

## Preface

This volume of six studies considers the thought of Max Scheler (1874-1928). At issue for the authors is Scheler's thinking about the person.

The person, Scheler argued, cannot be understood as a determined and definable thing or object. Instead, persons are ever surprising. As Scheler understood, the person's reality and possibility is *non-objectifiable* because who we are is never fully explainable by the factors of the human condition. The human person is always more than the sum of humankind's biology, anthropology, material conditions, and social life. Likewise, the person can never adequately be accounted for within the horizons of human knowledge; we must ever remain a mystery—a question—to ourselves.

Scheler also argued that mystery of the person was not located above or separable from the necessities and constitutive factors of living in the world. All the implications of living in the world matter profoundly, he thought, for who we are. Indeed, the vista of possibilities for the human person is enabled by the numberless real and ideal factors of the human condition. But, the human condition remains open for human acts and their consequences.

His understanding of the human person, led Scheler to novel ways of thinking about ethics, about authority, about God, about the community, and society. It offered him vantage points from which to rethink human responsibility to the world, inspiring him to propose unique theoretical orientations for philosophy, for the historical and social sciences, for theology and the humanities, and even for the natural sciences

The authors of this volume—Michael D. Barber, Philip Blosser, Daniel O. Dahlstrom, Eugene Kelly, William Petropulos, and Stephen Schneck—illustrate in their chapters that Scheler's understanding of the human person continues to yield insights for contemporary scholarship.