

UDC 17.022.1М.Шелер:33.053.22-021.414
DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/apfs.v051.2024.6>

A. V. Budz

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3514-9385>
Postgraduate Student at the Department of Philosophy,
Sociology and Religious Studies
Vasyl Stefanyk Precarpathian National University

RESSENTIMENT IN M. SCHELER AND REVALUATION OF POSTMODERN VALUES

Problem statement. The problem of values is important and relevant in the postmodern context, which is characterized by the excessive individualism, value relativism, deconstruction of traditional value systems and traditional value hierarchies. Postmodern worldview emphasizes the importance of emotions in one's self-expression and treats it as the most valuable insight into human mind, overwriting truth and objective reality as means of verifying one's claims. In the context of the significance of emotions in social existence and the self-identification of a human it is important to talk about the Ressentiment, a philosophical concept that, as argued by M. Scheler, addresses a phenomenon of suppression of feelings of envy and hatred. The article examines M. Scheler's interpretation of the concept of ressentiment, focusing on the displacement of vital values in the hierarchy of values by the values of utility, its implications in the modern world and the possibility of the revaluation of postmodern values emphasizing the significance of vital values. The article argues that such revaluation of values based on M. Scheler's emphasis on vital values offers a pathway to transcend the existential and sensual void of postmodernism based on advocacy for the importance of the vital values.

Recent research and publications analysis. The concept of ressentiment stands in the center of attention of many researchers. Particularly, V. Kebuladze [3] investigates ressentiment by Max Scheler and its contemporary relevance. The author argues that ressentiment is related to the desire for revenge and feelings of powerlessness, and that M. Scheler demonstrates national ressentiment rather than critically analyzes it, which can be related to the spirit of time when totalitarian regimes were forming. The article also shows how on the theoretical concept of resentment it is possible to critically deconstruct dangerous trends in the modern world, specifically the concept of the "russian world". M. Sinelnikova [8] explores the modern phenomenon of hating in the context of ressentiment. She argues that hating can be considered as a kind of the ressentiment experience, a radical and acute form of expression, which results in hating ressentiment. C. Seibert [7] delves into the connection between envy and ressentiment. He understands both as emotional strat-

egies for dealing with desire, while interpreting ressentiment as the perpetuation and radicalization of a strong form of envy. Y. Lu [5] investigates the inversion of values and the renunciation of desire and love. The author compares Max Scheler's and Wang Yangming's analyses of the disorder of the heart as the inversion of values. The author claims that M. Scheler discusses mostly the negative side of ressentiment, and that the objective hierarchy of values is correlated to the original and subjective moral feelings. C. Ching Yuen [2] interprets ressentiment as one of the most complicated feelings of human beings and investigates it through the prism of M. Scheler's philosophy in the context of relation of ressentiment and love. R. van Krieken [4] explores how ressentiment affects contemporary communications technology, combining the complex dynamics of processes of civilization and decivilization and the concept of ressentiment introduced by F. Nietzsche and developed by M. Scheler. The author claims that the spread of ressentiment in social media is the latest episode of processes of civilization and decivilization. D. Bondi [1] argues that ressentiment can be seen as a positive force in building of Western ethics, and victimism can be interpreted as a particular form of ressentiment, strictly linked to the Christian doctrine. The author develops the arguments by critically discussing and comparing the thoughts on ressentiment of F. Nietzsche, M. Scheler, and Ren Girard. I. Zagorac [9] explores the concept of ressentiment, stating that M. Scheler described it as a complex condition characterized by a thirst for revenge. Moreover, ressentiment has a property of presenting itself as having some merit. She argues that ressentiment has many different shades that raise questions about positive valuation, vulnerability, and the sense of injustice.

As seen from the analysis of the works above, researchers delve into the concept of ressentiment, hate and envy as primary emotions that constitute ressentiment. What this article proposes, is not only an analysis of M. Scheler's concept of ressentiment, but also a deeper look at the role of ressentiment in the shift of vital values from the position of main ones and their subsequent replacement in the hierarchy of values by the values of utility in the context of postmodernism.

The purpose of the article is to investigate how concept of resentment, primarily the focus on envy and hatred, structures postmodern values and to propose an approach focusing on vital values to rethink and reevaluate postmodern values, signifying the importance vital values.

Presentation of the main material.

1. M. Scheler's interpretation of resentment.

When exploring the origin of the concept of resentment, M. Scheler delves deep into the psychological and moral dynamics of the concept. He states that resentment is "... a lasting mental attitude, caused by the systemic repression of certain emotions and affects which... are normal components of human nature" [6, p. 45]. Two of the most important emotions, about the repression of which M. Scheler talks, in his views, are revenge and envy. He states that the "thirst for revenge is the most important source of resentment... The desire for revenge... – is also ... a reactive impulse. It is always preceded by an attack or an injury" [6, p. 46]. Revenge, as a reactive attitude of the human emotions, stems from the inability to act upon this negative emotion, when the addressing of the feeling or of the subject (object) of the feeling is not possible immediately and directly, so the person hides these emotions. But the emotion of revenge itself is not yet resentment, as M. Scheler points out, "we must add the fact that revenge tend to be transformed into resentment the more it is directed against lasting situations which are felt to be "injurious". This will be most pronounced when a person or group feels that the very fact of its existence is a matter which calls for revenge" [6, p. 50]. For revenge to become resentment, there must be added the lasting element, which means the act of oppression towards a group of people should happen over an extended period of time, during which the oppressed cannot express or fulfill their desires for revenge. We can trace this on examples of minority groups in today's society, when the feeling of oppression (regardless of if it's real or imagined) multiplied by the longevity of its application on groups affected leads to the strong feeling of the desire for revenge and even in some cases the inversion of the oppression structure. The feeling of powerlessness to achieve the groups or individuals' desires or goals, or also the lack of response in any meaningful way to factors of oppression contributes to the flourishing of resentment in these conditions.

Another source of resentment, according to M. Scheler, "...lies in envy, jealousy, and the competitive urge" [6, p. 52]. He states that envy "... is due to a feeling of impotence which we experience when another person owns a good we covet. But this tension between desire and nonfulfillment does not lead to envy until it flares up into hatred against the owner" [6, p. 52]. Here as well, the feeling itself is

not enough for resentment to arise, the important part here is the motivation of the person who experiences the feeling of envy. One person can observe that somebody possesses a thing they desire and will make efforts to achieve it on their own. On the other hand, when the conclusion the person makes in this context is to make the person who owns a "good" an object of hatred that is when the resentment feelings take over the human mind. As M. Scheler points out, "Envy does not strengthen the acquisitive urge, it weakens it. It leads to resentment when the coveted values are such as cannot be acquired and lie in the sphere in which we compare ourselves to others" [6, p. 52]. In this context, the inability to acquire a good or a value leads to strong negative feeling of envy expressed towards the person, and the strongest type of envy, as states M. Scheler, is "existential envy, which is directed against the other person's very nature" [6, p. 52]. The philosopher argues that this type of envy "...is the strongest source of resentment" [6, p. 52]. Indeed, the envy of one's life can lead to dangerous consequences, when the feeling of envy not only leads to the mere feeling of envy, but to the desire to do harm in order to satisfy one's needs of expression and fulfilment of the need of value. To some extent, such behavior is characteristic even of the whole of societies, that envy the successes and desires of other societies.

From this perspective, the feelings of envy, which is transformed into hatred, and the urge for revenge lead to the processes of moral corruption and value inversion, where the values and qualities of strength, vitality, and excellence are reevaluated as unnecessary, as morally inferior, while passivity and mediocrity are elevated as virtues. Such inversions of the hierarchy of moral values not only distort personal attitudes, when instead of focusing on positive aspects and ways of achieving "goods" or values, humans concentrate on the subject of such goods and values, and not objects; but also influence certain groups in a society or even the whole of a society. In this case, such accent on negative feeling in an individual can affect the collective moral framework, embedding resentment into cultural aspects and social institutions. M. Scheler's thoughts highlight how the embedding of this negative trend undermines the authentic pursuit of higher values and creates a cycle of discontent and indignation, and also results in an unjustified aggression and inhumane behavior not only within the borders of an individual group or society, but on the level of whole societies against other societies or nations.

2. The elevation of values of utility over vital values.

Such negative trend of accentuating attention on the subject of a good or a value rather than on the object (a good or a value) finds its actualization in the shift and "re-ordering" of the value structure,

where, led by the discontent and displeasure of not fulfilling person's desires, the neglect and negation of positive values, values of utility replace the vital values by their importance and relevance for humans. According to M. Scheler, "the most profound perversion of the hierarchy of values is the subordination of vital values to utility values" [6, p. 154]. This is evidently clear in the postmodern era, where the values of utility and usefulness – efficiency, productivity, and functionality occupy the central role in the value structure. Whereas such values of vitality as health, creativity, the value of life become secondary, less important. In this context, M. Scheler thinks that "Guided by resentment, the modern world view reverses the true state of affairs... all thinking geared to declining life, and seeks to understand the living by analogy with the dead. It interprets life as such as an accident in a universal mechanical process... [6, p. 171]. Such position to the contingency of human existence is profoundly evident in a postmodern era, where the mere human existence is treated as a threat to the planet and other species inhabiting it, which should be cured by the decrease in population and the neglect of human life. Such focus and attention to the declining life also can be traced in the current modern trends of degrowth, the appeasement of depopulation and the neglect of life as a concept in its totality. Such thinking tends to negativism, and destructionism, which in turn, elevate the feelings of vanity, meaninglessness, and absurdity of human life, which is void of any positive consequence of such human existence.

The reordering of the value structure, accompanied by an intense focus on the material side of things, reflects a broader tendency of societies to prioritize economic and technological advancement and achievements over the spiritual well-being of a person and societies, often at the expense of the latter. M. Scheler argues that "No wonder that the mechanical civilization – which is always the result of a relative stagnation in vital activity... – is mistaken for the triumph, continuation, and extension of vital activity. Thus, the infinite "progress" of mechanical civilization becomes the true "goal" of all vital activity, and the infinite development of the calculating intellect is made the "meaning" of life" [6, p. 171]. In this context, the emphasis on the materialistic values leads to neglect of spiritual ones, breaking the social fabric and alienating people from one another. No matter what technological advancements are achieved, the intrinsic human values cannot be a sacrifice in such process. As put by M. Scheler, "...the disintegration of the family, ... the growing dependence of marriage and procreation on money and property instead of vital qualities... all these will be considered as more or less "passing pills" which will disappear" [6, p. 173]. In such

sense, for postmodernists, the traditional structures and constructs are mere obstacles in achieving the higher goal of constructing an ideal society based on new values and norms, where old traditional structures and hierarchies are completely destroyed and replaced with new ones.

The dominance of utilitarian values is evident in the accent on measurable and quantifiable outcomes and achievements, often at the expense of vital values and spiritual integrity of humans. For example, workplaces increasingly value output and performance metrics over the well-being of employees, leading to emotional burnout and societal alienation. Similarly, education systems prioritize standardized testing and learning of facts by heart without the need to understand underlying factors that caused such processes and phenomena to happen over critical thinking and promoting creativity. From this perspective, M. Scheler argues: "The spirit of modern civilization does not constitute "progress"... but a decline in the evolution of mankind. It represents the rule of the weak over the strong, of the intelligent over the noble, the rule of mere quantity over quality" [6, p. 174]. At the same time, often the values of consumerism are emphasized rather than the values of self-realization. M. Scheler continues: "It is a phenomenon of decadence, as is proved by the fact that everywhere it implies a weakening of man's central, guiding forces as against the anarchy of his automatic impulses. The mere means are developed, and the goals are forgotten. And that precisely is decadence!" [6, p. 174]. Indeed, the proliferated emphasis on material aspects of human condition and measurement of any state of happiness nowadays is invariably linked to the materialistic expression of possessing goods, neglecting the vital, spiritual, or psychological aspects of the human mind.

He concludes by stating that "intrinsic values should be put above useful achievements" [6, p. 173]. The systemic elevation of utility over vitality results in a cultural degradation, where the richness of human experience is reduced to functional efficiency. In this context, it is important to rethink the postmodern values, since the abundant emphasis on mechanicism and utility and neglect of vital values results in the discontent with the existence, lack of meaning, drive, and desire to live.

3. The revaluation of postmodern values from the position of importance of the vital values.

The postmodern epoch is characterized by the excessive accent on individualism, disregard for objective truth, relativism, prevalence of the emotions over rational thought, expressionism, and pride. The emphasis on relativism and deconstruction has fostered a cultural tendency to undermine foundational values that sustain human vitality and existence. Additionally, the values of self-control, humility, subordination are viewed as pathetic,

unnecessary, and meaningless. Postmodernism's defining feature is its rejection of universal truths and abundant focus on power structures, traditional values, and their deconstruction. By deconstructing traditional values, postmodernism, however, puts forward values that are harmful to human existence and undermine it. Such constant critique and deconstruction often lead to the erosion and degradation of any stable foundation for meaning, sense of purpose, leaving a vacuum of senses, meaning and purpose, where nihilism can flourish. In rejecting the so-called "will to truth", postmodernism simultaneously neglects the "will to life" – the instinctive drive that reaffirms vitality and existence. In this context, M. Scheler's philosophy offers a framework for reevaluating postmodern values by emphasizing the importance of vital values.

From this perspective, postmodern values – such as hyper-individualism, cultural relativism, and an exaggerated focus on subjective experiences often undermine the collective and life-affirming dimensions of human existence. These values, while aiming to liberate individuals from oppressive norms, risk fostering alienation, fragmentation, and a disconnection from the essential vitality of human life. This disconnection can be traced in modern society, where the neglect of such values led to the breaking of social fabric and disengagement from social life, which is reinforced by the effects of social media and technological capabilities, which, sadly, often contribute to social alienation. As M. Scheler states: "Ressentiment must... be strongest in a society... where approximately equal rights or formal social equality... go hand in hand with wide factual differences in power, property, and education. While each has the "right" to compare himself with everyone else, he cannot do so in fact. Quite independently of the characters and experiences of individuals, a potent charge of resentment here accumulated by the very structure of society" [6, p. 50]. And the origin of resentment itself he draws from "a tendency to make comparisons between others and oneself" [6, p. 53], where with the access to social media nowadays constant injection of the so-called perfect lives that people express online only leads to more discontent with one's own state of affairs, hyperbolizing the negative emotions, leading to resentment. At the same time, to some extent social media enable the existence of an "anonymous subject", who spreads the phenomenon of resentment in social media even further since such subject cannot be identified. Moreover, resentment in social media can be artificially induced with evil intent from the side of separate individuals, certain organizations, or even states, that can manipulate civil thought and general consensus, affecting the social phenomena in the process, adjusting them to their own needs.

Here, M. Scheler says that "Ressentiment criticism" is characterized by the fact that improvements in the conditions criticized cause no satisfaction – they merely cause discontent, for they destroy the growing pleasure afforded by invective and negation" [6, p. 51]. From this perspective, "The man of resentment cannot justify or even understand his own existence and sense of life in terms of positive values such as power, health, beauty, freedom, and independence. Weakness, fear, anxiety, and a slavish disposition prevent him from obtaining them. Therefore, he comes to feel that "all this is vain anyway: and that salvation lies in the opposite phenomena: poverty, suffering, illness, and death" [6, p. 76]. Indeed, possessing positive values or desired goods does not satisfy the needs or desires anymore, the target of resentment become the values themselves. For example, M. Scheler points out: "the man of resentment no longer turns away from the positive values, nor does he wish to destroy the men and things endowed with them. Now the values themselves are inverted: those values which are positive to any normal feeling become negative" [6, p. 76]. Such neglect and disregard of vital values – those that prioritize health, strength, and creativity – pushes the postmodern philosophy and society into the hands of nihilism, where the negation of all positive values is normal, and the affirmation of life is subordinated to the endless critique of structures.

From M. Scheler's perspective, postmodern values often reflect a latent resentment – an inability to embrace the full spectrum of human experience, including its vital dimensions. By denying the importance of vitality, postmodernism risks perpetuating a culture that devalues life's inherent dynamism and creativity. To overcome this, a reevaluation of values is necessary, one that re-centers vitality as a source of meaning and a prerequisite for higher achievements. We can integrate these insights into a value system that affirms life, creativity, and authenticity. Vital values, in M. Scheler's opinion, are not opposed to spiritual or moral values but serve as their foundation, enabling individuals and societies to thrive.

M. Scheler's approach to resentment in his philosophy challenges us to recognize the intrinsic worth of vital values, which he places in the hierarchy of values above just the utility but below spiritual values. Vital values encompass the qualities that enhance human vitality, such as health, energy, and creative will. These values are not only prerequisites for individual flourishing but also foundational for the cultivation of higher values like truth, beauty, and justice. Without a robust affirmation of vital values, higher pursuits lose their grounding and become abstract or sterile, unnecessary. In this case, the current postmodern values that emphasize value relativism, the prevalence of the values of utility for

the materialistic achievements and technological advancements over the well-being of humans should be decreased in importance, downgraded in the hierarchy of values below the vital values.

A renewed focus on vital values challenges the postmodern tendency toward cynicism and fragmentation by fostering a sense of interconnectedness and purpose. For example, art and literature that celebrate the human condition, rather than deconstruct it, can inspire a collective reawakening of shared values. Similarly, cultivating practices such as mindfulness, physical activity, and communal rituals can help individuals reconnect with their sense of community, reinvigorating vitality. By addressing the root causes of resentment, this reevaluation offers a pathway to overcoming the nihilism and despair often associated with postmodernity, paving the way for a more integrated and life-affirming cultural ethos.

Conclusions. The postmodern values, while important in exposing the limitations and biases of traditional value systems, have often resulted in a nihilistic rejection of the will to life, the loss of sense and meaning, leading to the feeling of existential void and social alienation, which can reject the life itself. Max Scheler's philosophy, particularly his insights into resentment and the hierarchy of values, provides a pathway to critique this tendency and to propose an alternative route with the emphasis rooted in vital values. By affirming vitality as the foundation of human existence, we can resist the alienation and fragmentation that characterize much of contemporary culture.

A reevaluation of postmodern values must begin with the recognition that vitality – health, strength, and the will to create – is not an anachronistic ideal but a timeless necessity that expresses the very essence of human nature. Through this reevaluation, we can foster a culture that celebrates life's dynamism and reclaims the potential for higher achievements grounded in a life-affirming ethos. In doing so, we uphold the central insight of M. Scheler's philosophy: that the flourishing of the human spirit depends on a hierarchy of values rooted in the affirmation of life itself, and in the continuation of human existence. Max Scheler's concept of resentment provides a valuable lens for understanding the ethical and existential crises of postmodernity. The displacement of vital values by utilitarian values has contributed to a pervasive sense of disconnection, meaninglessness, and the absurdity of one's existence. By revaluing postmodern values through the prism of M. Scheler's philosophy and his views on resentment, we can battle the nihilistic void, loss of meaning and reclaim a sense of vitality and purpose that affirms life and transcends resentment. Such reevaluation and inversion of the previous inversion of the value hierarchy offers a route to a more holis-

tic and life-affirming postmodern ethos, grounded in the integration of vital and higher spiritual values, such as truth, justice, good, humaneness.

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Summary

Budz A. V. Resentment in M. Scheler and reevaluation of postmodern values. – Article.

The article investigates Max Scheler's concept of resentment in the context of its two main sources – revenge and envy. It is stated that revenge as a reactive attitude and a source of resentment has roots in one's inability to address the feelings directly, leading to the repression of such emotions as hatred, envy. Revenge becomes resentment when the element of longevity of this emotion is added to it, with time resulting in a radical form of revenge. The article explores envy as one of the main sources of resentment, which is based on the feeling of impotence to acquire a good or value a human desires, which results in the feeling of strong envy and hatred towards a person that possesses a good or a value. It is stated that hatred and the urge for revenge become the reason of the inversion of value hierarchy, leads to unjustified aggression and inhumane behavior. The article also investigates the reasons of domination of values of utility over vital values. It is argued that

postmodern society prioritizes materialistic values and the values of utility, neglecting the vital values. Such neglect is evident in the nihilistic attitude towards the value of human life, which is viewed as accidental, and absurd, while the values of consumerism and materialistic values are regarded as more important than vital values. M. Scheler's critique of the elevation of utilitarian values over vital values serves as a reference point through which we can evaluate the ethical and existential challenges of postmodernity. The article delves into the reevaluation of postmodern values, which accentuates the significance of vital values, such as health, strength, energy, creative will. It is substantiated that postmodernism's rejection of universal truths and traditional values, abundant emphasis on their deconstruction neglects vital values and creates conditions for flourishing of nihilistic values that are harmful for human existence. It is argued that by having the access to technical ways of spreading resentment, for example, to social media, such phenomenon may influence not only individuals but the whole of society, and result in destructive and aggressive behavior towards other societies. By revisiting the importance of vital values, this article proposes a reevaluation of postmodern values to foster a more life-affirming ethos in the modern world.

Key words: values of life, rethinking of values, values of utility, envy, revenge, negative emotions, alienation.

Анотація

Будз А. В. Ресентимент у М. Шелера та переоцінка постмодерністських цінностей. – Стаття.

У статті досліджується концепція ресентименту Макса Шелера в контексті двох її основних джерел – помсти та заздрості. Зазначається, що помста як реакційне ставлення та джерело ресентименту має коріння в нездатності людини висловлювати свої почуття безпосередньо, що призводить до придушення таких емоцій як ненависть, заздрість. Помста стає ресентиментом тоді, коли до неї додається елемент довготривалості цієї емоції, що з часом перетворюється у

радикальну форму помсти. У статті досліджується заздрість як одне з основних джерел ресентименту, яке ґрунтується на відчутті безсилля здобути благо або цінність, що призводить до почуття сильної заздрості та ненависті до людини, яка володіє благом або цінністю. Встановлено, що ненависть і бажання помсти стають причиною інверсії ціннісної ієрархії, призводять до невинуватої агресії та негуманної поведінки. У статті також досліджуються причини домінування цінностей корисності над життєвими цінностями. Стверджується, що постмодерне суспільство надає пріоритет матеріалістичним цінностям і цінностям корисності, нехтуючи життєвими цінностями. Таке нехтування проявляється у нігілістичному ставленні до цінності людського життя, яке розглядається як випадковість, абсурдність, тоді як цінності споживацтва та матеріалістичні цінності вважаються важливішими за життєві цінності. Критика М. Шелера вивіщення утилітарних цінностей над життєвими цінностями служить точкою відліку, через яку ми можемо оцінити етичні та екзистенціальні виклики постмодерну. Стаття заглиблюється в переоцінку постмодерністських цінностей, яка акцентується на значенні життєвих цінностей таких як здоров'я, сила, енергія, творча воля. Обґрунтовано, що відмова постмодернізму від універсальних істин і традиційних цінностей, надмірний наголос на їх деконструкції нехтує життєвими цінностями та створює умови для розквіту згубних для існування людини нігілістичних цінностей. Стверджується, що маючи доступ до технічних шляхів поширення ресентименту, наприклад, до соціальних мереж, таке явище може вплинути не лише на окремих людей, а й на все суспільство та призвести до деструктивної і агресивної поведінки стосовно інших суспільств. Переосмислюючи важливість цінностей життя, стаття пропонує переоцінку постмодерністських цінностей для сприяння більш життєствердному етосу у сучасному світі.

Ключові слова: цінності життя, переосмислення цінностей, цінності корисності, заздрість, помста, негативні емоції, відчуження.