given community. This whole process of intending, choosing and appropriating, however, is based upon “a unifying norm” as the “normal ethos” or “tradition” of that community, which “itself is alive in the social consciousness, [and] is itself progressively and historically shaped and objectivated as culture”¹⁰.

This dynamic description of the phenomenon of culture is totally grounded on Husserl’s genetic phenomenology upon which his concern is no longer just what the essence of human community and its culture is. But rather and further, how this essence can be understood only through “development [and] through a becoming”¹¹.

⁶. See Anthony J. Seinbock, “The Project of Ethical Renewal and Critique: Edmund Husserl’s Early Phenomenology of Culture,” *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1994): 452–454.

⁷. Seinbock, “Ethical Renewal and Critique,” 452.

⁸. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 59, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 309.

⁹. See Seinbock, “Ethical Renewal and Critique,” 449- 452.

¹⁰. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 63, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 309.

¹¹. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 44, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 314.

It is in this sense that in his Kaizo articles, he talks about “the genesis of renewal” of the European culture and calls for “the attempt to develop genetically the ethical form of life as an a priori and essential formation of possible human life”¹², since for him, “the idea of true humanity and its method of giving shape to itself is such only in the process of becoming”¹³.

B. A Brief Etymological History of the Word "Crisis"

Tracing back to the Greek word “krisis” (κρίσις) which is derived from the verbal stem “krino” (κρινῶ) or “krinein” (κρίνειν), denoting 1) to separate; 2) to decide; and 3) to judge, the name “crisis” may mean: 1) separation; 2) decision; and 3) judgment¹⁴, which all may be combined in a “crucial stage” or a “turning point” in the course of an incident. This crucial stage inevitably demands a kind of instability, at which the trend of future events in regards to that particular incident, for better or for worse, is determined through a firm final decision, preceded by a kind of judgment.

This definition is in fact, a generalization of the particular medical use of the term “crisis” in Ancient Greek (used as such by Hippocrates and Galen) for “turning point of a disease”, or the crucial and decisive moment in the unstable course of a disease, at which the patient has been divided between life and death, and according to his general fettle which can be judged by his physician, one end of the dichotomy is finally decided¹⁵. As can be seen in this definition, there are several existential senses such as danger, anxiety, difficulty, conflict, chaos in routine, risk, necessity, demand of going further, which is impossible without making a decision beforehand, and finally a so-called Hobson's choice¹⁶, so to speak, are all experienced once and at the same time in the stage of crisis.

¹². Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 29, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 314.

¹³. Husserl, *Aufsätze und Vorträge (1922-1937)*, 55, translated and quoted in Welton, *The Other Husserl*, 314.

¹⁴. “Online Etymology Dictionary,” <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=crisis>

¹⁵. James Dodd, *Crisis and Reflection: An Essay on Husserl's Crisis of the European Sciences* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2004), 44-46.

¹⁶. A Hobson's choice is a free choice in which only one option is offered. As a person may refuse to take that option, the choice is therefore between taking the option or not; “Take it or leave it”. The phrase is said to originate with Thomas Hobson (1544–1631), a livery stable owner in Cambridge, England. To rotate the use of his horses, he offered customers the choice of either taking the horse in the stall nearest the door or taking none at all. “Wikipedia,” last modified on 5 April 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hobson%27s_choice

However, despite the fact that all these senses are so intimately bound together and intertwined with one another in one crucial stage, a phenomenological subtlety can recognize some sort of primacy and sequence among them within the unity of this multilayered phenomenon. In accord with those meanings implied in the aforesaid etymological definition, it seems that there can be distinguished four sequential steps in the crisis, as emerges in the following analysis:

At the stage of crisis, one is supposed to make a crucial decision, since one is stuck between two ways or two things to choose, apart from which he/she can go no further. At first glance, this conflict seems to be imposed on the person trapped in the critical situation from outside, but in a deeper sense based upon a phenomenological approach, this seemingly outward conflict points to its roots inside the person and reflects his/her existential feeling of a conflict between two aspects of his/her own *being* as a human which has been inevitably preceded by a kind of separation between different aspects of that sort of being, namely "*human being*". So as an articulation of the above analysis, until now, we have three stages one occurring after another: separation, conflict, decision.

What is demanded now is a criterion which serves as a judge and makes the decision possible. This determines another step in between conflict and decision, namely, judgment. So now the question turns to this criterion of judgment and its origins. It is crucial, however, to note that, regardless of whatever such criterion could be, since it is acting as a judge, this criterion is inevitably an evaluating factor, given the fact that there is no judgment without any evaluation which puts a set of values in order. On the other hand, since evaluation is the most essential characteristic of the sphere of ethics, we may conclude that this criterion eventually has its roots in the ethical domain, and so in this way shares a common ground with culture, which as we showed above, is basically an ethical phenomenon (in an absolute sense of the word "ethical"). This common root prepares the ground for considering "the modern crisis of culture" as something intrinsically ethical in kind, as we will discuss it later in this paper.

But then again, functioning as a judge for making the decision possible, this criterion itself shall be considered as one of the steps of the whole course of the crisis and so as something which emerges within the course rather than merely intervening in it from outside.

Interestingly enough, the word criterion itself shares the same etymological stem with the word crisis - i.e. the Greek word "krinein" in the sense mentioned before. This may suggest that the very criterion of judgment for solving a critical situation has its roots in a preceding separation and crisis, and so on and so forth. In this sense, one may also say that every evaluation, as the heart of any act of judgment, is in fact a sort of *revaluation* of the previous order of values which has been already shaken by a precedent separation and conflict and so has lost its inspiring and sense-making role in the course of an ethico-cultural life of either an individual or a community.

This may lead to the conclusion that first, culture by its very essence is a critical phenomenon and second that indeed as a cultural being, humanity, is always and inherently in the status of crisis. This recalls Kierkegaard's conception of human condition as he asserts in his *Sickness unto Death*: "the human condition is always critical"¹⁷ and that "There is no immediate state of spiritual health [in this condition]"¹⁸. This conception is based upon Kierkegaard's definition of human being as "a synthesis of the infinite and the finite, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity"¹⁹. In short, according to him, human being is a battle field of two opposite poles which are in an unceasing struggle in every stage of one's life. In this sense there is no starting point for the crisis, as it is an intrinsic component of human nature and so, as it were, is always there. But then what is the point of talking about such a thing as "the modern crisis of culture"? Apparently, it makes no sense any more. Nevertheless, there is indeed such a crisis as a historical fact, recognized and announced by contemporary philosophers, so that one might wonder what this crisis is all about.

In fact, one may say that Kierkegaard's definition of human being is fair enough to point to the dynamic structure of the human nature and its fundamental temporality, though it is still too formal to involve a sense of historicity as that essential human characteristic which makes the very phenomenon of culture and its constant movement possible. This, in turn, implies that only through bringing historicity into account could one ask of what is meant by the alleged "modern crisis of culture" and seeks for its roots and origins within the horizon of human historicity.

¹⁷. Soren Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death: a Christian psychological exposition for edification and awakening*, trans. Alastair Hannay, (London: Penguin Books, 1989), 55.

¹⁸. Ibid.

¹⁹. Ibid., 43

Further, as constructed upon material categories a priori of human apprehension, historicity is that characteristic which is as essential for each human individual as for the entire community. In this sense, historicity is the most basic interface of individual and community through which they reflect into one another and have reciprocal influence on each other. As a consequence, one may say that, in human communities, every single person is as individual as universal, and this point should be especially considered once one is about to render a definition for human nature in general. This helps us understand how each individual is the representative of the entire history of its tradition and so is responsible for any purported crisis in that tradition, especially the most fundamental and universal one, namely the ethical crisis of culture. I will refer to this point in the last part of the current paper.

C: The Greek Love-Reason Separation as the Root of the Modern Crisis of Culture

Having assumed the necessity of bringing human historicity into account once our concern is the modern crisis of culture, our first question would be of the so-called *historical* "starting point" of the crisis at issue in the course of human history. Evidently this crisis is specific to the modern age, as its attribute indicates. This may suggest that it should be traced back to the starting point of the modern age itself in which something unprecedented has happened and led to this particular sort of crisis. This unprecedented occurrence, for Husserl, is the advent of "a new sense of rationality" which he calls "natural-scientific rationality" and characterizes it as that mathematical method upon which, "the splitting of the world and the transformation of its meaning was quite unavoidable"²⁰. Here emerges the first essential component of the crisis, namely separation, as a result of which "the world-in-itself split into nature-in-itself and a mode of being which exists psychically"²¹ or the well-known "Cartesian mind-body dualism". This separation in turn was followed by "the specialization of the sciences"²² and "the inner dissolution" of "the ideal of one universal science"²³, namely philosophy, the main task of which was to provide the whole realm of human knowledge in all its branches with their foundation and meaning for human life.

²⁰. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. David Carr (Evanston: North Western University Press, 1970), 61.

²¹. Ibid.

²². Ibid.

²³. Ibid., 11

In part I of the *Crisis*, Husserl explains that the main ideal and “the innermost motivation” of the sum total of all the revolutionary efforts of the era of modernity from the very outset was to establish a new universal philosophy as the foundation of a new humanity. Nevertheless the actual results have been quite contrary to the predetermined target. The reason for this latter, according to him, is nothing but the “centuries-old failure” of the modern philosophers in grasping the true and genuine meaning of reason and rationality and so their inability to find the true method of inquiry for that “all-encompassing science, or the science of what is” (οντωσον)²⁴. As a consequence, modern rationalism turned out to be a “naïve”, “mistaken”, “absurd”, “narrow-minded” and “bad” rationality. The rationality of “lazy reason” or, let us just say, it was rather a real “irrationalism”²⁵ which has lost the true meaning of rationality, in the original Greek sense of the word.

Having resulted in skepticism about the possibility of a universal philosophy (metaphysics), this rationalism has fallen short of the “whole problematics of reason” and been disappointed with encountering those so-called “ultimate and highest”, “metaphysical”²⁶ questions of humanity, the most burning of which are the questions of “the meaning or the meaninglessness of the whole of the human existence”²⁷. This is what Husserl considers the core of the modern crisis of culture which threatens “[the entire] European humanity in respect to the total meaningfulness of its cultural life”²⁸. The most striking evidence for this modern irrationalism, as he regretfully announced, is the devastating World War which “has revealed the internal untruthfulness and senselessness of the modern culture”.²⁹

So what is the resort, if this plight can be remedied at all? Husserl, in response, calls for the renewal of the European culture which, for him, is possible only through the revival of the “true idea of rationality”. This in turn demands a new faith in “universal reason which is inborn in humanity as such” and so, in fact, a new faith of humanity in itself as a “rational being”.

²⁴. Husserl, *Crisis*, 8.

²⁵. *Ibid.*, 16

²⁶. *Ibid.*, 9

²⁷. *Ibid.*, 6

²⁸. *Ibid.*, 12

²⁹. Peter McCormick and Frederick A. Elliston, ed., “Renewal: Its Problem and Method,” in *Husserl: Shorter works*, trans. Jeffner Allen (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 326.

Here Husserl refers back to the Greek sense of reason according to which reason is the criterion of "truth in itself". It is that fundamental principle "which ultimately gives meaning to everything that is thought to be, all things, values and ends," or in a word, to "what is"³⁰. In this sense, reason is the "meaningful order of being"³¹ in its entirety. That is why for the ancient Greeks reason is "the explicit theme" in all the disciplines concerning "knowledge", "valuation" and "ethical action". In all these, "reason is a title for 'absolute', 'eternal' and 'unconditionally valid ideas and ideals'"³².

This reason, according to Husserl, is what amounts to the "spiritual image of Europe"³³, which was first established in the ancient Greek nation as its spiritual birthplace in the seventh and six centuries B.C. E. Hence among all other civilizations throughout the history, "Greek humanity" has the privilege of being "the first breakthrough to what is essential to humanity as such", namely as "a rational being (animal rationale)"³⁴. This is what makes European humanity of "supranational"³⁵ identity and characterizes the Greek philosophy as the universal science of "what is"³⁶ or the whole sphere of being.

According to all of the above, Husserl calls for regaining faith in "the creative power of reason" which can guarantee "an aesthetic and moral sense"³⁷ for the whole cultural life of European humanity. He articulates this decisive solution, which is in fact his only proposed solution to overcome the modern crisis of culture, in a famous sentence at the end of his *Phenomenology and the crisis of European man*; that is "in the rebirth of Europe from the spirit of philosophy, through a heroism of reason"³⁸. Here, reason is hero since it is the criterion of truth, and as such a criterion, it can be a good judge in the critical situation. It is the foundation of the human capability for "reflection" (*Besinnung*) which in its deepest sense, consists in a conscious engagement in a subject matter in order to get to "the heart of it" or to "what it genuinely and essentially is", the function which is particularly assigned to "critique" and "criticism".

³⁰. Husserl, *Crisis*, 12-13.

³¹. Husserl, *Crisis*, 13.

³². *Ibid.*, 9

³³. Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy and the Crisis of European Man," in *Phenomenology and the Crisis of Philosophy*, trans. Quentin Lauer (New York: Harper & Row 1965), 156.

³⁴. Husserl, *Crisis*, 15.

³⁵. Husserl, *Crisis of Philosophy*, 177.

³⁶. Husserl, *Crisis*, 13.

³⁷. Husserl, *Shorter works*, 326.

³⁸. Husserl, *Crisis of Philosophy*, 192.

In this sense, the main characteristic of human reason is ‘critique’, a word which again shares the same Greek stem with the words crisis and criterion³⁹. So one may say, through critique, reason is the judging criterion of truth in the status of crisis. What a conscious engagement or “a critical consideration”⁴⁰ –in Husserl’s words – implies is the recognition of oneself in the course of a reflective analysis. This recognition enables the thinker to understand his relation to the subject matter of the analysis and his role and responsibility “to have it make sense”⁴¹.

This established sense is what signifies the essential nature of its subject and reveals its “truth”. The whole course of critique, however, is accomplished only when the thinker can recognize his responsibility for his own truth or true being⁴² as a “rational being” and can constitute his own norms and the meaning of his own existence according to this ideal of rationality. The latter occurs in the transition from a “purely theoretical attitude” to a “new kind of practical outlook” which demands “a universal critique of all life and of its goals”. This, in turn, entails “the critique of mankind of itself and of those values that explicitly or implicitly guide it”⁴³. Here the absolute theoretical insights of reason about the truth as such bring forth a new value order which is as absolute and objective as reason itself. It is through practicing the objective norms of this value order that human being can be “transformed into a radically new humanity”⁴⁴ or, in better words, it can arrive at the genuine sense of humanity: “the humanity of higher man” as a rational being and “of reason” as the criterion of truth⁴⁵.

Yet, one might wonder about “the question of justification of reason itself”, that is, about the criterion of the legitimacy of this very criterion of truth. We learned that critique is the essential characteristic of reason, but how can this characteristic assign reason to be the criterion of truth in itself? In addition, how can it characterize humanity, as such, as a rational being?

³⁹. See Dodd, *Crisis and Reflection*, 46.

⁴⁰. Husserl, *Crisis*, 18.

⁴¹. See Dodd, *Crisis and Reflection*, 7-11.

⁴². Husserl, *Crisis*, 17.

⁴³. Husserl, *Crisis of Philosophy*, 169.

⁴⁴. Ibid.

⁴⁵. Ibid., 180

Can anyone be possibly right if he/she considers “reason” as “essentially but an invention of the Greeks”?⁴⁶ This latter is the explicit position that Max Scheler takes.

In fact, Husserl is not the only philosopher of our age who announced the privilege of ancient Greeks in “this orientation towards reason”⁴⁷ as a historical fact. His contemporary, Scheler, has also noticed this point, though from another perspective. In his *Man and History*, while describing various “basic types of man’s conception of himself” and “his interpretation of his own nature”⁴⁸, Scheler introduces “the idea of ‘*homo sapiens*’ [rational man]” as “one of the most powerful and influential discoveries of human self-judgment”⁴⁹. But at the same time, he intentionally emphasizes on the initiation of this idea “by the Greeks and only by them and by no other human culture”⁵⁰.

Scheler explains well how reason, for the ancient Greeks, turned out to be the only determinative principle by which humanity “will be capable of recognizing being in itself... the divinity, the world, and himself”. The consequence of this latter would be the human being’s capability of “forming nature meaningfully by his activity [and] of treating his fellow-man well so as to develop, as perfectly as possible, this specific agent of creative reason”⁵¹.

One may notice the striking similarity between Scheler and Husserl’s description and terminology of the Greeks’ conception of “reason” which, in some sense, lasted the whole history of western philosophy up to the modern times. Nevertheless, they sharply differ from one another in their approaches towards this historical fact, since while Husserl passionately invites the entire Europe to revive such a conception of reason, Scheler considers it as a mere “invention of the Greeks”. Moreover, Scheler appreciates Nietzsche and Dilthey as the only thinkers “who fully recognized this fact”⁵².

⁴⁶. Max Scheler, “Man and History,” in *Philosophical Perspectives*, trans. Oscar A. Haac (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958), 74.

⁴⁷. Husserl, *Crisis*, 15.

⁴⁸. Scheler, *Philosophical Perspectives*, 68.

⁴⁹. *Ibid.*, 71

⁵⁰. *Ibid.*

⁵¹. *Ibid.*, 72

⁵². *Ibid.*, 74

That is why the former radically questioned the meaning and value of what we call "truth itself"⁵³ and the latter challenged the concept of reason as "the self-evident background and principle of the entire world order"⁵⁴.

On the other hand, one may rightly say that, just like Husserl, Scheler's main philosophical concern is "the modern crisis of culture" and its destructive consequences for Europe. He likewise speaks of the War as the diagnosis of the disease of the European soul and so calls for the necessary demand for "The Reconstruction of European Culture"⁵⁵. However, unlike Husserl, Scheler sees the origins of the crisis at issue, not in the lost meaning of reason, but to the contrary, alike his pagan counterpart, Nietzsche, in the so-called "reversal of values"⁵⁶. For Scheler, this latter finds its roots in nothing less than a missing phenomenon which has been failed to be recognized as the foundation of reason and all rational activities from the very beginning of Greek philosophy. Here Scheler brings "Love" into the discussion. He has a well-grounded argumentation on the fact that it was "man's love for the world" and his "ever and insatiably thirsting for poetic reunion and sympathy with all aspects of world essence"⁵⁷ which first established the fountainhead for the advent of Greek philosophy, as its very title (namely "the love of knowledge") indicates. Accordingly it beseeemed love, by right of its nature, to be placed first in the hierarchy of human knowledge of the sphere of being in general. Nevertheless from the very outset this principal role of love was unappreciated and its supremacy was ignored by the great progenitors of European philosophy.

According to Scheler, in the Greek notion of love, as it was articulated by Plato and Aristotle, "love is understood intellectually, as dependent on the process of knowledge"⁵⁸.

⁵³.Ibid.

⁵⁴. Ibid., 75

⁵⁵. This title is the name of the last essay among four more others in Scheler's book, *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. Bernard Noble (London: SCM Press, 1960), 405-455. It was "first expressed in the form of an address in the Urania at Vienna in the autumn of 1917". For more information see *ibid.*, 405, footnote 1.

⁵⁶. Max Scheler, *Ressentiment*, trans. William W. Holdheim (New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), 77.

⁵⁷. Max Scheler, "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture," in *Philosophical Perspectives*, 20.

⁵⁸.Max Scheler, "Love and Knowledge," in *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, ed. Harold J. Bershadly (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 152.

For them, love is considered as “the striving or willing of human intellect” which functions as “a bridge” or “an ontic agent” for “transition from a poorer and lesser to a greater and richer knowledge”⁵⁹. For Scheler, this articulation is the entire reduction of love to knowledge⁶⁰.

However, this latter, once upon a time in the history of the West, was radically opposed by the new conception of love unprecedentedly brought forward by Christianity. This new conception of love which Scheler calls “a reversal of (or in) the movement of love”⁶¹ “invalidates the Greek axiom that love goes from lower to higher things”⁶² and introduces an entirely inverted criterion of the phenomenon in question. Now according to this novel criterion not only is love no longer “the drive of the least to win participation in the most”⁶³, or the never-fully-fulfilled desire of the finite for the infinite, but to the contrary, “it has its origin in the Infinite Being itself”⁶⁴. It is the infinite “superabundance” or “overflow”⁶⁵ of the absolute Being over non-being, not “the striving of non-being for being”⁶⁶ through gaining knowledge. Consequently, it is no longer intellectual knowledge which is the criterion of truth and the value order of the world up to the highest good, since now “love itself is the highest of all goods”⁶⁷ and in being so, the true criterion of the entire sphere of values. Moreover, now the principle of eternity and perpetuation, as the received characteristic of love in terms of the principle of procreation for ancient Greeks, is well-grounded on the basis of the infinite Being. Upon this basis, it now can transcend its previous status of being a senselessly ever-repeated procreation of the finites as their yearning to be the infinite. Instead it represents an inward way towards infinity and a sign for an infinite aspect of the very being of humanity, which is founded on the infinite Being as the eternal origin of love itself.

⁵⁹. Ibid., 149

⁶⁰. Ibid., 152

⁶¹. Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 156 & *Ressentiment*, 86.

⁶². Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 156.

⁶³. Ibid., 152

⁶⁴. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 94.

⁶⁵. Ibid., 95

⁶⁶. Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 153.

⁶⁷. Scheler, *Ressentiment*, 87.

This is the root of Scheler's account of "the Eternal in Man"⁶⁸ and his new definition of human being as an *ensamans* (or a loving being), the definition which, as he asserts, is prior to both definitions of man as either an *enscogitans* (a thinking being) or an *ensvolens* (a willing being)⁶⁹.

This conception of love, however, never could dominate over the reason-centered orientations of Greek philosophy. Not only did the latter remain the same and shape the general structure of the Medieval philosophy, but even worse, the contradictory character of the two conceptions of love in these two inverted attitudes sparked the first feelings of controversy and separation between love and reason and consequently between faith and philosophy. Thus great Christian thinkers, while being restricted to the axioms of the Greek philosophy on the one hand, on the other saw their last resort in considering the love-based religious faith as "the master" of reason and philosophy.

But this can no longer work in "the present age"⁷⁰, the most distinguishing feature of which, according to Scheler, is the modern rebellion of reason against religious faith and its Greek-rooted "intellectual pride"⁷¹ in its autonomous capability of knowing and willing. The latter in turn has increased the old non-dissolved and ever-deepened separation of love and reason on the one hand, and on the other, has rejected the love-ordered structure of faith to protect the interests of reason.

⁶⁸. This is the title of Scheler's well-known book, "*Vom Ewigen im Menschen*", first published in German in 1921. According to Scheler's preface to the first German edition of the book, it "contains essays and studies which in essence are devoted to problems of ethics and the philosophy of religion". Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 11. Four of the five important essays contained in this book, has been occasionally cited throughout this paper. The book was later translated into English by Bernard Noble and first published in English in 1960. For more info, see bibliography.

⁶⁹. Max Scheler, "Ordo Amoris," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David R. Lachterman (Evanston, Northwestern University Press, 1973), 110-111.

⁷⁰. This is the title of the second part of Kierkegaard's book, *Two Ages: A Literary Review*, first published in the original Danish on March 30, 1846. "The book was a critique of the novel *Two Ages* (in some translations *Two Generations*) written by Thomasine Christine Gyllembourg-Ehrensvärd and discussed 'The Age of Revolution' and "The Present Age". "Wikipedia," last modified on 4 December 2012, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Two_Ages:_A_Literary_Review The former is characterized by Kierkegaard as the age of "passion", whereas the latter is the age of "reflection". One may find Kierkegaard's main criticisms of the modern era in the second part of the book, which first appeared in English in 1940 under the title *The Present Age*. I've used this term in the text because of its resonance of Kierkegaard's insightful criticism of the modern age which is in a great harmony with Scheler's above-mentioned critical viewpoints. For more info, see bibliography.

⁷¹. Max Scheler, "The Nature of Philosophy and the Moral Preconditions of Philosophical Knowledge," in *On the Eternal in Man*, 76.

The necessary consequence of all this, in Scheler's terms, is "the disorder of mind and heart" and "the internal overthrow of all order of values"⁷², an overthrow which has been accomplished through the mechanism of *ressentiment* towards the whole ethical value order of the pre-modern age. This all-embracing phenomenon which Scheler calls "the soul of the bourgeois-capitalist age"⁷³ is what underlies "the most deep-seated, far-reaching and consequential *perversion of the true relationship*" of philosophy to faith and the sciences, "that the European mentality has ever attained"⁷⁴.

So to articulate all this, one may say that the whole modern crisis of culture for Scheler is basically traced back to the lack of an insightful formulation of the true relationship between love and reason in the history of Western philosophy. This lack which is as old as the very course of Western philosophy throughout history has emerged its ultimate consequences in the modern time.

Here if we refer back to Kierkegaard's aforementioned definition of human being as the synthesis of the finite and the infinite, while taking advantage of some Scheler's phenomenological insights, which help us see reason as the order of the finite side and love as the order of the infinite side of human being, the general outlines of the whole structure of Western philosophy in the course of history can be portrayed in this way: Having been confused about its true relationship with love as its eternal source and the order of its infinite foundation, reason starts to abstractly conceptualize that "ecstatic knowledge"⁷⁵ which human being first gains through an "ontological relationship"⁷⁶ with the being in general. The result of this conceptualization is what Husserl rightly calls "the infinite idea" or "the idea of infinity" as "the spiritual *telos* of European man"⁷⁷. From now on, this purely theoretical idea, while being considered by reason as its greatest discovery for "overcoming the finitude of nature"⁷⁸, provides it with the horizon of the so-called "infinite tasks"⁷⁹ through which reason ever-actively tries to reach to its full realization. But the latter cannot be fulfilled until reason prevails over the entire sphere of infinity and introduces itself as its eternal order.

⁷². Ibid., 79

⁷³. Ibid.

⁷⁴. Ibid.

⁷⁵. Scheler, "Idealism and Realism," in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 294.

⁷⁶. Scheler, *Selected Philosophical Essays*, 292- 3 & *Philosophical Perspectives*, 39-40.

⁷⁷. Husserl, *Crisis of Philosophy*, 158.

⁷⁸. Ibid., 182

⁷⁹. Ibid., 189

This *telos* which, in Scheler's terms, is the ground of "the modern bourgeois spirit of limitless work"⁸⁰ demands reason's devastating upheaval against its own existential foundation, namely, the sphere of infinity, so as to conquer and radically reorder the latter according to its universal norms and its alleged "absolute value order". Here reason takes responsibility for itself and for making sense of its own life and its self-established norms⁸¹. But after all, reason is the order of the aspect of finitude and so by nature cannot produce any meaningful norm by relying only on its own a priories. As a consequence, while it increasingly consumes itself in the pile of different particular branches of science looking for the fulfilment of its *telos*, it gets more and more lost in the abyss of all these passively-done scientific activities, and sinks ever-deeper into a despair resulting from its inability to make sense of the entire existence of human life.

This depiction, which is compatible with Kierkegaard's description of that sort of despair in which one wants to be oneself⁸², is the status of European humanity in the modern age as the final consequence of that course of thought established by the ancient Greeks. The tragic part of this despair is particularly the problem of human "consciousness" of his infinite aspect or self, in Kierkegaard's terms. It is tragic, since while the modern humanity is aware enough of his infinite self, he is still missing the true orientation towards this fundamental aspect of himself. Consequently, he loses the capability of recognizing this infinite aspect as his concretely positive and inspiring foundation. He reduces the latter to "only the most abstract form of his own self"⁸³, a negative self which he wants to construct. This objective makes him undertake the Hegelian task of "refashioning the whole thing in order to get out of it the self such as he wants"⁸⁴, but after all "he does not succeed". He considers his efforts as an active defiance against his current misery in the depths of despair, but the further he goes the more passively he "feels himself nailed to this restriction in his own powers to dispose over his own property"⁸⁵. On the other hand, the modern humanity's consciousness of his own despair intensifies the latter, and the more it intensifies the more "demonic" it would be⁸⁶.

⁸⁰. Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 161.

⁸¹. Husserl, *Crisis of Philosophy*, 169.

⁸². Kierkegaard, *The Sickness unto Death*, 98-105.

⁸³. *Ibid.*, 99

⁸⁴. *Ibid.*

⁸⁵. *Ibid.*, 101

⁸⁶. *Ibid.*, 103

It is demonic since it is rooted in an unceasing rage, followed by “a moral resentment”⁸⁷ against its unachievable foundation, the foundation which has been replaced by an abstract idea of the infinite self, to be meaningfully constructed through the infinite tasks, but after all it makes no sense. This ever-deepened “resentment” is in fact the main cause for the modern illusion of the infinite superiority of the rational European humanity over all other types of humanity around the world.

According to the above, it seems that Husserl’s afore-mentioned resort to the Greek notion of reason cannot make the situation of the modern crisis of culture any better, since its final destiny is reason’s activity in the abyss of passivity. Surprisingly enough, Husserl vaguely calls for a “new faith” in the power of “absolute” reason⁸⁸, though one may fairly ask him what he means by the nature of the very phenomenon of faith, since according to the judgment of the above-mentioned inflated reason, like any other emotional fact, faith seems to be more passivity rather than an authentic and autonomous rational activity in itself⁸⁹.

D) The Way out of The Crisis of Culture: Towards the Phenomenology of Religion

It should be noticed that the aforesaid account of reason was not meant to ignore the great role of reason and its intellectual functions in the whole progressive process of humanity’s historical growth, both individually and communally. It is in fact very naïve to think that one may overcome the separation in question by degrading reason and celebrating love, while it is justly said that reason is the main human being’s “capacity to form and shape the world”⁹⁰. It is though the capability of human reason for reflecting upon and articulating the scattered givens and for penetrating into the essential structure of its objects that the production of a scientific verifiable or, even better, falsifiable knowledge is possible.

⁸⁷. Soren Kierkegaard, *The Present Age and of The Difference between a Genius and an Apostle*, trans. Alexander Dru (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 49.

⁸⁸. Husserl, *Crisis*, 12-13 & *Shorterworks*, 326.

⁸⁹. R. Philip Buckley, *Husserl, Heidegger and the Crisis of Philosophical Responsibility* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1992), 141-143.

⁹⁰. Dodd, *Crisis and Reflection*, 35.

So it seems fair to assert, in the final analysis, that human reason is autonomous, however never self-contained.

It is not self-contained, even if its structure is regarded as merely constituted by Kantian formal a priori categories, let alone when its material a priorities are taken into account as well. Thus the structure of human reason is always dependent on its relations to the world and, in this sense, one may correctly affirm that there is no final and fixed structure for reason, since it always can be appropriated in terms of the new a priorities in the context of the previous a priorities which all together constitute the world of reason. This can illustrate how reason may grow in the course of history and how this growth might be compatible with human historicity⁹¹.

But after all, reason is, by its essence, autonomous and for this very reason, critical. It is critical in the sense that in articulating and reintegrating all it has gained through its growth in the course of its temporality, reason is the main element in the human mode of being, which is in charge of making crucial decisions in every critical situation of a practical life both of an individual or a society. This task can be done by applying both material and formal a priorities upon a fortuitous circumstance, which itself may examine the efficiency of the current a priorities, through exposing their capability of passing judgment on a particular case and solving the critical situation. On the other hand, this function of making these crucial decisions through the afore-stated articulations and re-integrations does exactly amount to the "autonomy" of reason.

However, for Scheler, the main point to be noticed is that this autonomy has been already encompassed by another element of the being of humanity which displays the heteronomy of reason at both its starting point and its final destination. And here is the articulation of his argument⁹² in my own words: At first, while being inspired and orientated by love, reason makes its way towards the truth of all things.

⁹¹. For more info about Scheler's insights on the fact of "the historical growth of reason in humanity or the status of true humanity" see "The Forms of Knowledge and Culture" in *Philosophical Perspectives*, and "Problems of Religion" in *On the Eternal in Man*, particularly the part entitled: "growth and decline of the natural knowledge of God" (198-213) in the latter.

⁹². Scheler's own argument has been appeared in his essay entitled "The Nature of Philosophy and the Moral Preconditions of Philosophical Knowledge" which is published alongside some other essays of him in his book, *On the Eternal in Man*.

Then again the above-mentioned transcendental characteristic of love, as a sign of the existence of another aspect in human being, leads reason in the course of its earnest movement to the point at which, by right of its autonomy, reason can recognize its own limitation to comprehend the infinite truth of all things and to impose its ever-confined a priori structure on the sphere of infinity by taking possession of the status of its order. The latter in turn is associated with the reason's acknowledgement of its non-self-groundedness and its admission of the sphere of infinity as its ground and foundation. Here is where love can reveal itself as the order of the sphere of infinity, not by opposing the whole structure of reason, but by transcending reason upon itself and by being the ever-deconstructing force which prevents reason from holding fast to its intrinsically rigid and ever-limited structure. This liberating function of love is in fact what Scheler calls "a transcendent act of redemption"⁹³, which is an essential condition for human salvation.

According to the above, it is completely true to accept reason as the criterion of truth in the sense that it is the main human capability for making autonomous decisions, to the point of the admission of its restriction and so its autonomously necessary submission to its infinite foundation. One may rephrase all this process as the progressive realization of the "autonomous heteronomy" of reason. The latter fits well into the active-passive structure of love, in the current author's terms, as the arousing and at the same time adjusting conductor of reason in the whole process of its "constant *potential growth to the state of true humanity*"⁹⁴. This latter, however, no longer amounts to European humanity as Husserl insistently asserts in his works, since European humanity, though particularly admirable as being built upon the great discovery of the ancient Greeks, namely the autonomy of human reason, is at the same time, guilty of its failure to recognize and appreciate the principal role of love as the foundation of the whole process operated by reason and so as the way out of the totalitarian inflation of reason in its own autonomy.

For Scheler, this sense of humanity is that "European Idol"⁹⁵ for which the modern crisis of culture is a clear sign of decline and deterioration. It is based upon the above-mentioned failure which has been deeply implanted in the European historical mentality.

⁹³. Scheler, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, 149.

⁹⁴. Scheler, *Philosophical Perspectives*, 25-26.

⁹⁵. Max Scheler, "The Reconstruction of European Culture," in *On the Eternal in Man*, 443.

This is what he calls “the collective guilt of European people” which demands “a common repentance” and a “common will to rebuild”⁹⁶. According to Scheler, repentance is the only “primary *moral* condition”⁹⁷ which can make a cultural reconstruction possible. It is that capability of human mentality which functions as the self-healing mechanism of the whole system. The latter is accomplished through one’s engagement with one’s own past in order to detect and eliminate those hidden obstacles which have caused the current disharmony in his mentality and sunk him in an ever-deepened despair, while taking away from his ability for progress and success. It is in this sense that repentance has a two-sided function: one, negative and demolishing and the other, liberating and constructive. On the other hand, through this engagement with the past, repentance reveals its deeply intertwined relationship with human historicity. It makes human being aware of the fact that “*historical reality [either of an individual or a community] is incomplete and so to speak redeemable*”⁹⁸. Accordingly, it liberates human being from the effect of its past and makes the shining horizon of its future possible. Now if we recall the above-mentioned characteristic of human historicity as the main interface of universal and individual, Scheler’s account of “collective guilt” and his call for a “common repentance” makes a reasonable sense. It shows the moral responsibility of each individual for making contribution in the progression of repentance as the moral requisite for cultural reconstruction in the whole society.

Lastly, repentance demands judging about the past, a characteristic which makes it profoundly connected with reason and its autonomous character of the critical judgment. However, according to what has been already said, this connection should be understood in terms of a liberating provision rather than an accidental function. As the existential call of human conscience, repentance is the resourcefulness of the infinite foundation to provide human reason with the possibility of finding a way out of the absurd cycle of despairing judgments within its inflated self.

⁹⁶. Ibid., 416

⁹⁷. Ibid.

⁹⁸. Max Scheler, “Repentance and Rebirth,” in *On the Eternal in Man*, 41.

It is in this way that it can prepare reason to make radically deconstructive judgments in the status of crisis, especially when it comes to the so-called crisis of culture which as “the disorder of mind and heart” demands “not a mere restoration, but a total conversion of culture or a radical change of heart and the serious will to build anew”⁹⁹.

Finally, for Scheler, the failure of philosophy in preserving its dignity as the queen of sciences in modern times is not the result of the domination of the so-called naturalistic rationalism, as Husserl believes. In fact, it has its roots in the failure of human reason (and philosophy as its product) to realize its “true autonomy” in “voluntary and objectively necessary philosophical self-limitation”¹⁰⁰ and “submission” to “such a content of Reality”¹⁰¹, which by its nature demands this autonomous self-limitation of reason as the strictest consequence of its philosophical thinking. “This so-called content of the absolute Reality”¹⁰², for Scheler, consists in no more than “the order of divine revelation”¹⁰³, which is the particular objective of faith rather than reason. It is in this sense that in his essay, *The Nature of Philosophy*, Scheler explicitly confirms the medieval account of philosophy as “the handmaid of faith”¹⁰⁴, though not in the sense that it contradicts the autonomy of reason but, to the contrary, in the sense of being its free decision out of its ultimate intellectual activity. This free choice is what indeed prevents reason from being the mere servant of the sciences, since “reason is of such a nature that it must of necessity fall into heteronomous slavery to that extent to which it repudiates as slavery the very intrinsic condition of its right to full autonomy ... so only as the free handmaid of faith can philosophy preserve the dignity of the queen of sciences”¹⁰⁵.

And the concluding point is that, through recognizing “the content of the absolute Being” or the sphere of infinity as the particular objective of faith, which is possessed no more by reason, Scheler’s account of the true relationship between love and reason, and consequently between faith and philosophy may clear the ground for the possibility of an “authentic phenomenology of religion” on the one hand, and an “authentic creative activity” of human reason in its assigned region, on the other.

⁹⁹. Ibid., 419

¹⁰⁰. Ibid., 79

¹⁰¹. Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, 76.

¹⁰². Ibid., 80

¹⁰³. Ibid.

¹⁰⁴. Ibid., 79 & 80

¹⁰⁵. Ibid., 80

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