In his 1965 introduction to the thought of Max Scheler, Manfred Frings noted that Scheler belonged to a group of European thinkers that included Heidegger, Husserl, and Nicolai Hartmann whose message has remained almost unheard of in the United States (13). Almost thirty years later little has changed for Scheler. Despite his substantial influence on the development of contemporary European philosophy and the wide scope of subjects he treated, points that Frings noted in 1965, Scheler has not received the kind of attention accorded Husserl and, even more, Heidegger. Indeed, while there has been an increased interest in some aspects of Scheler’s philosophy, witness the publication recently of a collection of selected writing, *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing*, what some have considered Scheler's greatest work, *Man's Place in Nature*, has been allowed to go out of print. In David Holbrok's overview of the philosophical anthropology movement "A Hundred Years of Philosophical Anthropology" Scheler warrants only a few brief lines, despite being recognized as the founder of that discipline. Over the past several decades there has been a marked decline in Scheler scholarship until today few if
any articles on his work are published. I believe that this represents a loss to philosophers and students of philosophy and in this article argue for a renewed interest in the work of Scheler.

Scheler's philosophical career is generally divided into three periods according to his primary interests. The first period ends in 1912 and is characterized by his interest in Neo-Kantianism and ethics. From 1912 to about 1921 Scheler's work was characterized by his interest in phenomenology and his conversion to Catholicism. The last period ended in 1928 with Scheler's untimely death and is characterized by his dual interests in philosophical anthropology and the sociology of knowledge. It was during this period that Scheler wrote *Man's Place*, his attempt to answer the questions "What is man?" and "What is man's place in the nature of things?" *Man's Place* was written as an introduction to a planned and more comprehensive philosophical anthropology which Scheler was unable to complete prior to his death. The essays collected in *Philosophical Perspectives* were all composed during this period and reflect Scheler's anthropological interests. It was, according to his own testament, his interest in human nature that most preoccupied Scheler. "The questions 'What is Man?' and 'What is man's place in the nature of things?' have occupied me more deeply than any other philosophical question since the first awakening of my philosophical consciousness" (MP 3).

It is Scheler's work on philosophical anthropology that I wish to consider here. This work has had a considerable influence on the development of the philosophical anthropology movement and remains today of considerable import for any one interested in questions concerning human nature. It is the claim that there are sufficient grounds for renewing our acquaintance with Scheler's philosophical anthropology which I wish to defend in this article. I believe it is in fact worthwhile to bring Scheler's philosophical anthropology to the attention of contemporary philosophers, both in its own right and as a stimulus for a renewal of thought concerning human nature. In much contemporary philosophy over the past twenty years any discussion of human nature, philosophical
anthropology, or humanism has been treated with an undeserved disdain. It may now be time to reconsider these issues.

A second concern of this article is with the kind of reception we ought to give Scheler's philosophical anthropology. Scheler's critical reception in the past has tended to be quite polarized, with critics either overlooking obvious shortcomings and praising Scheler to a degree not warranted or dismissing Scheler's philosophical views as curious and of little import. I believe that neither approach is fully justified and a more moderated approach is warranted. There are serious problems in Scheler's philosophical anthropology that cannot be overcome. At the same time, however, there are many important and genuine insights that should be rescued from the relative obscurity into which Scheler's work on philosophical anthropology has fallen.

I will begin with a brief explication of Scheler's philosophical anthropology. Following that I will consider the various grounds justifying the claim that Scheler's philosophical anthropology is still worthy of consideration today. I will then attempt to separate what I take to be Scheler's contribution to contemporary philosophical concerns from some of his less helpful insights.

I

The introduction to *Man's Place* begins with the following remark: "If we ask an educated person in the Western world what he means by the word 'man'..." (MP 5). Scheler makes his way into philosophical anthropology through a reflection on the human being in the modern world, an average person reflecting on the meaning and circumstances of his or her own life. And like most philosophical anthropologists Scheler recognizes the precariousness of the human being's situation. "...Man is more of a problem to himself at the present time than ever before in all recorded history" (MP 4). There are scientific, theological, and philosophical views of the human being but no unified idea\(^3\). The goal of philosophical anthropology is to work towards a comprehensive view of the whole human being. This task is motivated in part by the
recognition that it is only through such a comprehensive anthropological framework that we can overcome both the dualistic view of the human being that has been the lasting heritage of Descartes and the picture of the human being coming out of the various sciences as being composed of distinct often unrelated parts.

Scheler's philosophical anthropology is a phenomenological exploration of the human being and his place in nature. *Man's Place* is a consideration of the essence of the organic realm of plants, animals, and human beings. The task of philosophical anthropology is to make clear the essential structure of the human being.

The structure of the human being is hinted at in the ambiguity present in the concept of "man."

In one sense, it signifies the particular morphological characteristics of man as a subclass of the vertebrates and mammals...in the second sense, (it) signifies a set of characteristics which must be sharply distinguished from the concept "animal"--including all mammals and vertebrates. (MP 6-7)

The human being, according to Scheler, is a unique fusion of vital and spiritual being, both part of and yet distinct from mammals and vertebrates. In order to bring this out, let me briefly discuss the nature of vital being and spirit, beginning with vital being.

All organisms or psychophysical life possess an inner-state or self-being which inorganic matter lacks. Scheler divides all psychophysical life into four stages of increasing complexity with no qualitative distinction existing between these stages: vital being, instinct, associative memory, and practical intelligence. The process of evolution from vital being to practical intelligence involves a progressive dissociation or decomposition in the connection between animal and environment. On the lowest end of the scale, vital being, drive, or impulse is the source of all energy and power in living things, is present in all living organisms, and is a mere goal orientation or striving toward something or away from something. Practical intelligence, on the other end, is the ability to respond meaningfully to a new situation without trial and error, a sudden insight
reflected in expression as an "Aha" experience. Such an experience is characteristic not only of human beings but also of some animals and is particularly evident in Kohler's experiments with apes in which they displayed, according to Scheler, "genuine acts of intelligence" (MP 33). Intelligence is not a monopoly of human beings.

Insofar, then, as we consider the human being as vital being there is no qualitative difference between human beings and chimpanzees, indeed between human beings and any other living organism. Insofar as we remain on the psychophysical level, there is nothing unique to human beings. It is, in fact, a mistake to look on the level of psychic and vital functions for that element which gives the human being his unique characteristics. The new element which gives the human being his essential nature "is a genuinely new phenomenon which cannot be derived from the natural evolution of life..." (MP 36). That new element, spirit, transcends psychophysical life. Spirit is that element not shared by animals which endows the human being with a capacity to act autonomously from his drives. Because it is independent of the human being's physical organization, it cannot be studied by biology or psychology.

There are according to Scheler four essential characteristics of spirit. First, spirit is open to the world. Unlike animals, who live completely immersed in the environment, subject to their drives and to the environment, the human being is able to detach himself from his environment and transform it into a world or a symbol of the world. The animal lives ecstatically immersed in its environment but the human being is capable of detaching himself from the world and transforming it into an object of contemplation. As Scheler writes,

The essential characteristic of the spiritual being, regardless of its psychological make-up, is its existential liberation from the organic world—its freedom and detachability from the bondage and pressure of life, from its dependence upon all that belongs to life, including its own drive-motivated intelligence. (MP 37)
Spirit is also the door to self-consciousness, the second characteristic of spirit. In addition to the capacity of objectifying his environment, the human being is also able to objectify his own physiological and psychological states. The spiritual center of action has consciousness of itself as vital center and in this consciousness of self arrives at self-consciousness. This center of action in which spirit appears Scheler calls "person." Third, spirit is pure actuality and is not, according to Scheler, a substantial thing or concrete entity. Finally, it is through spirit and the repression of the vital drives that the human being has access to the phenomenological intuition of essences.

The spheres of vital being and spiritual being are distinct. Spirit has its own nature distinct from the essence of vital impulse; it is "autonomous in its being and laws" (M 63). As psychophysical being the human being is a vital being determined by his drives and by the environment, part of the spatio-temporal realm, and capable of being objectified. As spiritual being, the human being is capable of objectifying his drives and his environment, cannot itself be objectified, and is beyond the spatio-temporal order.

But while spirit is autonomous of vital being it is also impotent, devoid of energy, and depends on vital being to acquire energy. The process by which the energy of the lower spheres is made available to the higher spheres Scheler calls "sublimation". Spirit depends upon such a process for whatever energy or power it comes to possess. In itself it can neither generate nor cancel the energy of the vital impulse. Rather, spirit must direct and guide this energy into proper channels. It is through the process of directing and guiding the vital impulse that spirit is energized and that the instinctual energy of vital being is transformed into spiritual activity. The human being represents an intimate fusion of both vital being and spirit. Human drives are the agents that realize spiritual ideas and values while the human spirit is the ideational factor that gives the drives their direction and aim (PP 86).
This brief sketch of Scheler's philosophical anthropology must seem somewhat quaint and anachronistic today. Any mention of spirit is liable to make the most reasonable of philosophers apoplectic. And indeed what little attention Scheler's work has received tends to be dismissive. While Marvin Farber, for instance, notes that Scheler has a knack for recognizing significant ideas, he argues that Scheler never sees these ideas to fruition owing to the fact that his treatment of them is not according to the canons of logic and on the basis of the sciences. What has Scheler contributed toward determining man's place in the cosmos, Farber queries.

To some extent he has contributed novelty: in degree and kind of obfuscation, in manner of crudeness in misrepresenting phenomenology and naturalistic theories...As matters stand, Scheler presents a sorry, confused, and eminently unworthy picture in his attack on scientific philosophy, as well as in his dogmatic defense of selected articles of faith.

In a similar vein, Parvis Emad comments:

Scheler uses here his anthropology as a spring-board for far-reaching metaphysical construction which display his characteristic imagination and ingenuity but which are, for all their poetic splendour, philosophically of small value.

While there are persuasive grounds for criticizing Scheler's philosophical anthropology, neither these blanket dismissals nor Scheler's current anonymity are warranted. There are three aspects of Scheler's philosophical anthropology that are deserving of consideration: his recognition of the importance of anthropological reflection, his understanding of the task of philosophical anthropology, and his recognition of the significance of the human being's world openness. Let me address each of these points in turn.

(1) Martin Buber argues that philosophical anthropology is only possible in periods of what he calls “homelessness.” In such periods, human beings are estranged from the world and, in their insecurity, are provoked to reflection. Philosophical anthropology begins in human beings’ recognition of their problematic being: “It can be
attained only by a formulation and expression of this question which is more profound, sharp, strict, and cruel than it has ever been before.” The origins of philosophical anthropology can be found in the various crises facing European intellectuals between the wars: the collapse of German Idealism and the threat of historicism and irrationalism, the growth of the human sciences and the failure of the sciences in general to provide a unified view of human nature, the social and political upheavals of the time. While Scheler may not have been the first of his generation to remark on this sense of crisis, he was one of the first to connect it explicitly to our self-reflection and philosophical anthropology. It is the fact that “…man is more of a problem to himself at the present time than ever before in all recorded history…” that leads Scheler into his concern over our nature and our place in the universe. It is only through a reflection on the nature of the human being in the modern world that we can provide some stability to an otherwise rapidly changing world.

Paradoxically, while the sense of crisis that spurred Scheler towards philosophical anthropology remains with us today, philosophical anthropology does not. If anything, the sense of crisis which led up to philosophical anthropology has deepened in the second half of the century. We have witnessed the increasing specialization and fragmentation of the sciences and the growing powers and dangers of technology. World War II has underscored for many the dangers of western rationalism seemingly gone beserk and the problems inherent in the pursuit of ever greater technological achievements. At the same time, philosophers and historians of science were rethinking the very foundations of the sciences. Development in the postempiricst philosophy of science together with advances in physics have served to emphasize the theoretical anarchy of the sciences, now extended to include even the physical sciences. Developments in the social and political spheres also contributed to the growing sense of crisis. The unprecedented savageness of two world wars, the conflicts in Korea and Vietnam, the student revolts of the 1960s, the collapse of Eastern Europe, the rise of counter-cultural movements (African-American,
Hispanic, third-world), the women’s and gay rights movements and the environmental movement, all contributed to a growing sense of crisis and cataclysm. As Michel Foucault has remarked,

> What has emerged in the course of the last ten or fifteen years is a sense of the increasing vulnerability to criticism of things, institutions, practices, discourses. A certain fragility has been discovered in the very bedrock of existence. (PK 80)

But if philosophical anthropologists such as Scheler tended to see reflection on human nature as the response to this crisis, contemporary philosophers from many camps, including analytic philosophers, poststructuralists and postmodernists, and feminists have argued that this was part of the problem. While one embraces a reflection on human nature, the other erases it from reflection. As Charles Taylor notes, “…We are very nervous and squemish about ‘human nature’. The very words ring alarm bells. We fear that we may be setting up some reified image, in face of the changing forms of human life in history, that we may be prisoners of some insidious ethnocentrism” (vii). While the sense of crisis has deepned, then, we have been cut off from reflection on human nature, from self-reflection. And yet many of the problems facing us today require just that. Debates on animal rights and the environment, on multicultural issues, the construction of identity (so-called politics of identity), gender issues, all raise significant issues about the nature of the human being, issues which are largely left untouched in today’s “squemish” atmosphere. I have argued elsewhere that what we need today is a renewal of anthropological thought (Weiss, 1994). The virtue of Scheler’s philosophical anthropology is to draw out the connection of these moral, political, and philosophical crises to our self-reflection. Whatever its flaws in execution, which I shall shortly discuss, Scheler's starting point stands as a testament to his placing the human being squarely at the forefront of concern, neither erasing it, marginalizing it, nor consigning it to the dustbin of history.
While there was widespread agreement among philosophical anthropologists on the sense of crisis and the need for anthropological reflection, there was less agreement on what form that reflection should take. While seldom recognized, there are, I believe, two distinct tasks to a philosophical anthropology. The first, which I will call the integrative task, begins in the recognition that the various sciences which deal with the human being and his achievements lack a firm foundation and that the necessary foundation is a theory of human nature. The integrative task grows out of a reflection on the sciences and their perceived state of anarchy. We unify and synthesize the various sciences by reflecting on their common object the human being. This understanding of the task of philosophical anthropology is evident in Jürgen Habermas's definition:

Philosophical anthropology assimilates and integrates the findings of those sciences—like psychology, sociology, archaeology, and linguistics—that deal with man and his achievements. . . (qtd. in Schrag 32)

Similarly, in his account of philosophical anthropology for the Encyclopedia of Philosophy H. O. Pappe writes:

Philosophical anthropology seeks to interpret philosophically the facts that the sciences have discovered concerning the nature of man and the human condition. It presupposes a developed body of scientific thought and aspires to a new scientifically grounded metaphysics. (160)

This understanding of the task of philosophical anthropology is also evident in the work of Ernst Cassirer, Arnold Gehlen, H. P. Rickman, and Calvin Schrag.

The second task of philosophical anthropology I will call the wholeness task. It does not begin with the sciences at all but with the human being's crisis of self-knowledge. It begins with the human being's recognition of his problematic nature and his desire to answer the anthropological question in such a way that he addresses his whole being. The wholeness task of philosophical anthropology can be found in the work of Martin Buber, Michael Landmann, and in Scheler and Helmhuth Plessner, the recognized founders of philosophical anthropology, all of whom begin with a reflection
on the place of the human being in today's world. As we've seen, Scheler makes his way into philosophical anthropology not primarily with a reflection on the sciences but on the circumstances of the human being in the modern world. "We can attain valid insights," he writes, "only if we are willing, for once, to clear away all traditional solutions and to look at the being, called man, with an extreme and methodological objectivity, and wonder" (PP 65). The wholeness task of philosophical anthropology developed in part as a response to the growing scientific objectification of the human being and represented an attempt to reassert the properly philosophical task of reflecting on human nature. Scheler recognized that a unified view of the human being could be derived from science but he suggests that the sciences must be approached with caution. "The increasing multiplicity of the special sciences that deal with man, valuable as they are, tend to hide his nature more than they reveal it" (MP 6). There are limits to what the sciences can tell us about the human being. Science provides us with a number of different conceptions of the human being which are all too narrow to encompass the whole human being. The sciences treat the human being as a thing but he is not a thing. Philosophy's task, according to Scheler, was to liberate itself from the bonds of the scientific method. "Philosophy must no more be the mere servant of the sciences than the servant of religious faith" (PP 1). Having recognized our crisis in self-knowledge, Scheler explicitly connected it with reflection on the whole human being, rather than the partial and objectified being provided us by the sciences. There are fundamental problems of interest to us as human beings which science cannot answer and require a specifically anthropological insight.

Ultimately the wholeness task was eclipsed by the more epistemological and scientific task of coordinating the findings of the various natural and human sciences. This has been unfortunate as it casts philosophical anthropology in the position of a foundational and hierarchical discipline that objectively orders and grounds the various sciences and humanistic disciplines at a period of time when critiques of foundationalism
abound. The work of Richard Rorty, Foucault, Derrida, and others has ably demonstrated the weakness of these foundational programs. The perceived connection between the integrative task and philosophical anthropology has made it all the easier to dismiss philosophical anthropology. But it is a mistake to assume that philosophical anthropology can be defined solely by the integrative task. As we have seen, for Scheler, philosophical anthropology is not an epistemological concern or an attempt to coordinate the findings of the sciences. Philosophical anthropology is a human concern, it is concerned with the whole human being and his place in nature. Scheler does not begin with what the sciences tell us about the human being. He begins with the human being. A reflection on Scheler’s philosophical anthropology, then, provides us with a clearer and I think more acceptable account of the task of that discipline, allowing us to recover the proper task of this important movement.

(3) The human being's world openness. As we have seen in the previous section, world openness is the essential characteristic of the human being and is pivotal to Scheler’s account of the human being as both a vital being and a spiritual being. It is the human being’s existential liberation from the organic world that opens to him the spiritual realm. Furthermore, Scheler's view of spirit as pure actuality and open to the world led him to emphasize the human beings' task of development. The human being is not a thing, not a being at rest, but rather a direction of movement, a possible direction of development.

Man does not "exist" as an object, nor even as a relatively constant object, but only as constant potential for growth to the state of true humanity which can be freely accomplished at any moment, a process of truly becoming man... (PP 25)

With the ultimate center of his being free from nature's driving force, with his ability to objectify not only the environment but also himself, to be open to the world, the human being is free to develop himself, to shape that infinitely plastic segment of his nature through the guidance and direction of spirit.
What comes from the spirit does not come automatically, nor does it come of itself. It must be guided! Man is a creature whose very essence is the open decision. What does he want to be and to become? (PP 101)

In making world openness a key characteristic of spirit, Scheler was drawing on a long tradition that Michael Landmann argues extends from Protagoras to the Renaissance and the Goethe Period. This idea, though, had not been developed within the context of an anthropological understanding of the human being. Again Scheler recognized the importance of placing a discussion of the human being’s world openness, freedom, and self-determiniation in the context of an account of the nature of the whole human being. World openness is not a characteristic of human beings that floats free from any ontological or anthropological foundation. And it was this characteristic of Scheler’s anthropology, more than any other, that had a lasting influence on the development of philosophical anthropology. Helmuth Plessner’s discussion of the human being’s positionality, Gehlen’s account of the human being as the deficient being, Buber’s discussion of distance and relation, as well as many others, owe a debt to Scheler’s early formulation of the human being’s world openness.

While today there are many correlates of the human being's world openness, seldom are they related to an understanding of human nature. Taylor’s account of human agency, Harry Frankfurt’s discussion of second-order desires, Ernst Tugendhat’s account of self-determination, Rorty’s recent thoughts on self-creation, and Foucault’s turn to technologies of the self all, in a fundamentally similar manner, presuppose an account of the human being as open to the world. What is generally missing from these contemporary approaches is an anthropological framework in terms of which we can understand the human being as a moral agent, as capable of having second-order desires, and as self-creating or self-determining. Little effort is expended in explaining how these capacities relate to a view of the human being as a whole. That such an account is
necessary was, I think, one of Scheler’s lasting contributions not only to philosophical anthropology but to philosophy as a whole.

What advances Scheler was able to make on these issues, though, were undermined by his metaphysical dualism. His recognition of the human being’s world openness, premised as it is upon spirit’s transcendent nature, is purchased at a heavy price. In the next section I wish to turn to some of the weaknesses of Scheler’s philosophical anthropology.

III

Despite the aspects of Scheler's work that are deserving of our consideration, there are serious problems with Scheler's philosophical anthropology. A reconsideration of Scheler should neither be a slavish devotion nor a naive return to his metaphysical themes. Too often opposite the rejection tout court of Scheler's philosophical positions is blind devotion or, more charitably, oversight. Manfred Frings and Vaceks' commentaries on Scheler, for instance, seem to tolerate or ignore serious problems, notably Scheler’s metaphysical dualism. Scheler’s account of the vital being capable of spiritual acts fails to meet the basic test of the wholeness account, a unified view of the human being. Furthermore, by locating the human being’s essence in the spiritual realm, Scheler is led to minimize the human being’s cultural nature as well as his embodied nature.

Scheler’s view is in fact complex and highly ambivalent. On the one hand, as we shall shortly see, he recognizes the significance of culture and biology in human life. On the other hand, though, when it comes to the spiritual sphere, which defines our essence as human beings and our unique place in the world, both matters are inconsequential. Let me begin by looking briefly at the role of culture in Scheler’s philosophical anthropology.

While culture in fact plays a fairly small role in Scheler’s philosophical anthropology, it is barely mentioned in *Man’s Place*, it does play a substantial role in Scheler’s sociology of knowledge, an aspect of his thought receiving growing attention today. 

5 Throughout his philosophical career Scheler maintained a distinction between
what he generally called fortuitous existence, the existence of the world here and now, and essence. Parallel to this distinction was the distinction between knowledge of control and achievement and knowledge of philosophy. The former is knowledge of the fortuitous existence of this world, the knowledge of the sciences and this knowledge, according to Scheler, is relative to various material and social conditions, to our various drives, and to the practical purposes we adopt. Knowledge of philosophy, though, the knowledge of essence, begins with the exclusion of all possible attitudes reflecting worldly desire and practical concern (PP 45). By excluding all attitudes based on the senses and drives, all inherited opinion, the philosopher is open to a new form of knowledge, knowledge of essence, which stands sharply opposed to the knowledge of the sciences. Through such an attitude, the philosopher gains access to the objective, a priori essential structure of the world in which facts are no longer relative because they depend on drives and practical concerns.

Disabusing himself of the prejudices of positivism, the philosopher could penetrate behind all phenomena to their essential structures. He could then describe these structures in such a way as to awaken modern man to the poetic dimensions of reality that were imperceptible to the methods of science. (qtd. in Staude 23)

Indeed, the human being's freedom and self-determination depend, according to Scheler, on the absence of tradition. The human being, in addition to objectifying his environment and his physiological states, can also objectify the contents of tradition, relegating it to history and clearing the grounds for new discoverings and inventions (MP 27). As John Staude notes, Scheler’s phenomenology requires “what Scheler called a ‘continuous deymbolization of the world,’ forcing man to return to the immediacy of his experience prior to its symbolization and conceptualization” (22). Phenomenology, the basis for Scheler’s philosophical anthropology, was the concerted effort to move from the symbols and images of the human being back to his intuitively experienced essence.
So while Scheler’s sociology of knowledge recognized the significance of cultural and social factors, they were relevant only to the knowledge of the sciences. Philosophy, including philosophical anthropology, dealt with essences and necessarily excluded knowledge of culture, tradition, and history. This, I believe, is a mistake. A philosophical anthropology that intends to deal with the whole of the human being cannot, I think, exclude culture, for if anything is true, it is that the human being is a cultural being. The human being’s life is informed by culture, history, and tradition. This was the essence of Cassirer’s argument with Scheler. While Cassirer’s approach to philosophical anthropology in *An Essay on Man* is indebted to Scheler, he argues, correctly in my estimation, that our unique nature lies in our symbolic activity, in the fact that spirit “weaves itself into a world of its own, a world of signs, of symbols and of meanings” (“Spirit and Life” 868). Cassirer argues that it is not by denying the symbolic that human beings are open to the world. It is the very nature of the symbolic to give man the power to venture "beyond all the limits of his finite existence" (*Essay* 55). Even were we to grant that culture is not an essential ingredient of human nature, a philosophical anthropology that remains silent on this important dimension of human life is inadequate.

The same ambivalence present in Scheler’s analysis of culture is also present in his account of the human being’s biological nature. Scheler does not deny the human being’s biological constitution. Life is an intrinsic part of human being. This point is interesting in light of Farber's setting Scheler in the context of a response to the rising tide of evolutionary naturalism opposing the naturalistic conception of man and his works. Farber sees Scheler as preeminent among the anti-naturalists. In one respect this is false. Scheler does not deny the human being's natural or biological endowment. He simply refuses to accord it any role in man's special nature. Vacek quotes Scheler as writing: "Man has in no way 'evolved' beyond the animal world; rather, he *was* an animal, *is* an animal, and always *will* remain an animal" (239). It is also the case that spirit requires drive or urge in order to realize itself. Each sphere is lawfully independent of the
other. Scheler's mistake is to make spirit completely independent of man's biological and psychological realities. As Emad quotes (notes p. 96):

For neither in its knowing, intuiting and thinking capacity, nor in its emotional and volitional one, is spirit, or nous, an outcome or "sublimation" of life. The modes in which cognition operates can nowhere be traced back to the biopsychical pattern found in processes of the automatic and objectively goal-seeking type.

We ought to look at what Scheler says about man being the dead end of nature. Does Scheler mean that biologically he is the dead end of nature? Our objection is that it is only because of his biological endowment that the human being is able to develop what Scheler identifies as his spiritual attributes. We need to discuss what it means to say that the human being is liberated from organic reality. In what sense is this true?

We might reflect more generally on the claim that the human being is the sick animal. This is a claim that comes up in Nietzsche and runs through many "life-philosophers" and in several philosophical anthropologists, including Gehlen and Scheler. What does Landmann say about this? Hartmann writes:

S is in accord with the biologists, life-philosophers, etc. in describing homo naturalis as the dead end or deserter of life, as the constitutionally sick animal that has gone astray, as sickness itself, as an intelligent and tool using animal that must make good its shortage of instinct, organic adaptability, and regenerative capacity by thought and tools, making a virtue of a mistake and accepting a poor substitute. (247)

Perhaps this view of the human being as a dead end biologically is meant to counter the evolutionary view. If the human being is simply part of nature there is nothing to separate him from the animals. In light of the widespread acceptance of evolutionary theory it is necessary to find some other way of drawing the distinction between human being and animal--downplaying the biological and emphasizing the spiritual. This comes through in Hartmann's account of this aspect of Scheler's thought:

As long as man's worth is measured by biological standards there is no justification for the claim that he is the highest animal. From this point of view there is no strict essential frontier between man and brute, and
Scheler considers it the illusion of pride to inflate the actual difference in degree into a difference in essence. It is only when we see man as the breakthrough point of spiritual acts that we see the chasm that separates this homo from the brute as well as from the homo naturalis. The spirit...is the basis for man's special position. (247)

So the distinction is necessary for two reasons. The first is to establish a strict essential frontier between man and brute. We might consider Haraway's work on simians here, especially in light of Scheler's interest in the work of Kohler on gorillas. The second and related reason is to establish man's special position—presupposing that man must have a special position. Does having a special position establish a strict essential frontier between human being and animal? Are these two reasons necessarily connected?

Though Vacek does note:

From his earliest writings to the last Scheler rejects any full-fledged naturalistic conception of human beings since, he says, it is insufficient to the facts of a true spiritual activity that is independent of the psychophysical organism. Moreover, such theories are self-destructive since they set out to explain various kinds of activity, e.g. mathematical reasoning, and end up by explaining them away, e.g., merely brain processes. (240)

One might argue then that what Scheler is opposed to is not claims about the human being's vital nature but its reductionistic extension as an explanation of the spiritual sphere of mankind (Vacek).

Here can we say that Vacek tries to save Scheler by minimizing these problems and talking in terms of the metaphor of a bridge. For Scheler human beings are a movement and tension, a bridge, between the spiritual and vital spheres, neither of which they fully inhabit. Men and women are embodied being, and without their bodies they can do nothing effective. It is the body which gives each human being a sense of reality (Vacek, 244).

These aporia in Scheler's philosophical anthropology can, I believe, be traced back to the dualism inherent in Scheler's view of the human being as a vital being capable of spiritual acts. We should mention the dualism at the heart of Scheler's philosophical
anthropology and all its ramifications—including perhaps his view of woman. This dualism allows Scheler to strip from the human being's mental acts any psycho-biological nature, thus making it impossible, I would argue, to understand the true nature of the human being.

The relation of spirit and life comes in the process of sublimation in which both interpenetrate in such a way that spirit is vitalized and vital impulse is spiritualized. One must wonder, though, how two things as distinct as spirit and life can interpenetrate. Scheler suggests that through the psychic process of sublimation the instinctual energy is transformed into spiritual activity (MP 68). This occurs under the guidance and direction of the spirit. But how can spirit, a nonspatial and nontemporaral realm of reality, guide and direct a psychic process which occurs in space and time? How can a spiritual center of action guide that which is essentially blind and substantial? One should also wonder to what extent it is appropriate to refer to an insubstantial spiritual activity as having a "center." While Scheler maintains that spirit cannot be located in space and time, he does suggest that it can be located "in the highest Ground of Being itself" (MP 47). Dunlop points out that while spirit is not supposed to be substantial according to Scheler's account of acts, Scheler's metaphors often suggest a substantial interpretation. Scheler's discussion of a tension between spirit and life suggests a substantial interpretation of spirit. As Dunlop comments, only things of the same order, one would think, can be in tension with one another. Scheler also talks in terms of an oscillation which is incompatible with his talk of interpenetration. Location, centers, oscillation, are spatial and substantial indicators that are inappropriate when referring to spirit. Further, how can the matter of instinctual energy be transformed into the immaterial activity of spirit?

Arthur Luther has attempted to defend Scheler's views on the antithesis of spirit and life by arguing that there is no dualism. He cites two reasons for thinking so.

1. Luther argues that the relationship between spirit and life has generally been seen as antithetical. This is due to the mistranslation of the term "gegensatz" which, says
Luther, is more adequately translated as "contrast" or "complementary." According to Luther, Scheler does not intend spirit and life to be in an antagonistic relationship. Rather, there is a functional relation in which spirit does not stand over against life but is the complement of life, serving to fill our or complete life. The two terms are correlative, with one term immediately implying the other. As Scheler points out, the two are not complete in themselves but only in and through their mutual interpenetration (MP 93).

The issue here, though, is not whether Scheler intended spirit and life to be antithetical or complementary but whether he in fact was caught in an inextricable dualism. Scheler clearly does intend for spirit and life to be complementary. The real question is whether they can in fact be so. And here the answer is no. It is simply not clear how two radically distinct spheres of reality can complete one another. Luther himself recognizes this without registering its true import: "It is absurd to think, for example, that there can be a struggle between some-thing, basic drive, and no-thing, spirit or person" (22). It is absurd to think that there can be a struggle between some-thing and no-thing but it is equally absurd to think that there can be an interpenetration or a complementary relationship between "some-thing" and "no-thing."

2. Luther's second justification in support of the claim that there is no dualism in Scheler concerns Scheler's thoughts on the Ground of Being. Luther writes: "A dualism is not found or implied here because ultimately drive and spirit are integrated without identification in the Ground of Being" (24).

Scheler's thought on the Ground of Being are his most obscure. With his rejection of Catholocism and his subsequent turn to pantheism, Scheler came to reject the traditional theistic view of God. His thinking on this matter seems to have been influenced by his strong belief in the human being's freedom and self-determination, that is, the human being's world openness. "A God must not, and shall not exist," Scheler wrote, "for the sake of man's responsibility, freedom, and mission, and in order to give
meaning to human existence" (PP 91). As a moral being, the "person," according to Scheler, cannot exist in a world created by a divinity according to its own plan.

Scheler's work in this third period which we are discussing came to increasingly emphasize the human being's participation in the process of realizing God, a process played out in human history through the interpenetration of spirit and life, the two attributes of the Ground of Being. The Ground of Being, according to Scheler is the highest form of Being; it is is own cause and is the Being upon which everything else depends (MP 70). Vital impulse as force or energy and spirit are its two attributes. The Ground of Being strives for self-deification, that is, the process of realizing an eternal Deitas and can reach this goal only through the interpenetration of spirit and vital impulse achieved in world history. The history of the spiritualization of vital impulse and the vitalization of spirit, a process which is realized only in the human being, is the process of the Ground of Being realizing itself in and through the human being.

Luther is correct in recognizing that Scheler believed that spirit and life are in fact integrated in the Ground of Being. For several reasons, though, this is not an adequate defense against the charge of dualism.

First, this merely pushes the charge of dualism one step back. Now the Ground of Being rather than the human being has the seemingly impossible task of unifying two metaphysically distinct realms of being. The question of how an originally impotent spirit can guide and direct an originally blind force remains essentially unanswered.

Secondly, bringing in the Ground of Being raises more problems than it solves. We are left wondering, for instance, what the relation of spirit as an attribute of Ground of Being is to spirit as an attribute of human being. Given that there is one infinite, ideating spirit, how do we individuate persons? Scheler suggests that the human being, as both spirit and life, is "but a partial mode of the eternal spirit and drive" (MP 92). The spirit of the human being is, according to Scheler, a self-concentration of the one divine spirit and is individualized "not in body and heredity, nor in experience derived through
the medium of psychic vital functions, but through itself and in itself" (PP 132). But this individuation through itself and in itself, as well as what Scheler might mean by the self-concentration of the one divine spirit, remains, life the interpenetration of spirit and life, essentially mysterious.

Finally and most decisively, the most serious problem concerns the very interpenetration of spirit and life that accounts not only for the realization of God in human history but also the relation of these two realms in the human being. In its pure form in the Ground of Being spirit is originally impotent, being completely devoid of power, energy, or activity. Whatever power or energy the spirit has is gained through the process of sublimation in which the spirit guides and directs vital impulse by inhibiting and releasing its energy according to the determination of the spiritual will. But if spirit is originally impotent where does it get the energy necessary to inhibit vital impulse? How is this inhibition possible? How is any form of guidance or direction possible given the complete impotence on spirit's part? Given spirit's initial lack, this first act of inhibition, which initiates world history, could never have gotten underway. Scheler remarks that

Spirit infuses life with ideas, but only life is capable of initiating and realizing the spiritual activity, from its simplest act to the achievement of a great spiritual content. (MP 81)

Here Scheler seems to realize that life in fact must initiate spiritual activity. The first spiritual act is not, in fact, a spiritual act at all, but an act on the part of vital impulse. This, though, is at odds with Scheler's other assertions that it is spirit which initiates this process ("It is precisely the spirit that initiates the repression of instincts" (MP 62).). Vital impulse, as essentially a blind striving-for, is incapable of initiating a spiritual act. But spirit, as devoid of energy, is equally incapable of initiating the repression of instincts necessary for any spiritual act. The only conclusion that can be drawn, then, is that spirit and life, originally separate and distinct realms of being, must remain separate and distinct.
Finally, then, we must conclude that Luther is mistaken in his claim that there is no dualism to be found in Scheler’s thought. The view of the human being as the vital being capable of spiritual acts is essentially a dualistic one and so fails to provide a unified view of the human being. Scheler fails to satisfy the task of philosophical anthropology.

IV: Conclusion

These problems would seem to weaken my claim that there is some justification for renewing our philosophical interest in Scheler. In this concluding section I would like to briefly consider Scheler’s relevance for our contemporary situation. Here I have in mind arguing that recent developments in philosophy (poststructuralism, artificial intelligence, cognitive psychology) require a counter-balancing influence from someone who recognized the importance of reflecting on the whole human being.

Additionally we need to recover from the above criticisms some of the important points. We could raise the question of what impelled Scheler to this metaphysical dualism in light of the task that he sets for philosophical anthropology and in light of his recognition that there was a dualism here. Scheler is, after all, very much aware of this issue:

Thus it is neither body and soul nor brain and mind that set up an essential dualism. We may say that the mind-body problem has lost metaphysical significance it has had for eternities. Instead, the dualism which we encounter in man and which we experience ourselves is of a higher order: it is the antithesis between spirit and life. (MP 80)

Scheler then is clearly aware of the dualism present between spirit and life and yet he surely endorses this view. Why? While the answer to this question is surely complex, I believe that one reason was Scheler’s strong and lasting contention that philosophy must be entirely independent of science and the corollary to that, that human beings must be entirely separated from animals.
Throughout his life, Scheler was fundamentally opposed to aligning philosophy with science. Here we want to say something about how it diminishes the human being, treating him like a mechanism or an animal, it is reductionistic. We can use the following quote: “In thus closing the way to all the other possibilities of knowing the world in general, it leads necessarily to a suffocation of spirit and the destruction of all freedom” (notes 101).

In the conclusion we can sum up the strengths of Scheler’s views and then end with this: his warning against the ever growing encroachment of science. We can tie this to cognitive science and sociobiology and urge that Scheler’s observations are as valuable today as they were 50 years ago.

**FOOTNOTES**

1 It is interesting to note that Heidegger's 1929 work *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics* bears the following dedication: "The present work is dedicated to the memory of Max Scheler. Its content was the subject of the last conversation in which the author was allowed once again to feel the unfettered power of his spirit."

2 *On Feeling, Knowing, and Valuing* deals primarily with Scheler’s earlier work on a theory of feelings and the sociology of knowledge. Interestingly, even in this area of his thought, as the editor Harold J. Bershady argues in his introduction, Scheler remains largely forgotten. “Max Scheler…was acclaimed in Europe after the First World War as one of the leading minds of the modern age and Germany’s most brilliant thinker…. But within a few years of his death Scheler became, at least publicly, a forgotten man….Scheler is now remembered as one of the intriguing but minor figures on the Weimar landscape, a philosopher who dealt chiefly with metaphysical and religious subjects and occasionally with sociological ones as well” (1). It’s also interesting to note that this collection of Scheler’s selected writings does not include any of his writings on the topic of philosophical anthropology.
3 By science Scheler seems to understand either evolutionary biology or mechanism. Scheler presupposes that there is a unified view of the human being derived from science but that the sciences must be approached with caution. "The increasing multiplicity of the special sciences that deal with man, valuable as they are, tend to hid his nature more than they reveal it" (MP 6). Science provides a number of different conceptions of the human being which are all too narrow to encompass the whole human being. They treat the human being as a thing but he is not a thing. Philosophy's task, according to Scheler, was to liberate itself from the bonds of scientific method. "Philosophy must no more be the mere servant of the sciences than the servant of religious faith" (PP 1). In fact, rather than following the sciences, Scheler argues that a philosophical anthropology must precede the sciences.

Only such an anthropology can furnish an ultimate philosophical basis, as well as definite aims of research, to all sciences concerned with the object "man," to the natural, medical, archeological, ethnological, historical, and social sciences..." (PP 65)

4 Scheler rejects Descartes' two substance view in favor of a unified conception of psychophysical life. There are two phenomenally distinct aspects of life which are ontologically identical.

It is one and the same life which, in its inwardness, has a psychic structure and which, in its being for others has a physical structure... The physiological and psychic processes of life are strictly identical in an ontological sense. They differ only as phenomena. (MP 73-74)

5 See for instance Scheler's Problems of a Sociology of Knowledge.

6 Scheler's view of God leads to the position that human beings are able to assume sole responsibility for themselves, for humanity, and for all of history. As Vacek puts it:

According to this view, the person as a free, moral being can exist only in a world where he or she is able to assume total control of the surrounding
mechanistic world. Such a person would suffocate, were he or she to function in a world teleologically ordered according to some divine plan. An existing and active God would be a threat to human seriousness and responsibility. Put baldly, it is God or man, but not both. (242)

This is why Scheler is led to his view of God and human being cooperating in which both mutually and freely attain their respective perfection.