



Joanna Sośnicka

# Phenomenology of Love

λoγoς



Die Open-Access-Stellung der Datei erfolgte mit finanzieller Unterstützung des Fachinformationsdiensts Philosophie (<https://philportal.de/>)



Dieses Werk ist lizenziert unter der Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 Lizenz CC BY-SA (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>). Die Bedingungen der Creative-Commons-Lizenz gelten nur für Originalmaterial. Die Wiederverwendung von Material aus anderen Quellen (gekennzeichnet mit Quellenangabe) wie z.B. Schaubilder, Abbildungen, Fotos und Textauszüge erfordert ggf. weitere Nutzungsgenehmigungen durch den jeweiligen Rechteinhaber.



DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30819/4179>

# Phenomenology of Love

A Philosophical Analysis of the Conception of  
Love in the Light of Dietrich von Hildebrand's  
Realistic Phenomenology

Joanna Sośnicka

This book is a reworked doctoral dissertation written under the direction of and reviewed by Professor Czesław Porębski and Professor Josef Seifert during a scholarship supported by a grant from Norway through the Norwegian Financial Mechanism under the Scholarship and Training Fund.

Cover picture:

Sandro Botticelli, The Birth of Venus

Sandro Botticelli [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available on the Internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de> .

©Copyright Logos Verlag Berlin GmbH 2015

All rights reserved.

ISBN 978-3-8325-4179-8

Logos Verlag Berlin GmbH

Comeniushof, Gubener Str. 47,

10243 Berlin

Tel.: +49 (0)30 42 85 10 90

Fax: +49 (0)30 42 85 10 92

INTERNET: <http://www.logos-verlag.de>

# Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 Dietrich von Hildebrand's Realist Phenomenology</b>	<b>15</b>
1.1 Phenomenology as a Research Method . . . . .	16
1.2 Conception of Cognition – Epistemological Basis of Ethics	25
1.3 Intuitive Cognition and a priori Knowledge . . . . .	32
<b>2 Dietrich von Hildebrand's Revolution in Love</b>	<b>41</b>
2.1 Love as a Philosophical Matter . . . . .	42
2.2 Categories of Importance – Conception of Value . . . . .	60
2.3 Love as an Affective Value-Response . . . . .	72
2.4 Contributions of Heart and Will in the Act of Love . . . .	85
<b>3 The Essential Characteristic of Love</b>	<b>95</b>
3.1 Love as Mutual Self-Giving . . . . .	96
3.2 <i>Intentio Unionis</i> and <i>Intentio Benevolentiae</i> . . . . .	106
3.3 Love and Morality . . . . .	124
3.4 Love and Happiness . . . . .	132
3.5 Categories of Love . . . . .	139
<b>Conclusion: Philosophical Guide for Lovers</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>Selected Bibliography</b>	<b>159</b>



# Introduction

Love received from another person changes our experience of the world. When it is mutual, it appears as a miracle; as a miracle unparalleled and not yet experienced by anyone. Spousal love is the end of the world, the end of the old world and the beginning of a totally new one. It is totally new because the life of a person in love is single and double at the same time. Saint Paul elevated spousal love above faith that moves mountains.<sup>1</sup> Love is the essence of every human life, but spousal love is its aim. The mystic unification between two human beings has a special place not only in philosophy, but also in modern psychological (political) discussions.

The understanding of love, its aim and form is a subject of dispute in the sphere of politics, religions, homosexual and heterosexual couples, modern philosophy and ordinary people who are (very often influenced by mass media) lost in various concepts and solutions. The main task for this work is to compare Dietrich von Hildebrand's "old and outdated conception" with all these modern propositions that exist today. Since "the highest does not stand without the lowest,"<sup>2</sup> we will probably find a place for von Hildebrand in our modern times.

Sometimes it is very hard to find an example of philosophers'

---

<sup>1</sup>*Holy Bible: Old and New Testament*, The First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Corinthians 13.

<sup>2</sup>C.S. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 9.

concepts (especially Christian philosophers) in practical life of people. A great clash of conceptions which are presented by religious and philosophical authorities and figures in show business occurs. There is still a small glimmer of hope. In twilight of century, the editors of *Le Figaro Magazine* were shocked by results of their research when they asked their readers about their conception of love for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> The statistics showed that more than 86 percent of French people (80 percent men and 87 percent of women) claimed that intimate feelings are necessary for sexual relations, but what more shocking for the journalists was that almost 65 percent of them feel desire towards their own, permanent partner.<sup>4</sup> They expected something quite different.

At the time of the sexual revolution, the statistics are very auspicious. The problem is now only how to use those polls. The fashion for casual relationships is still very current, but the very human necessity for real and deep love does not want to be put aside.

How can we describe the experience of giving something that belongs to us and receiving a gift from another person? The second problem is related to the first not only in a linguistic sense, but also of an essential one: whether human beings can and are allowed to give of themselves to other people. Is this kind of gift possible and does human ontic structure and human objectivity enable it?

It seems that one cannot omit this anthropological and ethical question in the face of the reality of “I am yours” – “You are mine”, which we cannot excluded from the sphere of relations among and/or between people. Afterwards, if it is the fact that humans need to give themselves to each other and feel happy when this gift is accepted and reciprocated, a third question arises: what kind of forms can the gift from the person herself take? The desire of endowing other people and the desire of providing the other person with gifts are undoubtedly expressions of love. The gift from the person herself is all the more a sign of love. This gift is an expression of love *quo*

---

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Polish magazine *Polityka* 06/2000 (2231).

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*



*maior cogitari non potest*, because one cannot give to the other person a much bigger gift. In this way, how should we call love that could help us recognize and distinguish it from other kinds of love? In the English language, there exists a valuable expression that we sometimes forget, which we can use as a linguistic sign for this reality about which we speaking here. This expression is “betrothed love”. Betrothed love is this kind of love in which two people give themselves to each other and receive a gift from each other.

There is still one thing needed to explain regarding our motivation or the reason why we have chosen to deal with the conception of love according to Dietrich von Hildebrand.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup>Dietrich von Hildebrand was born on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 1889 in Florence and died on January 26<sup>th</sup> in New Rochelle (near New York). He was a son of the famous German sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand and Irene Schäuffelen. Dietrich had private tutors, he started to attend high school only one year prior to passing his high school final exams in Munich, where his family also moved. After passing his high school finals, when he was 17, he started philosophical studies at the University of Munich as a student of Alexander Pfänder and Theodor Lipps. In 1909, he moved to Göttingen University, because he wanted to be Edmund Husserl’s student, whose *Logische Untersuchungen* seemed to be an aurora of (present the German philosophy of the time) German philosophy for von Hildebrand. He completed his doctorate in 1913 on the basis of his thesis on “The idea of Moral Action”. Husserl called this dissertation (one of the few which he had received) a true masterpiece. He obtained his habilitation in 1914. In the same year he converted to Christianity, and also started to work as a Privatdozent at the München University. During this time von Hildebrand was affiliated with Adolf Reinach and Max Scheler. Von Hildebrand treated Adolf Reinach as his teacher and master, because Husserl’s idealism disappointed him and he differs with Scheler in many points of philosophical doctrine. During the First World War, he completed military service as a medical orderly. After the war he was a professor at the Munich University. When Hitler took the power in Germany, von Hildebrand, as an opponent of Nazism, had to fled from Germany. He went to Vienna where he worked at the University of Vienna, and run to France after entering Hitler’s army to Austria. In 1940 he went to New York, where he was a professor until retired. Von Hildebrand’s philosophical activity was very intensive and broad. It included epistemology, metaphysics, anthropology, ethics and aesthetics in general, but in particular he was very interested in the theory of love. In *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen* he wrote: “The investigation into the true being of love and into all types of genuine human love takes a central place in my whole life.” (“Die Erforschung des wahren Wesens der Liebe und aller

This problem is closely related to the above-mentioned second (Whether a human being can give himself to another person?) and third (What kind of forms can the gift take from the person herself?) questions. The problem with those questions always bothered theologians and philosophers. The second question is usually included in the context of marital life which includes a mutual self-giving which makes the marital couple one flesh. The answer was different,<sup>6</sup> from one extreme (the rigorous puritan answer, which excuses marriage self-giving only for the sake of its aim i.e. procreation) to another extreme (Freud's theory which explains this gift by a desire for pleasure which is written down in the nature of human being).

Dietrich von Hildebrand belongs to the group of philosophers who, has given a full and multi-aspect answer to the question about the origin of the right of self-giving of the person. He also provides

---

Typen echter menschlicher Liebe nahm in meinem ganzen Leben eine zentrale Stellung ein." *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 115.)

Theological issues also started to be a theme for his research after his conversion to Christianity. Apart from his literary activity in this matter, von Hildebrand also organized seminars. From 1925 to 1930, the meetings took place every two weeks in his house where people discussed religious problems of the day. Sometimes the number of participants reached 160 persons.

In his academic output, he left 29 published books, 6 ready to be published and 193 articles. He characterized his scientific activity as follows: "Philosophy is my big passion and truth the motto of my life, but I did live a full and rich life, full of highest joy and deepest suffering. The philosophical investigation into truth is indeed profound passion and the inspiration towards philosophical insights is more or less always at my disposal. But this thematic recognition would never be for me a strait-jacket and would not hinder me from dealing with a totally other theme which is present in the lively contact with all big natural goods, and in the religious life." ("Philosophie ist meine grosse Leidenschaft und die Wahrheit das Motto meines Lebens, aber ich habe ein volles, reiches Leben "gelebt", voll von höchstem Glück und tiefstem Leid. Die philosophische Erforschung der Wahrheit ist zwar eine Urleidenschaft und die Inspiration zu philosophischen Einsichten ist mehr oder weniger immer zu meiner Disposition. Aber dieses thematische Erkennen wurde nie zu einer Zwangsjacke für mich und hinderte mich nie, auf das völlig andere Thema voll einzugehen, das in der gelebten Berührung mit allen grossen natürlichen Gütern und religiösen Leben vorliegt." *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 126.)

<sup>6</sup>Some of the answers will be mentioned in the following chapters.

some conditions of how to protect the gift of the person from abuses. Besides this, von Hildebrand also speaks about different forms of love, describes them, and tries to grasp their essence (love as love, love to neighbor, friendship, parental love, filial love, spousal love, holy love). Spousal love in the clearest and fullest expression of the first kind of love, and the second one is expressed by purity dedicated to God. Of course there is a large bibliography about the first as well the second kind of love, but it is very hard to meet a philosopher who could show fully those two forms in their specific character without falling into some extreme.

Since von Hildebrand's descriptions are very compact, and in some ways I think that it is worth making an analysis of his depiction of love and even to let him lead us in this analysis.

However, if we want to speak (and sometimes critically analyse) about von Hildebrand's conception of love, we should know what kind of essence he ascribes to love. That is why the main aim of this work is the analysis of von Hildebrand's conception of love; however, if one wants to do this, one should first make an investigation into the notion of love.

It is also important to look a little longer at the chosen method of research. Von Hildebrand is one hundred percent a pure phenomenologist. He uses this method in his philosophical works and he is a master of phenomenological decryption. Colourful characteristics supported by beautiful language, huge erudition and deep faith ensure wonderful, scientific journey into philosophical problems also guarantee (as a main feature of phenomenology) a precise, realistic and essential look at described problem.

For this reason, the first chapter is devoted to the analysis of phenomenology itself: What was the beginning of this philosophical current? What does "phenomenology" mean? What are "phenomena"? How can we obtain a phenomenological outlook, phenomenological intuition? Finally, why is it important to talk about love from the phenomenological perspective? Answers to this kind of questions will be considered in the first chapter.

The second part is dedicated to von Hildebrand's understanding of love and more precisely to notion of love and its definition. The author gives a very clear and strict definition of love (he understands love as an effective value response to the value of the person) which brings about numerous problems like what is the conception of value according to von Hildebrand's phenomenological view or what is the contribution of heart and will in the act of love?

The last, third chapter will touch on the description of the essential characteristics of love. We will try to see love as a mutual self-giving, explain it as a moral sphere of our life and to show love in relation towards happiness. The aim of this part it to see also broad range of categories of love in which we enter into during our life.

This is how the problematic title and scheme of the work appears from the theoretical point of view. Theory, especially this kind of theory, like ethics, has practical implications, and von Hildebrand could be one of them tackling those issues.

Love and the problems connected with it are experienced by people every day, but they can also very easily lead to abuses. In addition, there are many ethical theories that attempt to find some reasons and explanations for these abuses. Yet, if we undertake this matter, instead of sending the reader to Dietrich von Hildebrand's books, we are doing this because, it seems to us, this theory can be corrected and modified in some points. In making these corrections we see the opportunity to make a small contribution to the work consisting in deepening human reflection about love.

The main propose of this work will be to investigate the concept of love. The task is difficult, because the chosen conception is very compact. However, the main aim is to show the most important and key-elements of love, to show how sometimes small elements (that can appear as not so important) can modify and deform love. One can ask why and what for? This is because experience shows that love is changing which is not a result of the weakness of human character or external difficulty, but more of the nature of love. For

some time, most of these changes are harmful for loving people. But the problem is that human beings can protect themselves from only some changes. Love is very demanding. This characteristic of love could be summarized by this saying that pins down some of love's needs (to paraphrase the famous prayer of Kurt Vonnegut):

Courage – to change in love all the things, which one can change; Serenity – to accept the things, which are not possible to change; and Wisdom – to always know the difference.<sup>7</sup>

It is rather impossible that the following chapters will give courage or serenity to someone, because the ideas are not just derived from books. However, one cannot ignore the fact that this work can help someone to distinguish in love that which needs courage from that which needs serenity.

---

<sup>7</sup>K. Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse – Five*, Reissue edition, Laurel 1991, p. 60.





# Chapter 1

## Dietrich von Hildebrand's Realist Phenomenology

The fundamental postulate of phenomenological ethics regarding the cognition of beings assumes that we must refrain from all pre-established assumptions and statements which concern a given area of knowledge. Such a position prevents us from deforming examined reality, warns us against catching such reality by predefined notions, which we are used to using several times without criticism. Thus, if we want to gain knowledge of any particular being, we must first see everything without any prejudice, which is given to us in our experience as unquestionable.

Phenomenology provides tools and a methodology to grasp the essence and quiddity of a given state of facts.

This way of grasping and describing the world we live in guarantees that such descriptions of that which is most important and precious, will be precise and complete without the interference of prejudices and stereotypes.

Deep reflection, based on getting through to the *eidos* of given state of facts, an attempt to discover and analyze it (*eidos*) is the

main objective of phenomenology. In the case of love, which is in its own definition often enough involved with inaccuracy and ambiguity, this kind of methodology seems to be a prescription for the disease of vagueness.

In order to show, as complete as possible, the analysis of the phenomenon of love in the light of Dietrich von Hildebrand's philosophy understood as a phenomenological method, the first chapter serves as an introduction into the world of phenomenology in general (first two subchapters) and into von Hildebrand's phenomenology in particular. In order to properly see the novelty and specificity of von Hildebrand's way of phenomenological thinking, it is worth understanding (unfortunately in a very short way) the process of how this philosophical current as such has been formed.

Phenomenology as a notion (the understanding of 'phenomena') and the philosophical conception has an ambiguous character.<sup>8</sup> Dietrich von Hildebrand commented on, referred to and critiqued some of the conceptions and proposed aims of phenomenology made by some philosophers on several occasions.

## 1.1 Phenomenology as a Research Method

Phenomenology is the study of 'phenomena'. It comes from the Greek word *phainómenon*, which means 'that which appears', 'phenomenon' and the word *logos*, which means 'study', 'word' and 'theory'.<sup>9</sup> *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the meaning of phenomenology (the study of *phenomena*) as appearances as opposed to reality. Yet the discipline of phenomenology did not blossom until the 20<sup>th</sup> century and remains still poorly understood in many circles of contemporary philosophy.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup>D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, Routledge Chapman and Hall Inc, New York 1991, p. 222.

<sup>9</sup>H. Kiereś, "Fenomenologia", *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, vol. 3, Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2012, p. 397.

<sup>10</sup>D. Woodruff Smith, "Phenomenology", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, E. N. Zalta (ed.), Winter 2013 Edition, <http://plato.stanford.edu/>

The meaning of phenomenology has never been clear; and, as is the case with all other general terms, it is routinely grasped from a variety of perspectives. Yet, all observers agree that phenomenology concerns phenomena, a theme that was already under discussion in ancient Greece.<sup>11</sup> Throughout the history of philosophy, the term 'phenomenology' was used in this way, with meanings ranging from positive to negative expressions of phenomena. The Latin term 'phenomenologia' was introduced by Christoph Friedrich Oetinger in 1736.<sup>12</sup>

Originally, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, 'phenomenology' meant the theory of appearances fundamental to empirical knowledge, and, in particular sensory appearances. In 1764, Johann Heinrich Lambert, a German philosopher, also spoke of a discipline that he called 'phenomenology' in his *Das neue Organon*. He defined it as 'false appearances' (*Schein*).<sup>13</sup> For Lambert, appearance is conceived as a serious obstacle in the search for truth. Appearance, as he said, "(...) very often lead (us) to represent to ourselves the things in another form, and to easily take what they appear to be for what they really are, or to confuse reality with appearance."<sup>14</sup> For Lambert, it is 'always a mistake' to take the appearance for a thing itself, for a thing as it is in reality.

In his 1804 lectures on the *Wissenschaftslehre*, Johann G. Fichte represented phenomenology as a doctrine of appearance and illusion

---

entries/phenomenology/

<sup>11</sup>T. Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2011, p. 65.

<sup>12</sup>W. Bonsiepen "Einleitung", *G.W.F. Hegel Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1988, p. ix-x. Oetinger supposedly used the term phenomenology arguably for the first time in an unpublished diary in 1736, where he defines it as divine science of relations. T. Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, p. 65.

<sup>13</sup>T. Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup>J. H. Lambert, *Neues Organon, Philosophische Schriften II*, pp. 217–218. see also: C. Piche, *The Concept of Phenomenology in Fichte's Wissenschaftslehre of 1804/II* in: V. L. Waibel, D. Breazeale, T. Rockmore (ed.), *Fichte and the Phenomenological Tradition*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., Berlin 2010, p. 27.

(*Erscheinungs und Scheinlehre*).<sup>15</sup> Understood in this way, phenomenology is, for Fichte, a theory of true appearances and false appearances as distinguished from the theory of being (*Seynslehre*). In this sense, Fichte uses the term in a positive sense.<sup>16</sup> Unlike Lambert, he asserts that a true appearance (*Erscheinen*) is never the mere appearance of illusion (*Schein*). Since truth is phenomenal, phenomena are not false, or false appearances, but authentic.<sup>17</sup>

Immanuel Kant “used the word ‘phenomenology’ only twice, but he gave a new and broader sense to ‘phenomenon’, that in turn, resulted in a redefinition of ‘phenomenology’.”<sup>18</sup> Kant distinguished objects and events as they appear in our experience from objects and events as they appear in themselves, independently of the forms imposed on them by our cognitive abilities. The former he called ‘phenomena’ the latter ‘things-in-themselves’.

In his first major work *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel argued that “Phenomenology is the science in which we come to know the mind as it is in itself though the study of the ways in which it appears to us”<sup>19</sup> and later “Phenomenology is the science by which the mind becomes aware of the development of the Spirit and comes to know its essence – that is, Spirit as it is in itself – through a study of its appearances and manifestations.”<sup>20</sup>

The essential point to note is that, unlike Kant, Hegel claimed that one could come to know a thing in itself through its appearances.<sup>21</sup>

For Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, the word ‘phenomenology’ is used as a synonym for ‘generalized physics’, an expression best un-

---

<sup>15</sup>J. G. Fichte, *The System of Ethics, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 107.

<sup>16</sup>T. Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, p. 89.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>R. Schmitt, *Phenomenology* in: P. Edwards (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Macmillan Publishing Company and Free Press, 1967, p. 135.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup>A. Dharma, *To the Things Themselves*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., Berlin 2001, p. 12.



derstood as indicating not only kinship with classical physics, but a science of matter or cosmology.<sup>22</sup> Such a phenomenology of the cosmic has been defined as “a science which seeks to describe the universe as an observable phenomenon in its totality and its intrinsic cohesion and to discover the meaning concealed in that totality.”<sup>23</sup> However, the most important and most extensive understanding of ‘phenomenology’ comes with the philosophical course of Edmund Husserl, which understands phenomenology as a scientific method and the idea of a ‘first philosophy’ without presuppositions. For Husserl, phenomenology is the scientific study of the essential structures of consciousness. Such understanding of ‘phenomenology’ is the key for philosophy of 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>24</sup>

The roots of phenomenological movement are placed, in this way, in the last decades of 19<sup>th</sup> century, but the term, as we could see, was introduced in first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century. In order to elaborate on such a short and superficial introduction into the world of phenomenology, one must not forget to mention its founder – Franz Brentano. He is the finest exponent of such a current of European philosophy, which trusts experience and reason, and more precisely, it appreciates inner experience.

Franz Brentano undoubtedly represents the move from early modern to contemporary philosophy, in the sense, that the early modern times broke the connection that was cultivated by antiquity and the Middle Ages, between subjective sphere and reality and the connection between thinking and being. Brentano's philosophy is an important attempt to renew the establish bonds between consciousness and reality. In his famous books *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint* and *The Origin of the Knowledge of Right and Wrong*,

---

<sup>22</sup>D. H. Lane, *The Phenomenon of Teilhard: Prophet for a New Age*, Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia 1996, p. 60.

<sup>23</sup>N. M. Wildiers, *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, Collins, Fontana, London 1968, p. 48.

<sup>24</sup>J. Galarowicz, *W drodze do etyki odpowiedzialności (Towards the Ethics of Responsibility)*, vol. 1, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej, Kraków 1997, p. 16.

Brentano draws attention to a deeper understanding of mental phenomena and he elaborates a very original theory of truth based on his theory of evident judgments.<sup>25</sup>

According to the author, we detect the correctness or the truthfulness of the act by the experience of what we are experiencing or judging. The evidence detects the goodness or the truthfulness of what is perceived but the contents change according to the mental phenomenon by which it is experienced.<sup>26</sup> By this new approach to the ethical issues and new justification of ethics, he gave rise to contemporary ethical thought.<sup>27</sup>

This novelty brought by Brentano consists in fact that he showed and emphasized the specificity of moral problematics and its autonomy regarding empirical knowledge about world. What is also important in Brentano's ethical view is that he based his analysis of good on moral consciousness: "We call something good, when the love that is directed to it is right".<sup>28</sup> Contemporary results of Brentano's axiological-ethical studies were improved and developed at least in two points, regarding feelings and ontology of values.

Brentano's most prominent and most original successor was his student Edward Husserl. Husserl explained the relation and influence of Brentano's philosophy on his understanding of phenomenology in his work entitled *Ideas*: "Finally, many people view phenomenology as a continuation of Brentano's psychology. However highly estimate this work of genius, and however strongly it (and other writings of

---

<sup>25</sup>The origin of the concept of good, like that of truth, can be found in the rightness of our acts, and the rightness of the act of judgment is ultimately explained in terms of its evidence. "The source of those concepts is inner perception, for it is only through inner perception that we comprehend ourselves as loving or hating something [...] Among our judgments we found some that are distinguished by possessing evidence. [...] In the case of an evident judgment [...] it is experienced as being correct." F. Brentano, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 2009, p. 131.

<sup>26</sup>S. Ferrarello (ed.), *Phenomenology of Intersubjectivity and Values in Edmund Husserl*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, p. 103.

<sup>27</sup>F. Brentano, *The Origin of our Knowledge of Right and Wrong*.

<sup>28</sup>Idem, *Psychology from an Empirical Standpoint*, p.19

Brentano's) has affected me in younger years, it must still be said that Brentano has remained far from a phenomenology in our sense . . . . Nevertheless he has gained for himself the epoch-making service of making phenomenology possible."<sup>29</sup>

Originally eidetic philosophy, Husserl's phenomenology over time, turned into transcendental phenomenology. In the beginning, the first philosophy supposed to be an ontology (as a philosophy about senses, ideas, essences, pure possibilities); but, later on, transcendental phenomenology took its place as a philosophy about pure consciousness and transcendental ego. Toward the end of Husserl's life, his conviction about the importance of transcendental phenomenology for European culture was even stronger.<sup>30</sup> The idea of eidetic phenomenology first appear in Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

The outline of the new research method called the phenomenological method developed in his latter works, especially in *Ideas*. Since the final aim of phenomenology as fundamental philosophy should be to obtain certain knowledge, we must first 'bracket' all assumptions about the existence of the external world.<sup>31</sup>

The first postulate of phenomenology is presuppositionlessness. This criticism postulated by phenomenology, this readiness to being free from every kind of prejudice and superstitions is an indispensable condition of genuine openness to that which is certain, that is, truth.

The deepest sense of Husserl's motto, *Zurück zu den Sachen selbst!* (Back to the things themselves!) signals exactly such an attitude: to liberate ourselves from every kind of prejudice and to look at the world from a fresh perspective.

According to Husserl, the method which leads to discovering the

---

<sup>29</sup>E. Husserl, *Ideen III*, Martinus Nijhoff, Haag 1952, p. 59. see also: J. C. Morrison, *Husserl and Brentano on Intentionality* in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 31, no. 1, 1970, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup>See *Cartesian Meditations: An Introduction to Phenomenology* or *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*.

<sup>31</sup>J. Galarowicz, *W drodze do etyki odpowiedzialności*, pp. 18–19.

core of subjectivity is transcendental reduction. This mental operation is neither a negation of the existence of the world, nor, one that has emerged from confidence or doubt in its real existence, or even a theoretical consideration whether the world really exists or not.<sup>32</sup>

The main objective of transcendental reduction is obtaining new, unknown thus far, insight into the relation between consciousness and reality. The way to accomplish this is to change the natural attitude into a phenomenological one. In the natural attitude, we see the world as reality independent of our consciousness; however, when we adopt a phenomenological attitude, we come to see that the natural position is rather naïve. Since the world we live in is a world we experience and which presents itself in our consciousness, it is, in this sense, always our world. It turns out that the world, in some sense, is dependent on my consciousness; and therefore, my consciousness is more important than the world itself. It can be said that transcendental reduction frees human beings from the worst destruction, which can be called a naïve understanding of person of himself.

Eidetic reduction, which consists in intuitive grasping of the sense of phenomena (it may include also consciousness) was used in different varieties by: Max Scheler, Roman Ingarden, Edith Stein or Dietrich von Hildebrand.<sup>33</sup>

However, von Hildebrand did not agree with Husserl about the necessity of using transcendental reduction for studying consciousness. Husserl's philosophy is, without doubt, one of the most meaningful attempts to naturalize the human person in a foreign world and an attempt to establish the relation between thinking and reality on the new ground.

Husserl, Max Scheler and Aleksander Pfänder all worked out the phenomenological method at the same time.

This simple introduction into the history of phenomenology shows the diversity of perspectives and possibilities within pheno-

---

<sup>32</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 24–25.

menology itself. What is important to emphasize is that the most prominent and eminent representatives of “fundamental – classical” phenomenology are Edmund Husserl, Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand and Roman Ingarden.

Among the most important orientations which are modifications of classical phenomenology, we have to connote here the conception which connects phenomenology with the Thomistic philosophy of existence (Edith Stein, Karol Wojtyła) and existential phenomenology (Martin Heidegger, Jean-Paul Sartre, Maurice Merleau-Ponty).<sup>34</sup>

The aim of this very sketchy introduction into the world of phenomenology was to show its specificity and uniqueness towards other philosophical currents, but also the diverse and long history of being shaped as a philosophical mainstream. The other objective, perhaps not as obvious, was to introduce (or to prepare some kind of background for) the ethical problems grasped through such a special way of perceiving a human being and the world.

Love (as the main problem of this publication) is a problem elaborated by only a few phenomenologists, while the phenomenological perspective of love shows its extraordinary image. The sphere of ethics and ethical issues in the light of phenomenology will be the next step in this short sketch of the world of phenomenology. Throughout the ages, the ethics of self-perfection and eudaimonism, (gr. *eudaimonia*) dominated in Western philosophy. This domination was severely criticized by Immanuel Kant and his ethics of values. Kantian ethics took the shape of moral law's obedience ethics, the ethics of duty. As a matter of fact, it was the formal ethic of values, and that is why for most of the time, we called it ethical formalism.

From the resistance to eudaimonism on the one hand, and critics of Kantian formalism on the other, material ethics of values (*materiale Wertethik*), in short also called material ethics (*Wertethik*) or axiological ethics, appeared in the phenomenological current. Very often the “ethics of values” (axiological ethics) is identified with “phenomenological ethics” however those two notions are not identical in

---

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*



meaning. The scope of “axiological ethics” is broader than the scope of “phenomenological ethics”. “Axiological ethics” deals with those models of ethics which are based on the notion of value. Axiological ethics is represented by certain phenomenologists and existentialists, as well as the French philosophy of the spirit Louis Lavelle, René Le Senne William R. Sorley and Wilbur M. Urban.<sup>35</sup>

Of course, the most important kind of axiological ethics is the phenomenological ethics of values, which is mainly the work of the Austrian and German philosophers. Franz Brentano, as we saw already, is the founder of phenomenological ethics of values along with his students Alexius Meinong and Christian von Ehrenfels. However, Max Scheler is doubtlessly the founder of material ethics of values.

Scheler expounded his vision of ethics in his great book *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A new attempt toward the foundation of an ethical personalism* (*Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*). He fought against eudaimonism and the Kantian ethics of duty and based his ethical conception on values understood as individual and objective, which are given to the human person in emotional acts.

Dietrich von Hildebrand referred to Scheler’s material ethics of values. He also presented his very original conception of ethics in: *The Idea of Moral Action* (*Die Idee der sittlichen Handlung*), *Morality and Knowledge of Moral Values* (*Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis. Eine Untersuchung über ethische Strukturprobleme*), *Ethics* (*Ethik*) and *Morality* (*Moralia*). He elaborated his conception of ethics which we can describe as axiological and personalistic, and different from that of Scheler and Hartmann.

Axiological ethics, as a conception based on values, raises the following questions: what is the most fundamental axiological category: good, value or maybe importance? What is the relation between being and value? How does value exist (in an ideal way or perhaps realistic)? What kind of value exists and what is the hierarchy among them?

---

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30–32.

Of course, the main problem of phenomenological ethics is moral values, and more broadly, the sphere of morality. Further questions include: What is the structure of the subject of morality; and, in particular, what is freedom? Other very important questions concern love: what is the nature of love? Is love a condition to knowing values? What is the role and place of love in morality?<sup>36</sup>

An attempt to explain the fundamental issues and states of affairs by means of the phenomenological method raises important questions concerning the nature and the structure of philosophical knowledge itself. If philosophical knowledge must lead to uncovering the fullness of being (its value and essence), it has to be characterized by such properties which will help to achieve the intended propose. Von Hildebrand proposes intuitive and intentional cognition in order to achieve such an aim. However, with regards to the question about the content of such cognition (in other words: what we cognize in direct experience of subject), von Hildebrand presents an a priori cognition and its specific properties, which are very essential in phenomenological methodology of cognition of reality.

## 1.2 Conception of Cognition – Epistemological Basis of Ethics

If we ponder the human person, von Hildebrand starts his *What is Philosophy?*, we are struck by the fundamental role of cognition in his life. The unique capacity for the individual person to partake in the existence of the rest entire world. All our willings and strivings, our loves and hates, our joys and sorrows presuppose knowledge<sup>37</sup> and a consciousness, knowledge and understanding of the object of willing, striving, loving. Causality links us, as it does non-personal beings such as stones, plants and animals, to the entire world which surrounds us, beginning with the physical, spatial, colored, sounding

---

<sup>36</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>37</sup>D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 13.

world, full of material objects and events, and going on all the way to the people about us.<sup>38</sup>

Everything that concerns human beings presupposes knowledge: we obtain knowledge of the world, people and objects that surround us. This cognition process also presupposes (human interaction/participation) since we are constantly on the way to greater self-knowledge.

Knowing how to cognize is the key to proper cognition of myself as a human being, of my life, my feelings, desires, needs and strivings. The problem or the way of cognition (how to cognize) is, in this way, very crucial and essential not only for a particular human being (the subjective aspect), but also for philosophy as a domain of knowledge (the objective aspect). What is knowledge in this way? How it is possible to grasp the entire world, which surrounds us, in the best, proper and fullest way?

At the beginning of his *Prolegomena (Christian Ethics)*, Dietrich von Hildebrand starts with a clarification: "I want to begin *from the beginning*, suspending all theories concerning the moral sphere. I want to start with the *moral experience itself*."<sup>39</sup> Let us then, leave all the presuppositions behind and let start as von Hildebrand intended, form the basic understanding of cognition.

As a phenomenologist, von Hildebrand moves on to objectivity and cognitive realism in his methodology of philosophical research.<sup>40</sup> The phenomenological method understood as a manner of direct perception of data and its description is, according to von Hildebrand, an adequate research tool in philosophy, a method that is basic and original.<sup>41</sup> He states, "the act of knowledge is an ultimate datum

---

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, David McKay Company INC, New York 1953, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> A. Bohdanowicz, *Integrująca rola miłości w małżeństwie. Studium na podstawie myśli fenomenologicznej Dietricha von Hildebranda (The Integrative Role of Love in Marriage. A Study Based on the Phenomenological Thought of Dietrich von Hildebrand)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2007, p. 24.

<sup>41</sup> D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 223.

which cannot be reduced to anything else.”<sup>42</sup> It is not possible to define it in this way, and one can just point to it indirectly, because it can be grasped only in itself. We can picture it as a wholly unique contact in which one being *touches* another and *possesses the other in an immaterial manner*.<sup>43</sup> Thus, we must time and time again, as von Hildebrand emphasizes, come back to the most explicit and unrestricted experience of moral data, and if possible, confront every result of our exploration with the full flavor of the experienced data themselves.<sup>44</sup>

Cognizance is essentially *receiving*. Content is found in the object, and we are void and empty. An object, grasped by the person as it really is, becomes understood and known; therefore, we can say that an object discloses and unfolds itself before the person's spiritual eyes.<sup>45</sup>

We have learned to understand the process of taking cognizance as that unique spiritual contact with a being whereby the being in its own nature reveals itself to us. However, we must also realize the next essential feature of taking cognizance of something (in the broadest sense of the word): *it is not a purely passive affair*.<sup>46</sup> The active component in taking cognizance of something in no way implies a contradiction to the basic receptive character of knowledge. This active component not only, as von Hildebrand underlines, does not cancel the receptive character, but it does not even imply a limitation of it, for it may not in any sense be understood as any sort of production of the object of knowledge.<sup>47</sup> It is rather a *spiritual going with the object and its nature* (*geistiges Mitgehen mit dem Gegenstand*). However, this “going with” is only an active co-operation with the self-disclosure of the object: it is a spiritual “infiltration” into the object, which does not produce a second spiritual object,

---

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>44</sup> *Idem*, *Christian Ethics*, p. 2.

<sup>45</sup> *Idem*, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 15.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

but explicitly executes the intentional participation in the object or spiritual possession of it.<sup>48</sup>

Cognizance of an object represents a unique spiritual contact with a being (a being reveals itself to us in its specific nature). Cognizance is in no way a production of the object known, but a receptive grasping of it (it does not even possess the spontaneity of conviction or, still less, of affirming, for it is to be completely distinguished from the sphere of judgement in the strict sense of the term). The receiving in which the object discloses itself is then not even purely passive, because it contains such an active component and also, the spiritual “going with” the *ratio* or essential nature of the object known.<sup>49</sup> Philosophical cognition should, in this way, grasp reality as it is, that is, in the way it discloses itself, and take in all its seriousness, direct data and everything that has a real sense, that is true intelligibility.<sup>50</sup> This kind of existential and direct contact with a cognized object is possible by means of intuitive cognition, which allows, first of all, the spiritual exploration and penetration of a penetration of the being’s secret essence.<sup>51</sup> That is why, alongside the mentioned terms for cognition: *touching and receiving*, von Hildebrand also calls cognition a *spiritual possession* (*geistiges Besitzen*).<sup>52</sup>

The condition for entering into intuitive, source contact with the object is reduction. Reduction is defined as suspending all previous judgments and convictions regarding that which is directly given in experience. It is necessary, because especially in the domain of moral values we deal with a significant influence of the environment, of the milieu, of the traditions of a community, in short the entire interpersonal atmosphere in which we grow up and live. In the ethos of a community, moral convictions are present in another way than are the convictions concerning other spheres. This influence, accord-

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>51</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>52</sup> Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 25.

ing to von Hildebrand, makes the proper perception of values more difficult. In such a perception, much more is required: not only another degree of reverence and of opening our minds to the voice of a being, a higher degree of 'conspiring' with the object, but also our will's readiness to conform to the call of values.<sup>53</sup> It is important to emphasize that by intuitive cognition, we do not mean a mysterious and irrational contact with the object, a mystical vision, or at least, contact with it lying beyond the realm of rational knowledge. This is a complete misunderstanding, but for many people, this term connotes the irrational.<sup>54</sup>

Von Hildebrand also definitely rejects the conviction that only empirical cognition is scientific in nature. Many believe that it is in the laboratory alone that we come into contact with valid and authentic reality.<sup>55</sup> Apart from this, everything is just a semblance of reality. This is a disastrous error which cuts us off from the most important part of reality. It is not only a dull and gray notion of the world; but it is simply an incorrect, deformed and unrealistic one (as every one sided outlook is). As long as we look at values from outside and as long as we approach them with the laboratory attitude, they cannot be grasped in their true nature and meaning.<sup>56</sup>

Von Hildebrand criticizes positivism, which also like phenomenology refers to experience, but understands it differently, for positivism limits it to experience based on direct, empirical data.<sup>57</sup> This limitation of cognition sources exclusively to observation (used in empiricism) ignores or discredits some aspects of reality.<sup>58</sup>

---

<sup>53</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 108-110.

<sup>54</sup>Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>55</sup>Idem, *Man and Woman*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>58</sup>The positivist considers only knowledge which has the character of blunt observation as reliable, serious and systematic. Not only does he identify systematic and critical knowledge with scientific knowledge, but he even uses one part of scientific knowledge, namely pure empirical observation, seeing in this pattern of knowledge as such. Many things which, in his naïve approach to being, in his existential experience are the most immediately and undoubtedly given,

The characteristic feature of positivism is that it attempts to deal with philosophical topics in a radically unphilosophical manner. It approaches the facts of morality, beauty in art and nature, the spiritual life of the human person, free will, love and knowledge in a way which bars any contact with these data from the start and necessarily leads to overlooking them and replacing them by something else.<sup>59</sup>

It is worth pointing out that phenomenology also uses some kind of observation, but such observation has a totally different character of insight into objects and leads to a different eidetic cognition.<sup>60</sup> Von Hildebrand is certainly right in this point, because we cannot limit human experience to sensory data. Therefore, cognition itself cannot be reduced to such observation proposed by empiricism.

For von Hildebrand, it is important to start cognition from “the immediately given”, that is at the moral data themselves in order to listen to the voice of being itself.<sup>61</sup> The sense of notions and formulated theories we have to adapt to the experienced being (to the results of what “the being is talking to us”).<sup>62</sup> Cognition understood in this manner is a unique form of spiritual unity with an object, since it is somehow “possessing” the object in an immaterial manner. Cognition should establish direct experience, that is experience understood as cognition of existence and the essence of the object. This is the fundamental epistemological principle of the von Hildebrand’s phenomenological method.<sup>63</sup> According to von Hildebrand, this kind of an intentional relation to the object is the act of pure consciousness, but the act of the person understood as the conscious being, equipped with intentional structure and the capacity of tran-

---

are excluded as merely subjective aspects, as illusions, as soon as the positivist places them under the “microscope” of so-called sober, realistic, serious intellectual analysis. Granted his approach to philosophy, the positivist’s exclusion of these realities is understandable. Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>59</sup>Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, p 3.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 219-222.

<sup>61</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>62</sup>Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 95-96.

<sup>63</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 221-222.

scendence, a person who is the object of cognitive acts.<sup>64</sup>

Not everyone is able to achieve this kind of intuitive grasping of the object and entering into the secrecy of being. The person in question must actualize other intellectual 'organs' in order to grasp the objects he wants to inquire: the intellectual courage to stick to what he grasps, and he must have the philosophical talent to express and formulate his discovery adequately. This kind of arche-data ensures the efficiency of intuitive cognition.<sup>65</sup> The above-mentioned intellectual abilities of the person do not exhaust the whole prerequisite endowment in the process of value cognition: "But in the case of moral value-perception much more is required: not only another degree of reverence and of opening our mind to the voice of being, a higher degree of 'conspiring' with the object, but also a *readiness of our will* to conform to the call of values, whatever it may be."<sup>66</sup>

Understood in this way, the return back to the things themselves (in other words starting from direct experience data) allows the object to reveal itself to us in its own nature, richness, dignity and truth. Such "revelation" is possible under the following conditions:

"First, the evident, as well as everything which is really given, must have undisputed precedence over any hypothesis, explanation or interpretation.

Second, we have to approach being with a readiness to grasp the specific nature of every new datum, especially if this datum has the character of a fundamentally new *ratio*, such as personal being, space, moral virtue, knowledge, will and so on.

Third, we must turn our efforts in the direction which will allow us to do full justice to a datum; we must ever be aware of the danger of violating it by reducing it to something already familiar to us, aware of the temptation of a certain intellectual laziness disguised as an epistemological 'economy' which deafens us to the voice of being and prevents us from wondering enough about its nature.

---

<sup>64</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>65</sup>Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>66</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 110.



Finally, the task of properly estimating the nature of a datum which is given to us must take precedence over the effort to bring the nature of this being into harmony with formerly discovered, undubitable data.”<sup>67</sup>

When discussing the problem of direct cognition, which aims to discover the fullness, essence and value of being, von Hildebrand claims that this kind of cognitive aims can be achieved only on the way of intuition and a priori knowledge.

### 1.3 Intuitive Cognition and a priori Knowledge

Intuitive knowledge means here “perception” (*Wahrnehmung*) in the broadest sense of this term.<sup>68</sup> In this sense, it plays a fundamental role in all our knowledge, naïve and scientific, as well as philosophical. By perception, we mean every form of taking cognizance of something wherein the object is self-present and discloses itself intuitively to our mind.<sup>69</sup> Perception, according to von Hildebrand, is characterized by three features:

First, the object of which I take cognizance is self-present and given as such, as itself. It is not reached indirectly by any means of induction or deduction, but it stands, as it were, in person before my mind. I am in direct and immediate contact with the very object itself.

Second, the object discloses itself to my mind in its existence. It speaks to me; it informs me about itself. A unique contact with the object is established. The perceived object fecundates my mind and it bestows a “knowing” on my mind.

Third, the object is intuitively given, that is, it unfolds its such-being before me mind.<sup>70</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>68</sup> *Idem*, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 215.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

The basic perfection of perception consists also in the most intimate contact with the object (to grasp object and to “have” it thereby in an incomparable way, implies an intimacy of contact which is a perfection in its own). This kind of knowledge as such is a unique form of spiritual union with the object. In this act, the object manifests whole richness of its nature, unveil itself before our mind.

For von Hildebrand intuitive cognition has also an active component, kind of spirituals going with the object and its nature.<sup>71</sup> This dynamic presence of the object in the act of perception is the highest level of the cognitive act of our mind with reality; and, in this respect, perception has a privileged position among all forms of taking cognizance.<sup>72</sup>

Von Hildebrand also points out the contemplative character of intuitive cognition, which bases itself on full possession, that is mentally coming into contact with an object and confronting the object “face to face”.<sup>73</sup> He introduces various kinds of spiritual contact with an object. The first one is climaxed in the knowledge of the object and the other in the spiritual weeding with the self-present object. Consequently, there are two directions of knowledge (in the broadest sense) and two kinds of spiritual possession of being toward which our mind tends. Von Hildebrand emphasizes, that perception is the basis for both. “Knowing-possession” is the starting point and weeding with the object is the fulfillment.”<sup>74</sup>

For von Hildebrand, this kind of cognition is particularly important in the range of cognition of moral values, including love (as a basic moral value). The perfection of this kind of cognition goes into a deep union with the object (value), which makes possible a more intimate being with cognizing values until the “love relation” appears. This ‘going deep’ is important in moral attitude creation, especially when a person speaks out towards cognizing values.

---

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>73</sup> A. Bohdanowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 30-31.

<sup>74</sup> D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 178.

Moreover, only such an entering into the depth of moral values enables person to cognition and to respond to the source of values and towards God, the fundamental basis of all values. In view of the close unity between a person and the object. This kind of cognition has a special significance of new perfection: "Knowing, even the most perfect, could never substitute for the dimension of contact and union with the object."<sup>75</sup>

It is important now to take a closer look at the relation which appears between person and the object of the relation, which von Hildebrand calls intentional reference. Intentionality, this notion is not proposed by von Hildebrand. He also remarks about its inaccuracy and ambiguity: "We do not here use the term 'intentional' in the common usage, in which it means something done in purpose. We refer to a terminology introduced by Husserl, in which 'intentional' means any conscious, meaningful relationship to an object (Cf. *Logische Untersuchungen*)."<sup>76</sup> Thus in saying 'intentional' we refer to a conscious, rational relation between the person and the object.<sup>77</sup>

This relationship consists, let us remember, in the spiritual going with the object and its spiritual penetration. We have here a dynamic "cooperation" with the object and participation in it, which makes spiritual movement in the person: "I partake intentionally (intentionaliter) in the being of the perceived object, which is necessarily before me."<sup>78</sup> This activity of the person in relation to the object von Hildebrand calls spiritual possession or intentional relationship with the object.<sup>79</sup> Understood in this way, it intentionality corresponds with human nature, which has this ability of taking cognizance of an object (*Kenntnisnehmen*), but also the ability of responding to it (*Stellungnahme*). Von Hildebrand clearly underlines that such cognizance is in no way a production of the object known,

---

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>76</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 191.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>79</sup> Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 25.

but a receptive grasping of it.<sup>80</sup>

For philosophy, such cognition is very significant because it leads to absolute certainty of the truth (the characteristic of a priori knowledge is its absolute certainty)<sup>81</sup>, but also gives an absolutely certain insight of state of affairs and possibility to reach the being.<sup>82</sup> To listen to the real voice of a being itself means we reach its essence, but only a priori cognition makes it possible (in contrast to empirical cognition).<sup>83</sup> In this kind of cognition, we discover the essence of being, truth, the human person, justice, will etc.<sup>84</sup> What are the main features of such cognition? Von Hildebrand lists three unmistakable marks: intrinsic necessity, incomparable intelligibility and absolute certainty.<sup>85</sup> They essentially differ a priori cognition from the empirical one.<sup>86</sup>

The first necessity of a priori knowledge is described by von Hildebrand as an ultimate datum. It cannot be deduced from something else; and, therefore, it cannot be 'explained'. We can only point unequivocally to it, isolating it from all neighboring moments in order to see it in itself.<sup>87</sup> When we consider a necessary state of facts, which illustrates the proposition 'Moral values cannot be embodied in impersonal beings.' – it means that moral values can be embodied only in persons and the link (connection) between 'moral values' and 'persons' is a necessary one<sup>88</sup>, it comes from the essence of moral value and the essence of the person. For von Hildebrand, only this kind of necessity, grounded in the essence of an object itself, is absolute in character; only as such can they be used to described this what is a priori.<sup>89</sup>

---

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>82</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>85</sup> Idem, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 64.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67-69.

The second principal character of a priori facts, namely their incomparable intelligibility, is closely lined to their intrinsic necessity. In such cognition, we reach in an intuitive way, the given object itself. We ‘understand’ that the necessary facts are such as they are. We grasp not only *that* something as such, but also *why* it is. It is only with respect to these facts that we can speak of having ‘insight’ into the full sense.<sup>90</sup> This *intelligere*, this understanding from within, is possible only when the knowledge of an essentially necessary fact is at stake. This ‘intelligibility’, which allows us to grasp the fact in its inner logos, necessarily presupposes the essential necessity of the fact and it is even deeply rooted in it.<sup>91</sup>

A third characteristic of a priori knowledge is its absolute certainty. It is not a mark of the state of facts as such, but rather of the relation between the state of facts and the knowledge about it. For von Hildebrand, examples of propositions which have absolute character can be: ‘Moral values presuppose a person’ or ‘Something cannot exist and not exist at the same time.’ Here, the state of facts is unequivocally and absolutely intelligible. Here, there remains no gap in the credentials of its reality, its reality is undoubtedly and absolutely certain. There is no possibility of any eventual ‘disappointment’ or refutation, for the state of facts in its necessity is laid completely and absolutely bare before our mind.<sup>92</sup> A priori knowledge is achieved by way of immediate insight into essential states of facts. In addition, it shows in a special way the difference between the knowledge of the existence of an object and the knowledge of the ‘such-being’ or essence of an object.<sup>93</sup>

Since a priori cognition is based on grasping the essence of the state of a fact, it not only has absolute certainty, but it is also the highest form of possessing the truth, which is the fundamental task of philosophical cognition (philosophical cognition which always at-

---

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 69-70.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*

tempted to grasp the essence of fact and finally explain it).<sup>94</sup> In a priori cognition, we are not able to grasp the real existence of a being, but it does not cause any undesirable consequences for this kind of cognition.<sup>95</sup>

The way towards this kind of cognition goes through contemplation: "To grasp an a priori state of facts, it suffices to delve into the nature of the being to which the subject refers; and to draw out, as it were, the state of facts in question."<sup>96</sup> Cognition of moral values is a result of the contemplation of a being who possess such values; contemplation which allows penetration and entrance in the deep of the meaning (we cannot form the concept of moral values unless we have already perceived them. Furthermore, in our perception, they are grasped as qualities of human acts).<sup>97</sup>

According to von Hildebrand, "a final mark of an a priori state of facts in our sense of the term is that, it is not essential that it be knowable for every man. Universally available knowledge is not, therefore, as Kant believes, inseparably connected or even identical with a priori."<sup>98</sup>

Understood as such, a priori cognition overtakes, according to von Hildebrand, empirical cognition and is independent of cognition as we have by real contact with the being: "As far as knowledge of absolutely certain and essentially necessary state of facts is concerned, all that is necessary is independence from experience in the sense of observation and induction.(...) Hence it is necessary to keep the concept of the a priori free from every pretention toward an independence of experience in the widest sense of the term, that is, including the experience of such-beings."<sup>99</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p.191.

<sup>95</sup> "An essence is given to me. In it are grounded necessary states of facts, and in it, in the 'givenness' of the essence, I understand these necessary facts. In other words, facts of this kind require only the 'givenness' of a such-being and not an existential status to be grasped." *Ibid.*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 82.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-92.

Empirical perception is not so essential for intuitive cognition, therefore, its absence is not an obstacle to grasp the concrete state of facts: "If someone says 'I cannot talk about love. I do not know what it is because I have never experienced it', the sense of 'experience' here is evidently quite different from mere blunt observation. Here it means that something has never disclosed itself in its essence to my mind, that it was never given to me in a concrete moment which would have enabled me to grasp it in its essence."<sup>100</sup> Von Hildebrand calls such experience the 'experience of such-being' in opposition to blunt, empirical observation.<sup>101</sup>

Concerning this problem, we can ask (as does von Hildebrand) a question here: are there any contents which we know independently of any experience in the broadest sense of the word the experience of such-being as well as of existence? Are there any contents which need not to be grasped by us even once in a concrete and somewhat qualitative manner in order to be known by us? Von Hildebrand believes that intuitive insight into a state of facts gives us a clear and unambiguous picture (cognition). In such cognition, the object is "right before us" and that is why we gain absolute certainty, valid and essential cognition:<sup>102</sup> "To gain an absolutely certain and essentially necessary insight, it is not enough that we have an experience of such-being and that we prescind from the question of actual existence and intuition."<sup>103</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>103</sup> "Husserl stressed this prescinding from existence in his term 'putting existence into brackets'. He erroneously believed that this would suffice to guarantee a priori knowledge independently of the nature of the object. It is the basic weakness of Father Lauer's critique of Husserl (his *Triumph of Subjectivity*, New York 1958) that he never singles out the main error in Husserl's 'bracketing theory', namely the failure to see that, except for necessary essences, all objects of knowledge lose their interest as soon as we prescind from their concrete, real existence, and that they yield no a priori knowledge, no matter how much we bracket them. It is this failure which led Husserl to transcendent idealism, a position radically opposed to the one set down here." *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Von Hildebrand clearly underlines the fact that we should be accused of simply playing around if we have claimed that we were descriptively examining an imagined kind of metal or an imagined type of beetle.<sup>104</sup> It is, therefore, clearly up to the kind of such-being of an object whether or not delving into it, putting aside any consideration of its real existence, possesses any knowledge interest at all, and whether it yields the knowledge of absolutely certain and essentially necessary states of facts. In this way the possibility of a priori knowledge depends on the kind of object we want to know.<sup>105</sup>

This assumption is an essential novelty which von Hildebrand contributed into understanding of a priori cognition. As we have said before, in a priori we can speak about independence cognized given state of facts from the real experienced contact with reality and in this way about very special range of such cognition.

As we have seen already, von Hildebrand a completely different meaning of phenomenology is in strict, radical opposition to any idealism: "The phenomenological approach in this sense is chiefly synonymous with the intuitive analysis of genuine, highly intelligible essence."<sup>106</sup> For von Hildebrand, what is new in phenomenology is its emphasis on the existential and immediate intuitive contact with the object, in opposition to any abstractionism or any dealing with mere concept,<sup>107</sup> but it is not however restricted to the philosophical analysis of genuine essences, that is, to philosophical a priori knowledge. "Phenomenology is further characterized by its facing the object itself and by its methodical concern to do justice to

---

<sup>104</sup> A. Bohdanowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>105</sup> D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, pp. 73-75.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 233. "It signifies in fact the most outspoken objectivism and realism. It is this meaning of phenomenology which we find in the writings of Adolf Reinach, Alexander Pfänder, myself, and several others, and which we, at least, identified with the meaning of phenomenology in the first edition of Husserl's *Logische Untersuchungen*. In fact, the historical impact of this work of Husserl, attracting student of all countries to Göttingen, was due to its unambiguous refutation of psychologism, subjectivism, and all types of relativism." *Ibid.*, p. 223.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.



the qualitative nature of the object.”<sup>108</sup> This means a very respectful attitude and full internal of study reality which is the fundamental principle or phenomenological research. This also leads to understanding the specific character and individuality of such reality. The phenomenological position assumes an open attitude to everything that comes from outside, the rejection of prejudices, which can suppress full cognition of that which is real.

Such a method without doubt helped von Hildebrand describe love. Love is understood as the theme (that is to say, the core) of the closest and most intimate of all earthly unions. Love is the inmost core of the relation of the soul to God.

---

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 225.

## Chapter 2

# Dietrich von Hildebrand's Revolution in Love

Phenomenology as a philosophical current has a very ambiguous history. The propositions of how to understand “phenomena”, how to grasp the phenomenological methodology and how and to which extent a priori cognition has an impact on obtaining real and certain knowledge are the problems that modern phenomenology and phenomenologists face today. However, if we consider phenomenology as a philosophical method of perceiving reality in its deepest and fullest extent without presuppositions and prejudices, we must agree that in order to talk about particular notions, phenomenology (as a method of research) can be a very good way to grasp such notions in the lightest light.

Ambiguity is a characteristic feature of notions not only within the area of philosophy (as a science), but also in the realm of everyday life. What is interesting is that such misconceptions refer mainly to important words associated with the essence of human life. It is not surprising then, that this problem also concerns the concept of love, which is understood in various ways not only in philosophy, but

also in literature, psychology, sociology, anthropology and by each of us (as a being capable of loving).

The attempt to grasp the notion as well as phenomenon of “love” is the main aim of this chapter. The colorful and varied attempts to describe love proposed in different epochs of the history of philosophy will give a strong foundation for the modern phenomenological proposition.

Von Hildebrand characterized the phenomenological method by its facing the object itself and by its methodical concern to do justice to the qualitative nature of the object.<sup>109</sup> In this way it seems, that such understood methodology is a good choice and an interesting way to reinvent, repaint picture of love and to look at it from different perspective.

## 2.1 Love as a Philosophical Matter

One has quite a limited vocabulary, when one wants to speak about love in the English language for example. Karol Wojtyła stresses in his book *Love and Responsibility*, that the word ‘love’ possesses many meanings.<sup>110</sup> In order to speak about ‘love’ an average person must be satisfied with notions of synonymous type: kindness, friendship, desire, fancy.

It is very interesting at this point to follow Josef Pieper by stating the following questions: “Does the word ‘love’ have an equal, even to some extent, scope of meaning, or rather, so to say, an archipelago of very different meanings, among which there is no perceptible relationship? Is, what is called by the entertainment industry ‘love’, love? And does what Stendhal, in his famous essay, calls *amour physique*, have anything in common with the theological virtue, which is so closely related to faith and hope?”<sup>111</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup>D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 225.

<sup>110</sup>K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts, 1981, p. 73.

<sup>111</sup>J. Pieper, *Über die Liebe*, Kösel Verlag, München, 1977, p. 15:

“Entsprich dem Namen “Liebe” ein auch nur einigermassen einheitliches Be-

How often do we speak about 'love' for wine, paintings, dance or singing? How often do we hear about desire towards wealth or pleasure? But, is not there a great gap between all those sensitive and beautiful feelings of two people?<sup>112</sup>

Presumably, the apparent poverty of vocabulary contains, however, a certain chance. This chance is an attempt of, on the one hand, perceiving, in these different forms of love, some unification, and on the other hand, catching and realising common features in spite of the tendency of abusing of 'love'. In Latin and modern languages which are rooted in it, the word which qualifies 'love' is 'amor'. *Omnis dilectio alias caritas est amor, sed non e converso*, i.e.: "all affection in the sense caritas is love, but not inversely". This sentence is, so to say, the registration of accepted lingual habits: all loving – *dilectio*, and all specifically Christian love of a neighbour and love of God – *caritas* (*charité, charity*) in fact is love – *amour* (*amour, amore*). We can add here also *pietas* (as Christian charity), unexpectedly *studium* (as a will of serving somebody or something) and *affectio* (the moment, which is present in love).<sup>113</sup>

However, as it was advised a moment ago, one should reflect, whether all of this, what in fact qualifies as love, has something common with the essence of love.

Sigmund Freud, who, on the one hand speaks "about negligence of

---

deutungsfeld – oder nicht eher so etwas wie eine Inselgruppe höchst verschiedener Wortsinne, zwischen denen keine erkennbare Verbindung besteht? Hat, was die Produktionen der Unterhaltungsindustrie als "Liebe" bezeichnen und was, in Stendhals berühmtem Essay, *amour physique* heisst, irgend etwas zu tun mit der "theologischen Tugend", die zusammen mit Glaube und Hoffnung genannt zu werden pflegt?"

<sup>112</sup>As mentioned before, Josef Pieper made a sketch of the analysis of the problem of Love in other languages. He wrote that in his native language, German, there is only one word which is used to translate love i.e., Liebe, and all the trials to introduce others words, which would have enriched the German vocabulary of 'love' fizzled out. These words were quickly devaluated, and went out of use. Pieper noticed a more extensive vocabulary in English and French, in which the most important Latin words have been incorporated such as – amour, charity, affection – but are used in a slightly different meanings. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 22-27.

language in usage of the word 'love', but on the other hand (similarly to Pieper), instructs to reflect on the fact that lingual habit, even in its own fads, stays faithful to some reality."<sup>114</sup> It is important to notice that nowadays there are huge lingual abuses. The scope of some words is incredible, and their designates are, maybe not the contrasts, but they possess "a slightly other emotional tinge". It is also very interesting that these abuses refer mainly to important words connected to the essence of human life. And because "the highest does not stand without the lowest", it is possible that all these abuses have something in common.

Here we stated the problem of the nature of love, but we must remember that it is closely linked to the attempt of describing an ambiguous phenomenon. We should construct such a definition, which would avoid the ambiguousness. There are many methods of description. However, our civilisation, because it is profoundly characterised by utilitarian commercialism, treats love marginally. It is not easy to describe the "truth, beauty and good" of love, and not every way or method is able to reach the challenge of grasping love.

The idea of altruistic love is very often derided, and what follows, this is that the Christian idea of loving one's neighbour is belittled. Moreover, the hedonistic basis for social life leads to the spiritual emptiness and the loss of the meaning of life so that there is a danger of a deformation of a love-idea. That means that we should not allow for impoverishment, for naturalisation, egoism, and first of all for absolutization of certain forms of love and for depreciation of others.<sup>115</sup> We are able to absolutize all kinds of love: erotic, parental, etc. Unfortunately, such a degenerated love can become a deadly threat for people. Consequently, in order to undertake an attempt of characterising love, it is necessary to have the consciousness of

---

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p 17:

"Sigmund Freud, der einerseits gleichfalls von der "Nachlässigkeit der Sprache in der Anwendung des Wortes "Liebe" spricht, gibt andererseits zu bedenken, der Sprachgebrauch (bleibe) selbst in seinen Launen irgendeiner Wirklichkeit treu."

<sup>115</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves*, Collins, Fontana Books, London 1960, pp. 11-12.

undertaken matters, and also of the responsibility in usage towards man. For, after all, love is compactly connected with human being.

There are many different ways, in which one can describe love. One can use also different languages: literary, theological, psychological, axiological, ontological or anthropological and personalistic one.<sup>116</sup> These languages are being used in large number of practical disciplines; sometimes they are preferred by different philosophical systems.

Some arguments are banal, while other quite serious. They are exact reflections and deep considerations. However, this is a very crucial issue, because it refers to something that is very important, which touches every people, because it refers to every human being, namely the personal love.

What, then, is love? What is this something, that oppresses thinkers, keeps poets up all night, and determines the basis of human existence?

In his famous work *Symposium*, Phaedo calls Eros a "great god".<sup>117</sup> If the oldest god is Chaos (as Phaedo said after Hesiod), so after it came Earth and Love.<sup>118</sup> Eros belongs to the oldest Gods. And only Love can give a power to people you love. And what is more is that: "guiding principle (...) if we are minded to live a comely life, cannot be acquired either by kinship or office or wealth or anything so well as by Love." Eros belongs to the oldest Gods. And only Love can give a power to people you love. And what is more is that: "guiding principle (...) if we are minded to live a comely life, cannot be

---

<sup>116</sup>This division is offered by S. Kowalczyk in his book *Człowiek i Społeczność (Person and Community)*, p. 197.

He proposes a division into a micro- and macro social dimension of love. First, above all, there is a form that initiates the origin of marriage. Second there is a problem much more complicated because it touches not only the family or class dimension, but the national and human dimension as a whole, the establishment of social love (love of common good, activity for the good of the community member), pp. 203-208.

<sup>117</sup>Plato, *Symposium*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Harvard University Press 1996, p. 101.

<sup>118</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 101.

acquired either by kinship or office or wealth or anything so well as by Love.”<sup>119</sup>

But in Plato’s work one will see that he distinguishes two kinds of Love. According to Pausanias one comes from Aphrodite, “who is the elder of no Mother born, but daughter of Heaven, whence we name her Heavenly.”<sup>120</sup> The second Aphrodite – younger daughter of Zeus and Dione is called Popular.<sup>121</sup> So, that is why the one Love is Heavenly and the second Popular.

States and normal people should adore the Heavenly Love, because this kind of love impels people to work on and develop themselves. The second one, that belongs to the Popular Aphrodite “(...) is the Love we see in the meaner sort of men who in the first place, love women as well as boys, secondly; where they love, they are set on the body more than the soul; and thirdly, they choose the most witless people they can find, since they look merely to the accomplishment, and care not if the manner be noble or not. Hence they find themselves doing everything at haphazard, good or its opposite, without distinction.”<sup>122</sup> Consequently, one can conclude that there exists two different kinds of loving, two dissimilar Loves.

One can find also these two types of Love in human souls, as well as in human body, and in music (“in the actual system of harmony or rhythm we can easily distinguish these love-matters”)<sup>123</sup> and medicines (“thus in music and medicine and every other affair whether human or divine, we must be on the watch as far as may be for either sort of Love; for both are there.”).<sup>124</sup>

It seems that Plato, by bringing the idea of gods, wanted not only to describe these two types of causative powers in personality of human being, but also at the same time to explain why one of these types of influences ennoble human being (makes better his thinking

---

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-111.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 127-129.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

and acts), and another makes him more egoistic and morally evil.<sup>125</sup>

Plato's student, Aristotle, does not appeal in his work to gods, but as a naturalist, he describes the phenomenon of friendship and love. And as follows, according to him, there are two types of friendship; one of them is a result of the pleasure of being with someone, another one is the result of pure pleasure. However, as he stresses it: "the perfect form of friendship is that between good men who are alike in excellence or virtue."<sup>126</sup> This kind of friendship is, as a matter of fact, a kind of love.

"For a good man, a good man is the object of affection and of choice for both these reasons. Now, affection resembles an emotion, while friendship is rather a characteristic or lasting attitude. For it is equally possible to feel affection for inanimate objects (which cannot reciprocate the affection), but mutual affection involves choice, and choice springs from a characteristic. Also, men wish their friends' good for the sake of those for whom they feel friendship, and this attitude is not determined by an emotion but by a characteristic. Also, in loving a friend they love their own good. For, when a good man becomes a friend he becomes a good to the person whose friend he is. Thus, each partner both loves his own good and makes an equal return in the good he wishes for his partner and in the pleasure he gives him. Now friendship is said to be equality, and both those qualities inhere especially in the relationship between good men."<sup>127</sup>

Aristotle binds together love with friendship, friendship with courage that is a result of education. As an excellent analyst, he

---

<sup>125</sup>G. Reale, *Plato and Aristotle: A History of Ancient Philosophy*, edited and translated J.R. Catan, University of New York Press 1990, pp. 169-174.

<sup>126</sup>Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. M. Ostwald, The Liberal Arts Press 1962, p. 219.

<sup>127</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 224.



describes different kinds of friendship, love, and he shows also some conditions, but also results of given love for society.

While Plato understands love as an intellectual and artistic erotic sublimation, the teaching of Jesus Christ was a great revolution in the ethical sphere. The postulate “love your neighbour as yourself” gave to love a universal and supra-biological dimension. This motto created a new sense of dignity, a new aim of life as not individual but collective. Because from this postulate it appears that for Jesus Christ love means an emotional relation junction with neighbours, with God, and somehow a readiness for giving one’s life for a brother.<sup>128</sup> The scientist agrees that the antique world did not know this understanding of love.<sup>129</sup>

But Christ’s postulate needs human being to transcend his biological and social nature; it needs to leave egoism, overcome the erotic passion, and learn temperance. Only marriage allows the physical love, but not as an aim itself, but as a source of a new life, as a source which completes the spiritual relation of spouses.

The Christian understanding of love, by putting such huge ethical requirements on human being, was sometimes confronting believers with very difficult moral choices. As an example, one can evoke the love of monk Abelard to nun Heloise in France in 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup>The golden rule is known to Christians from two Gospel passages:

“Do to others as you would have them do to you.” (Lk 6:31); “In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.” (Math. 7:12). But it is important to see other versions on golden formula; likewise the Jewish formula in *Leviticus*, 19: 17-18: “17 You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbor, or you will incur guilt yourself. 18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD.” See also the following passage: “Do to no one what you yourself dislike” (Tobit 4:15). An Islamic version of the golden rule is: “None of you is a true believer if you do not desire for your brother what you desire for your self”, (Hadith 13, Al Bukhari); the Hindus formulate: “Do not do to others what would make you suffer if it were done to you”.

<sup>129</sup>J. Kowalski, *Starożytni o Sensie Życia (Ancients on Sense of Life)*, Warszawa 1988, pp. 338-339.

<sup>130</sup>In the letter from Abelard to Heloise, it is written:

Etienne Gilson, a great French historian of philosophy and modern thinker, claims that the Middle Ages (12<sup>th</sup> century) shaped three “great love theories”. We owe one of them to Abelard, even though he did not write exclusively on love. One is built on the reconstruction of “Abelard’s theory” from different philosophical – theological works. But the essence of Abelard’s theory was the fact that he put pure love on the pedestal. Gilson claims that there were two sources of this conception: Cicero’s treatise about friendship, and Heloise’s opinion.<sup>131</sup>

The conception of love, according to Abelard, is a “true, pure love” which is turned directly and only to the lover; this true love excludes also some kind of prize or reward (which is in this moment somehow owed to God), because one does not love for a prize. Love cannot be reduced to interest. It is so important, because Abelard transfers human love towards love to God, and this love should be pure.<sup>132</sup>

Love, according to William of Saint-Thierry; the author of *De Natura et Dignitate Amoris*, claims that God puts in human mind love toward him. That is why human being naturally aims at loving the Absolute Being. But the sin removes human being from his aim by pushing him to physical love. Human being should first know himself and then return to love to God. The knowledge of human being of himself will help him bring back to his mind that he has a soul which is similar to God, which in turn, will help him to be closer in love to God. In this conception “true love” represents a deep

---

“You know how shamefully my passion had completely sacrificed our bodies. Respect neither for God nor decency, even on those days when the Passion of Our Lord was beginning so solemnly commemorated, deterred me from wallowing in the mire. When you objected to it yourself and resisted with all your might, and tried to dissuade me from it, I frequently forced your consent (for after all you were the weaker) by threats and blows. I was bound to you by the ardour of such desire that I forced these wretched pleasures which we can no longer mention without shame before God and myself.” E. Gilson, *Heloise and Abelard*, The University of Michigan Press 1977, p. 48.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 57.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 47-57.

feeling to God, and different kinds of love are not proper for human being.<sup>133</sup>

Love in Saint Bernard's conception, when it is pure, takes place in the human soul, and for this kind of love there is at the end a reward: God's prize. Of course human being first of all loves God, because it is not possible not to love him with the accent he deserves.<sup>134</sup> Thus, according to Abelard, who is in this way not only a theoretician, but someone who experienced by himself all wealth of feeling, the true love is only when one can relinquish every prize; the true love is not a state of happiness: it is rather a state of lasciviousness.

All mentioned conceptions were connected to Cicero's work, *De Amicitia*. Cicero claims that friendship (as an essential element of love) is a disinterested sensitiveness, and that all enjoyment of love is in love itself.<sup>135</sup> Hence, the true love should accompany self-reflection. As Saint Bernard proposes in his *De Consideratione*, love should start from self-reflection because it is hard to consider everything without having knowledge of one's self. It is possible to know all the secrets, to know everything about the world, to penetrate the height of heaven, and wander the depth of the sea, but the fact of not knowing oneself is like a building without foundations which would be more like ruin than a real house. Is not a thinker whose wisdom does not spread on himself. A real thinker, first of all, ought to try his wisdom on himself, wisdom which is supposed to be his main source. Thus, all questions would start from oneself and would finish on oneself. One is for oneself first and last.<sup>136</sup>

The 18<sup>th</sup> century brought two conceptions of love; the first was developed by Spinoza and the second by Leibniz. In the *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*, Spinoza writes:

"Love is a union with the object which our understanding

---

<sup>133</sup>Idem, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Random House, New York 1955, pp. 167-168.

<sup>134</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>135</sup>Idem, *Heloise and Abelard*, p. 57.

<sup>136</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 57-65.

judges to be good and glorious; and by this we mean such a union whereby both the lover and what is loved become one and the same thing, or together constitute one whole. He, therefore, is indeed always wretched who is united to transient things.”<sup>137</sup>

The last sentence means that man's love to another man (as a transient thing also) is not strong and solid like love towards God. It seems, that the originality of Spinoza rests on the fact that he did not claim that love stems from feelings. Rather, according to him, “Love, then, arises from the idea and knowledge that we have of a thing; and the greater and the more glorious the thing shows itself, the greater is our love.”<sup>138</sup> It seems that no one among earlier philosophers identified love with cognition, with consciousness of an individual human being, with rational argumentation that should persuade one to love. It seems also that in our modern times it would be very hard to hold this opinion. On the other hand, Leibniz claims that: “Love is to be disposed to take pleasure in the perfection, well-being or happiness of the object of ones love”.<sup>139</sup> This opinion is definitely different from Spinoza's. It can be put in the Christian ethical thoughts, because it connects love with the happiness of another human being, and also it includes the feelings towards God as an impersonation of a perfect, most happy, the most worthy of love substantiate.<sup>140</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, one owes to Hegel the most comprehensive analysis of the phenomenon of love.

“The real essence of love consists in the fact that it gives up the consciousness (or awareness) of itself in order to forget itself in another self, yet it is in this disappearance

---

<sup>137</sup>Spinoza, *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*, Part II, Chapter 05.

<sup>138</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup>G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, BK II: Of ideas 163.

<sup>140</sup>*Ibid.*, BK I: *Of Innate Notions*, p. 73.

and giving itself that it has and possesses itself (...) So is love in this affirmative satisfaction and in itself, an ideal, calm, and happy reality, but simply a spiritual beauty, whose own intimacy it can express also in the sincerity and as the sincerity of character.”<sup>141</sup>

According to Hegel, three feelings are growing to the infinite level, which are, the subjective honour, love and fidelity. If these three feelings are altogether present in one man, it is possible to say that this man is chivalrous. Hegel, in opposition to Spinoza, connects love with cognition, with intellect. According to Hegel, love does not consist in reflection and reason, as it takes a place in honour for example; in love it has the source in feeling, and because of it, the difference of the sex plays a huge role here, this difference also constitutes the basis for the soulful natural relations.<sup>142</sup> The highest shape of love, according to Hegel, is motherly love. Because it is most of all real, purely human, throughout spiritual, free from concupiscence, not sensible, but still present: absolute contented, blessed by internal deepness of feeling. This kind of feeling appeared very often in romanticism, what induces Hegel to formulate his own definition of romantic love:

“It is always the personal feeling of the single subject which turns out to be satisfied not with the eternal interest and the objective content of human existence, not with family, political goals, fatherland, duties of occupation, of position, of religiosity, but with its own self that

---

<sup>141</sup>G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik II*, Werke in zwanzig Bänden 14, Suhrkamp, pp. 155-156:

“Das wahrhafte Wesen der Liebe besteht darin, das Bewusstsein seiner selbst aufzugeben, sich in einem anderen Selbst zu vergessen, doch in diesem Vergehen und Vergessen sich erst selber zu haben und zu besitzen. (...) die Liebe in dieser affirmativen Befriedigung und in sich beruhigten seligen Realität ideale, aber schlechthin geistige Schönheit, welche sich ihrer Innerlichkeit wegen auch nur in der Innigkeit und als die Innigkeit des Gemüts ausdrücken kann.”

<sup>142</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 155-156.

the feeling, reflected by another self, wants to receive back."<sup>143</sup>

As one remembers, Hegel accepts love at the infinite level, which he explained as follows:

"This fact of giving up its consciousness (or awareness) in the other, this impression of altruism and unselfishness, through which the subject finds again itself and becomes itself, its forgetfulness, so that the loving does not exist for himself, does not live for himself and is anxious, but finds the roots of his being in another and yet it is in this very other that he enjoys perfectly himself, constitutes the infinity of love; and the beauty is particularly to be looked for there, that this feeling does not remain just an instinct (or impulse) and feeling, but that the imagination itself develops its world towards a relation, everything else, except all that belongs to interests, conditions, objectives towards real being and life, everything that raises towards an ornament of this feeling, everything that tears in this circle, and only in this relation it is granted to him a value. It is in particular in a female nature that love is in its most beautiful form, for which there is this self-denial, this giving up of the highest point, in which she gathers and opens out the whole spiritual and real life towards this feeling, and only in which she finds an end of being; and a misfortune touches therein, as a light shrinks, through which the first rough breath extinguishes."<sup>144</sup>

---

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188:

"Sie ist nur die persönliche Empfindung des einzelnen Subjekts, die sich nicht mit den ewigen Interessen und dem objektiven Gehalt des menschlichen Daseins, mit Familie, politischen Zwecken, Vaterland, Pflichten des Berufs, des Standes, der Freiheit, der Religiosität, sondern nur mit dem eigenen Selbst erfüllt zeigt, das die Empfindung, widergespiegelt von einem anderen Selbst, zurückempfängen will."

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183:

“Modern” philosophy offers many conceptions and understandings of love.<sup>145</sup> Here the focus will be put on specially Scheler and Wojtyła.

The order of heart means that regularity of feelings has the same status as regularity of logic. The regularity of feelings is totally independent from the regularity of logic. People who, intuitively discover “postulate of heart” are “geniuses of heart”. The geniuses in the emotional sphere appear very rarely, like the geniuses in the reasonable sphere. The greatness of the geniuses of heart is not less than the greatness of the science geniuses.<sup>146</sup>

By building his own conception of feelings, Max Scheler puts emotionality on the top of his ethics, but most of all love and its opposite, for hate is the capstone of his whole system. Since it plays a crucial role not only in his ethics, but in his theory of community, love is of necessity a highly complex, stratified, and many-faceted reality. Scheler claims that among feelings are those intentional and unintentional. The unintentional feelings are “feeling-

---

“Dies Verlorensein seines Bewusstseins in dem anderen, dieser Schein von Uneigennützigkeit und Selbstlosigkeit, durch welchen sich das Subjekt erst wiederfindet und zum Selbst wird, diese Vergessenheit seiner, so dass der Liebende nicht für sich existiert, nicht für sich lebt und besorgt ist, sondern die Wurzeln seines Daseins in einem anderen findet und doch in diesem anderen gerade ganz sich selbst genießt, macht die Unendlichkeit der Liebe aus; und das Schöne ist vornehmlich darin zu suchen, dass dies Gefühl nicht nur Trieb und Gefühl bleibt, sondern dass die Phantasie sich ihre Welt zu diesem Verhältnis ausbildet, alles andere, was sonst an Interessen, Umständen, Zwecken zum wirklichen Sein und Leben gehört, zu einem Schmucke dieses Gefühls erhebt, alles in diesen Kreis reißt und nur in dieser Beziehung ihm einen Wert zuteilt. Besonders in weiblichen Charakteren ist die Liebe am schönsten, denn ihnen ist diese Hingebung, diese Aufgebung der höchste Punkt, indem sie das ganze geistige und wirkliche Leben zu dieser Empfindung zusammenziehen und ausbreiten, in ihr allein einen Halt des Daseins finden und, streift ein Unglück darüber hin, wie ein Licht schwinden, das durch den ersten rauen Hauch auslöscht.”

<sup>145</sup>Many of these conceptions and understandings of love (but also these mentioned before) will be evoked (in comparison with Hildebrand’s) in other chapters of this work.

<sup>146</sup>M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, Francke Verlag Bern und München 1980, pp. 251-261.

states" (*Gefühlszustände*). The "intentional feeling of something" (*intentionales Fühlen von etwas*) has intentional character.<sup>147</sup> The emotional "reactions of response" (*emotionale Antwortsreaktion*) is a name of feeling only somehow intentional.<sup>148</sup>

He distinguishes a few kinds of "intentional feelings of something". The kinds of feelings create a hierarchy, the criterion of which is the level of intentionality of the given feeling.<sup>149</sup>

In a short, one can say that the more intentional the feeling is the higher it is in the hierarchy. Emotional acts occupy the highest level in the hierarchy of feelings. But there exists two levels among acts. The lower level makes the acts of "preferring" (*Vorziehen*) and "placing after" (*Nachsetzen*).<sup>150</sup> The highest level in intentional emotive life is constituted by the acts of loving and hating.<sup>151</sup> Scheler wrote a lot about love.<sup>152</sup>

And according to him, love is: "That movement wherein every concrete individual object that possesses value achieves the highest value compatible with its nature and ideal vocation; or wherein it attains the ideal state of value intrinsic to its nature."<sup>153</sup> Love

---

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

<sup>148</sup> The difference between "feeling-states" and "intentional feeling of something" is: the first one is passive, unintentional; it is a phenomenon of definitive notion, and does not undergo an understanding; the second one is active, intentional; it is function and undergoes an understanding.

<sup>149</sup> The kinds of feeling which are distinguished because of their intentionality and their hierarchy, are shown by Scheler in the second subsection (*Fühlen und Gefühle*) of the fifth chapter of *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*.

<sup>150</sup> "Von den emotionalen Funktionen sind zu scheiden die Erlebnisse, die sich erst auf deren Fungieren als ein höheres Stockwerk des emotionalen und intentionalen Lebens aufbauen: das ist das "Vorziehen" und "Nachsetzen" (...). *Ibid.*, p. 265.

<sup>151</sup> "Lieben und hassen endlich bilden die höchste Stufe unseres intentionalen emotionalen Lebens." *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>152</sup> He wrote about love in: *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie, Liebe und Erkenntnis, Ordo Amoris*, and in fragments of his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*.

<sup>153</sup> Idem, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. P. Heath, Archon Books, 1970, p. 161.



possesses a constructive sense which rests on the fact that love is forward to be a higher value. The constructive character of love does not mean that love creates new values or their hierarchy. Love enables existence for totally new and higher values for the sphere of preferring and intentional feeling of something. Love, in the act of its *moving*, brings to the appearance a higher value in the object, as if the value by itself spurts out from a loving object. Love opens eyes to the higher values, from those which are already given in interest, given without love. Love makes it possible to see higher values, values which are hidden in the absence of love.<sup>154</sup> For Scheler, our heart is primarily destined to love. More than anything else, love is the primordial act of the heart and is more original than knowing and willing. This position is a little bit different from Karol Wojtyła's, who calls love between persons a "drama":

"Love is certainly a drama in the sense that it is made up of happenings and action (for Greeks the verb 'to act' is *drao*, from which "drama" comes). Thus, the *dramatis personae*. People discover the plot of this drama in themselves, they perceive love as a unique psychological situation, and one of the great and absorbing important elements in their inner lives."<sup>155</sup>

Thus, love, as we comprehend it, causes a person to want to give

---

In original: "Liebe ist die Bewegung, in der jeder konkret individuelle Gegenstand, der Werte trägt, zu den für ihn und nach seiner idealen Bestimmung möglichen höchsten Werten gelangt; oder in der er sein ideales Wertwesen, das ihm eigentümlich ist, erreicht." Idem, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Francke Verlag Bern und München, p. 164.

<sup>154</sup>Idem, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, p. 266.

<sup>155</sup>K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 114:

"Miłość jest na pewno dramatem w tym znaczeniu, że zawsze jest jakimś działaniem się i zarazem działaniem, a to przecież oznacza greckie słowo *drao*, stąd "dramat". Otóż *dramatis personae*, y i x, odnajdują wątek tego dramatu w sobie, odnajdują miłość zawsze jako jedyną w swoim rodzaju sytuację psychologiczną, która jest bardzo ważną i absorbującą sprawą ich wnętrza." K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa naukowego KUL, Lublin 1986, p. 103.

herself, to offer herself to the other.<sup>156</sup> Love unites. It is something that exists between persons, and, as a result, causes the creation of 'we' from the united 'I'. It brings two individuals together as one. Love is mutual. Love is a gift and it is based on reciprocity.

"Love (...) is also contagious to the will. It does not actuate it, but rather draws it into its own orbit by a specific mood, which embraces the will by exerting on it a specific charm. The human being moves in this mood, and in this manner stays internally in the vicinity of the person, which binds him with emotional love."<sup>157</sup>

In this fragment, Wojtyła displays a very important guideline of love, a characteristic that love is only and exclusively for spiritual beings with which it is internally connected.<sup>158</sup> Wojtyła wants to analyse the problem of love very precisely, so he tries to describe it on three levels, from three points of view: metaphysical, psychological and ethical. He uses the last as a summary of the whole issue.

"Love can be understood as a certain situation with a psychological significance, but it also has an ethical significance, and as such, is connected with a norm. The norm in question here is the personalistic norm: it finds its expression in the commandment to love. Situationism, which recognised no norm, falls into vulgar psychologism in its understanding of love. (...) In other words, love as experience should be subordinated to love as virtue, - so much so that without love as virtue, there can be no fullness in the experience of love."<sup>159</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, p 125.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 116:

"Miłość (...) udziela się też woli. Nie pobudza jej, ale raczej wciąga w swą orbitę przez specyficzny nastrój, który ogarnia wolę wywierając na nią swoisty urok. Człowiek porusza się w tym nastroju i w ten sposób utrzymuje się wewnątrz wciągnięty w pobliżu osoby, z którą wiąże go uczuciowa miłość." K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, p 110.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p 117.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p 120:

By way of summarizing, we can say that love is a certain specific situation which takes place only and exclusively between persons who possess an inward life. This feeling is developed in each of them separately. The power of each of these feelings remains in connection with them, it is an act of giving oneself without which there is no love. Love is always in a state of becoming. It does keep 'moving', but is subject to a continuous development in which the will also participates. It is only in love that a human being is in a position to really perfect himself. It is this feeling where all should lean on the virtue.

The short analysis above shows the difficulty that one faces while investigating the nature and issue of love. Nevertheless, the main concern was rather to provide somehow a background for the main problem. The choice of the above-mentioned authors is not fortuitous because, von Hildebrand, who is the main source of the work, has not only drawn many things from these authors, but also has disagreed with some of them on some points.

The aim of this historical-systematic introduction was also to show how different the various conceptions of love are, as well as how easy it is to deform and downplay the role of love. One should have hope that the above-analysis provided a theoretical ground to the main analysis.

As we said already before Dietrich von Hildebrand wrote a lot about love. In fact, besides the extensive monograph, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, which is exclusively dedicated to love, he alluded many times to love in numerous other books and articles.<sup>160</sup> Von Hildebrand gave

---

"Miłość można pojmować jako pewną sytuację w znaczeniu psychologicznym, ale równocześnie ma ona znaczenie etyczne, jest więc związana z normą. Norma, o którą chodzi w danym wypadku, to norma personalistyczna; jej jako cnotcie, i to tak dalece, że bez miłości jako cnoty nie może być pełni przeżycia miłości, którego wyrazem jest przykazanie miłości. (...) Innymi słowy: miłość jako przeżycie należy podporządkować miłości." K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, p 108.

<sup>160</sup> *Die Ehe*, München 1929; *Reinheit und Jungfräulichkeit*, Regensburg 1950; *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, Regensburg 1955; *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg*, Regensburg 1955; *Über das Herz*, Regensburg 1967; *Das trojanische Pferd*

a very clear definition of love, but before analysing it, it is important to start with a suggestion made by von Hildebrand himself; namely that if one wants to grasp the nature of something (like act, value, and quality), one should always investigate this process from the cases, in which this “something” is given in a very distinctive and intensive way. Because we are talking about love, we should proceed from the cases in which a large, deep and intensive love is present. We should start from love which plays a central role in human life. And this kind of love is for von Hildebrand betrothed love.<sup>161</sup>

“For this reason we must also often proceed from the betrothed love, because this is, in many respects, the most typical love within the natural categories of love and despite its special characteristics, many features of love in it are clearly distinctive. Thus we will choose here the betrothed love as starting point of the work of the nature of love, even if we will find some of what we find here as characteristic features of love, which is only similar to other categories of love.”<sup>162</sup>

By betrothed love von Hildebrand understands love which the persons mutually give each other, and which is fully realized in marriage. But what does it mean “to love”? According to von Hildebrand, love is an answer, precisely a value-response (*Wertantwort*),

---

*in der Stadt Gottes*, Regensburg 1968; *Die Enzyklika “Humanae Vitae” – ein Zeichen des Widerspruchs*, Regensburg 1968.

<sup>161</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Istota i rodzaje miłości w ujęciu Dietricha von Hildebranda* (*The essence and kinds of love according to Dietrich von Hildebrand*) “*Roczniki Filozoficzne*” XXXI, 3 (1983), p. 117.

<sup>162</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Gesammelte Werke, t. III, Regensburg 1971, pp. 110-111. “Aus diesem Grund müssen wir auch oft von der bräutlichen Liebe ausgehen, weil diese in vieler Hinsicht innerhalb der natürlichen Liebeskategorie die typischste Liebe ist und trotz ihrer besonderen Eigenart viele Züge der Liebe im allgemeinen in ihr am klarsten ausgeprägt sind. So werden wir auch hier der Herausarbeitung der Eigenart der Liebe die bräutliche Liebe als Ausgangspunkt wählen, wenn auch manches von dem, was wir als charakteristische Züge der Liebe hier finden, bei den anderen Liebeskategorien nur analog zu finden ist.”

of one person to the value which another person possesses qua person (*Gesamtwert*, *Personwert*), which makes him or her precious of himself or herself, which characterizes her and raises her up *qua person*. This is the response to a person in view of her possessing value in herself, to the objective goodness of the person, the aim in itself, its general existence. Love, here, aims toward a mutual bestowing of oneself and the spiritual unification of persons. It transforms and enriches the individuality of a human being. Moreover, love appears in different degrees, in different qualities and depth, in different categories. It is the deepest expression of a person and the purest gift (response) to the value of the person. Although this appears to be quite straightforward, it implies, however, a large number of other problems. Among these problems, that of value occupies a prominent place. Hence, we may formulate these questions: what is a value? What is the status of a value? Does it differ from good, and if so, what are the differences? The problem of value is a central point in von Hildebrand's anthropology. Furthermore, dealing with the problem of value, will bring another complex issue, namely that of a person. Person and value are so intertwined in Dietrich von Hildebrand's conception of love that one ought to proceed to their careful analysis.

## 2.2 Categories of Importance – Conception of Value

Because, according to von Hildebrand, love is a value-response (*Wertantwort*) of one person to another person, it seems to be important to explain what is meant by the notion of value. Von Hildebrand's axiology is extremely complicated. On the one hand, he uses the phenomenological theory of value of Max Scheler and makes it very original by deepening it. On the other hand, the results of his phenomenological analysis entwine (much more than Scheler's) with metaphysical and theological clues. In spite of this complexity (or

maybe owing to it) it is a theory which flows in very interesting, but sometimes questionable, ideas. Consequently, it deserves careful attention.<sup>163</sup>

Max Scheler, in his Preface to the second edition of *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, shows few basic arguments, or maybe ideas, which characterized the general theory of value. The first of these ideas is the position of a “strict ethical absolutism and objectivism”. The second idea is what could be called “emotional intuitionism”, provided one interprets Scheler’s *Wertfühlen* here as an emotional and not as an intellectual act. The Pascalian *sentir*, which inspired Scheler, is undoubtedly understood by Pascal as an intuitive intellectual act when he says that we “feel that space has three dimensions”, where he means simply an immediate intuitive intellectual knowledge that is not deduced from premises and “material apriority” (i.e., values and their relations can be objects of material cognition a priori, which has character of some “intuitive and cognitive feeling”) The assertion of a “material a priori” is in fact an entirely different idea than that of “emotional intuitionism” as we shall see. And the third idea, Scheler says, is “axiological personalism” (i.e., that all values – those which are vested to things and those which are vested to non personal beings and organizations – one should subordinate to the value of the person and of personal acts).<sup>164</sup>

Some central aspects of the above mentioned ideas of Max Scheler also define, in principle, the axiological theory of Dietrich von Hildebrand, who holds a strict ethical objectivism against any ethical relativism, a material (content-full, non-formal) a priori of values and of moral qualities, and the conviction that the value of the person and of the life and acts of persons ranks highest within the realms of values, but he rejects – introducing a distinction between being affected (*Affiziertwerden*) and cognitive acts of value-perception –

<sup>163</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości (Hildebrand's Conception of Love)* “Roczniki Filozoficzne” XXVIII, 2 1980, pp. 83-87.

<sup>164</sup>M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, pp. 12-16.

the opinion of an emotional intuitionism.<sup>165</sup>

One can sum up the most serious modifications, which distinguish von Hildebrand from Scheler, with the sentence that not every “good”, in the widest understanding of this word, is an axiological “good” (it means the “good” which is constituted by intrinsic value). One will see in the following subsection the other differences and the new ideas of von Hildebrand’s work. But first of all, one should start from the problem of importance.

According to von Hildebrand, the most basic element that expresses in general the essence of value is that it is one special (intrinsic) kind of “importance” (*Bedeutsamkeit*) of being sharply distinguished from others; an importance which by no means only possesses a particular ontological autonomy, but an axiologically speaking objective and intrinsic character: an axiological absoluteness and in-itself-ness. Here it is important to see that this goes, as John Barger showed in his doctoral dissertation on Roman Ingarden, in quite another direction from that of purely ontological autonomy of the “thing-in-itself”. Moreover, it can be found in beings and objects that possess being itself but just as well in appearances such as musical works or paintings and colors. Nonetheless, values themselves are never just appearances, even when their bearers are.

Von Hildebrand characterizes this phenomenon of importance first as it appears in relation to the sphere of human motivation: to feelings and acts of will,<sup>166</sup> but in no way sees the essence of importance in such a relation or motivating power of important objects: neither the objective goods for persons nor intrinsic values (and not even the subjectively satisfying) are reducible to their motivating power. The dignity of the person remains just the same value even when nobody is motivated by it or gives an adequate response to it, etc.

---

<sup>165</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, chapter 17; Idem, *Die Idee der sittlichen Handlung*, 1916, 2. Aufl. zusammen mit der Habilitationsschrift *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt 1969, pp. 1-126.

<sup>166</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, chapters: 1-3.

He begins his discussion of importance, though, from the statement that not any being that can be an object of human cognition, can therefore beget in human beings an emotional reaction. For example, it is not possible to be despaired or horrified because of the fact that  $3 + 3 = 6$ . This fact can be an example of a relatively neutral or indifferent state of affairs.<sup>167</sup> The opposite of this neutrality is in general, exactly Importance. In this way, by “importance” of being, von Hildebrand understands some property of being that can motivate the will or can bring some reaction in the emotional sphere of the knower. He understands it as some feature that confers in the widest sense – the character of “good” (positive importance) or “negativity” (negative importance) to a given object.<sup>168</sup> To put it in another way, it is the property which “*de-neutralizes*” being.

Von Hildebrand claims that when in cognition one starts with a direct experience, three motivating categories of importance (and *ipso facto* category of good)<sup>169</sup> appear to a person. These categories may “occur” in every object:<sup>170</sup>

---

<sup>167</sup>It is not absolutely neutral because it possesses the general value of being (*den allgemeinen Seinswert*) as well as a value of high intelligibility, necessity, structural importance. *Ibid.*, chapters: 6-7.

<sup>168</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 24-26.

<sup>169</sup>V. Hildebrand talks only about the “positive importance”.

<sup>170</sup>Von Hildebrand's contribution to value theory lays in the fact that he introduces three categories of importance. He himself acknowledges a lack in this scope in former and hitherto existing philosophy:

“Das volle Verständnis des Wertes, dieses tiefsten Urphänomens, ist von entscheidender Bedeutung. Das Urdatum des Wertes wurde zwar von allen grossen Denkern in seiner zentralen Bedeutung vorausgesetzt, aber es fehlte die volle philosophische *prise de conscience*. Die Erkenntnis der Wertes tritt bereits deutlich bei Plato hervor, z. B. im *Staat*. [Platon, *Der Staat*, VI, Kap. 19, St. 508e-509b.]. Aristotles spricht an mehreren Stellen vom Wert, wenn auch viel weniger deutlich. In der Philosophie des heiligen Augustinus spielt er als das *in sich Bedeutsame* eine grosse Rolle. Im Thomismus ist er mehr oder weniger auf das objektive Gut für die Person zurückgeführt, obwohl ihn der heilige Thomas selbst an manchen Stellen vom objektiven Gut für die Person unterscheidet. Kant sich den Wert klar, wenn er vom guten Willen als dem einzigen sittlichen Wert spricht. Die Erkenntnis des Wertes, besonders des sittlichen, findet sich erst recht bei Sören Kierkegaard. Auch Max Scheler und vor allem William



The merely subjective importance<sup>171</sup>: some objects possess “importance”, meaning that they can motivate the will, but only because they are subjectively satisfying objects (like a complement, or smoking). Apart from this “fulfillment”, they do not possess any “importance” for a person; they are something neutral.

Importance in itself (or intrinsic importance)<sup>172</sup>: some objects can motivate the human will because they have some inner, intrinsic importance that von Hildebrand calls *value*. They possess (like love or justice) importance in itself that does not depend on any relation to the will.

The objective good for the person<sup>173</sup>: some objects call out some reactions in the human will because while they address themselves to persons *for whom* they are goods, they have the character of objective gifts *for* a person; they satisfy proper, objective human interests and are in the person’s true interest. This category is different from the subjectively satisfying, because of its objective character. A prisoner needs freedom, not only because of its subjectively satisfying character, but first of all, because freedom is a high natural good for a human being. In this category also legitimate pleasure and satisfaction, which are accordant with the true interests of human persons, can be simultaneously objective goods for a person, while other subjective pleasures may be intrinsically or accidentally illegitimate and therefore to enjoy them is pleasurable but at the same time an objective evil for the person. In the case of subjective importance, pleasure and satisfaction are subjective.<sup>174</sup>

---

David Ross haben das Wesen des Wertes weitgehend gesehen.” D. Hildebrand, *Moralia* Gesammelte Werke IX, Regensburg 1980, pp. 47-48. “Aber eine volle, eindeutige philosophische *prise de conscience* des Wertes in seiner prinzipiellen Verschiedenheit vom objektiven Gut für die Person ist nirgends durchgeführt.” *Ibid.*

<sup>171</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 34-49.

<sup>172</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 34-49.

<sup>173</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 49-59; pp. 393-403.

<sup>174</sup>According to Josef Seifert, M. Scheler and N. Hartman somehow prepared a ground for these important distinctions; but it is only D. v. Hildebrand who achieves a full philosophical “*prise de conscience*” of these distinctions and con-

Von Hildebrand does not undertake to define value.<sup>175</sup> He himself claims that a definition can never explain all richness of the essence which implicates value itself; value as directly given, is the primary essence and real (near being, truth and love) object of philosophy,<sup>176</sup> and is indefinite; and value is primary, i.e., irreducible to something other than itself.<sup>177</sup> But von Hildebrand tries to fill this lack of definition by description.

As we have said before, value is a property of a being which makes it improper to be indifferent vis-à-vis this being. Value is something which “de-neutralizes” being, which makes it such that the being that possesses “it” is in some aspect of worth in itself – and not only for the “knower”. Von Hildebrand tries to demonstrate that there is an absolute objectivism of value by showing that values have an absolute and independent character:

“We see then that the important-in-itself or the value is objective in every sense of the word. It is objective insofar as it is a real property of the being of which we predicate a value; beings are endowed with values even if we abstract from any possible motivation. Values are so much proper to beings that they form the core of their significance. Values can in no way be interpreted as mere relational aspects of being which it possesses with respect to our desire or will. Values clearly reveal themselves as belonging to a being independently of any desire or will.”<sup>178</sup>

One knows already that value – as opposed to the objective good for a person – is an importance in-itself, and is also the objective property of being (regardless of the actual relation to the sphere of

---

nects it with an essential characteristic of value.

<sup>175</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości (Hildebrand's Conception of Love)*, p. 83.

<sup>176</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 10, 95, pp. 102-105.

<sup>177</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 95.

<sup>178</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 89.

the will). It is not possible either, according to von Hildebrand, to treat value as something relative on the account of the fact that not everyone can “see” it in cognition.<sup>179</sup> This means that some beings do not have the capacity to grasp value, that they are blind to it.<sup>180</sup> For, value is identical to itself, regardless of human cognition.<sup>181</sup>

A given object is worthy, not because it is proper to human nature. On the contrary, it is worthy because it possesses a value. A value, for example justice, can be grasped only through its essence. It is not possible either to deduce value from the relation of harmony (from conformity of one object to human nature) because value itself explains this conformity; value exists independently of this relation of conformity. Here the autonomous character of value appears. Von Hildebrand claims that value is the most primary thing, *an ultimate datum* (*ein Urphänomen*); it is primary as essence, existence and

---

<sup>179</sup>At this point Hildebrand’s position is questionable. Witness these words from Adam Rodziński:

“It seems that the essence of value as value is “above persons” and also is relational. For, it is always its genesis no matter whether the object itself, of which the value may be adjudged (projecting, so to say, this relation on its essence or some its accidentals, comes out with the value-forming initiative toward a person, or – how it takes place with some value types – the person by himself causes that value appears in some object that by itself would not be able to neither initiate nor determine unequivocally neither an actual interesting on the person’s side, nor, all the more, any his decision following it.” In: “Roczniki Filozoficzne” XIII 2 1975, p. 9:

“Widzimy, że istota wartości jako wartości jest “adpersonalna” i relacyjalna zarazem, taka bowiem jest zawsze jej geneza bez względu na to, czy z inicjatywą wartościotwórczą występuje wobec danej osoby sam przedmiot, o którym orzekać możemy wartość (rzutując niejako tę relację na jego istotę czy jakieś jego akcydensy), czy też – jak to się dzieje z pewnymi typami wartości – osoba sama sprawia, że wartość pojawia się w jakimś przedmiocie, który sam z siebie niezdolny byłby zainicjować czy zdeterminować w sposób jednoznaczny ani konkretnego zainteresowania ze strony tej osoby, ani tym bardziej jakiejś jej decyzji idącej w ślad za tym.”

<sup>180</sup>Von Hildebrand deals with the problem of “value blindness” at length in *Graven Images: Substitutes for true Morality*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1957, p. 11-39, and also in *Christian Ethics*, pp. 431-452.

<sup>181</sup>See B. Schwarz, *Dietrich von Hildebrand on Value*, “Thought” 95, 1949, p. 664.

truth.<sup>182</sup> He explains the autonomy of values by their primary, irreducible, absolute, and objective character. And what value also imposes from an object is an obligation to give it an adequate response.<sup>183</sup>

Importance in itself like moral values, for example, imposes that the object always be accepted. Human relation towards them is not left to his arbitrary choice or mood. However, requirements of the merely subjective importance like the pleasure of smoking or pleasure of hearing compliments are different kinds. Human being is conscious that it is possible to resist their tempting invitation.

By analysing the importance in itself, von Hildebrand claims that the value of a human being is essentially different from other values of this sphere. That is why he divides importance in itself in five groups: (1) the formal (general) value of being as such; (2) value rooted in the fact of creation; (3) ontological values (like value of human being, value of angel); (4) qualitative values (aesthetic values, intellectual values, moral values)<sup>184</sup> and (5) technically values<sup>185</sup> (strong will, energy, the capacity of controlling impulses and instincts).<sup>186</sup>

The explanation of the rules of this kind of classification is not present in von Hildebrand's theory, he also did not dwell on the first two kinds of values. However, one can say that the formal value of being as such is the value that is objectified in being (as in opposition to non-being); it is the value that expresses "being something" – the value of essence and existence as such, without any specific determination.<sup>187</sup> It is the value that is available only in the philosophical

---

<sup>182</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 95.

<sup>183</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>184</sup>For a precise analysis of ontological and qualitative values, see Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 129-140.

<sup>185</sup>For this type of values von Hildebrand uses also different names, like instrumental values, immanent perfection. Idem, *Graven Images: Substitutes for true Morality*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>186</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości (Hildebrand's Conception of Love)*, p. 84.

<sup>187</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 146-150.

grasp of the reality, on the third level of abstraction.<sup>188</sup> Every being is participating in this value independently of its nature. Through the second type of value, which is rooted in the act of creation, every being possesses some kind of value and dignity. According to von Hildebrand, every being possesses these two values.

By ontological values he understands values that every particular, specific being possesses. In other words, "ontological values are embodied in the specific nature of a being".<sup>189</sup> Hence, one can talk about the value of a dog, value of a human being, value of an angel. Ontological value is possessed by every being of the same species and in an equal extent (one man cannot be more man than other one). Human being possesses this kind of value and it is not possible for him or her to lose it. The hierarchy of those values refers to the hierarchy of beings.<sup>190</sup>

The qualitative value is a value that human beings can possess (but not necessarily). This kind of value does not appear in being in the same way; it is possible for it (value) to grow or become smaller. Von Hildebrand distinguishes three groups of qualitative values, namely, (1) moral values, (2) intellectual values, and (3) aesthetic values. Moral values are the highest. According to von Hildebrand, the qualitative values give full character of goodness to real objects.<sup>191</sup> That is why von Hildebrand treats those qualitative values as values in the most proper sense of the word.<sup>192</sup>

Von Hildebrand does not solve unequivocally and exhaustively the problem of the manner in which a value exists. His work gives an unequivocal answer to the problem of the objective existence of values. And it is a positive answer. He also gives many unequivocal answers to the distinctions and relations between values and the other forms of importance (adding many more to the three categories

---

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 154, pp. 158-160.

<sup>192</sup> T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości* (Hildebrand's Conception of Love), p. 86.

distinguished in his *Christian Ethics* later), and to their relation to human motivation and intrinsic nature. He is also quite unambiguous regarding the question that values can be really existing and do so in real beings: the ontological values are real values of real beings, but also the qualitative and moral values that ought to be realized in the world can become and be real. Thus von Hildebrand rejects, much more clearly than Scheler, the view of Nicolai Hartmann according to which values are in principle a sphere of ideal objects. He also unequivocally, in his *What is Philosophy?* as well as in his *Christian Ethics* and in other works, teaches that there are timeless and ideal value-essences. But less developed is the answer to the question whether values possess an ideal or real way of existence.

Von Hildebrand sees the necessity of the acceptance of an ideal sphere in philosophy. But he does not consider himself as an idealist in Plato's objectivist sense while he clearly and radically rejected any subjectivist Kantian or Husserlian "idealism" in his *What is Philosophy?* And at this point the difficulty consisting in clarifying von Hildebrand's conception of the way an ideal existence of values occurs. Because he claims that values are vested with an ideal way of existing, but different values do not have the same relation to real existence.

"The fact that we have not yet a metaphysical place at hand in which to locate these necessary such-being does not permit us to deny the ideal existence which justice, love, the number 3, color, etc., clearly reveal as their property. By screaming in horror 'That is Platonism!' instead of admitting, free from any prejudice, an unambiguously given feature, we act like Procrustes who cut off the feet of men because they did not fit into the bed he had made."<sup>193</sup>

The ontological values stand more on the side of ideal existence than other values: most of them are rooted in the essence and exis-

---

<sup>193</sup>D. Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy?*, p. 117.

tence of real beings. Among the qualitative values, the moral value are such that their ideal way of existence assures them at the same time a place in concrete real existing being through a fusion in given acts.<sup>194</sup> But von Hildebrand claims that this concrete realisation of values does not extend their existence and metaphysical importance, but from another point of view this realisation can be very important:

“The real existence of a moral value is obviously a completely new stage, for it implies that a moral good has been concretely realized. But it nonetheless secondary when compared with the reality which the moral values already possess thanks to their ideal existence.”<sup>195</sup>

The key, which can be helpful in interpreting von Hildebrand, and which can also help to ignore an objection of contradictions, can be a proper explication of his understanding of ideal existence.

According to von Hildebrand, the notion of “ideal way of existence” can be understood twofold: this term points at some perfection (which is an internal necessity and non-contradiction of the essence), or on some imperfection, some kind of ontological areas (i.e., that this kind of existence is excluded from the area of the individual beings in real world). Von Hildebrand accepts the first explanation of this term,<sup>196</sup> i.e., when he writes about the ideal way of existence, he understood it as an essential notion, internal necessity from which essence appears and which is opposite to something that is accidental and chaotic.<sup>197</sup>

---

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>196</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>197</sup> See J. Seifert, “Die verschiedenen Bedeutungen von ‘Sein’ – Dietrich von Hildebrand als Metaphysiker und Martin Heideggers Vorwurf der Seinsvergessenheit”, *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein. Festgabe für D.v. Hildebrand zum 80. Geburtstag*, Regensburg 1970, pp. 301-332. J. Seifert distinguishes three dimensions of being which is very helpful in this context: sensibleness, reality and value.

That is why, when one claims that the ideal way of existence is vested to value, one understands by this the proper sense of the expressions, which designate these values. Hence, one can say: "The fact that human attitudes *should* be morally good shows that the reality of moral values is guaranteed by their 'ideal existence'."<sup>198</sup>

Values are always given in some hierarchy. Von Hildebrand accepts the hierarchy of values (near some more others) to primary metaphysical relations:

"Unfortunately into Scholasticism the four *Aristotelian causae* – to which many of the *Platonic – Augustinian causa exemplaris* was added – were held for the only metaphysical relations. There are, however, still different, just as important and fundamental ones. "First is the relation of hierarchy. It belongs to the nature of the genuine (the important in-itself) that there is an objective height and lowness. Thus, the whole family of moral values – as fair, pure, good-natured, magnanimous, grateful – stands higher than those of the intellectual values – mentally meaning, sharpness of the understanding, talented – and again stands within the moral values humility and purity still higher than trustworthiness. The relation regarding the value of the high standing is a central metaphysical genuine relationship, which sharply stands out as something totally different and new against the 4 *causae* of Aristotle."<sup>199</sup>

---

<sup>198</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Graven Images: Substitutes for true Morality*, p. 122.

<sup>199</sup>Idem, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 94.

"Leider wurden in der Scholastik die 4 Aristotelischen *causae* – zu denen bei vielen die *Platonisch – Augustnische causa exemplaris* hinzukam – für die einzigen metaphysischen Relationen gehalten. Es gibt aber noch andere, ebenso wichtige und fundamentale. Da ist ersten die Relation der Hierarchie. Es gehört zum Wesen der echten (des In – sich – Bedeutsamen), dass es ein objektives Höher und Niedriger gibt. So steht die ganze Familie der moralischen Werte – wie gerecht, rein, gütig, grossmütig, dankbar – höher als die der intellektuellen Werte – geistig bedeutend, Schärfe des Verstandes, begabt – und wiederum steht



The highest in this hierarchy of qualitative values are moral values, after which come intellectual values and aesthetic values. Each of these three regions of values has also its own hierarchy. Among ontological values (which are given in natural cognition) the highest is the value of human being, and then comes the value of animal, and the value of plants and inanimate matter.

## 2.3 Love as an Affective Value-Response

Value as the property of a being which makes it impossible to be indifferent vis-à-vis some being, value as something which “*de-neutralizes*” being, which makes that the being that possesses “it”, is in some aspect of great worth for the “knower”.<sup>200</sup> And value understood exactly as such, is given to some object directly and intuitively. In this matter von Hildebrand is accordant with Husserl and Scheler:

“Profoundly rooted prejudices let such descriptive knowledge be limited often to the sphere of the sensible opinion. Only in the most recent time Edmund Husserl began to break the real, great, old tradition of philosophy, and establish the given (facts) in its own right, that we find abandoned for every subject-area of an appropriate act of lively information. So does it show itself in an appropriate investigation, that there is some perception of value-knowledge for the realm of value, in which they reveal themselves to us in things, states of affairs, and circumstances and founded objective values of persons, like in our seeing colours, hearing tones, and which are

---

innerhalb der moralischen Werte die Demut und Reinheit noch höher als die Verlässlichkeit. Die Relation des wertmässig Höherstehens ist eine zentrale metaphysische Urbeziehung, die sich scharf als etwas von den *4 causae von Aristoteles* ganz Verschiedenes, Neues abhebt.”

<sup>200</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości* (Hildebrand’s Conception of Love), p. 84.

given in the external perception of things and so on.”<sup>201</sup>

In an epistemological point of view a problem occurs as to what kind this intuition is: is it an intellectual intuition or an emotional one? Before von Hildebrand gave an answer to this question, he made a division of human experiences: intentional and unintentional experiences.<sup>202</sup>

By intentional experiences von Hildebrand understood – according with Husserl and Scheler – a conscious relation of human being to the object. By unintentional experience, he understood some psychological state, like tiredness, irritation or a bad mood, which does not have a conscious relation to the object. These states have some reason, but a causal relation is not identical with an intentional relation.<sup>203</sup>

“We are not tired *about* something; tiredness is only a state, an experience of something qualitatively related to our body, but it does not have any meaningful reference to an object. Of course the state is *caused by* something. But the objective causal relation must not be confused with an intentional relation.”<sup>204</sup>

---

<sup>201</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, Patris Verlag 1982, pp. 131-132.

“Tiefgewurzelte Vorurteile liessen ein solch anschauliche Kenntnissnahmen oft auf die Sphäre der sinnlichen Anschauung beschränkt sein. Erst in der neuesten Zeit hat Edmund Husserl an die eigentliche grosse alte Tradition der Philosophie anknüpfend mit diesem Vorurteil prinzipiell zu brechen angefangen und die Tatsachen wieder in ihr Recht eingesetzt, die uns für jedes Gegenstandsgebiet einen entsprechenden Akt der anschaulichen Kenntnissnahme finden lassen. So zeigt sich auch bei unbefangener Untersuchung, dass es für Reich der Werte ein eigenes Wertkenntnissnahmen gibt, in dem uns die in den Dingen, Sachverhalten und Personen fundierten gegenständlichen Wert zur Gegebenheit kommen analog wie uns im Sehen Farben, im Hören Töne, in der äusseren Wahrnehmung Dinge usw. gegeben sind.”

<sup>202</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, Chapter 17.

<sup>203</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości* (Hildebrand's Conception of Love), pp. 84-85.

<sup>204</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 191.

But all intentional experience includes acquaintance with their cause, knowledge of the object, which motivates this experience. In intentional experiences (that is to say, in the sphere of acts), von Hildebrand distinguishes: cognitive acts (*Kognitive Akten*) and responses (*Antworten*).<sup>205</sup>

One can grasp the differences between them as follows:

The cognitive acts are consciousness of something. The cognitive object is quasi empty. The content is on the subject side. But when, for example, one feels joy, the content is on the object side. The object is 'full' of joy. The joy turns to the subject. The joy is not a consciousness of something – as von Hildebrand claims – but something conscious (*eine bewusste Entität, eine bewusst vollzogene Realität*).

In the cognitive acts the intention turns from the subject to the object; the subject is speaking, the object is listening. In the response the intention is turned from the object to the subject. The object opens his heart. The notion of the object's act turns to subject. The object's act is a response to the subject.

All cognitive acts have a receptive character. The receptivity is an essence of every cognition. On the other hand 'responses' are not receptive. "The response, as such, is on the contrary, unreceptive;

---

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 195.

Father Siemianowski sees the great importance of value response, who wrote in the Epilogue of the Polish translation of *Die Umgestaltung in Christus*:

"From a theoretical point of view this notion (value-response) is very important. Well, when the object 'listens intently' to the objective sense of values, which is discovered in subjects and when the object is going after its 'voice', it is only in this way in its experiences, emotions, feelings, behaviours, that the object gives proper value-response; it is only in this way also that one has to deal with complete sense and rational experiences of values, and it is only in this way that the object, for its subjective emotions and feelings, can find in values the objective explanation. (...) Hildebrand, by introducing theoretical notions of value-response to the description of subjective experiences, widened and enriched the phenomenological understanding of intentionality, and because of it he could more adequately describe and explain data of axiological experience." Antoni Siemianowski, Epilogue in D. Hildebrand, *Przemienienie w Chrystusie*, trans. J. Zychowicz, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1982, pp. 366-367.

rather, it has a definitely spontaneous character.”<sup>206</sup>

A specific relation between these two kinds of intentional acts occurs: “All responses necessarily presuppose cognitive acts; they are essentially based on cognitive acts.”<sup>207</sup>

The subject first must uncover himself in his specificity, in order to be a subject of response. In dialog between person and world, cognitive acts make the ‘basis’ for every other act.<sup>208</sup> Firstly, one must know the person in order to love him/her. Von Hildebrand accepts here (as his own) the scholastic principle ‘*Nihil volitum nisi cogitatum*’.<sup>209</sup>

Von Hildebrand divides the responses into three groups: (1) theoretical responses (conviction, doubts, supposition); (2) volitive responses (want, acceptance, negation); (3) affective responses (joy, sadness, love, hatred, hope, apprehension, regard, admiration, indignation).<sup>210</sup>

The theme of the theoretical responses is truth or existence. One can rightly ask these following questions: What is the essence of this thing? Does this thing exist? In a theoretical response ‘we’, by the ‘word of our spirit’, grasp an object, which appears to us in a cognitive act, by accepting the fact that such an object exists. In this kind of response it is not a question of cognition, because the cognition is already established. If this response is adequate, then we repeat by our words what the object said to us in cognition. That is why von Hildebrand said that theoretical responses are not free in the sense that the will cannot arbitrarily decide what kind of

---

<sup>206</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 197.

<sup>207</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>208</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości (Hildebrand's Conception of Love)*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>209</sup>At this point von Hildebrand radically departs from Scheler. Scheler understands the world of feelings in this way: (1) the world of feeling constitutes separate, individual universum of experiences and meanings, and its explanation does not need recall to any other phenomenon aside from feelings; (2) Feelings are foundations of all consciousness. Feelings condition and define the intellectual and volitional experiences.

<sup>210</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 86-87.

response one should give. Cognition decides what kind of response one should give.

In the case of volitive responses, von Hildebrand changes his view about the scope of objects, to which they are related and about the character of these responses. In his *Christian Ethics* he claims that the theme of volitional responses is a state of affairs, which is not realized yet, but which is still realizing. Our interest turns to the not yet realized state of affairs and it realizes it. The “words” with which our will turns to our objects are: thou shouldst exist and thou wilt exist.<sup>211</sup> This kind of response has an activist and futuristic character. According to Josef Seifert, von Hildebrand in *Moralia* accepts that volitional responses can adopt some kind of form which accepts moral good or negates the moral evil. This kind of implicit position includes devotion to God and renouncement of Satan. Apart from the position which accepts the moral good or negates the moral evil, von Hildebrand adds to the volitional responses concrete acts of free will, which – in opposition to his words in *Christian Ethics* – can relate not only to the not-yet-realized state of affairs, but also to the realized state of affairs: “So, we can say: something is not only so, but we also will that it be so.”<sup>212</sup>

One can conclude from the above characteristics that the volitional responses are different from the theoretical and that the ‘volitional’ theme is the *importance* of the state of affairs, and not the truth about it. The truth is established in them. The second feature, which makes these two responses different is the practical character of this first one (at least some of them, namely those which are turned to the not-yet-realized state of affairs to realize it).

Von Hildebrand characterizes the affective responses in contrast to the theoretical and volitional ones.<sup>213</sup>

Therefore, he claims that an affective response is much more a response than a conviction, doubt, or supposition. These last are only

---

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>212</sup> Idem, *Moralia*, p. 75.

<sup>213</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, pp. 202-206.

“So können wir sagen: Etwas ist nicht nur so – wir wollen auch, dass es so sei.”

a repetition of what the object reveals to us. In affective responses one can express more one's own creativity.

Affective responses have a common feature with volitional responses, namely that both include an importance of object, consciousness of this importance, and through this importance they are motivated. But von Hildebrand also sees the difference between these two types of responses:

Volitional responses are free in a strict sense, they are independent of us. Affective responses are not free in this meaning. One cannot command them to oneself. Von Hildebrand understood love, for example, as a gift;

Affective responses do not have the capacity of ordering any kind of activity to our bodily organs, when volitional responses have this kind of possibility;

Affective responses are a voice of our heart, wherein a person expresses himself, and in volitional response only the free centre of the person is shown.<sup>214</sup>

If von Hildebrand claims that the whole person is engaged in an affective response, he assumes this because according to him, the affective response – like every value response – establishes the cognitive act, i.e., the intellect is active. On the other hand, human will also cooperates in this kind of response (when the will refuses '*Desavuirung*' or accepts '*Sanction*', then an affective response spontaneously occurs). Von Hildebrand considers sanction and disavowal as the deepest dimension of freedom:

“There also exists a fundamentally different way in which man's freedom displays itself: the free attitude toward experiences already existing in our soul. We have the freedom of taking a position toward experiences which have come into existence without our free intervention, and which also cannot be dissipated by our free influence.”

and

---

<sup>214</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

“Now we come to a new fundamental mark of the morally conscious man. It consists in making use of the very core of human freedom: the capacity of sanctioning and of disavowing our own spontaneous attitudes.”<sup>215</sup>

After introducing von Hildebrand’s classification of intentional acts and keeping the definition of love (that it is a value-response of one person to the value of another person) in mind, one should now look into the conception of the person. It will be very helpful to explain this response, and in peculiarity, whether, or to what extent, it is a theoretical, volitional or affective response.

According to von Hildebrand the most fundamental division of beings – apart from the division between the Absolute being and accidental beings – is the division between the personal and impersonal beings.<sup>216</sup> In every experience the personal human being appears as a human being.

“Every man is a person in that his being is essentially conscious: he is a subject who enters into relations with others, who knows, wills and loves. A person is a being who posesses himself, who does not simply exist but who actively achieves his being and has the power to choose freely.”<sup>217</sup>

This is how von Hildebrand sees human being. The reflection on man’s properties shows a totally new, incomparable deeper dimension of personal being; one can see deeper properties than usual in material or animated beings. Human being is a spiritual being. This “spirituality” of the person is characterised by immateriality.<sup>218</sup>

---

<sup>215</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 316 and pp. 320-321.

<sup>216</sup>“Der grösste Unterschied innerhalb des Seienden – abgesehen von dem von unendlichem und endlichem Sein, von dem absoluten Sein und dem kontingentem Sein – ist der von personalem und apersonalem Sein.” Idem, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 89.

<sup>217</sup>Idem, *Liturgy and Personality*, Sophia Institute Press 1993, p. 19.

<sup>218</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 87.

Immateriality, of course, also concerns beings such as literary art, science etc. However, reality is what distinguishes spiritual being of the person from other immaterial beings. Von Hildebrand distinguishes in the person three spiritual centres: "Let us to admit that in man there exists a triad of spiritual centres – intellect, will and heart – which are ordained to cooperate and to fecundate one another".<sup>219</sup> They are sources of specific spiritual acts: cognitive, volitional and affective.

The next property of the person is the fact that he is the highest kind of substantial being. It is probably at this point that von Hildebrand departs mostly from Scheler, according to whom the person is not a substantial being,<sup>220</sup> but only a unity of being of acts,<sup>221</sup> a unity which exists in its own performance,<sup>222</sup> in its excavation without any basis.<sup>223</sup> Von Hildebrand consciously refers here to the Aristotelian conception of substance, wherein the essential feature is *inseitas*.<sup>224</sup>

But for von Hildebrand not only *inseitas* is important, i.e., that substance is not a part of something. According to him substance is also not an element of some continuum. This "uniqueness" which

---

<sup>219</sup>D. Hildebrand, *The Scared Heart*, Helical Press 1965, p. 46; see also *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 112.

<sup>220</sup>"An diesen Bestimmungen ist (...) Eines ganz richtig: Dass nämlich Person niemals als ein Ding oder eine Substanz gedacht werden darf." M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 371.

<sup>221</sup>"Person ist die konkrete, selbst wesenhafte Seinseinheit von Akten verschiedenartigen (...) vorhergeht" Idem, p. 382; or "Das geistige Aktzentrum, die Person des Menschen, ist keine Substanz, sondern eine monarchische Anordnung von Akten, unter denen je einer die Führung und Leitung besitzt und auf denjenigen Wert und die Idee gerichtet ist, mit denen der Mensch sich je "identifiziert"." Idem, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, Bern 1966, p. 64.

<sup>222</sup>"Die Person existiert einzig im Vollzug oder in Aktregung ihrer Akte. Ihr Sein ist ein immer neues Sichselbsthervorbringen." Idem, *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*, Bern 1954, p. 54.

<sup>223</sup>"Gewiss ist die Person und erlebt sie sich nur als aktvollziehendes Wesen und ist in keinem Sinne "hinter diesen" oder etwas, das wie ein ruhender Punkt "über" dem Vollzug und Ablauf ihrer Akte stünde." Idem, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 384.

<sup>224</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 91.



is a characteristic of substance in different beings, is also realised in different ways. For example: stone, which is an element of a rock, is separate only spatially from it. The “being for itself” of the stone, its character as individual is very weak. In the organisms, this “being as individual” is much deeper. Individuality of the being has the highest point in the person. This “uniqueness” (*Ein – Individuum – Sein*) is really connected with personal being.<sup>225</sup> The idea of fusing together two people in one human being, or of the division of one person into two persons seems to be nonsense.<sup>226</sup>

The person is this kind of substance, which excludes the possibility of obliterating the limits of its uniqueness.<sup>227</sup> In this sense substance as a being is inaccessible. Classic philosophy expresses this property of personal being by the formula “*persona est alteri incommunicabilis*”. But the person is capable of going beyond the limits of his own uniqueness and of assuming freely and consciously an attitude to the external world. The person can engage itself in the value world, and not only because some values are good for the person, but because of the values themselves. The person can treat himself and his acts in this same way; he can accept or refuse the becoming of spontaneous affective acts: sanction them or disavow. Von Hildebrand calls transcendence the capacity that the person possesses of engaging his objectivity which is motivated by values.<sup>228</sup>

---

<sup>225</sup>Idem, *Liturgy and Personality*, p. 19.

Adam Rodziński, in one of his articles “Osoba wśród wartości” (“Person Among Values”), does not deny the substantial character of the person and his openness to others but he also claims that relational character belongs to the essence of personality. In Polish language the word “osoba” captures very well the individuality of personal being. “Osoba” (person) implies “osobność” (uniqueness) and non-repetition. This aspect of personal being underlines Polish ethics. Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* or Tadeusz Styczeń, *Objawiać osobę*.

<sup>226</sup>Idem, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 92.

<sup>227</sup>Idem, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, Regensburg 1975, p. 20.

<sup>228</sup>“Mit Transcendenz meine ich: der Mensch wird im Unterschied zu Pflanze und Tiernicht nur von einer theologischen Bewegung beherrscht, einer Tendenz, seine Entelechie zu entfalten. Er ist vielmehr fähig, auf etwas ihm überlegenem einzugehen, sich an Dinge, die einen echten Wert besitzen, hinzugeben. Vor allem vermag er auf Gott in Liebe und Anbetung zu antworten. (...) Nicht das Ver-

---

langen nach der eigenen Vollendung motiviert die innere Gutheit und Bedeutsamkeit des echten Wertes, über allem aber die unendliche Güte Gottes." Idem, *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg*, p. 258.

See also K. Wojtyła: "The endeavor to fulfill person's self, him-self, is, so to say, shown by the fact that this 'self' is incomplete, and incompleteness does not mean the same what accidentally being does, although, it allows to reduce itself to this accidental. (...) it irrefutably demonstrates that the personal objectivity of human being is not a closed structure. Neither self-consciousness, nor self-possessing can close human being, human 'I' in his own object. It is, apparently, the other way around, namely, this 'turning toward myself', based on one's consciousness and self-determination, appears to be finally a source of the fullest opening of the subject to reality. There is a close relation between self-fulfillment and transcendence in human being, in his 'I' understood as personal object. Transcendence is, so to say, the second name of person in the contemporary mentality. (...) The philosophical significance of transcendence is manifold. In metaphysics, it describes being as both such reality that trespasses all categories, and that is also their fundament. In the similar way, it is so in the case of truth and good as parallel *transcendentalia*. In philosophical anthropology transcendence – according to its etymology '*trans-scendere*' – means also to go beyond (to sur-pass), if it may be claimed in complete experience of human being, if it manifests itself dynamic entirety of person's being and acting, in her [his] '*esse*' and '*operari*.' Different aspects of this transcendence meet finally in one source that constantly gushes in human being as subject, as '*suppositum*', and which in the final analysis testifies to the fact that '*suppositum humanum*' is also of spiritual nature. Transcendence is a manifestation of human spirituality." K. Wojtyła, *Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota* (*Person: Object and Community*), "Roczniki Filozoficzne" XXIV 2 (1976). p. 17:

"Dążność do spełniania siebie, swojego 'ja', unaocznia niejako fakt, że to 'ja' jest nie-pełne i niepełność nie oznacza tego samego co przygodność bytu, ale pozwala się do niej sprowadzić. (...) Wskazuje to niezbicie, że osobowa podmiotowość człowieka nie stanowi struktury zamkniętej. Ani samoświadomość, ani samoposiadanie nie zamykają człowieka, ludzkiego 'ja' w jego własnym podmiocie. Wręcz przeciwnie, cały ten 'zwrot ku sobie', na rzecz którego pracują świadomość i samostanowienie, okazuje się ostatecznie źródłem najpełniejszego otwarcia tegoż podmiotu na rzeczywistość. Zachodzi w człowieku, w ludzkim 'ja' jako osobowym podmiocie, ścisły związek pomiędzy spełnianiem siebie a transcendencją. Transcendencja jest jakby drugim imieniem osoby w umysłowości współczesnej. (...) Filozoficzne znaczenie transcendencji jest wielorakie. W metafizyce oznacza ona byt jako rzeczywistość przekraczającą wszelkie kategorie, a zarazem stanowiącą ich fundament. Podobnie prawda czy dobro jako paralelne w stosunku do bytu *transcendentalia*. W antropologii filozoficznej transcendencja – zgodnie ze swoją etymologią '*trans – scendere*' oznacza również prze-kraczanie (lub też prze-rastanie), o ile ono jest stwierdzalne w całościowym

In the human being, these two features, namely objectivity and transcendence, do not exclude each other and do not prevent each other,<sup>229</sup> but they condition each other. The person who engages more in a world of values, will develop himself more. This fulfillment of the person depends also on the kind of motivating values. The higher the value is, the fuller the development of the person is.<sup>230</sup>

The objectivity and transcendence cause that the person is capable and designed to live with God, (as St. Augustine claims: *Fecisti nos ad Te, Domine*) with another person (in this case it is a me – you relation), and they cause a person to be a member of society (relation me – we).<sup>231</sup> As a matter of fact, the person in relation with another person achieves the full development of his capacities.<sup>232</sup> Of course there are great levels of this meeting: from mutual observation, to the unification and mutual presence that is specific to love.<sup>233</sup> Mieczysław Albert Krapiec in his book *I – Man*, explains this relation in a very meaningful way:

“Hence, there arises a characteristic manner of existence

---

doświadczeniu człowieka, o ile ujawnia się w dynamicznym całokształcie jego bytowania i działania, jego ‘esse’ i ‘operari’. Wielorakie przejawy tej transcendencji spotykają się ostatecznie w jednym źródle, które stale bije w człowieku jako podmiocie, jako ‘suppositum’, i które w ostatecznej analizie świadczy o tym, że ‘suppositum humanum’ jest również duchowej natury. Transcendencja stanowi ujawnienie się duchowości człowieka.”

<sup>229</sup>“Es gilt nun zu verstehen, dass ein solches Überschreiten des Eigenlebens, ebenso wie das Heraustreten aus ihm, nicht ein *Aufgeben* des Eigenlebens darstellt, ein Hinwegsterben des Eigenlebens. Das Eigenleben und das darüber Hinausgreifen durchdringen sich organisch.” Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Regensburg 1971, p. 280.

<sup>230</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 280.

<sup>231</sup>Idem, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, p. 92; Hildebrand dedicates his other book *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft* to questions related to the metaphysics of the community.

<sup>232</sup>“Und doch findet die menschliche Person, die wie kein anderes uns in der Erfahrung bekanntes Geschöpf eine ‘Welt für sich’ darstellt, erst in der geistigen Berührung mit anderen Personen, in der Vereinigung mit ihnen, kurz; erst in der Gemeinschaft (gemäss dem weiteren Sinn des Wortes) die Erfüllung ihrer Wesensanlage.” Idem, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 20.

<sup>233</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 21-31.

between 'I' and 'Thou', a manner of being 'for another', through which 'I' offers himself to another and, in meeting with a similar act from the side of the 'Thou' he not only does not lose any of his inner riches but, contrarily, he enriches himself in everything which the other person has acquired and what he personally presents.<sup>234</sup> In the act of love the personally-existential openness reaches its zenith, since there occurs another person's communication, not only of his objective, existential, intentional and cognitive contents that have arisen as the result of an individual person's work, but something more, the offering of the very person's subject (of the very being) who, while presenting himself to another person, adopts the manner of *being-living-for-another-person*.<sup>235</sup>

Even if the person is a substance which is "itself a world", he is also open to a unification with others and to a moral fulfillment by

---

<sup>234</sup>Obviously, just as in the case cognition so, too, in love the reason of generating it (at least very frequently) is that which can be called in general "human body". It enables these acts to come into being but it is not the goal of their actualisation. In the case of love, we are dealing with an extremely delicate matter where, especially in marital love, the body is the reason of giving oneself and although it is simultaneously the reason of giving oneself and also the gift, it is not that which leads man to the highest point of love and which constitutes him in love.

<sup>235</sup>M. A. Krąpiec, *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. M. Lescoe, A. Woznicki, T. Sandok, Mariel Publications 1983, p. 242.

"Powstaje zatem charakterystyczny sposób bycia pomiędzy 'ja' a 'ty', sposób bycia 'dla drugiego', poprzez który 'ja' darowując się drugiemu i spotykając się z takim samym aktem ze strony 'ty' nie tylko ze swego bogactwa wewnętrznego nic nie traci, lecz przeciwnie – bogaci się tym wszystkim, co osoba druga zdobyła i co sobą przedstawia. W akcie miłości 'otwartość bytowo-osobowa dochodzi do szczytu, gdyż zachodzi tu komunikowanie osobie drugiej nie tylko treści bytowych przedmiotowych, poznawczych, intencjonalnych, powstałych w wyniku pracy osobistej jednostki, ale coś więcej – darowanie się (samego bytu) podmiotu osoby, która darując się osobie drugiej obiera sposób 'bycia-życia-dla-osoby-drugiej.'" Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, *Ja-człowiek: Zarys Antropologii Filozoficznej*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 1979, pp. 282-283.

others.<sup>236</sup> Exactly here, in the structure of human being, the answer to the question: ‘how is it possible for a person to give himself to other person?’ is included. The structure of man allows him to present himself to another man, above it, it is only in this “presenting” and “unification” with other, that the person can achieve full development.

One can also see in Karol Wojtyła’s work the similarity of understanding this unification, and most of all the great importance of it:

“By its nature, because it is what it is, the person is its own master (*sui juris*), and cannot be ceded to another or supplanted by another in another in any context where it must exercise its will or make a commitment affecting its freedom. (It is *alteri incommunicabilis*). But love forcibly detaches the person, so to speak, from this natural inviolability and inalienability. It makes the person want to do just that – surrender itself to another, to the one it loves. The person no longer wishes to be its own exclusive property, but instead to become the property of that other. This means the renunciation of its autonomy and its inalienability. Love proceeds by way of this renunciation, guided by the profound conviction that it does not diminish and impoverish, but quite the contrary, enlarges and enriches the existence of the person. What might be called the law of *ekstasis* seems to operate here: the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another.”<sup>237</sup>

---

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>237</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts, New York 1981, pp. 125-126.

“Z natury, czyli z racji tego, jakim jest bytem, osoba jest panem siebie samej (*sui iuris*) i nie może być odstąpiona innej ani też zastąpiona przez inną w tym, co domaga się udziału jej własnej woli i zaangażowania jej osobowej wolności (*alteri incommunicabilis*). Otóż miłość wyrывa niejako osobę z tej naturalnej nienaruszalności i nie-odstępności. Miłość bowiem sprawia, że osoba właśnie

One can give this kind of answer, according to von Hildebrand, on the basis of analyzing the structure of personal being. But also it would be difficult not to agree with von Hildebrand on this point.

## 2.4 Contributions of Heart and Will in the Act of Love

At the outset of our analysis, we have said that love is a value-response (*Wertantwort*) of one person to the value of another person. After introducing the meaning of the terms used in this definition, it should be fundamentally clear now as to what kind of notion is hidden under words and expressions such as value, response and the person. But von Hildebrand is talking about different kinds of responses to value. That is why the question as to what kind of value-response love is still remains. Which human power is responsible for the act of love? In traditional philosophy love is an act of free will. Also the modern philosophers, who are connected with the current of *philosophiae perennis*, claim that love is an act of free will. One defines here the expression “act of free will” not only as pure human decision. One understands very widely the act of free will. An example of such an understanding can be drawn from Josef Pieper's book:

“In every possible case, love means so much like what is recognized as good. (...) This approbation, which one has here in mind, is much more the manifestation of the will; it means the contrary of the factual, more

---

chce się siebie oddać innej – tej, którą kocha. Chce niejako przestać być swoją wyłączną własnością, a stać się własnością tej drugiej. Oznacza to pewną rezygnację z owego *sui iuris* oraz owego *alteri incommunicabilis*. Miłość idzie przez taką rezygnację, kieruje się jednak tym głębokim przeświadczeniem, że rezygnacja ta prowadzi nie do pomniejszenia i zubożenia, ale wręcz przeciwnie – do rozszerzenia i wzbogacenia egzystencji osoby. Jest to jakby prawo ‘ekstazy’ – wyjścia z siebie, aby tym pełniej bytować w drugim.” K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 1986, p. 112.

distanced, and pure “theoretical” neutrality. This approbation means here agreement, accord, affirmation, applause, celebrity, adoration, admiration. So is also the clear difference of power between normal approbation and enthusiastic and glorious affirmation – all the links of this chain, which of course it could be easy to enlarge, have one common feature – they are, without exception, the forms of manifestation of the will. (...) And consequently, love is a mode of willingness.”<sup>238</sup>

St. Thomas, besides the activist act of will (i.e., willingness as a narrowly understood act of striving to something, something what does not exist yet – *vis appetitiva*), distinguishes also the act of loving and enjoying of this, that one has already.<sup>239</sup>

This way of understanding free will and its acts allows Pieper to discern the analogy between acts of cognition and acts of free will. Among the cognitive acts, apart from inference, there is also normal looking which gives direct certainty about the basic information of thinking and existing. In this way, one cannot find tensivity which is related to future, as it happens when it comes to inference.

“It is exactly in the same way that there is a kind of will, which does not aim at doing something which has never been done and so on, in the future; and which aims at changing the actual state of things. There is much more

---

<sup>238</sup>J. Pieper, *Über die Liebe*, pp. 38-39:

“In jedem denkbaren Fall besagt Liebe soviel wie Gutheißen. (...) Die hier gemeinte Gutheißung ist vielmehr eine Willensäußerung; sie bedeutet also das Gegenteil von distanzierter, rein “theoretischer” Neutralität; sie besagt: einverstanden sein, beipflichten, Billigung, Beifall, Bejahung, Lob, Rühmung und Preisung. So deutlich der Intensitätsunterschied zwischen bloßem Einverstandensein und enthusiastisch rühmender Affirmation auch ist – eines ist allen Gliedern dieser Reihe, die natürlich leicht noch erweitert werden könnte, gemeinsam: es sind ausnahmslos Formen der Willensäußerung. (...) Lieben ist also eine Weise, zu wollen.”

<sup>239</sup>St. Thomas, *On the Power of God*, trans. English Dominican Fathers, The Newman Press, Westminster 1952, Q. 3, 15 Art. 14.

besides the will to acting, also its real affirmative agreement, that is beautiful; and this agreement (consent) is likewise without any 'futurist expectation'; *le consentement est sans futur*. The fact of conforming and affirming something already realized is just called: love."<sup>240</sup>

Von Hildebrand knows the traditional understanding of the acts of free will and he was conscious that love is taken as an act of it. But he claims that one understands love in this way, because before no one knew the distinction between effective and volitional responses to the value. This broad understanding of free will entails that love could be in its sphere. But von Hildebrand holds that it was not a correct treatment of the act of love, and the answer of traditional philosophy to the question: Which human 'power' is responsible for the act of love? – is a mistake.

According to von Hildebrand, *love is the affective value-response, of one person to another person*. This kind of answer prescribes him, first of all his conception of an act of free will. At once one should stress that von Hildebrand's opinions about acts of free will go under some evolution. This evolution went towards the enlargement of the scope of objects (objects that the acts of free will face). In this case the view about the role of free will in an act of love changed also. But in spite of this evolution von Hildebrand, till the end of his life, was loyal to his definition, namely that love is an affective value-response of one person to the value of another person.<sup>241</sup>

In his *Christian Ethics* and in *Das Wesen der Liebe*, von Hildebrand understood very narrowly the volitional response. He wrote: "In speaking of will in the strict sense, we mean the response which

---

<sup>240</sup>J. Pieper, *Über Die Liebe*, p. 40:

"Genau ebenso aber gibt es eine Gestalt des Wollens, die nicht darauf zielt, etwas noch Ungetanes zu tun und so, in die Zukunft hinein, den gegenwärtigen Stand der Dinge zu ändern. Es gibt vielmehr, außer dem Tun-Wollen, auch die rein bejahende Zustimmung zu dem, was schon ist; und diese Zustimmung ist gleichfalls ohne 'futurische Spannung'; *le consentement est sans futur*. Etwas bereits Verwirklichtes bestätigen und bejahen – eben das heißt: Lieben."

<sup>241</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.



is directed toward something not yet real, but endowed with the possibility of being realized.”<sup>242</sup> In addition, this state must be important and realized by myself. In von Hildebrand’s understanding, a double thematic will belongs to the essence of free will: the importance of the subject and the realization of this subject by actions of the object. Fundamentally, von Hildebrand delimited here the actions of free will to the decision. And, in consequence of this kind of understanding of an act of will, love was excluded from its act of free will,<sup>243</sup> because:

- The object of love is not a state of affairs, only a person
- Person – object of love – exists, and the volitional response is directed towards something not yet real, something that has the possibility of being realized
- For an act of love is properly a specific fullness and warmth, which are absent in a volitional response
- Love is not free in the sense that it cannot be commended to oneself, as it is possible in the case of action. Love is always a gift. Von Hildebrand very often is using an expression: “Between the mere will to love someone and real love for that person there is Abyss.”<sup>244</sup>

Von Hildebrand does not explain why he narrows down the sphere of the notion of the act of will. But one can assume that

---

<sup>242</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*, p. 200.

<sup>243</sup>“Wir brauchen nur an all diese Wesensmerkmale des Willens zu denken, um zu verstehen, dass die Liebe nicht als ein Willensakt aufgefasst werden kann. Ihr Objekt ist nicht ein Sachverhalt, noch ist das Realwerden eins noch nicht Realen ihr Thema. Ihr Wort ist nicht: Du sollst und wirst existieren und sie ist auch nicht frei in demselben Sinne wie der Wille. Andererseits hat sie eine Fülle, eine Wärme, die der Wille nicht besitzt. Sie ist eindeutig eine affektive Stellungnahme.” Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 66.

<sup>244</sup>“Zwischen dem blossen Willen, jemanden zu lieben und der wirklichen Liebe zu ihm gähnt ein Abgrund.” *Ibid.*, p. 83.

the theory of feelings is of great importance in this case. Traditional philosophy put feelings in the sensual sphere of human being, however von Hildebrand – similar to Husserl, Scheler and Hartman – defended its spiritual character. He admitted that there exist carnal feelings (toothache, tiredness) but also, besides, he distinguishes also the psychical feelings that he calls psychical states (euphoria, depression) and spiritual feelings (joy from conversion or friend's recuperation, compassion, love). These spiritual feelings have a spiritual character that could be proved in a way: (1) They have an intentional character, i.e., that they consciously include a direction to the object which calls out this feeling. (2) They do not rise from physiological process, they are only motivated. It means that these kinds of feelings assume the knowledge of an object and its importance. They are motivated by the value-response. (3) Transcendence is proper to spiritual feelings, i.e., there is a co-ordination of object – object's heart – with value.<sup>245</sup>

Von Hildebrand characterized the spiritual feelings in this way. This means that many of the acts that traditional philosophy put in the scope of acts of free will are no longer to be found there. From former volitive acts remained only those, which have an activist character. It was also followed to initiate, in the place of the old two-division of spiritual acts, a tri-division of these same acts. Because von Hildebrand divided the spiritual acts into intellectual, volitional and affective acts, which have their center in mind, will and heart.

In the end of his life von Hildebrand changed his view on the scope of objects, which are included in acts of will. Consequently this also had an influence on the change of his opinion about the role of the will in the act of love. In *Moralia*, in contrast to *Christian Ethics*, von Hildebrand consciously sets a broad understanding of the act of free will:

“First it must be determined as an important correction of our ethics that the will is not necessarily directed as

---

<sup>245</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

a statement – through which in itself the contained yes or no to an object - toward states of affairs (situations), or towards a not yet realised state of affairs, or towards a state of affairs that would be realisable by me.”<sup>246</sup>

At this moment, he is talking about following indications of acting of the free will:

- Fundamental position of the will (*Grundintention*), which accepts the morally good and negates the morally evil, and includes *implicit* devotion to God and renouncement of Satan.
- Concrete act of free will, which accepts or negates something that exists already; in this way not only something that IS and is SUCH, but one cannot by an act of will, express a wish that one wants for it to be like that.
- Decision of realization of an act.<sup>247</sup>

This correction modifies the notion of free will. Here Dietrich von Hildebrand is very close to Josef Pieper and his affirmative function of free will. The widening of the scope of the notion of free will, allows von Hildebrand also to look at the notion of love in a different way. In *Moralia* one can find the ascertainment that in some kinds of love, the will makes its skeleton (*Skellet*) and heart (*Kernstück*). The love to God and love to neighbor can be an example.<sup>248</sup>

“The will to God, which reflects itself in obedience, is already an important element of love, a “skeleton”, and this is freely in the full sense of the word (...) this applies

---

<sup>246</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Moralia*, p. 74:

“Zunächst muss als wichtige Korrektur unserer Ethik festgestellt werden, dass sich der Wille als Stellungnahme – durch das in ihm enthaltene Ja oder Nein zu einem Objekt – nicht notwendig auf einen Sachverhalt richtet, weder auf einen noch nicht realisierten noch durch mich realisierbaren Sachverhalt.”

<sup>247</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>248</sup>*Ibid.*

rightly to the love of the neighbours. If we want to love the neighbours, a core of the love of the neighbours is already there. It is certainly a bare “skeleton” compared with the glowing love that we find in holy persons.”<sup>249</sup>

But, according to von Hildebrand, in the first and second cases, love profits fully only when one joins the dimension of the heart (i.e. feelings) to the will of loving, and these do not depend on human being, as the act of will depends on it.

The division of the “skeleton”, which makes the will and the “body” of feelings (which do not depend on human free activity in these acts of loving) is proper only for a love to God and love to neighbor. In other (natural) kinds of love, von Hildebrand does not make this division. He claims for example that in betrothed love, between a man and woman, the will to love could be a regrettable substitute of love, and not a “*skeleton*” of love.<sup>250</sup> As regarding the traditional definition of love, which says that love is an act of free will, von Hildebrand does not claim now – as he did in *Das Wesen der Liebe* – that this definition is a mistake. His opinion in this case is more nuanced: “The fact that the will to love God and the neighbours builds a “skeleton” and already a principal item of the love to God and the neighbours, is a reason why traditional philosophy equated love with will, that is, by calling love an act of will.”<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>249</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Moralia*, p. 365:

“Der Wille, Gott zu Lieben, der sich im Gehorsam auswirkt, schon ein gewichtiges Element der Liebe, ein ‘Skelett’, und dieses ist frei im vollen Sinn des Wortes. (...) Erst recht gilt dies für die Nächstenliebe. Wenn wir den Nächsten lieben wollen, ist schon ein Kern der Nächstenliebe da. Gewiss ist sie ein blosses ‘Skelett’ im Vergleich zu der glühenden Liebe, die wir bei den Heiligen finden.”

<sup>250</sup>Von Hildebrand is conscious of the possibility of existence between man and woman of a betrothed love on which they cannot agree, for example if one of them is already married. In this case these people should, by an act of will, disavow this born spontaneous love. See Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, chapter XIII: Treue, especially: Treue in der bräunlichen Liebe, pp. 446-454.

<sup>251</sup>Idem, *Moralia*, p. 365:

“Die Tatsache, dass der Wille, Gott und den Nächsten zu lieben, ein ‘Skelett’ und schon ein Kernstück der Gottes- und Nächstenliebe bildet, ist ein Grund,

Thus the difference of von Hildebrand's responses to this same question (asked in different books) is clear. In *Christian Ethics* and *Das Wesen der Liebe* he unequivocally claims that love is an affective act. On the other hand, in *Moralia*, he is not so unequivocal and consequent. Because he claims that for some category of love the act of free will is essential, and for others it is an affective act. If in this moment one sees that (1) in *Das Wesen der Liebe* von Hildebrand wrote:

“The love for God is, in spite of its ultimate bond with the moral theme, also the exemplary cause, or model, of all creaturely love; it is the purest, most expressive value-response of love, the ultimate, absolute, total giving of my heart, of my very self. Here the theme of love as such reaches its maximum, as we can see from the fact that the *intentio unionis* reaches here its maximum.”<sup>252</sup>

And in *Moralia* he did not recall it and (2) if after he accepts the act of free will as essential for this kind of love, it seems that if one wants to reconcile von Hildebrand with himself, one should accept love as an act of free will. Even if von Hildebrand did not put this correctly, he would need this for his conception of the person. Transcendence which is constitutive to a personal being shows that the person is not finished in every respect. The person is rather the “being to its fullness”. The person achieves this fullness by giving to the values the adequate response. A deeper dimension of transcendence of the person is his causative capacities of entering in relation with

---

warum die traditionelle Philosophie Liebe und Wille gleichsetzte bzw. die Liebe als einen Willensakt bezeichnete.”

<sup>252</sup>Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 323:

“Die Gottesliebe ist trotz ihrer letzten Verbundenheit mit dem sittlichen Thema zugleich auch die *causa exemplaris* aller geschöpflichen Liebe, die reinste, ausgeprägteste Liebeswertantwort, die letzte, absolute, totale Hingabe unseres Herzens, die Schenkung unserer selbst. Hier erreicht auch das Thema der Liebe als solches seinen Höhepunkt. Dies kommt eben auch darin zum Ausdruck, dass die *intentio unionis* hier ihren Höhepunkt erreicht.”

other people. Through these relations, the person, who is the most perfect substance, is open for a moral improvement while entering into contact with other people;<sup>253</sup> this moral improvement is best realized in love. This kind of conception of the person makes that at least one of von Hildebrand's arguments against the possibility of recognizing love as volitional act, namely that will turns to something that is not yet realized, comes in as wrong. This 'not quite fullness' of personal existence, which uncovers in acts of transcendence, causes that love opens a chance of fuller existence, alike, for its object and recipient. In this sense, the person – as a being in its fullness – can be an object of an act of free will; and one can accept as love an act of free will which wants this fullness for other person.

But von Hildebrand defends himself before this kind of unequivocal answer, especially when it comes to betrothed love. Because one cannot command oneself to this kind of love, because it is born in a spontaneous way, independently of oneself. That is why von Hildebrand accepted that it is the affective act which constitutes the essence of this kind of love: "As long as this commitment of the heart is not a 'necessity', that is something stronger than we are, there is no real love."<sup>254</sup>

Therefore he affirmed – through his conception of the person and the corrections he made regarding the act of free will – his former conception of love. Von Hildebrand raises to the range of essence, love as such, the indispensable condition for an existing given category of love.

But it is important to say that von Hildebrand always claims that the will has a voice in the act of love (but the will is not the essence of love, it only arises to the affective act by approbating or disavowing this act).

We have dealt with the most important terms which are included in von Hildebrand's definition of love. Love, for von Hildebrand, is

---

<sup>253</sup>Idem, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 21.

<sup>254</sup>Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 83:

"Solange es nicht ein "Müssen" ist, etwas, was stärker ist als wir – ist die wahre Liebe nicht da."

understood as an answer, precisely a value-response (*Wertantwort*), of one person to the value of another person. Furthermore, here is the sketch of what would capture von Hildebrand's conception of love:

The Person is a *substantial* being; it is a being which is *conscious*, *self-possessed*, *free* and *open* to the world and the environment, and especially to the other person.

Value is a property of a being which makes it impossible to be indifferent vis-à-vis this being. Value is something which "*de-neutralizes*" being, which makes that the being that possesses "it" is in some aspect of great worth for the "knower". Von Hildebrand distinguishes two kinds of value: ontological values and qualitative values. The person is a specific ontological value equipped with qualitative values.

Response is an act which refers to the person's attitude towards another being equipped with values. It is an intentional act, i.e., an act consciously directed to the object; but the "essence" of an act is still on the subject's side, not on the object's side.<sup>255</sup> For von Hildebrand, love is the most effective response to the value of another person. It means that effective responses (in opposite to volitional responses) are turned to something that is ongoing; they are the voice of the human heart, and not free (they are independent of us – like love as a gift).

Love understood in this way, raises many important and questionable points that we have tried to pin down in the above description. One of them is, for example, the problem of ideal existence of values (i.e., what is meant by the possession by values of an ideal existence, and hence, the relation between reality and this kind of being); another issue could be the status or essence of love, i.e., love as an act of free will. Elsewhere, von Hildebrand elaborated this understanding of love through his conception of person, but also in virtue of the coherence of his definition.

---

<sup>255</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 118.

## Chapter 3

# The Essential Characteristic of Love

The present civilisation is characterised by the trend of socialisation, because social and economic processes demand the inclusions of small communities into the greater ones. Teilhard de Chardin wrote about the phenomenon of “planetisation”. The Popes spoke about the “human family”, and politicians about globalisation. The process of creating larger communities-above-families, tribes and even states – that was opposed by Rousseau and the romantics is not an illusion.

However, the issue of social life widens more and more. It is an irreversible process. The problem of the present civilisation is that it degrades the phenomenon of love. This civilisation is focused on economy and consumption that lead to the depersonalisation of mankind. The social life, which gives up the idea of love, inevitably leads to the degeneration of the human person. That is why this socialising should appeal to the great phenomenon of human existence i.e. love. That is what justifies this call: “only civilisation of



love takes into consideration human nature and his dignity.”<sup>256</sup>

Love is the most important event between birth and death of human being. It is so important that many authors have devoted their attention to it, from Antiquity to our modern times. Hence, provided the huge amount of resources on love, any claim of originality for a work which aims at dealing with love, would be somewhat very difficult to make. But, we think that still, there is something to be said about love especially that the interest of the problematic of love and the reflection about it are most of the time limited, in our culture, to the practical sphere. People look for answers to the question “how to love and to be loved?”, while not caring about the essence and source of love, preferring to satisfy themselves with the pieces of advice to fill some psychological gap and emptiness.

Human being rightly expects that true love fulfils his life in happiness, gives it a special sense and shine, looks for it and holds out his ear for pieces of advice which would show him the way to this kind of love. Many of the advisers do not bring him out from the fundamental mistake which sticks in her understanding of love, and try to give him instructions as to how to achieve this dream of happiness. To grasp this mistake one needs something more fundamental than this that can guarantee a pure psychology of love. One has to draw away from pure experiences and turn to the side of its essence. One should specify not only intentions, which are included in this turning to the second person and expressed by the formula “I love you”, but also their gradation.

### 3.1 Love as Mutual Self-Giving

We have already pointed out that values demand responses which are adequate to their valence. That is why, for example, the admiration for a work of art should be appointed by the artistic and aesthetic values of this very work. One receives the admiration of daub as a

---

<sup>256</sup>S. Kowalczyk, *Człowiek a Społeczność. Zarys Filozofii Społecznej (Human Being and Society. Sketch of Social Philosophy)*, RW KUL, Lublin, 1994, p. 197.

mistake, because in the ‘word’ of response (*An-t-wort* = *Wort an*) to the daub, one said more than what this object, as a carrier of values, deserves.

For love, which is also a value-response, is a characteristic fact that on the one side love is motivated by the value of the person, on the other side, the lover gives something from himself to this response. At this point, the value-response is not so adequate to the motivation value, as it is in the case of respect for example. In spite of this, love does not lose its greatness. Love which is a value-act cannot be destroyed by any exaggerated love. We can say in this moment that the person does not deserve love.<sup>257</sup> But love itself is still beautiful, according to von Hildebrand. He called this “element” which is included in the person who loves in response to the value of another person who is loved *gift of love*.<sup>258</sup> Within “gift”, which is a property of love, von Hildebrand distinguishes three elements: affirmation and enthronization of the person who is loved, credit of love and answer to a value of the individual person but not to her particular features.<sup>259</sup>

In love, the person who is loved shows, in all her richness, a worth of affirmation, independently of her faults. This concrete person with all her richness is ‘this’, what is objectively and worthily given. But the person is given in a specific way. This concrete person with her qualitative richness is for any subject a valuable person and as such, she requires a right appreciation of her value.<sup>260</sup> The loving subject

---

<sup>257</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>258</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 90. J. Pieper describes love in a similar way. According to him, in fact, love is also a gift: “Every love is properly speaking innocent. One can neither gain it, nor earn it. It is always a pure gift.” J. Pieper, *Über die Liebe*, p. 57:

“Ungeschuldet ist im Grunde jede Liebe. Man kann sie weder verdienen noch fordern; sie ist immer reines Geschenk.” First of all it is God who loves us in this kind of unearned love. He shows it to us in his work of creation and redemption. *Ibid.*, pp. 57-58 and also see C.S. Lewis, *Four Loves*, p. 45.

<sup>259</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, pp. 118-119.

<sup>260</sup>The Personalist says sometimes in this context that it is the OWING to a person’s affirmation which is a basis of ethical principle. T. Styczeń, *ABC*

distinguishes this concrete person from many others, even if these persons bear an identical richness. In the act of distinguishing this one person from others, the loving person performs what von Hildebrand called *Enthronization*.<sup>261</sup> The beloved person presents herself to the loving person as particularly valuable. The beloved person appears to the loving person as an exceptional person; and this brings joy and happiness to the loving person.

Another element that the loving person gives to the loved person is a *credit of trust*. Love expands the beauty and the dimension of the

---

*Etyki (ABC of Ethics)*, Lublin 1981, Zarys Etyki (Sketch of Ethics), Part I, Methaethics, Lublin 1974.

<sup>261</sup>It seems that in this enthronisation in some way von Hildebrand tries to unveil a secret of individuality of the person, in the sense that he tries to catch her in her individuality. Von Hildebrand by accentuating this element of love, can a little bit satisfy the dramatic philosophical striving for discovering the person in her individuality. Tadeusz Styczeń expresses, in a very beautiful way, this striving, in his article: "Boethius stressed a capital truth about the person, by depicting him as a *rationalis naturae individua substantia*, Pascal by calling him a thinking reed. Kant placed the person in the realm of unique aims, Scheler saw in him the object that reflects himself by pointing to values and the experiences of values . . . All this and many other approaches of this kind are important positions in discovering what the person is. However, all of these attempts, by 'uncovering' the person, simultaneously make him indifferent to all another persons. They blur their faces, they take away their uniqueness and place them in the row of others as another copy of the same book. But where is yet this very person? The one who stands in front of us? And where to gain the power, from whom to borrow this penetrability in order to break through the curtain of her pure individuality." T. Styczeń, *Objawiać osobę* (Discover the Person), "Roczniki Filozoficzne", XXVII 2 (1979), pp. 163-164; T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 119.

"Boecjusz wypowiedział kapitalną prawdę o osobie, określając ją jako *rationalis naturae individua substantia*, a Pascal nazywając ją czciną myślącą. Kant umieszczając osobę w królestwie celów wsobnych, Scheler widząc w niej podmiot stanowiący ognisko odniesień do wartości i ich przeżywania. . . . Wszystkie te i szereg innych prób tego typu, to ważne pozycje w odkrywaniu osoby. Ale wszystkie one odkrywając osobę, równocześnie 'zrównują' poszczególną osobę do wszystkich pozostałych. Zamazują im twarze, odbierają im właśnie ich 'osobność' stawiając w rzędzie innych niczym egzemplarz tego samego nakładu książki. Gdzież tu jest jeszcze ta oto tu osoba? Ta przed nami tu stojąca? I gdzie zdobyć moc, od kogo przenikliwości pożyczyć, aby się przebić poprzez zasłonę do jej nagiej jedyności."

beloved person in all directions, over the personality of person. By basing oneself on the positive qualities (the ones which are known by the loving person), one arrogates to the beloved person the positive qualities even in the case where the loving person does not have a chance to find them. This refers to the *credit of trust*. It is a pure gift of love.<sup>262</sup> This keeps everything in the loved person at a very high level; all acts of the loved person are interpreted as qualities, until something wrong happens.

“There are after all so many things in a human being what can be interpreted very differently, many deeds, utterances, modes of behavior that in themselves are not unambiguously morally good or bad, beautiful or ugly, intelligent or foolish, but which take on their full meaning and character against the background of the particular, individual person. Whereas it is typical for suspicion and hatred to be always on the alert for the weaknesses of another and to interpret all aspects for him in a negative light, à la baisse, it is a basic element of love to hope that the other is treading the path of what is just, good, and beautiful and to have the readiness to interpret in the best possible light everything that admits of various interpretations. This readiness to interpret all à la hausse is of course closely related with the credit of faith given to the other.”<sup>263</sup>

---

<sup>262</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>263</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 99:

“Es gibt ja so vieles im Menschen, was noch sehr verschieden interpretiert werden kann, viele Taten, Äusserungen, Verhaltensweisen, die in sich selbst nicht eindeutig unsittlich oder sittlich gut, unschön, oder schön, dumm oder intelligent sind, sondern die erst auf dem Hintergrund der besonderen individuellen Person ihren Sinn und ihre volle Charakteristik bekommen. Während es ein typisches Merkmal der Missgunst und des Hasses ist, dass man immer auf dem qui vive lebt, den anderen auf Fehlern zu ertappen und alle Dinge bei ihm im negativen Licht zu interpretieren, à la baisse, ist es ein Grundelement der Liebe, dass man hofft, den anderen auf dem Pfade des Rechten, Guten, Schönen wandeln zu sehen und dass man die Bereitschaft hat, alles, was in verschiedener Richtung

This position does not exclude a level-headedness in relation to the person who is loved. The one who loves knows that the loved person can have some defaults, but this does not at all lessen his love, because it is of the essence of all genuine love that all qualities (in the loved person) are seen as one's own, but the defaults are regarded as an infidelity to her own essence. But, in an objective attitude, both good and wrong features are real for her.<sup>264</sup>

Von Hildebrand differentiates this position towards lacks of the beloved person by distinguishing various kinds of these lacks. In this way he distinguishes some lacks which are the opposite sides of positive features. For example, the vigorous man, in striving for something good, displays his action with zeal and force. The gentle and humble man can be sometimes too concessive and weak (especially in situations where strictness should be a moral duty). According to von Hildebrand only Saints could combine these opposite features.<sup>265</sup>

In the case where the defaults are the opposite of the positive features, the loving person regrets them, and he wants the beloved person to overcome them. But at the same time the loving person treats these defaults as a deviation from positive features, and he still has only a positive picture of the beloved person. It exist also lacks, which are not only the opposite side of positive features, but also they themselves are wrong: pride, cheeseparing, impurity. The loving person sees this kind of blemish as treason of the essence of the beloved person. To these defaults, the loving person says: "this is not my beloved." He feels these faults as an infidelity of the beloved person in relation to himself, in relation to the very essence of the person. Therefore the loving person fundamentally sees the beloved person as someone who is good.<sup>266</sup>

The person who loves, while giving this credit of trust (to the

---

interpretiert werden kann, im besten Lichte zu interpretieren. Diese Bereitschaft, alles à la hausse zu interpretieren, hängt natürlich mit dem Kredit des Glaubens an den anderen eng zusammen."

<sup>264</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>265</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics* especially chapters 11 and 36.

<sup>266</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 120.

loved person) at the same time does not overlook the mistakes committed by the other. These mistakes hurt a lover, because it is important for her that the person whom she loves be loyal to herself and develop fully his or her nature.<sup>267</sup>

Von Hildebrand talks about threefold credits, which are typical to love:

- When one does not have a basis for finding defaults, one in-

---

<sup>267</sup> Josef Pieper, through an analysis of love, sees the necessity to proportionate the weakness and sins of the beloved person: “And what about “weaknesses” and “errors”? don’t they belong also inevitably to the concrete existence? (...) At this point, a second distinction [first distinction between fragility and sin] proves itself to be necessary, the distinction between two different ways, somehow difficult to accept, of which the first lines up to the loving, and the second does not. I mean the distinction between excuse (apology) and forgiveness. (...) by “excuse” it should now be understood the fact of making light (undermining) the bad thing; I allow something “to be good”, even though it is bad; I ignore the evil, I do not care; it is indifferent to me: I am not concerned about it. Now, there are very few things, if at all, something, that a loving in such sense, will “excuse” – while he is able to forgive the loved person for everything. Forgiveness is even one of the foundational acts of love. But what it is exactly meant by this? Not meant is anyhow something bad, “to be left as good”, something which is simply not important to take – as only one mistake happens there. One can forgive only something that one regards expressly as a bad thing, and the negativity of which one does not exactly ignore.” J. Pieper, *Über die Liebe*, pp. 55-60:

“Und wie steht es mit den ‘Fehlern’ und ‘Schwächen’? gehören nicht auch sie unvermeidlich zur konkreten Existenz dazu? (...) An diesem Punkt erweist sich eine zweite Unterscheidung als notwendig, die Unterscheidung zwischen zwei verschiedenen Weisen, etwas Schlimmes zu akzeptieren, von denen die eine dem Liebenden ansteht, die andere nicht. Ich meine die Unterscheidung zwischen Entschuldigen und Vergeben. (...) Unter ‘entschuldigen’ soll jetzt die Bagatellisierung des Schlimmen verstanden werden; ich lasse etwas ‘gut sein’, obwohl es schlecht ist; ich ignoriere das Böse, ich mache mir nichts daraus; es ist mir gleichgültig: ich kümmere mich nicht darum. Nun, es gibt sehr wenig, wenn überhaupt etwas, das ein Liebender in solchem Sinn ‘entschuldigen’ wird – während er dem Geliebten alles zu vergeben vermag! Vergebung ist sogar einer der Grundakte der Liebe. Aber was ist damit des genaueren gemeint? Nicht gemeint ist jedenfalls, etwas Schlechtes ‘gut sein zu lassen’, es einfach nicht wichtig zu nehmen – als sei da nur ein Versehen passiert. Vergeben kann man nur etwas, das man ausdrücklich für schlimm hält und dessen Negativität man gerade nicht ignoriert.”

interprets all in the beloved person in the best light (credit of faith); he remains very optimistic.

- One interprets the equivocal features “as higher” (credit of trust)
- One interprets the visible defaults of the beloved person as a treason and infidelity towards the real essence or nature of the beloved person.<sup>268</sup>

According to von Hildebrand the rift which is also characteristic and proper for the gift of love is the fact that love concerns the person as a whole and not just the person in her particular values, i.e., one does not love the beauty of ‘this’ person; on the contrary, one loves the concrete, the whole person himself, albeit some features such as beauty could play some role. To make clearer his point, von Hildebrand reminds of the relation of values to goods (goods, called by von Hildebrand the ‘carriers’ of values). In all value-responses, our response concerns goods and does not concern values. Thus one admires Mozart’s *Figaro* because of its beauty. In this case it is the beauty that motivates our admiration, but the ‘admiration’ is directed towards the bearer of this beauty. It is similar when one admires the heroic moral act. Here the moral value is a cause of admiration and worship; moral value motivated them. It is value which moves our heart and raises admiration, but exactly this admiration concerns a concrete, real act; that is why our admiration is due to the act. At this point, the difference between *that which motivates* response and *that to which this response is directed*,<sup>269</sup> is very clear. In love this difference has a new character. In love between human beings, the motto that love owes to person and not to values, takes on a totally new meaning. First of all it means that one person gives to another individual person his heart, that there is a specific relation of intimacy which is being built up.<sup>270</sup>

---

<sup>268</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>269</sup>J. Pieper, *Über die Liebe*, p. 74.

<sup>270</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 121.

Secondly, it is also a different way in which value is connected with its bearer. In love the most important is the quality of value, quality which marks this concrete individuality. However in responses such as joy from an heroic act, one is brought to happiness because of the realization of some kind of type of moral values. But in love, the realization of general types of values is not at all at stake. The whole beauty which is embodied in the beloved person is *unique* and *unrepeatable*. And it is exactly this whole beauty of an individual person that motivates the response of love.<sup>271</sup>

This difference between love and other kinds of value-responses goes much deeper. Not only does this whole beauty of individuality motivate love, but one does not grasp the person in this response as a bearer of this whole beauty *only*. The person embodies this beauty; that is why love owes to real person, and not to the bearer of values:

“For a person embodies this overall beauty in such a way that love refers to the person himself, not only in the sense in which all value responses refer to the bearer of value, but rather in quite a new sense, which brings us back to the ‘gift’ of love. Love does not just respond to the beloved person on the basis of his overall beauty, but rather encompasses his real person as such. The one who loves gives his heart to the beloved person, he commits himself to the other as individual. The ‘excess’ of warmth, of goodness, of ultimate concern, of solidarity refers entirely to this real person in such a way that it would be impossible to take this person simply as the bearer of typical values like moral, aesthetic, or vital values and to rejoice primarily over the realization of these values.”<sup>272</sup>

---

<sup>271</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>272</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 108:

“Sie (Person) verkörpert diese Gesamtschönheit und die Liebe gilt daher der Person selbst – nicht nur in dem Sinn, wie alle Wertantworten dem Träger gelten – sondern noch in einer ganz neuen Weise, und das bringt uns wieder auf die



In love the person is a theme. The theme of the person as someone who is only one and unrepeatable is so characteristic for love that according to von Hildebrand even in the case where two persons were similarly worthy in qualitative values, still it would not be possible that one could love these two persons in the same betrothed love. For a loving person it would also not be meaningless who, between these two persons, will reciprocate his love.

Von Hildebrand underlines the specific mystery of love. On the one hand, love is a value-response. This response is specific because it includes a credit (that we mentioned above). The persons who received love understand it exactly in this way. The beloved person takes love as something unearned, as something that one presents to her, something given for free. One can say that for the beloved person the response of the loving person is too great in relation to the motivating value. On the other hand, the loving person experiences his love as too small in relation to the beloved person, too small in relation to the merit of the beloved person. The beloved person is so special for a person who loves that every gift seems to be too small for him. That is why the loving person wants to give himself as a present. This takes place especially in betrothed love. The proper words here are: "I am yours". The person who loves experiences happiness, when the beloved person receives this gift. At the same time the loving person expects these words from the beloved person: "I am also yours". Because love strives to the unity of loving persons.<sup>273</sup>

This problem is very interesting and important because it includes itself some kind of paradox. Because on the one hand the person is untransferable (*alteri incommunicabilis*), i.e., she is her

---

'Gabe' der Liebe. Die Liebe antworten nicht nur auf den Geliebten wegen seiner Gesamtschönheit, sie umfasst seine reale Person als solche. Der Liebende gibt der geliebten Person sein Herz, er entscheidet sich für sie als Ganzes. Die 'Gabe' der Wärme, Güte, des letzten Interesses, der Solidarität gilt ganz dieser realen Person, wobei es unmöglich wäre, diese Person nur als Träger typischer Werte wie sittlicher, ästhetischer, vitaler Werte zu sehen und sich primär über die Verwirklichung dieser Werte zu freuen." J. Pieper expresses in almost the same way this fact, in his book, *Über die Liebe*, p. 74.

<sup>273</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 122-123.

own master (*sui juris*), and she cannot give herself anyway, cannot surrender herself; she is somehow uncompromised and inalienable. But, on the other hand, the person can step outside her own and, more importantly, the “I” of the person is far from being destroyed or impaired as the result enlarges and enriches (of course in a super-physical, and moral sense.) This paradoxical element is very characteristic for love, and only for love.<sup>274</sup>

“Self surrender as a form of love is the result of a process within the person, and presupposes a mature vision of values, and a will be ready and able to commit itself in this particular way. Betrothed love can never be a fortuitous or imperfect even in the inner life of the person. It always constitutes a special crystallization of the whole human “I”, determined because of its love to dispose of itself in this particular way. In giving ourselves we find clear proof that we possess ourselves.”<sup>275</sup>

Thus love is different from other value-responses in that it contains in itself the element of gift. This is why von Hildebrand calls love “Überwertantwort”. But this difference goes much deeper. In love one aims at a unity with the second person and wants to endow her with goods. Von Hildebrand called these two important things in love, *intentio unionis* (desire of reciprocation) and *intentio benevolentiae*. Von Hildebrand claims that these two wishes: the desire of unity with the beloved person and the desire of endowing her with goods are essential for love. They can characterize all kinds of love, because they exist in every possible kind, even though they exist in different proportions within different kinds of love.<sup>276</sup>

---

<sup>274</sup>K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, pp. 96-97.

<sup>275</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>276</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 123.

### 3.2 *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae*

As we could see, the loving person wants to *give herself* to the beloved person. In this desire of giving oneself is included the hankering with the beloved person. Von Hildebrand wrote a lot about this personal union.<sup>277</sup>

First of all there is a deep difference between personal union and union of non-personal beings.<sup>278</sup> According to this division, it would be profoundly mistaken to treat, as an ideal of unity, the fusion of two metals for example (when two different metals become one). Of course a unity occurs here, but it is an unconscious unity. Meanwhile the unity which can occur in reciprocal love exceeds the unity of every alloy, because in love, what is most important is that a unity of individual persons who cannot relinquish their individuality occurs. The fact that the persons bring about a unity in love, that these persons at the same time cannot relinquish their individuality, and that this individuality in this personal union is even stronger, makes this unity much deeper:

“Precisely the fact that a loss of the individual existence of persons is impossible, that union, far from involving any loss of individual existence, throws both persons more fully and properly into relief in their own individual existence, precisely this fact makes the unity all the deeper. It is also much deeper because it is a conscious experience of unity, whereas all unity in the apersonal world and especially in the purely material world is a non-conscious and non-experienced unity. This is connected with the incomparable superiority of persons and

---

<sup>277</sup>See D. Hildebrand *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, especially Chapter II: “Die Stufen der Geistigen”; Chapter III: “Die Vereinigung”; Chapter IV: “Die Einswerdung”, and Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Chapter VI: “Intentio Unionis”.

<sup>278</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 123.

with their new dimension of existence.”<sup>279</sup>

Von Hildebrand distinguishes personal union from a union of a person with non-personal beings, for example between persons and the beauty of scenery or the beauty of art.<sup>280</sup> The personal union is experienced by these two people, it is a relation between “I–you”, relation of two objects. In this second case (union between personal and non personal being) the union is experienced only by the one side, it is the relation subject – object. In this case the union ‘I–you’ receives a much deeper assessment even at the formal level than the union object – subject, and most of all in the sphere of experiences.

Von Hildebrand also sees some differences between the personal union in love and social solidarity.<sup>281</sup> According to him it is mistaken to bring out love from social solidarity and he uses the argument of love between part and whole:

“One could object that there are nevertheless cases in which the unity between persons has materialized without love in which love is a result of this unity. One thinks, for example, of the relationship of the child to parents and to older brothers and sisters. The child is united with the parents and brothers and sisters even before it loves them. (...) The child loves them because it belongs to them. Thus, unity can indeed precede love and even be the reason for love. In reply to this, it must be pointed

---

<sup>279</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 172.

“Gerade die Tatsache, dass hier nie eine Aufgabe der individuellen Eigenexistenz der Personen in Frage kommt, dass die union, statt einen Verlust der Eigenexistenz einzuschliessen, die beiden Personen noch voller und eigentlicher in ihrer Eigenexistenz hervortreten lässt, macht diese Einheit so viel tiefer. Sie ist auf so viel tiefer, weil sie eine bewusste, erlebte Einheit ist, während ja alle Einheit in der impersonalen Welt und besonders in der rein materiellen eine nicht-bewusste und nicht-erlebte ist. Es hängt dies mit der unvergleichlichen Überlegenheit der Person zusammen, ihrer neuen Existenzdimension.” See also D. Hildebrand’s *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>280</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 172-174.

<sup>281</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

out that is false to maintain that the consciousness of belonging to and thereby of unity with the family is the *ground* of the love of the child for its parents and brothers and sisters. It goes much rather hand in hand with the budding love. (...) unity or belonging is not the source of love, but only goes hand in hand with it.”<sup>282</sup>

Even that unity, to which one strives in love, is a basis of society, and the unity in marriage makes the most compact natural society. Neither is society a source of every love, nor is love the basis for an individual’s attachment to a social group. Love to the individual person and attachment to a given social group can coexist, but this coexistence does not survey a difference.<sup>283</sup>

Von Hildebrand begins to analyze the *intentio unionis*, by trying to set free this element of love from mistaken descriptions and interpretations, which were born throughout history.<sup>284</sup> In every kind of

---

<sup>282</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 20:

“Mann könnte einwenden, es gäbe doch Fälle, in denen die Einheit zwischen Personen ohne Liebe zustande gekommen ist und in denen die Liebe eine Folge dieser Einheit ist. Man denkt z. B. an das Verhältnis des Kindes zu den Eltern und älteren Geschwistern. Das Kind ist geeint mit den Eltern und Geschwistern, noch bevor es dieselben liebt. (...) Das Kind liebt sie, weil es zu ihnen gehört. Also kann doch die Einheit der Liebe vorangehen und sogar der Grund der Liebe sein. Dagegen muss hervorgehoben werden, dass es falsch ist, zu behaupten, dass das Bewusstsein der Zugehörigkeit und damit einer Einheit mit der Familie der *Grund* der Liebe des Kindes zu den Eltern und Geschwistern ist. Es geht vielmehr eher Hand in Hand mit der aufkeimenden Liebe. (...) die Einheit oder Zugehörigkeit nicht die Quelle der Liebe ist, sondern nur mit ihr Hand in Hand geht.” English translation in: *Altheia*, volume I Metaphysics, D. Hildebrand “The Essence of Love and the Need for a ‘Phenomenological Metaphysics’”, trans. Mary K. Heyne-Seifert, The University of Dallas Press 1977, pp. 6-7. See also *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 175-179.

<sup>283</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>284</sup>Von Hildebrand already suspects in Plato’s thoughts a wrong understanding of *intentio unionis*, because according to von Hildebrand in Plato one perceives this element as a striving (which grows out of human needs) to human’s own perfection in relation with the second person. *Intentio unionis* understood in this way cannot be taken as an element of value response (which is not love for Plato), but rather as *appetitus*. After *intentio unionis* was interpreted as a

love, but most of all in betrothed love, some kind of form of *hankering* for unity with the second person is very present. This hankering consists – as von Hildebrand puts it – in hastening to the beloved person but also in the fact that only in love does one *disclose* oneself and *turn with one's spiritual face* to the other.<sup>285</sup> This interest in the second person which is present in love is motivated by the whole beauty and preciousness of the person. The aim of this interest is to participate in the value of a given person.<sup>286</sup> For, love is from its essence a value response, so *intentio unionis* which is an element of love, is in its fullest sense, a relation to the person. One's interest in the second person and one's turning to her in the act of love means much more than an analogous reference of the person in other affective responses. In addition, love does not exhaust in the very intention of establishing contact, but it includes in itself a *virtus unitiva* (which aims at a real unification with the beloved person).<sup>287</sup> The real personal union is possible – according to von Hildebrand – only if the love of the loving person is reciprocated.<sup>288</sup>

Love to the concrete, individual person expresses itself in the desire of unification with her. This personal union in love has also different degrees. The loving person appears next to the beloved person, wants her presence, talks permanently with her, participates in her living and thinking; the loving person opens his essence before the beloved person. But a unity can be achieved only if the beloved person reciprocates this love, and if the beloved person needs the unity with the loving person.<sup>289</sup>

Apart from the fact that one needs many elements in order to make the personal union (like: presence of the person, possibility of talking with her, possibility of co-existence in her living and think-

---

selfish, egoistic love – *amor concupiscentiae*. D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 175.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

ing), von Hildebrand claims that even these elements by themselves can in no way make a union. External identification of life in marriage, tenderness, even physical unification cannot make real internal oneness of the persons if there is a lack of this communication of love. It is only when it is real that the internal union of all others elements can develop their join potency:

“One never reaches the beloved person in the way that is desired by spousal love. But the interpretation of loving looks or the mutual love establishes a profound unity, even if everything else is missing: it is a true encounter of persons in a shared ‘here’. Only on the basis of this unity can all the other elements, such as presence, dialogue, living together, and in the case of marriage, tenderness, and above all the becoming one flesh, unfold their unifying power, and only then can they confer the fulfilling happiness of union, which varies according to the kind of love and the kind of union desired in it.”<sup>290</sup>

The union will never occur without a mutual love. But it does not mean that love must have the same proportion in degree and category from both sides. There are some personal relations in which the category of love should be the same on both sides, for example: the relation between parents – children, master – student.<sup>291</sup> In betrothed love, there must be from both sides the same love, on

---

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 179-180:

“Man erreicht dann den geliebten Menschen nie in der Weise, wie es die bräutliche Liebe ersehnt. Der Ineinanderblick der Liebe hingegen oder die gegenseitige Liebe konstituiert schon eine tiefe Einheit, auch wenn alles andere fehlt; es ist eine wahre Begegnung der Personen in einem gemeinsamen ‘hier’. Nur wenn diese Einheit da ist, können all die anderen Elemente: Gegenwart, Dialog, Zusammenleben, und im Fall der Ehe alle Zärtlichkeiten und vor allem die körperliche Einswerdung ihre vereinigende Kraft entfalten und nur dann, je nach der Liebe und der Art der in dieser Liebe ersehnten unio, eine beglückende Erfüllung der unio sein”. And see also *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, Chapter IV: Die Einswerdung, pp. 40-43.

<sup>291</sup> T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

the categorical plan. But it is possible to make a union with different degrees of love, because the potentials of love are different in people.<sup>292</sup>

The longing for a union in love, besides the values it has in itself, besides that it develops the person, is, for the loving person, a source of happiness. The happiness is already the possibility of loving. The person, whom one loves, makes her happy by the fact that she is. The child is for his mother a source of happiness by the fact of his existence. In betrothed love the beloved person is a permanent source of happiness for the loving person in a much deeper way.<sup>293</sup>

If already the possibility of loving is a source of happiness, so this happiness increases exceedingly if that love is reciprocal, when the union of persons happens. Von Hildebrand accepts the union with the beloved person as a source of happiness which cannot be compared with any other earthly happiness.<sup>294</sup> However, von Hildebrand

---

<sup>292</sup>The problem which is somehow connected with the problem of reciprocation – but which will not be developed here – is the question about unrequited love. Wojtyła calls this kind of love also a one-sided love. And as he describes it, this phenomena of love also has its distinctive and authentic psychological profile but not so objective fullness that reciprocity would give to it. It can be a characteristic of unrequited love, “which as everyone knows is fraught with pain and suffering. If love of this kind persists, as it sometimes does, for a very long time, this is because of some inner obstinacy, which however tends to distort love and rob it of its proper character. Unrequited love is condemned first to stagnation in the person who feels it, then to gradual extinction.” K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 85:

“(…) wiadomo zaś, że miłość nieodwzajemniona łączy się z przykrością i cierpieniem. Miłość taka utrzymuje się nieraz bardzo długo w swym podmiocie, w osobie, która ją przeżywa, ale dzieje się to mocą jakby wewnętrznego uporu, co jednak raczej zniekształca miłość i odbiera jej właściwy charakter. Miłość nieodwzajemniona skazana jest naprzód na wegetację w swoim podmiocie, a później na stopniowe konanie” K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, p. 79.

<sup>293</sup>According to Josef Pieper the proper words of love are: “How good that you are!”

<sup>294</sup>“Wir sahen, dass die in der Liebe ersehnte unio nur in der Erwiderung der Liebe zustande kommen kann. Die eigentliche unio von Personen kann sich nur im Ineinanderblick der Liebe realisieren. Es ist darum klar ersichtlich, welch unfassbares Glück die erwiderte Liebe als solche gewährt. Die unio mit dem Geliebten ist ja eine unermessliche Quelle eines Glückes, das mit keinem anderen



claims that happiness in love cannot be its motive or aim. The most important aim in love is the unity with the second person. But happiness is an additional gift which emerges from love.<sup>295</sup> To accept this kind of relation between happiness and love, von Hildebrand enters into a debate with the position which, by accepting the fact that union with the beloved person is a source of happiness, draws the conclusion that *intentio unionis* in love is aimed at by the loving person to reach his own happiness, and because of it, *intentio unionis* is a degradation of the second person to instrumentality achieve this aim, and that *intentio unionis* is opposed to the 'pure giving' and unselfishness:

"There are two fundamental misunderstandings of man and his nature and dignity as person. One of them goes in the direction of obscuring his transcendence, holding that man is in principle incapable of taking an interest in something having value in itself but can only be moved by something beneficial for himself. The opposite misunderstanding consists in thinking that man achieves his full destiny when he no longer has any beneficial goods for himself, only when he has become indifferent to happiness and unhappiness to the point of living only by pure value-response. (...) Both conceptions are disastrous errors. (...) If the first error locks persons in themselves and in this way distorts their ultimate relation to the world and to God, the second error deprives them of their character as full selves. The first error reduces man

---

irdischen Glück verglichen werden kann. Es wäre aber völlig falsch zu glauben, dass die unio nur beglückend wäre im Sinne einer Erfüllung der *intentio unionis*, d.h. als Befriedung eines Sehnsens. Wir sahen, dass die Liebe keinerlei appetitus ist und dass ihre Glut und ihr Feuer nicht eine Folge der Unerfülltheit ist, die dann einer befriedigten Sättigung Platz macht, wenn die ersehnte unio erreicht ist. Die *intentio unionis* ist das Interesse an der unio, das sich als Sehnsucht nach der unio auswirkt, solange dieselbe nicht erreicht ist und als tiefes Glück über die unio, sobald sie erreicht ist." D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 307.

<sup>295</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

to the biological, taking him according to the model of a plant or animal. The second error robs him of his character as a full subject and destroys the personal in him by exaggerating the objective to the point of dissolving that which makes him a subject. We have to keep clear of both errors.”<sup>296</sup>

According to von Hildebrand the union is a pure gift of oneself to another person, because it is a spiritual ‘run out’ and persistence near the beloved person. The proper words for love are: “I am yours”. If these words of the loving person will meet with the same from the beloved person, then these people will feel happy. The union which cannot bring happiness would be devoid of its soul.<sup>297</sup> Happiness is here in superabundant relation to the experience of union with a person. It starts to be experienced by the two persons in *intentio unionis*, because these persons turn to each other, in that each of them transcends oneself.<sup>298</sup>

The loving person wants unification with the beloved person and

---

<sup>296</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 273-274:

“Es gibt zwei grundlegende Missverständnisse des Menschen, seiner Eigenart und Würde als Person. Das eine geht in die Richtung, seine Transzendenz zu verkennen und zu glauben, der Mensch sei grundsätzlich nicht fähig, sich für einen Wert in sich zu interessieren, er könne nur durch ein ‘objektives Gut für ihn’ bewegt werden. Das andere – entgegengesetzte – Missverständnis besteht darin, zu glauben, der Mensch erreiche seine volle Bestimmung erst, wenn es keine objektiven Güter für ihn mehr gebe, das heisst, wenn er gegen Glück und Unglück indifferent geworden sei und nur noch reine Wertantworten kenne.(...) Beide Auffassungen stellen verhängnisvolle Irrtümer dar. (...) Wenn der erste Irrtum den Menschen einsperrt in sich selbst und damit seine letzte Beziehung zur Welt und zu Gott verfälscht, so höhlt der zweite Irrtum den Menschen aus und raubt ihm den Charakter eines vollen Selbst. Der erste Irrtum biologisiert den Menschen, fasst ihn nach Art einer Pflanze oder eines Tieres auf. Der zweite raubt ihm seinen Charakter als volles Subjekt, zerstört das Personale in ihm in der Richtung einer Überspannung des Objektiven, so dass das aufgelöst wird, was ihn ganz eigentlich zum Subjekt macht. Von beiden Irrtümern muss man sich durchaus frei halten.”

<sup>297</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>298</sup>J. Seifert, *Essence and Motivation of Moral Acting*, p. 75.

this unification is for her as a source of happiness. In union, the happiness of the loving person and that of the beloved person are inseparably braided together. That is why in the *intentio unionis* one wants *our* happiness. Von Hildebrand claims that if one strives to unity only from the point of view of his own happiness, instead of love, there comes a desire of possession that can occur only between personal beings and non personal beings; only the person can be a possessor, whereas a thing can only be possessed.<sup>299</sup> Nevertheless, this kind of treatment can slip into the love of parents towards their children; sometimes in marriage, it can happen that the man has the feeling of possessing the woman. But this relation destroys love, because this is a unilateral relation, whereas the soul of every genuine love is a union in which the persons freely give themselves to each other, without any kind of constraint. But it is important that this ‘giving’ oneself does not become a ‘possession’, in the sense that one person can possess the second one and reign over her.<sup>300</sup> But also if one wants the union only because of the happiness of the “second” person, in some categories of love, for example in the case of the betrothed love, it would contradict the genuine essence and nature of love.

In this case, according to von Hildebrand, the nobleness of love does not expect to relinquish to its own happiness, which is a consequence of personal union. Gilson expresses the same idea in a very meaningful way:

“Love seeks no recompense: did it do so it would at once cease to be love. But neither should it be asked to renounce joy in the possession of the thing loved, for this joy is coessential with love; love would no longer be love if it renounced its accompanying joy. Thus all true love is at once disinterested and rewarded, or let us rather say that it could not be rewarded unless it were disinterested,

---

<sup>299</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 125.

<sup>300</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 81.

because disinterestedness is its very essence.”<sup>301</sup>

The desire of happiness, given by the union with a second person, does not need to degrade the person to the ‘instrumentality’ in the achievement of this happiness. The objective view on *intentio unionis* allows us to see the value of this element of love. The person, in experiencing this hankering for the beloved person and the unification with her, gives (*hingibt*) much more of himself than it happens in *intentio benevolentiae*. A bigger gift simultaneously proves an objectively bigger actualization of the value of this element of love. One can speak here of the *biggest gift* and at the same time of the *maximum of transcendence* (on the human sphere); this transcendence expresses itself in the fact that the two persons who reciprocate love mutually forget about themselves, turn to each other, and stay in mutual unification, which is for them a *source of happiness*. The dimension of this transcendence goes much more beyond intellectual transcendence (i.e., knowledge of the necessity of the person to be with a second person, or about community of love), but also it is not possible to compare it with the situation where one person expresses only his will to meet with a second person.

The trait of gift and dimension of transcendence, which are proper to *intentio unionis*, determine not only the theme of love but first of all they give to love its own value.<sup>302</sup> The actualization of this element of love (*intentio unionis*) makes the growth of the responsorial character of love always possible: On the one hand, proportional to intensity, the deep category of this feeling, and on other hand, the measure of the personal gift and capacity of transcendence by the person herself.

*Intentio Benevolentiae* is – according to von Hildebrand – along with *Intentio Unionis*, the second essential element of this value response which is love. Von Hildebrand describes this element in this way:

---

<sup>301</sup>E. Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A.H.C. Downes, Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York 1940, p. 280.

<sup>302</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 119, p. 181.

*“Intentio benevolentiae* consists in the desire to make the other happy; it is above all else a real interest in the happiness, the well being, and the salvation of the other. We find here in the nature of love a unique sharing in the other person, the other’s happiness and destiny. Of course, this mark of love is also found in a particular way in spousal love and is itself there in the wish never to stop conferring benefits on the beloved person with favours. But in some form or other the *intentio benevolentiae* is an essential trait of every love.”<sup>303</sup>

This desire of the longing for making the other happy is a result of love, its fruit. But this fruit is not separate from love, or somehow called by it, but something constitutive for love. It is something that decides about the specificity of love in difference to other value response.<sup>304</sup>

The loving person wants to pour the constant beloved with favours and by this to make her happy. But that which is ‘good for a person’ does not constitute a homogeneous class of goods. Von Hildebrand elaborated a specific theory of *objective goods for a person*; goods deriving their importance from the fact that they are *proper* for a person and that they are goods which can be desired by a person.<sup>305</sup>

The objective goods for a person owe their valence exactly to this, that they are good and pleasant for someone, in contradistinction to values which do not owe their valence in relation to something (von

---

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78:

“Die *intentio benevolentiae* besteht in der Sehnsucht, den anderen zu beglücken; sie ist vor allem das wirkliche Interesse an seinem Glück, an seinem Wohlergehen, an seinem Heil. Es ist die einzigartige Teilnahme an der anderen Person, ihrem Glück, ihrem Schicksal, die in der Liebe liegt. Gewiss, auch sie ist in besonderer Weise in der bräutliche Liebe zu finden und äussert sich dort in dem Wunsch, den Geliebten ständig mit Wohltaten zu überhäufen. Aber in irgendeiner Form ist die *intentio benevolentiae* ein Wesenszug jeder Liebe.”

<sup>304</sup> T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>305</sup> D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Chapter VI.

Hildebrand wrote that holiness, humility, sorrow, beauty of view are simply good and beautiful, and do not owe their valence to the fact that that are good for someone).<sup>306</sup>

The category of objective goods for a person is different also from these things and events, which von Hildebrand calls '*subjektiv Befriedigende*' i.e., to these kinds which motivate our response, only because they are pleasant, without complying with their value. This category owes its importance only to subjective feelings of pleasure by the object. However the category of objective goods for a person, even that which includes relation 'for ...' still has an objective character, a character which does not depend on the subjective reaction on them.

Von Hildebrand distinguishes four kinds of goods for a person: (1) Objectivity of values: it is possible to put here the holiness of the person, her moral perfection, intelligence, charm. All this, apart from vesting unique values, is a good *for a person*. (2) Goods which can give happiness by virtue of their unique value. These goods are: eternal unification with God, personal union in love, discovering of the truth, being in a beautiful area. (3) Useful things and things necessary for life: food, house, clothes and everything that is helpful to life, and that makes life easier. These goods are in relation to our existence; they are irrevocable elements of our (comfortable) life, but not from the point of view of their value. They make possible the possession of goods which can give to a person real happiness. (4) Pleasant things are also objective goods as long as they do not include in themselves things forbidden.<sup>307</sup>

In love the loving person wants to see the beloved person sprinkled with all these favours, because these goods are carriers of values, they include a relation to the person, and are *good for her*. But love lies much deeper.<sup>308</sup> The loving person experiences good and evil, which are experienced by the beloved person, in the same way these

---

<sup>306</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>307</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 127-128.

<sup>308</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 128.

things would happen to her (the loving person). The goods for a beloved person become goods for the loving person.<sup>309</sup>

Von Hildebrand sees in this fact a specific brilliance, warmth and transcendence of the act of love. This apparent leaving of the position from which one judges everything from a point of view of values, and acceptance of the position which turns to goods for a person, does not take away the nobility of the act of love, but gives to it (act of love) special moral value. This turning to objective goods for a person, to make the beloved person happy, is an extremely noble acceptance. It is the result of the deepest value response, it is a work of love.

Von Hildebrand, by bringing to light, in the act of love, this anxiety of the loving person about the good for the beloved person, sheds a lot of light on the conception of the person and on the conception of love. Because it is proven that human being is capable of overcoming a worry about his good and he can want the good for its own sake. Transcendence, understood in this way, can fit in von Hildebrand's conception of the person. In the case of love, this transcendence can even have a deeper dimension, because everything that happens to the beloved person, both good and evil, is treated by the loving person as though it would happen to her, not because the loving person

---

<sup>309</sup>Jacek Woroniecki writes, regarding this element of love in St. Thomas theory: "Saint Thomas has a beautiful article, in which he teaches that real love always gives rise to ecstasy. And he did not think about extraordinary states in cognition, which can bring strong indication of different kinds of love. He thought about this soft going out of oneself and forgetting about oneself in relation to this people, with whom the we are connected by goodwill love. From this love flows zeal about these people problems; problems that we take to our heart as our own." J. Woroniecki, *Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza*, T. II (Catholic Ethics of Education volume II); *Etyka Szczegółowa cz. II* (Particular Ethics part II), Kraków 1948, p. 203.

"Św. Tomasz ma piękny artykuł, w którym uczy, że miłość prowadzi do ekstazy. Nie idzie mu tam bynajmniej o stany nadzwyczajne w dziedzinie poznania, jakie mogą wywołać silne przejawy miłości różnego rodzaju, ale o to ciche wychodzenie z siebie i zapominanie o sobie w stosunku do tych, z którymi nas łączy miłość życzliwa. Z niej wypływa gorliwość o ich sprawy, które bierzemy do serca, jak by były nasze własne."

fulfills and develops herself, but because it is the beloved person who experiences it. Of course von Hildebrand includes the element of happiness and development in love, but according to him happiness and personal development are results of love, not its aims.

As we said earlier, *Intentio Benevolentiae* is an essential feature of love (*Wesenszug*)<sup>310</sup> if not the basic element of love (*Grundelement der Liebe*).<sup>311</sup> Von Hildebrand closely characterized it as the authentic interest of the loving person in the well-being, happiness, and even in the redemption of the beloved person.<sup>312</sup> This interest of the beloved person appears when the loving person, in her relation to the beloved person, aims not only at the category of motivation of that which is important itself, but also she takes into deep consideration what is objectively good for the beloved person. As long as, for example, we are looking on the fact of someone's conversion from the point of view of its importance itself (i.e., we see the moral values of this act, the dimension of God's grace) we do not grasp the meaning of this fact *for* this concrete person (for example: a new, more full way of the life of this person); our interest will stop at the pure axiological sphere and does not turn to the person, to her feelings and experiences. To the essence of love belongs the motivation of value as well as the interest in the objective good for a person.<sup>313</sup> More importantly, in this interest in the beloved person, one can observe, so to speak, a *move* from the beloved person, from a pure value response in order to focus more on that which is an objective good (or objective wrong) for the beloved person.

This could be proven by the fact that the person gives totally different responses in the case where his reaction is directed towards an unknown person, and where this same person has a different reaction regarding the experiences of the beloved person.

In the first case, the response of the person stops somehow at the axiological sphere. But objective evil touches (*affiziert*) the heart of

---

<sup>310</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 79.

<sup>311</sup>Idem, *Moralia*, p. 101.

<sup>312</sup>Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 78.

<sup>313</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 223.



the loving person when an objectively sad state of affairs concerns the beloved person.<sup>314</sup> For von Hildebrand this *deeper* interest in the second person is understandable only in the light of love. This is a sign of an essential feature of love: *intentio benevolentiae* which steers the loving person towards the world of experiences of the beloved person, on her happiness and unhappiness.<sup>315</sup> The affective participation of the loving person in the world of experiences of the beloved person is regarded by von Hildebrand as a special manifestation of the transcendence of affective responses which are founded in love; and also the manifestation of the transcendence of the love response itself which, in a very clear way, exceeds here the limits appointed to her through the value of some state of affairs, in order to go into the world of experiences of the beloved person. According to von Hildebrand it is not possible to understand this transcendence only as a theoretical cognition of an existing state of affairs, i.e., as transcendence which is possible only for the intellect.<sup>316</sup> Pure knowledge about something *what* someone experiences and what this state of affairs means *for* another person (even if this state already makes possible for the interested person some form of transcendence) does not lead to transcendence achieved in love. The intellectual transcendence of the limits of owns “I” does not mean necessarily yet to become free from egoistic “I”.

The transcendence which is specific for love, with a view to objective good for a person, surpasses also the interest in the good of the person which is present in volitional responses. Goodwill (*Wohlwollen*), in relation to the second person, is for sure a meeting with someone half way; it means to exceed the limits of owns “I”. However, it does not refer to a *deep solidarity* with the beloved person that is possible to catch in love.<sup>317</sup> It is only in a meta – love response that the person can transcend the world of her own experiences and that *her interests* are also experiences of the beloved

---

<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79, p. 201.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 215.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

person.

In *Intentio Benevolentiae*, along with the dimension of transcendence, one should underline the *giving of oneself* of the loving person which is expressed through the present of the beloved person. It is worthy to see in this point the objective sense of this present. Not everything that is subjectively satisfying should be a gift for the beloved person, only that which is, from a moral point of view, objectively good for her.<sup>318</sup>

Love, which is experienced in the dimension of *Intentio Benevolentiae*, does not mean in its essence the person leaves the position of responding to value, in spite of love's apparent departure from the nature of value response, and love towards human being becomes deeper. Von Hildebrand explains this apparent split of these two aspects of love as a *specific interaction* (*Auswirkung*) of this deepest and most central affective response, which itself has special moral value.<sup>319</sup> This special moral value is entitled to love not only because of its character of value response, but also for the reason of its special element – *Intentio Benevolentiae* (in which appears a special dimension of gift and transcendence). The meta-response of love is a bearer of moral values, because it is given regardless of the objective

---

<sup>318</sup>For example to present to the beloved person alcohol or drugs, for example, cannot be accepted as a real objective sign of love, because the value of health surpasses the indirect value of this what is pleasurable; and what is very important is that the fact of keeping the proper hierarchy of goods belongs to the essence of love. The choice of what is pleasurable than what is objective good for a person could be a *disorder of good-naturedly* of donor. It means that donor guided first of all by the voice of the heart in contrary of the reason and will. This *weakness* of the loving person dictates the *tyranny of the heart* (Das Tyranische Herz), [Idem, *Über das Herz*, p. 117.] It does not mean that lower goods for a person, like tasty meal, cannot be a subject of *Intentio Benevolentiae* in relation to the beloved person. Also this kind of goods could be in taking into consideration the objective hierarchy of the goods, if they do not go into conflict with higher objective good for a person, because they have a huge meaning in relation between persons which is based on love. Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 225.

<sup>319</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 220.

good for a beloved person.<sup>320</sup>

The affective participation in the experience of the beloved person, in her happiness and unhappiness, does not diminish the responsorial character of love, but on the contrary, it *grows a gift* and *increases the transcendence meta-response of love* and thus contributes to award a higher moral value to this special value response.

The previous deliberations on von Hildebrand's conception of love showed that all resorts to the second person, which is characterized by love, is a gift of the loving person to the beloved person. It is a *gift* in the sense that one person, in all her individuality, gives herself to another, in all her individuality, without attending to particulars, but rather to the person as a whole. And this makes a difference between love and other – von Hildebrand would say – affective value responses like respect, admiration, and honour.

In every value response such as love (gift) von Hildebrand distinguishes two fundamental spiritual motions: *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae* which are shortly characterised here:

“But the *intentio benevolentiae* is far more than the desire to make the beloved person happy; it is far more than deep interest in his well-being and happiness. It is certain goodness felt toward the other, the breath of goodness (*G,te*). Thus we find here something analogous to what we found with *intentio unionis*. We saw that *intentio unionis* is not only a yearning for union with the other, but is at the same time already a first step towards establishing this union, since one spiritually hastens to the other in love. In a similar way, the *intentio benevolentiae* is not only a desire to make other happy, not only an interest in his well-being, but it is itself a breath of goodness that confers happiness, giving the other a unique indeed irreplaceable gift. The *intentio benevolentiae* is also something found only in love and serves clearly to distin-

---

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 224.

guish love from esteem, admiration, or veneration.”<sup>321</sup>

Consequently in love is included a hankering for a unification with the beloved person and an interest in her happiness. This interest appears in a desire of sprinkling the beloved person with goods, and – what has a relation with *Intentio Unionis* – in a gladdening infiltration of the loving person, by his goodness, in the soul of the beloved person:

“In love, one is spiritually in a hurry towards the other, in order to be with him and share something with him, on the other hand, one covers him with a “coat” of good, cares lovingly and looks after him spiritually. Every love, which must deserve the name love, contains both of these elements, even though they are in unequal emphasis according to the kind of love.”<sup>322</sup>

---

<sup>321</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 79:

“Aber die *intentio benevolentiae* ist noch mehr als die Sehnsucht, den Geliebten zu beglücken, und das tiefe Interesse an seinem Wohlergehen und Glück. Es ist die gültige Gesinnung gegen den anderen, der Hauch der Güte in der Liebe selbst. Wir finden daher hier etwas Analoges wie bei der *intentio unionis*. Wie die *intentio unionis* nicht nur eine Sehnsucht nach Einheit, sondern zugleich auch schon ein Ansatz ist, die unio herzustellen, weil man sich in der Liebe geistig zu dem anderen hinbegibt, so ist die *intentio benevolentiae* nicht nur eine Sehnsucht, den anderen zu beglücken, nicht nur ein Interesse an seinem Wohlergehen, sondern sie ist selbst ein beglückender Hauch der Güte und man gibt dem anderen damit schon ein einzigartiges, ja unersetzliches Geschenk. Auch die *intentio benevolentiae* ist etwas, was sich nur in der Liebe findet und was sie deutlich von Schätzung, Bewunderung, Verehrung unterscheidet.”

<sup>322</sup>Idem, *Sittliche Grundhaltungen*, Verlag Josef Habbel, Regensburg 1969, pp. 75-76. “In der Liebe eilt man geistig dem anderen entgegen, um bei ihm zu weilen und an ihm teilzuhaben, andererseits bedeckt man ihn mit einen ‘Mantel’ der Güte, umhegt und pflegt ihn geistig. Jede Liebe, die den Namen Liebe verdienen soll, enthält diese beiden Elemente, wenn auch je nach der Art der Liebe in ungleicher Betonung.”

### 3.3 Love and Morality

According to von Hildebrand the fundamental and crucial significance for human morality has a *necessity of proclamation* between the *sphere of value and the sphere of the subjectively satisfying*.

One should notice here that moral values, as a kind of qualitative values, are not a single source of acting which can be qualified as a moral acting inasmuch as not every value has essential significance for morality. Von Hildebrand calls as morally relevant values all those values which have an essential role for morality.<sup>323</sup> The morally relevant values are not a separate kind (in relation, for example, to ontological and qualitative values) of values. They include, of course, moral values as a kind of qualitative values, but also ontological values:

“The term ‘morally relevant value’ is obviously much more inclusive than the term ‘moral values’. Many ontological values, such as the life of man or his rights, are morally relevant values, though they are clearly not moral values. The ontological value of man’s life and his dignity, though not moral values, are definitely morally relevant values, because to give an adequate response to them is undoubtedly morally good. It must be said that all moral values are morally relevant, but not all morally relevant values are moral values.”<sup>324</sup>

Von Hildebrand, since his earliest work in analysing the source of moral goodness, stresses first of all the significance of the general attitudes towards morally relevant values. Already in his *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, he shows that all moral life of a given

---

<sup>323</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 265:

“We shall term all those values in which a moral significance is found, and to which a right response is morally good in the full sense of the word, ‘morally relevant values’”.

<sup>324</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 280.

person, all her behaviours, depend on general human attitudes towards good and evil, attitudes which one can qualify as moral.<sup>325</sup> In many places he returns to the differences in a general attitude by comparing Socrates and Aristippes. Even in his later works he underlines the fundamental significance of the general attitudes towards good and evil.<sup>326</sup>

Von Hildebrand very carefully analyses the *source of human moral goodness*. Most interesting for him is the situation of a *permanent* realisation of the moral goodness and that is why he focuses on the conditions, which are necessary for the realisation of this situation.

First of all, according to our Philosopher, the fulfilment of choosing a *value* is required, which lies on the general attitude of giving the *adequate response* to the value and which stands in opposition to what is subjectively satisfying.<sup>327</sup> As long as human being is motivated only by the subjective importance, his behaviour would not have a character of morally good.<sup>328</sup> Secondly – moral goodness is not connected with response to every value, but only with the morally relevant values.<sup>329</sup> Thirdly – it is true that the person has

---

<sup>325</sup>Idem, *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, pp. 80-81. “Von der Stellung der Person zu ‘gut’ und ‘böse’, zum Reich des Sittlichen überhaupt, hängt des ganze übrige sittliche Verhalten ab, seine Stellung zu allen Einzelwerten sowie alle spezielleren sittlichen Haltungen überhaupt. (...) Die sittliche Grundhaltung bildet die konstitutive Basis des sittlichen Lebens der Person; die Stellung, die jemand zu ‘gut’ und ‘böse’ hat oder zu Gott, ist für alle Stellungen zu Einzelnen sittlichen Werten entscheidend.”

<sup>326</sup>Idem, *Moralia*, pp. 21-22:

“Nun aber sei betont, dass die für den sittlichen stand eines Menschen im ganzen entscheidende Haltung, die Grundintention, den sittlichen Status der Person bestimmt. (...) In einem gewissen Sinn ist die Grundintention die wichtigste Quelle des sittlich Guten.”

<sup>327</sup>Idem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 255.

“We saw before that every morally good attitude is, or at least implies, a value response.”

<sup>328</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 342:

“As long as we are motivated only by something subjectively satisfying, our attitude will not be endowed with a moral value in the full sense of the term.”

<sup>329</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 342.

to at the same time grasp the morally relevant situation and show a will to be generally good.<sup>330</sup>

If the moral character of the situation was not included, and behaviour expresses a will to be good, this kind of behaviour can have a character of *pharisaism*.<sup>331</sup> The will to be good is an especially important moment for the stability of the choice of good. The will to be good is a specific response to the general moral values, a response which follows from the understanding of their importance.<sup>332</sup> The will to being generally good as a response to the general moral values should be distinguished from the concrete value responses. One can say that in a concrete situation, on the significance of the situation, that one's behaviour will be good, even if he will not show a will to be a generally good. But the lack of this will can cause that in the next concrete situation this same behaviour could not be taken as morally good. The will to be good should guarantee the permanence of the good. Fourthly – the behaviour can be morally good only if it is *free*.<sup>333</sup> Freedom is connected with responsibility. If the act would not be free, we would not be responsible for it, and this could exclude it from the moral classification. By distinguishing the conditions of moral goodness von Hildebrand asks: *what can be good?* And as a response he gives three main spheres of moral goodness: The first sphere of moral goodness is the sphere of *human actions*.<sup>334</sup>

“The will commands the action; it is the master of all actions. Though the will is not restricted to actions but has also a tremendous function to perform in the sphere of our indirect power, the sphere of action is nonetheless

---

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 261.

“To look at the moral significance, i.e., at the objective goodness, of an action or attitude which we are about to accomplish is radically opposed to the attitude of the Pharisee who squints at himself whenever he acts and relishes the moral goodness of his act.”

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

the specific kingdom of the will and it is here that the will attains its most immediate, full moral significance.”<sup>335</sup>

The actions are directly connected with the will, which is – as one remembers – one of the kinds of value response.<sup>336</sup> Some philosophers limit ethics only to these actions, whereas von Hildebrand shows other spheres.

Love (but also all emotional responses) belongs to the second sphere of moral goodness, as well as responses of the will which do not lead to acting.<sup>337</sup> The third sphere of the morally good makes some features of human character, i.e., humility, truthfulness, justice etc.<sup>338</sup> Von Hildebrand also makes an analysis of the source of moral evil. The fundamental source of it is indifference towards morally significant values and goods. This indifference manifests itself in following the subjective importance of things.<sup>339</sup> Fundamental causes of morally reprehensible acting are conceit (*Hochmut*) and desire (*Begehrlichkeit*), which are totally opposite to good acting.<sup>340</sup>

Von Hildebrand, in describing the sources of moral goodness, focuses on the important conditions for realizing the permanent good. The condition, which is especially important for the permanent good is – as we have already suggested – the will to be good. But he perceives that human behaviour can be good even if the person does not manifest this kind of will. Therefore, he distinguishes two types of humans: the morally conscious and the morally unconscious. One is morally conscious if one shows a permanent will for being good, whereas one is morally unconscious when one does not possess any

---

<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 342-343.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 353-355.

<sup>339</sup> Idem, *Moralia*, p. 25:

“Wir zeigten, dass die Indifferenz gegenüber den sittlich bedeutsamen Gütern oder deren Zerstörung zugunsten eines bloss subjektiv Befriedigenden Träger des sittlichen Unwertes sind.”

<sup>340</sup> Idem, *Christian Ethics*, p. 407.



will for being good.<sup>341</sup> We can briefly say, the conditions of moral goodness are: the choice of values and the fact of giving them an adequate response, the moral goodness which is always connected with morally relevant value, the importance of grasping a morally relevant situation and of being generally good, the free act. We have also dealt with one of the main issues of our work which can also be well captured by this question: “what can be good?” And as we have developed, “good” could involve human acting, some features of human character and value responses; responses of the will, but also emotional ones.

With the above-description, we intended to present von Hildebrand’s conception of morality, and specially the conception of morality and the place of love in this moral theory.

We aimed also at investigating the relation between morality and love. And as it was mentioned above, love belongs to one of the spheres of moral goodness. It means that it has a dimension which is not only generally human, but also moral.

“To love” can be judged in moral aspects, because “to love” means to act morally. Love as an element of morality has at the same time, not only a strict philosophical meaning, but also an ethical one.

By showing the place of love in von Hildebrand’s moral theory we stressed along with it a very important element that we can call dimension. Because, in addition to self-giving, the caring for the goods of the beloved person, the loving person, by the very act of “loving”, enters into the moral sphere, the moral dimension. To love for a person is not just a good act it is a morally good act.

What is also important to notice here is the trial to grasp the essence of love by starting from the proposition of the general striving of being for perfection. In the case of human being this striving would adopt the form of loving oneself. Exactly this “own love” would be a source, and at the same time an example and measure of every love to the second human being. In this conception, the love to the second person organic grows out of necessity of fulfilling the being

---

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 265-266.

of the beloved person and it appears on the extension of own self love. This love strives for abolishing the distance between objects, and even for their identify. Own love is here temporarily and ontologically primeval in relation to the love of the second person. It appears as a fundamental condition of development of the human nature.

Apart from the methodological falsity of this theory it is important to underline that a fundamental antinomy is hidden in it. Because in the love of the second person one wants the good for this person, but the motivating force of this willingness is one's "own good."<sup>342</sup>

Love understood as a value response, theoretically excludes straight away the possibility of subordinating the beloved person to some necessity; it could be even the loftiest understood necessity of self perfection. Because according to von Hildebrand value cannot be some kind of correlate of necessity. Value always appears as a striving itself, striving which explains itself. It is not possible even to say that value is based on the conformity of something with human reason. In the opposite, it is a mind, which is reasonable, when it accepts the autonomy of the logos of the values, and it subordinates of values demanding. The rationality in love, in this way can be the axiological rationality.

The starting point for love is always different values, which a given person – object of love – carries himself (it can be moral, intellectual, aesthetical values). But finally love responds to the unique value of the second person as a person, to the entire beauty of her individuality. This personal value is not a particular realization of some general essence (like humanity for example), but it includes itself a trait of original invention of God. The mystery of love is the fact – as von Hildebrand would say – that on the one hand it is a value response, on the other hand it always concerns individual, unique person. One loves a person, not a value.<sup>343</sup>

---

<sup>342</sup>J. Gorczyca, *Transcendencja w miłości (Transcendence in Love)*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>343</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 104-113.

The wrong view, which in desire of unification sees some flawless on the love purity, and ideal sees in love totally disinterested, was born as a reaction on the not good understanding of the essence of the unity between persons. This understanding came from (as von Hildebrand claims) Plato's philosophy. Plato, by understanding Eros as a son of Abundance and Poverty, reduced love between people to striving for the mutual complementing, to reconstruction of the formerly lost unity. It means that if one strives for unification, one wants the second person to fulfill herself, for her own happiness.

That is why according to the great metaphysician Levinas (who uses also the myth of love from Plato's *Symposium*) there is in love a fundamental ambiguity of the fact, which is on the borderline between necessity and desire, immanence and transcendence.<sup>344</sup> Many philosophers of the Christian tradition fully accept this ambiguity, by seeing in it rather double dynamic, which is inseparable from every human love. More importantly, one claims even sometimes that in love called goodwill (which desires of the good of other person) stick always some element "regardless to myself" and disinterested is only a sublimed form of elementary, unconscious infirmed towards our own perfection. In this way the personal unification would be only the most perfect form of relation to the second person as a good, which makes me more reach. The second person is here not only subordinated to me, is this one to owing whom I achieve my own perfection and happiness. But this kind of unity finally would be only a unity of mutuality in the desire for possessing the second person, would be a unity of absorption of two "I", which can be soften by the gesture of the goodwill love.

Does it mean that an absolutely disinterested love is possible, where the importance is only goodness and happiness of the beloved person?

If it is true that in the love to neighbour goodness and happiness of the second person play the leading role, it is also true that, for

---

<sup>344</sup>E. Levinas, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité* (*Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*), La Haye 1974, pp. 232-233.

example, in betrothed love or in friendship the absolute indifference regards one's good and happiness would be in contradiction with the nature of love. If someone would say: "For me the most important is only your happiness, mine is indifferent for me, I can live unhappy with you" this person seems someone who does not know the essence of love. But the relation with the second person is not also this kind of relation when one wants the second person as a kind of good to achieve her own perfection and regardless her own happiness, but this is a relation when one gives oneself as a gift for the goodness of the beloved, and the goodness and happiness of the loving person accompany the gift of the gesture of self-giving. It is only in this way that the beloved person is not reduced to a means for achieving a goal, but one gets to know and to love her in her unique value of being exactly this person; she is situated outside of any utilitarian interest of the loving person.

Of course it does not mean that the beloved person is not a "good" for the loving person. But in an ontological point of view it is a good which is essentially different from the good as a correlate of necessity. The beloved person is an axiological good, which is found in an absolute value and as such (in his goodness in relation to the loving person totally autonomous) is a good for the loving person. This kind of unification with the second person (as my goodness) grows from a response to his value; it is not a closure of "me" and closure of "you" in immanence, but in the opposite, it is continuous self-transcendence in love.<sup>345</sup> To the essence of love belongs the will of giving to the beloved person, this is what is the objective good for her, and it is somehow on the extension of self-giving. All that is good for the beloved person penetrates in the sphere of the loving person and so much that the good for the beloved person stands as the good and happiness for the loving person; and all that is evil for the beloved person remains evil for the loving person.

But the unification in love is not free from some kind of danger. Also love, like every human reality, has some kind of pathology. Von

---

<sup>345</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 166-167, p. 189.

Hildebrand sees its two main forms: one he calls “egoism for the second person” and treats the second person as an extension of own “I”.<sup>346</sup>

In love, in this way, there can be a double negative tendency: to the closure of the beloved person in the immanence of the loving person and to the exclusion of the third person. Von Hildebrand takes the presence of this destructive dynamism into consideration and tries to show also that what opens love to the truth of mutual self-giving, i.e., opening of the persons to all conditions which follow from values and moral norm.

### 3.4 Love and Happiness

The object takes as gladdening everything that appears to him as valuable, and that has a power to motivate his will and causes in him the affective responses. Von Hildebrand claims that it exists as something that is important itself, something that is objectively good for a person, something that is *objectively gladdening itself* (*objectiv erfreulich*) and something that is objectively gladdening for someone.<sup>347</sup>

Von Hildebrand sees, next to this objective character in gladdening, a manifestation of value, some kind of duty (*Sollen*), which is analogous to duty of existence (*Seinsollen*) affirmed in every value. Von Hildebrand characterizes the nature of the first duty as: “(...) everything objectively gladdening ought to give us happiness and requires from us a response of joy.”<sup>348</sup>

---

<sup>346</sup>“Egoism for a second person” is not egoistic love, but rather the egoism which follows from love. It is an attitude, when loving person in a care of good of beloved person excludes from this good some third persons. This “third” appears here as an intruder, who threaten beloved, and indirectly to loving person. Beloved person is possible to treat as an extension of own “I”. The egoism in love in this case will be not different form the egoism “for my self” only with the difference that it will possess the wider extent.” *Ibid.*, p. 336.

<sup>347</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 144.

<sup>348</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 145:

Thus, the object is confronted with the duty of giving an affective response of joy. Hence, the response of joy means generally some affective response depending on the nature of the good, some kind of value, etc. It means also specific joy – response in the above-mentioned two forms. But on the other hand, as we said before, the nature of affective responses depends on the motivation of the subject.

Taking into consideration the joyful aspect of value, we can ask: What kind of role does this aspect of value, in value response, play? Does experience of happiness have a positive or negative influence on the attitude of the object who is responding? What kind of condition should fulfill the object in the acceptance of the gladdening *gift* of love?

In trying to answer to these questions, one should respect the goods that can be called *gaudenda* as well as the goods which make it possible that the object experiences the state of *frui*.

The function of joy in value response will be broadly developed, when we will address the problem of gladdening participation of the object in value. It (the function of joy in value response) will show us also a specific character of value itself in connection with the phenomenon of happiness. The relation of value with happiness, in a specific way, will come out in the response of love, which goes beyond, in every way (because of its gladdening character), all other responses of the heart.

If one wants to get to the core of our problem, one first should see the correlation which is proper for the situation wherein valuable goods are experienced by the object as *gaudenda*, and one will compare them with the correlation which is characteristic for the experience of value in *frui*. The structure of these correlations will show us the way in which happiness appears to the object.

In the first case one has to deal with the response of joy to the objective gladdening state of affairs (joy of an innocent man freed

---

“( . . . ) alles objektiv Erfreuliche uns beglücken soll und die Antwort der Freude fordert.”

from prison). In the structure of this correlation one sees the relation between a value (i.e., the act of freeing an innocent man) and the objective gladdening character of a state of affairs (the joy from gaining freedom).<sup>349</sup> Von Hildebrand speaks here about a double thematic (*Themen*): value and happiness. He specifies joy, i.e., a response of the object as “first-rate participation in objective gladdening character of value”; however he does not regard it as a separate thread (*Thema*) of happiness.<sup>350</sup> It appears in the object, but does not increase in the object’s side a new and separate thematic (*Thema*). The correlation that is grasped in this way is proper to every affective value response.

Von Hildebrand sees in a different way the correlation which is typical to the experience of emotion, of value (*Affiziertwerden*) and states of *frui*. When a person, for example, admires a precious work of art and contemplates its beauty, the value of beauty gets to the core of his heart (soul). In this case one also can speak of a double thematic: value (beauty of the work of art) and happiness (aesthetic experience of beauty), but with the difference that here the thread (*Thema*) of happiness is present also in the experience of the object.<sup>351</sup> It appears clearer in the experience of the *frui* happiness than in the affective response. The receptive object opens himself to the gladdening action of the value, and in virtue of that, his experience brings (in relation to the value response) *something totally new* (*das ganz Neue*).<sup>352</sup>

What kind of relation do these two types of relations, between value and happiness, have regarding the object who responds to values? In other words: does the presence of happiness, whether thematic or not, have some influence on the object and his relation to the value? To get down to the object one should take into consideration the object’s motivation.

The non-thematic presence of happiness in the experience of the

---

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, p 152.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 150.

object does not have negative influence on his value response, under the condition that the object stays near value. If the object is led, in his value response, principally by duty (*Sollen*), his happiness cannot weaken the responsorial character of his state. On the contrary, happiness from the objective gladdening realized state of affairs (about moral or a morally important value) is a response which is morally valuable.<sup>353</sup> This kind of value response is more advantageous than when the person is affectively indifferent when catching the voice of value.

In this way, the affective response can connect to the volitive element in the object in the case where the act of the object always founds a volitive attitude (*Stellungnahme*) in relation to the not yet realized state of affairs. Because the will has the crucial voice here, one should assume that duty (*Sollen*) is the first-rate motivation of the act expressed by the will. Affective responses are somehow a second-rate element, even if they are motivated by the value of the possible state of affairs. They fulfill the responsorial character of responses by bringing in the affective color and increase the general moral value of the acting.

The role of happiness, or the possible influence on the responsorial character of the object, is more evident in expressing the *frui* by the object. This state, as it is clear in the beginning, is not devoid of some ambivalence. The fact that the theme of the gladdening appears in the experience of the object, can be connected with the fact that the object turns to the happiness and turns away from value. Here there exists a danger of falsifying the objective order (by the subjectively satisfying motivation) of the value from which happiness follows. "As soon as the disorder occurs of making the happiness granted by the *frui* into the first and most important theme, the attitude of value response would be radically abandoned, but with that the true *frui* would also be destroyed."<sup>354</sup>

---

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158:

"Sobald hier eine Unordnung einsetzen würde, durch die das Glück, das uns



The choice of happiness as an aim itself is a sign of a eudaemonist position. This position leads to disastrous consequences in the sense that falsified happiness, by making it egoistic, immanent, occasional ‘happiness’ tries to derive value from the experience of this “happiness”.<sup>355</sup> In this divert relation, happiness – value, the experience loses its full sense and intentional steering of the valuable subject, and the object does not develop himself, he is only still in the limits of his immanent “I”.<sup>356</sup> Von Hildebrand calls this state a perversion.

In the history of ethics, there are many manifestations of eudaemonism, from Aristotle to our modern times. Von Hildebrand warns us of the dangers of eudaemonism; he explains that the theme of happiness in experiences of the object during the experiences *frui* can never be understood as a single, independent thread, which is separate (*loslösbar*) from the first-rate thread of this experience, i.e. from the relation of the object to value.<sup>357</sup> The theme of value should keep proper place for itself, proper for its precedence. It does not mean that the presence of happiness in the experience of the object loses its meaning. Von Hildebrand even talks about *duty* (*Sollen*) of the experience of happiness: “If we speak here of the thematicity of happiness, we do so only in the sense that happiness should be fully experienced, that it would be wrong and indeed mad not to acknowledge in its overwhelming significance and glory this happiness flowing organically from value and the *fruitio* of the good.”<sup>358</sup>

Happiness, which goes from deeply experienced value – according to von Hildebrand – moulds a positive sense of the relation of the object to value. One sees it especially in the context of affective

---

das Frui gewährt, das erste und wichtigste Thema würde, wäre allerdings die Wertantworthaltung radikal verlassen, aber auch das wahre Frui zerstört.”

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>356</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 298.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160:

“Wenn wir hier von einer Themazität des Glückes sprechen, so nur in dem Sinn, dass es voll als Glück erlebt werden soll, dass es falsch und wahnsinnig wäre, dieses organisch aus dem Wert und der *fruitio* des Gutes fließende Glück nicht in seiner überwältigenden Bedeutung und Glorie zu erkennen.”

responses. In this kind of responses – as we pointed it out earlier – the ‘call’, which goes from the value, reaches directly into the heart of the object, and not the instance of the will. To the nature of all positive affective responses belongs the fact that they are somehow gladdening. The response of joy, in the situation, for example, that one sees some beautiful work of art (like *Mona Lisa* of Leonardo da Vinci) is somehow gladdening. One can say that the affective responses include in themselves some *source (Quelle) of happiness*.<sup>359</sup> The presence of happiness in these responses can be explained by the fact that they establish the experience of value, or that they are connected somehow with this experience; experience in which happiness gets to the core of the human heart.

Von Hildebrand sees a special source of happiness in some kind of affective response. One can be convinced of the existence of this special kind of source, if one compares some less affective responses with responses which are more affective, for example by comparing respect with admiration.

In the first case one gives a response with some emotional tint; in the second one, one can experience emotion (*Affiziertsein*) from the value of beauty. Admiration, in contradistinction to respect, appears as a response, which has the emotion of the value as a fundament.

Along with the fact of giving some types of responses (for example: admiration) there is the fact that the object opens a *new source of happiness (eine neue Quelle des Beglückenden)*.<sup>360</sup>

According to von Hildebrand the fact of plaiting the affective responses with the experience of happiness (which is present in or on their basis and in which is given to the object a special kind of experience of the value) has an influence *on the growth of the theme of the value (Steigerung der Wertthematizität)*.<sup>361</sup> And it means a deeper self-giving of the object to the value of the subject and a higher

---

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297.

Much deeper relation with experience of happiness is in the response of delight, which includes of course emotion of the value, but also it is gladdening itself.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

dimension of experienced transcendence (especially in responses to the moral and morally important value).

Among affective responses love has the most gladdening character. And because of this the fundament of the object profits new value. Love, in the strict sense – as mentioned above – is related to the value of the person. In love the loving person opens before the beloved person a special source of experience. The human experience suggests that when an object performs some acts, one recognizes simultaneously their specific character.<sup>362</sup> That is why the experience of love towards the second person is a source of experience of the specific character of love itself. This source of the experience is connected with the source of gladdening of the person:

“For to love, to be able to love, is a unique happiness. Of course all that we mentioned in connection with enthusiasm – growing beyond oneself, transcending oneself, coming to oneself as a spiritual person – are given in love in a vastly fuller way. But the transcendence of love is of a different kind on account of the literal self-giving that is proper to love.”<sup>363</sup>

The nature of the gift of the person in the response of love was clearly shown through the description of two essential elements of love: *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae*. In each of them,

---

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 295.

The author calls a *secondary experience* (*laterale Erfahrung*) the experience of the essence of love in value response to the value of the person. As a *front experience* (*frontale Erfahrung*) he recognizes experience of love which appears in front of us i.e., love between two persons, of which we are witness. The third *intermediate experience of the essence of love* is to be the beloved person.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 302:

“Zu lieben, lieben zu können ist ein einzigartiges Glück. Nicht nur ist all das, was wir bei der Begeisterung erwähnten, das über- sich- Hinauswachsen, die Aktualisierung der Transzendenz, die Entfaltung unserer geistigen Person, in ungleich höherem Maß gegeben in der Liebe. Eine ganz neue Art der Transzendenz liegt hier vor wegen der Hingabe im buchstäblichen Sinn, die der Liebe eigen ist.”

one saw a co-present gladdening theme of the person, and even more, a mutual gladdening of the persons in love.

Moreover, love, in comparison with other value responses, has much more an effect on the person himself. It renews the existence of the person; and this is expressed in the following:

The soul of the person is disposed in this way that it makes the person wary (*waschsam*) on the world of values. (1) The person is much more vigilant in positing attitudes (*Stellungnahmen*). (2) The person finds herself (*Sich Finden*).<sup>364</sup>

It seems that the first of these elements, that is “the wary on the world of values”, is closely connected with the experienced value (*Affiziertwerden*), the second one “vigilance in taking attitudes” has a special position in every value response, and “finding oneself” is somehow a fruit of the participation of the object in value.

Depending on the category of love and its extent the above-mentioned elements will show themselves clearly and are experienced by the person as a gladdening. They will appear also somehow in the description of the next two dimensions of love, which give a special rank to this response.

### 3.5 Categories of Love

All authors, who make an attempt to analyse the phenomenon of love, realize that there are numerous aspects of the notion, as well as numerous aspects of reality which shine through love. Therefore they tried to find out some principle, which would be helpful in making some kind of groups composed of all different aspects of the affirmation turned toward the second person.<sup>365</sup>

Von Hildebrand assumes not just one rule of division, but three

---

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 303.

<sup>365</sup> We saw already the ambiguity of the notion of ‘love’ in the second chapter. As for classification we can name as an example C.S. Lewis: eros, friendship, caritas; A. Nygren: eros, agape; J. Woroniecki: love as: attraction, desire, goodwill and friendship.

(so can we say), although it is clear that it is not that proper to speak of division in strict sense: division in consideration of the kind (category) of love; division in consideration of the quality of love and division in consideration of the intensity (extent) of love.<sup>366</sup>

In the analysis that follows, we will see what kind of relations and correlations exist between these three divisions (category, quality, and extent) of love.

Von Hildebrand understands by the category of love the fundamental, basic kinds of love, which are different (independently from a difference of extents and depth-quality) between themselves regardless of essence and form.<sup>367</sup> He worked out some of these categories in his book *Das Wesen der Liebe* while dedicating the love within marriage to separate books,<sup>368</sup> and in some parts of the book *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft* von Hildebrand dedicated one chapter to the short characteristic of the classic – as he called them – category of love.<sup>369</sup>

These categories are: parental love, filial love, love between brother(s) and sister(s), “love as a love” to the person whom one can recognize as worthy of love, friendship, betrothed love, holy love, love to our neighbour and love founded on a common basis. They are categories of love which can happen between people, and which are characterised by von Hildebrand in the above-mentioned book. Apart from these categories, in his different books, he writes at length about love to God; that is why we will take also this kind of love into account.

Love for God is a value response, and the highest in the sense of the word. It is motivated by an unlimited magnificence and holiness of God, Whom we love. The fruit of the value response to God enters into the “kingdom of holy goodness”, and as its result, the loving

---

<sup>366</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>367</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 45.

<sup>368</sup>*Die Ehe, Reinheit und Jungfräulichkeit, Man and Woman, Die Enzyklika “Humanae Vitae” – ein zeichen des Widerspruchs.*

<sup>369</sup>Idem, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, Kapitel 5: “Kategorien de Liebe”, pp. 41-65.

person re-beams over with the goodness.<sup>370</sup> *Intentio Benevolentiae* has here a totally different character than in the other categories of love which can occur between people. It expresses itself through the fiery zeal of God's glory, through a deep desire to adore Him.<sup>371</sup> On the first place there is the admiration of the affirmation of God and a total self-giving. Therefore, *Intentio Unionis* plays a crucial primary role here, and on the second position this role can be played by human happiness.<sup>372</sup> This love, for many reasons, is incomparable with other categories, because it concerns Absolute Lord, God Almighty and Infinite Holiness.<sup>373</sup>

Our love for God is inseparable from the obedience of His Commandments. And this Love expresses itself in this obedience. But it is not only a theme of this love. It would be mistaken to simply reduce it only to obedience. What is proper for this kind of love is the a full giving of oneself to God, which is a pure response to God, a pure response of love, the response that love has as a theme. In von Hildebrand's understanding, in Christ's words: "If ye love me keep my commandments" (John 14, 15), shows that the obedience to God is a touchstone and essential expression of love for Him. But it is not possible to interpret these words in the way that a response of admiration of love for God and the giving of our hearts to Him are not necessary:

"The love for God is, in spite of its ultimate bond with the moral theme, also the exemplary cause, or model, of all creaturely love; it is the purest, most expressive value – response of love, the ultimate, absolute, total giving of my heart, of my very self. Here the theme of love as such reaches its maximum, as we can see from the fact that *intentio unionis* reaches here its maximum."<sup>374</sup>

---

<sup>370</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>371</sup>Saint Theresa of Jesus, *The Interior Castle*, Sands & Co, London 1945, p. 60.

<sup>372</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 322.

<sup>373</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>374</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 323.

In parental love (*Elternliebe*) the characteristic fact that it does not contain any deep mutual penetration; there is no spatial equation – “to be vis-à-vis oneself”, as it happens to be the case in betrothed love. It is neither characteristic for this kind of love “to be side by side”, as it is so specific for love between brother(s) and sister(s) and for friendship.<sup>375</sup> The characteristic feature of parental love could be referred to as somehow a “standing one by one”. The parents are standing after their children to protect them. Because children start experiencing life and working for it, and it is exactly the parental love that should help them to enter in life and to become self-dependent. Parents feel love towards their children, without waiting for their children to ask for this love.<sup>376</sup> In this kind of love, *Intentio Benevolentiae* takes the lead before *Intentio Unionis*. But it does not mean that *Intentio Unionis* does not appear in this love. Naturally, it appears, but it has a specific tint. Reciprocation is longed for here.<sup>377</sup>

But it is a different reciprocation than in the love in marriage or in friendship. In this case, reciprocated love is different (according to category) from received love, it is love of children to their parents.<sup>378</sup> However in marriage and in friendship the reciprocation founds the same category of love. Non-reciprocal parental love does not thwart this love. Parents are ready to love without reciprocation.<sup>379</sup> This “readiness” of resignation from mutual love is here different than in

---

“Die gottesliebe ist trotz ihrer letzten Verbundenheit mit dem sittlichen Thema zugleich auch die causa exemplaris aller geschöpflichen Liebe, die reinste, ausgeprägteste Liebeswertantwort, die letzte, absolute, totale Hingabe unseres Herzens, die Schenkung unserer selbst. Hier erreicht auch das Thema der Liebe als solches seinen Höhepunkt. Dies kommt eben auch darin zum Ausdruck, dass die *intentio unionis* hier ihren Höhepunkt erreicht.”

<sup>375</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>376</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>377</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, pp. 46-47.

<sup>378</sup>*Ibid.*, and also T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>379</sup>“Diese Verzichtsbereitschaft ist für die Elternliebe tief charakteristisch – allerdings ist es ein Verzicht, der blutenden Herzens geleistet wird, im typischen Gegensatz zur Nächstenliebe, die eine völlig freie Verzichtsbereitschaft enthält. Sie verleiht der Elternliebe einen spezifisch selbstlosen rührenden Aspekt.” D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 46.

love of neighbor, because parents resign from it with bleeding heart. Parental love does not lean on a community of interests. Of course those deep differences of convictions can hurt a parents' heart, but in this love these differences do not matter.

Filial love (*Kindesliebe*) is different because it depends on the age/maturity of the child.<sup>380</sup> But in spite of these differences, one can speak of only one type of filial love. For a child, according to von Hildebrand, his parents are representatives of God, because they appear as people who can possibly solve everything, who make the norm of life and who know everything. The child turns to them and looks somehow "up".<sup>381</sup> The appeal of reciprocation does not exist in this love. The parental love is silently found as obvious, and on this fundament of parental love grows (but not as its result) filial love. *Intentio Unionis* takes the lead in childhood, but in the adolescence it is in the shadow of *Intentio Benevolentiae*.<sup>382</sup> In an adult child pietism comes into prominence. Their love towards their parents can evolve with time to result into friendship.<sup>383</sup> In filial love, the individuality of the parents plays the small role. For children their parents are first of all "parents", thus somehow representatives of "parental department", after which their individuality is estimated.

The characteristic for love between brother(s) and sister(s) (*Geschwisterliche Liebe*) is a consciousness of being connected together. Lovers somehow stand one by one.<sup>384</sup> This "being one by one" exists also in love based on a common basis, but in this case the lovers connect the object of interest. In love between brother(s) and sister(s) the mutual relation is primary. Between brother(s) and sister(s) occur an obvious trust in which in some way is opened the

---

<sup>380</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 48-49 and also T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>382</sup> "In dieser Liebe prävaliert die *intentio unionis* vor der *intentio benevolentiae*, d. h., das Kind will bei den Eltern weilen, von ihnen und ihrem Geist zehren und sich nähren. Dagegen tritt die Richtung auf Beglückung der Eltern zurück." D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 48.

<sup>383</sup> T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>384</sup> D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 49.



sphere of intimacy. But it is not this kind of “opening” that happens and is specific for love in marriage. Because in love in marriage, a mutual disclosure of the sphere of intimacy takes place. In love between brother(s) and sister(s) this kind of fact is already founded, but it is limited. This kind of love is a natural ground for friendship.<sup>385</sup>

Von Hildebrand does not talk about *Intentio Benevolentiae* when he analyses this kind of love. But even if he does not talk about it in a very clearly way, we can reconstruct his idea of *Intentio Benevolentiae* in love between brother(s) and sister(s) with the help of the context and climate (which is proper for this kind of love). It seems that brother(s) and sister(s) are ready to help each other in every situation on the fundament of a common bond and obvious trust.<sup>386</sup>

Love as a love (*Liebe Schlechtweg*) is understood as love to the person whom one can recognize as worthy of love. When von Hildebrand characterizes this kind of love, he writes that this kind love is motivated by the individuality and character of the person. The interest of the second person resides in the fact that one is totally bent on the side of the beloved person. But what is important in this kind of love is that there is a lack of self-giving, as it happens in love in marriage. In this love one person grasps the second one as such, not as a member of some social structure – as von Hildebrand calls it – i.e., as being a parent, brother, friend. Love as a love can proceed from down – up, from up – down, or be on the same level. This kind of love does not need reciprocity or some kind of anchor in some objective values, which are common for both sides. It is different from the love of neighbor because of the element of individuality, which is its characteristic which it does not have that much importance in

---

<sup>385</sup>“Für die Geschwisterliebe ist ferner typisch, das sie einen günstigen Boden darstellt für Freundesliebe und Liebe im allgemeinen. Sie trägt gleichsam eine natürliche Disposition in sich, ein Fundament für Freundschaft zwischen den Geschwistern zu werden – selbstverständlich nur dann, wenn noch besondere Momente hinzutreten, nämlich wenn die Geschwister ihre Individualität gegenseitig wertantwortend bejahen und von da aus im objektiven Verstehen auf neue Weise verbunden werden.” *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.

<sup>386</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

love to neighbor.<sup>387</sup> Von Hildebrand does not characterize this kind of love through *Intentio Unionis*, *Intentio Benevolentiae* and their mutual relation. He characterizes it by showing its similarities, and most of all, its differences from other kinds of love.

According to von Hildebrand the characteristic trait of friendship (*Freundesliebe*) is the possibility of continually making it deeper, until a “saintly friendship” i.e., the friendship in Christ, is achieved; and also what is characteristic is the possibility of growth, the intensity of love without of change in its different kinds. For this kind of love calmness, trust, and mutual understanding are proper. This love includes the mutual penetration in mutual understanding and openness to the second person – this openness is different from the disclosure which is characteristic to love in marriage. Understanding – which is a characteristic in this kind of love – concerns the sphere of value, which is common to friends.<sup>388</sup>

If one wants to show the relation between friends spatially, one can say that they stand in a semicircle, shoulder to shoulder, but at the same time they look at each other.<sup>389</sup> *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae* are in the same extent.<sup>390</sup>

Von Hildebrand treats spousal love (*Die eheliche Liebe*) as the most typical within the limits of the natural love. He uses it as a paradigm in characterizing other kinds of love. About the characteristic features of betrothed love one can say: the loving persons stand somehow vis-à-vis themselves, and their proper theme is their mutual love. *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae* penetrate each other. It is the love of a person of a different sex. This love is full of delight in taking the person in her individuality, in this what she can be (see: credit of love). In betrothed love the sphere of intimacy is mutually revealed. This love has a determined and ex-

---

<sup>387</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 53.

<sup>388</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 53-54 and also T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>389</sup>S. Lewis characterizes love of friendship also by using the spatial comparison, but he arranges friends in different way: they do not look each other, only the object is interesting for them.

<sup>390</sup>T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 132.

clusive character. Regarding qualitative depth, this kind of love can be different. It depends on the fact, what for each individual couple is transparent in their mutual revelation, in which sphere of value their love is anchored. It includes the highest extent of human love, because it is the central experience in human life. This love, much more than other kinds, requires fidelity.<sup>391</sup>

As a separate kind of love, von Hildebrand mentions the so-called Holy Love (*Die thematische heilige Liebe*). He affirms at the same time that it is possible to experience this kind of love very rarely, because it founds a meeting of the loving persons on the highest sphere of love. It is love in Christ.<sup>392</sup> This kind of love can appear as a love which shines through other kinds of natural love, such as love in marriage love or friendship, or as a love which is isolated from other categories.<sup>393</sup> Von Hildebrand talks about isolated, holy love.<sup>394</sup>

As we pointed out earlier, the betrothed love is the paradigm for other kinds of love. Because von Hildebrand treats the “holy love” as loftier. In that case he claims that it is in holy love that the features of betrothed love are demonstrated and ennobled. The similarity to the betrothed love expresses itself also in standing vis-à-vis themselves of the loving person and in striving for unification. This unification takes place in the sphere of the highest values. The loving person grasps the beloved one in his individuality, and the theme here is mutual love.

A deep understanding of the second person appears here, an understanding which is somehow deeper than in betrothed love, because a mutual revealing of the deepest self-essence is possible only on the highest sphere of values. This revealing does not concern the vital or sensual sphere, it is love in Christ and with Christ – it is co-loving with Christ, the second person in her individuality.<sup>395</sup> This

---

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>392</sup> D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, p. 58.

<sup>393</sup> Idem, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 326-329.

<sup>394</sup> T. Wojtarowicz, *Ibid.*, p. 133.

<sup>395</sup> D. Hildebrand, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, pp. 64-65.

love can concern only these persons, in whom is visible a deep unification with Christ, and they, in their essence, materialize something from Christ's world.<sup>396</sup> *Intentio Unionis* and *Intentio Benevolentiae* are in the same dimension. The deepest gesture of this love is when the second person gives himself to Christ; the loving person wants that the beloved person totally belongs to Christ. As an example of this love, von Hildebrand gives the love which happens between Saints, like the love between St. Francis de Sales and St. Francis de Chantal, St. Francis Assisi and Brother Leo.

Love to Neighbor (*Die Nächstenliebe*) is related to the holy love, but at the same time totally different from it.<sup>397</sup> It is related to it because it takes place on the highest sphere of values; and it is different from it because in this kind of love the individuality of the person does not play an important role. Von Hildebrand distinguishes natural love to neighbor and supernatural love. The relation of love to neighbor and holy love concerns the supernatural love to neighbor. In this way it is co-loving the second person with Christ. The deep relation in it is disclosed in the fact that in this case the individuality of the person is not a fundament of the value response; it concerns only the second person, because every human being possesses an immortal soul and is infinitely loved by Christ, and is also expiated by His Blood. The next difference appears in the fact that it is love which is least dependent upon reciprocity. In this kind of love the *Intentio Benevolentiae* strongly bypasses the *Intentio Unionis*.

It appears here a desire for the second person, to shower her with goods and bring her closer to Christ. It is love which does not expect anything and is capable of making every sacrifice. The natural love to neighbor is also love to every human being, which follows from love to God (whom we know in a supernatural way).<sup>398</sup> In every

---

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 65.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

<sup>398</sup> "Es ist wohl nicht erforderlich, zu zeigen, dass die Nächstenliebe echte Liebe ist und nicht nur ein Wohlwollen oder der blosse Wille, dem Nächsten Wohltaten zu erweisen. Dies gilt auch von der weniger hohen, minder vollständigen Form der Nächstenliebe: von der rein natürlichen." *Ibid.*, p. 61.

human we see the precious creature, which is made in the image of God, which is capable of knowing God, worshiping Him and serving Him. This precious creature is human being, a sinful creature, but worthy of love. But the natural love will never grasp this purity, fervor and power which are possessed by Christian love.

# Conclusion: Philosophical Guide for Lovers

Philosophical thought can react in two ways when it meets with new ideas, when it comes into contact with a new configuration of culture or intellectual sphere. It can try to grasp a novelty and to conceptualize reality according to the spirit of modern age, find knowledge, human sensibility and systems of notions, which are used in a given culture and established in axiological decisions. Concord then precedes it in the image of the world suggested by culture, which makes it clearer, verbalizes it, and theoretically underpins it.<sup>399</sup>

However, philosophical reflection can also be distant regardless of its contemporary understanding and evaluation of the world. In the actual climate of culture it can catch dead places and dangerous areas for human spirit. As if *Signum Temporis* would not impress it. Philosophical reflection tries to observe it very critically. Novelty does not earn unequivocal axiological applause. One of the ways of doing philosophy, which this kind of defiance makes possible, is exactly a reference to tradition and to existing and elaborated conceptions. Decision of choice and publications about human love are in the sphere of this second strategy. This book presents ideas that a thinker tell us today, which seems to be different, deeper and graver

---

<sup>399</sup>M. Grabowski, *O miłości (About Love)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 1998, p. 5.

than what we currently hold to be true.<sup>400</sup>

Nowadays, the description of love and the understanding people attach to it are not only expressions of mass culture, but also that of a certain trivialisation and reductionism. The interest of the problem of love and the reflection about it are most of the time limited to the practical sphere. People look for answers to the question “how to love and to be loved?”, while not caring about the essence and source of love, preferring to satisfy themselves with the pieces of advice to fill some psychological gap and emptiness. It is exactly because of that, love very often is understood in a primitive manner. Such love simplifications have to do with the fact that love is reduced to a permanent and exclusive search for happiness and a search for filling a gap of loneliness.<sup>401</sup>

Human beings rightly expect that true love fill their lives with happiness and gives it a special sense and shine. People look for it and listen out for pieces of advice which would show them the way to this kind of love. Many of the advisers do not bring them out from the fundamental mistake which sticks in her understanding of love, and try to give her instructions as to how to achieve this dream of happiness. To grasp this mistake, one needs something more fundamental than that which can guarantee a pure psychology of love. One has to draw away from pure experiences and turn to its essence. One should specify not only intentions, which are included in this turning to the second person and expressed by the formula “I love you”, but also their gradation. One can find this kind of analysis of phenomenon of love in Dietrich von Hildebrand’s works.

Von Hildebrand analyzes some notions which are included in “I love you”, shows (and as one could see) that happiness is a derivative element of naturally less importance than some more fundamental intentions described in the notion of love. It would be a mistake, as von Hildebrand would say, if one looks for love and understands it as happiness. Human beings wander when they are looking for

---

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

happiness in the form of pleasure, as in the sexual love.

This shift of accents demotes love. Happiness accompanies love, but it is neither its root, nor its direct aim. It is a by-product of love. Accepting the primacy of happiness in love and making it the main purpose closes the depths of experiencing love. Max Scheler wrote about the love between lovers: "Pleasure should not be the primary aim, and it is only as a by-product of love-making, not as a goal and object, that it attains a depth and power of passion sufficient to produce a genuine fusion and identity of feeling."<sup>402</sup>

Von Hildebrand claims that if one strives for unity only to obtain his own happiness, a desire of possession that can occur only between personal beings and non- personal beings occurs in the place of love; for only a person can be a possessor, whereas a thing can only be possessed. Nevertheless, this kind of treatment can slip in the love of parents towards their children. It can also happen in marriage that man has the feeling of possessing his wife. However, such a relation destroys love, because this is a unilateral relation, whereas the soul of every genuine love is a union in which the persons freely give themselves to each other, without any kind of constraint. It is important that this 'giving' of oneself does not become a 'possession', in the sense that one person can possess the second one and reign over her.<sup>403</sup> Also, if one wants the union only because of the happiness of the 'second' person, in some categories of love, for example in the case of the betrothed love, it would contradict the genuine essence and nature of love. In this case, according to von Hildebrand, the nobleness of love does not expect to relinquish to its own happiness, which is a consequence of personal union.

Many people think that love is an aspiration for a unification of persons, which should overcome loneliness, as a primeval human state. Erich Fromm, in his book *The Art of Love* represents this position. The fact is that when love appears, loneliness disappears. One would be wrong by holding that the source and essence of love are

---

<sup>402</sup>M. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, p. 111.

<sup>403</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, p. 81.



to be found in the desire of overcoming alienation and loneliness. Certainly love is something more than an experience of intimacy. This aspect derivatively comes from love, but often love is not in its foundation. How many people unite together because of the fear of loneliness? This is another problem which concerns the understanding or reason for looking for love. It is closely connected with the reflection not about our understanding of love, but about our preparation for love. These two issues are very connected with each other. Those problems include the lack of time, laziness and taking the risk.

Our life, in fact, is an extremely fast life, some of the expressions of which can be found in fast food, unlimited hours of work (very often we work 10-12 hours per day), fast love and easy women. The lack of time constitutes for man an obstacle for meeting, knowing the other person in a better way, and finally falling in love with her. Life is going faster and faster, but still our natural necessity for unification takes the voice. However, the lack of time, sometimes even the lack of education about interpersonal relations, renders the beginning of love extremely difficult.

The standards of life, some requirements which life sets before us, do not go in the direction of human love. Love does not go with the spirit of our time, it does not go fast enough; real love needs time, reflection and care. Here is the clash between two different ways of human existence, the external one and internal necessities. The result is sometimes called "the fashion to be single"; and the single person finds for herself some substitute to fill the gap of not having a real love.

How far one can go with this kind of life? The answer is very difficult. Of course, not from the point of view of our deliberation which is unfortunately a purely theoretical one, but surely from the practical point of view of the ordinary human being, that is whether a person will be in contradiction to the modern economy, fashion and way of life or will go with the stream of modernity. Our civilisation is focused on the economy and consumption which leads to the de-

personalisation of mankind. The social life which gives up the idea of love inevitably leads to the degeneration of the human person, and by ricochet, of love.

Laziness is closely connected with the description mentioned above. The “speed” of our world also implies the fact that if one has already time for something, one should acquire it quickly and easily. Pleasures do not need effort. Free time is a time for getting things fast and easily, for resting without problems and efforts. Is there any place for love?

Love, even according to its definition, is a process which implies time and pain. Does modern man still have time and patience to give sufficiently to love? Our civilization does not propagate any conception of love that arises out of hard and long work, which needs time and patience. The easiness of our time touches everything what is material and also spiritual. Love becomes a product, which one not only can buy, but also this “process” of acquiring it is not difficult. Love understood in this way renders the human being very lazy, mostly when it comes to developing his inner spiritual sphere. In this case human does not want to fight and strive for something.

Love, starts to be understood from its sexual point of view, and transformed into and devoid of hard work. Easy love, just like easy fast food, is not very healthy (and as fast-food differs a lot from real meal), but the demand for it becomes greater and greater. As an unknown author said that we can compare the real, “24-carat” love with the Halley’s comet. This comet is near the Earth every seventy five years, or so. However, if you want to see it, you must have not only a big telescope, but you must be also in the right time there and in the proper place. So it is with real love. It is easy to find elements of love, but it all depends on which way you mix those elements. It needs a lot of work.

Firstly, you must understand and accept this. Secondly, you must be a very good friend. One ought to work in order to avoid that what the other person does not like or accept. There is a need of a “big heart” and good intentions, and in spite the fact that it is so

easy to be just a “modest man” in so many situations . . . Sometimes the “spark” which animates love is with people from the beginning. However, many people misunderstand this “spark”, and take it for a “flame”, which, so they think, will be there forever. This is a reason why so many “fires and glows of the human hearts” burn away and die. To achieve real love, we must work very hard.

“All great things on earth are connected with risk,”<sup>404</sup> wrote von Hildebrand. The problem is how this statement can be found right now. Love is a risk also, very huge risk, because it can break the heart and the soul. Pain after unhappy love is very deep and it very lacerates the internal sphere of human being. That is why the real love brings with itself a huge risk. In any way one will not overcome it, to really love is to be faced with a risk, with the risk of great loss.

The quoted examples turn our attention to the intentional character of love, to the complexity and hierarchical intentional aspects included in the notion of love.<sup>405</sup> One can and should reflect about love, but not in the same way as with emotions; rather, we should reflect on it as on the spiritual reality of the person who governs it by her own internal sense and logic. One should diligently investigate and discover that this is a reality endowed with its own intelligibility that cannot be reduced to anything simpler.<sup>406</sup> For von Hildebrand love is not an effect of acting in the sexual sphere, only a pre-fundation of the spiritual life of the person.

At the end of our analysis we might be able to provide the answers to the following questions which we have been asked at the beginning of our journey: what did von Hildebrand consider an essential element for an act of love? How did he differentiate love from other phenomena? By way of answering some of such fundamental questions we have asked, we shall say the following: love is an effective value response to the value of the person; to the essence of love belong two desires: desire of unification with the beloved per-

---

<sup>404</sup>D. Hildebrand, *Die Ehe*, p. 42.

<sup>405</sup>M. Grabowski, *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>406</sup>*Ibid.*

son (*intention unionis*) and desire of goods for the beloved (*intentio benevolentiae*). Those two elements appear in different proportions in every kind of love.

On the basis of the deliberations we also came to the conclusion the human person, even if he is not transferable (*alteri incommunicabilis*) in the ontic aspect, can give herself to the other person in a moral sense. Her structure allows her to do it: the person as an immanent being at the same time transcends herself by her acts of value response. The most perfect act of the person (which is undoubtedly love) requires a self-giving act. To the essence of love belongs the unification with the beloved person. This unification is stronger exactly in betrothed love.

In such deliberation about love, we also underlined that the methodology (the way how we want to grasp love) plays a very important role. It is worthy talking about it now, because von Hildebrand's eidetic descriptions deviate from the factual experiences of love and the real one is always imperfect. However, the presented analysis has a perfect character. One should clearly underline this exposition's sketch. Von Hildebrand did not describe love which occurs in the life of an ordinary person, but he shows it as it should be.

The appearance of misleading, disappointment or numbness in love can be the background on which one can see better how the real love should look like. This kind of dealing with the matter derives from the very fundamental experience. Always, whenever we try to describe these realities, we come to understand that we enter a particular surplus in relation to our factual knowledge, the knowledge which results from experience, from the knowing people and their relationships.<sup>407</sup> Every attempt to describe the real nature of love spontaneously contains this element of duty; and one will describe the ideal picture of love as it should be. In eidetic descriptions one takes very seriously this moment. One goes after this impulse and treats it as a sign. The result of this kind of descriptions tran-

---

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6-10.

scends reality and at the same time adds an element of possibility. Many contemporary thinkers react against this type of knowledge about ideality. They fear the indubitable cognitive risk related to this method.

This balance between ideality and reality, this going after “it should be like this”, always breaks the contact with real possibilities, which are in real structure of the world, and to fall in an imaginative world of “divine” wishes, which one cannot realize in our world. In fact one needs here courage, prudence and restraint. The extreme which results from this fear is mistrust in cognitive access to love, which runs through ideal description. However, one cannot agree on this position, because the cognitive loss would be too great. The eidetic analysis seems to be a necessary risk.<sup>408</sup>

In our thoughts on von Hildebrand’s conception of love we have come to a conclusion that there are some flaws that lie therein. Von Hildebrand, indeed, ties love with an emotional act and opposed it to the act of will. Even if love would be an act of emotion, but as we have seen von Hildebrand was not convinced by this solution either, and still at least von Hildebrand’s argument would not support his own statement but would rather contradict it. Von Hildebrand claims that love cannot be an act of will because an act of will turns to something that still is not yet realized, while love concerns a real person. In the moment when von Hildebrand appeals to this argument, he is in collision with his own conception of the person.

Immanency and transcendence are essential for a person in von Hildebrand’s understanding. In the acts of transcendence (value response) the person reaches this fullness, which is written to her personality and for which the person is designed. The person, in this way, is not in every respect “completed”; she is rather open for more and more perfect self-fulfilment. In that case love can be an act of will if this act turns to a state of affairs not yet realized, to make it real.

It seems that in the name of the conception of the human person,

---

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*

one should change this conception of love. Also, in the name of love, as an adequate response to the value of the person, we should rather connect it with the act of will. Only then one adequately responds to the value of person when one wants to fully create circumstances for the personal development. Von Hildebrand claimed very clearly there that the loving person should desire unification with the beloved on the highest sphere of values.

In times when the circle of mass culture encounters with the spiritual dimension of the human being, an author like von Hildebrand would be a suitable guide. He discloses the depth of the human spirit which is exposed in love and by love. The subtlety of his descriptions discloses the human being as a creature with a rich inner life, which actualizes itself in a single and unique way, in love.

The ideal description has this strength to tear up, persuade to reflection, and even to awake longing for full human love. We can say after this analysis of love and its order in von Hildebrand's conception of love, there stands an available desire for truth about love and understanding its importance in ordinary human life.<sup>409</sup> It determines the courage to use the phenomenological method in its earliest version. It is not only a matter of following the contemporary mode, nor is it a cognitive naivety, but a consciousness of the fact that the epistemological risk, connected with the subjectivity of this method, with its ambition to reach/obtain knowledge about the essence of love, is worthy to pick up; to pick up in order to even be somehow closer to a so existential important reality, which is love.

---

<sup>409</sup>M. Grabowski, *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.



# Selected Bibliography

## I. The Works of Dietrich von Hildebrand

- Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Celibacy and the Crisis of Faith*, tr. John Crosby, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1971.
- ———, *Christian Ethics*, Routledge, New York 1953.
- ———, *Die Ehe*, Müller, München 1929.
- ———, *Die Enzyklika "Humanae Vitae" – ein Zeichen des Widerspruchs*, Habbel, Regensburg 1968.
- ———, *Graven Images: Substitutes for True Morality*, Franciscan Herald Press Chicago 1957.
- ———, *Heiligkeit und Tüchtigkeit*, Habbel, Regensburg 1969.
- ———, *In Defence of Purity*, Franciscan Herald Press, Manchester 1970.
- ———, *Liturgy and Personality*, Sophia Institute Press, N. H. Manchester 1986.
- ———, *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg*, Habbel, Regensburg 1955.
- ———, *Man and Woman: Love and the Meaning of Intimacy*, Sophia Institut Press, Manchester 1966.
- ———, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft*, Habbel, Regensburg 1955.
- ———, *Moralia*, Gesammelte Werke IX, Habbel, Regensburg 1980.
- ———, *Philosophie in Selbstdarstellungen*, Meiner, Hamburg 1975.



- ———, *Przemienienie w Chrystusie*, translated by J. Zychowicz, Spoleczny Instytut Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1982.
- ———, *Reinheit und Jungfräulichkeit*, Eos Verlag, St. Ottilien 1981.
- ———, *The Sacred Heart*, Helicon, Baltimore, Dublin 1965.
- ———, *Sittlichkeit und Ethische Werterkenntnis*, Patris Verlag, Vallendar-Schönstatt 1982.
- ———, *Sittliche Grundhaltungen*, Habbel, Regensburg 1969.
- ———, *Das Trojanische Pferd in der Stadt Gottes*, Christiana, Stein a.Rh 1968.
- ———, *Die Umgestaltung in Christus*, EOS, St. Ottilien 1988.
- ———, *Über das Herz*, Habbel, Regensburg 1967.
- ———, *What is Philosophy?*, Routledge, London.
- ———, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, Gesammelte Werke, t. III, Habbel Regensburg 1971.
- ———, *Zölibat und Glaubens Krise*, Habbel, Regensburg 1970.

## II. General Works on Love

- Augustinus, *St. Augustine on Marriage and Sexuality*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1996.
- ———, *Treatises on Marriages and Other Subjects*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1955.
- John Armstrong, *Conditions of Love: The Philosophy of Intimacy*, Penguin; New Ed edition 2003.
- Rolando B. Arjonillo, *Conjugal Love And The Ends Of Marriage: A Study Of Dietrich Von Hildebrand And Herbert Doms In The Light Of The Pastoral Constitution Gaudium Et Spes* Peter Lang Publishing 1998.
- Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glaubhaft ist nur Liebe*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln 1966.
- John Cowburn, *The Person and Love: Philosophy and Theology*, Alba House, New York 1967.

- Marian Grabowski, *O miłości (About Love)*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 1998.
- Alice von Hildebrand, *By Love Refined: Letters to a Young Bride*, Sophia Institute Press 1998.
- Muhammed Ibrahim, *Romantic Relationships in Islam*, Universe, New York 2004.
- Clive Staples Lewis, *The Four Loves*, Collins, Fontana Books, London 1960.
- Alfonso Quintas López, *Human Love*, The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, Washington, D.C. 2004.
- Johannes Baptist Lotz, *Ich – Du – Wir*, Frankfurt 1969.
- Rollo May, *Love and Will*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York 1969.
- Thomas J Owens, *Phenomenology and Intersubjectivity*, Martinus Nijhoff, Hague 1970.
- Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, Ignatius Press 1997.
- ———, *Über die Liebe*, Kösel – Verlag München 1977.
- Plato, *Symposium*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb, Harvard University Press 1997.
- Anthony Price, *Love and friendship in Plato and Aristotle*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997.
- Denis De Rougemont, *Love in the Western World*, Princeton University Press 1983.
- Max Scheler, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, Francke, Bern 1974.
- Alan Soble, *Eros, Agape and Philia: Readings in the Philosophy of Love*, Paragon House Publishers, St. Paul 1990.
- Alan Soble, *The Philosophy of Sex and Love: An Introduction*, Paragon House Publishers, St. Paul 1998.
- Tadeusz Ślipko, *Życie i płeć człowieka (Life and Sex of the Human Being)*, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Apostolstwa Modlitwy, Kraków 1978.

- Theresa of Jesus, *The Interior Castle*, Sands & Co, London 1945.
- Joseph M. de Torre, *Freedom, Truth and Love*, Center for Research and Communication, College of Arts and Sciences, Manila 1992.
- Robert E. Wagoner, *The Meanings of Love: An Introduction to Philosophy of Love*, Praeger Publishers, Westport 1997.
- Ruth Westheimer, Jonathan Mark, *Heavenly sex: Sex in the Jewish Tradition*, York University Press, New York 1995.
- Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H. T. Willetts, Farrer, Straus, Giroux, New York 1981.
- ———, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, Lublin 1986.
- ———, *The Theology of Marriage and Celibacy*, St. Paul Editions, Boston 1986.
- ———, *Fruitful and Responsible Love*, Seabury Press, New York 1979.
- ———, *Original Unity of Man and Woman*, Daughters of St. Paul, Boston 1981.
- ———, *Osoba i Czyn (The Acting Person)*, Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, Kraków 1969.
- ———, *The Acting Person*, Reidel, Dordrecht 1979.
- ———, *Pope John Paul II and the Family*, Franciscan Herald Press, Chicago 1983.
- ———, *Mężczyznę i Niewiastę Stworzył Ich (Male and Female He Created Them)*, Libreria editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 1983.
- ———, *Person and Community*, trans. Theresa Sandok, Lang, New York 1993.

### III. Other Works

- Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, trans. H. Rackham, Harvard University Press, London 1975.
- Wolfgang Bonsiepen, *G.W.F. Hegels Phänomenologie des Geistes*, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 1988.
- Franz Brentano, *Psychology from an empirical standpoint*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 2009.
- Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *The System of Ethics, Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2005.
- Étienne Henry Gilson, *Heloise and Abelard*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1972.
- ———, *Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Random House, New York 1955.
- ———, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A.H.C. Downes, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1949.
- Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik II*, Werke in zwanzig Bänden 14 Friedrich Frommann, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt 1965.
- *The Holy Bible*, containing The Old and New Testament; translated out of the original tongues; and with the former translations diligently compared and revised, by his majesty's special command, British and Foreign Bible Society, London.
- Edmund Husserl, *Ideen III*, Martinus Nijhoff, Haag 1952.
- Henryk Kiereś, "Fenomenologia", *Powszechna Encyklopedia Filozofii*, vol. 3, Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu, Lublin 2012.
- Stanisław Kowalczyk, *Człowiek a Społeczność. Zarys Filozofii Społecznej (Human being and Society. Sketch of Social Philosophy)*, RW KUL, Lublin 1994.
- Józef Kowalski, *Starożytni o sensie życia (Ancients on Sense of Life)*, PWN, Warszawa 1988.
- Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec, *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, trans. M. Lescoe, A. Woznicki, T. Sandok, Mariel, Cop., Connecticut 1985.

- ———, *O Ludzką Politykę (About Human Politic)*, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1997.
- David H. Lane, *The Phenomenon of Teilhard: Prophet for a New Age*, Mercer University Press, Macon, Georgia 1996.
- Emmanuel Levinas, *Totalité et Infini. Essai sur l'extériorité (Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority)*, La Haye 1974.
- Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1997.
- James C. Morrison, *Husserl and Brentano on Intentionality* in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 31, no. 1, 1970.
- Giovanni Reale, *Plato and Aristotle: A History of Ancient Philosophy*, edited and translated J.R. Catan, University of New York Press 1990.
- Paul Ricoeur, *Figuring the Sacred*, Fortress Press, Minneapolis 1995.
- Tom Rockmore, *Kant and Phenomenology*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2011.
- Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, Francke, Bern 1980.
- ———, *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*, Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, Bonn 1986.
- ———, *Die Stellung des Menschen im Kosmos*, Francke, Bern 1966.
- Balduin V. Schwarz, *Dietrich von Hildebrand on Value*, in: "Thought" XXIV, Dezember, Nr. 95, New York 1949.
- Josef Seifert, *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein. Festgabe für Dietrich von Hildebrand zum 80. Geburtstag*, Habbel, Regensburg 1970.
- Arvind Sharma, *To the Things Themselves*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., Berlin 2001.
- Baruch Spinoza, *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*, Part II.
- Tadeusz Styczeń, *ABC Etyki (ABC of Ethics)*, in: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1986.

- ———, *Objawiać osobę (To Discover the Person)* in: *Roczniki Filozoficzne* XXVII 2, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1979.
- Violetta L. Waibel, Daniel Breazeale, Tom Rockmore (ed.), *Fichte and the Phenomenological Tradition*, Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co., Berlin 2010.
- Norbertus Max Wildiers, *An Introduction to Teilhard de Chardin*, Collins, Fontana, London 1968.
- Teresa Wojtarowicz, *Istota i rodzaje miłości w ujęciu Dietricha von Hildebranda (The Essence and Kinds of Love According to Dietrich von Hildebrand)*, “*Roczniki Filozoficzne*” XXXI, 3 (1983).
- ———, *O Hildebranda koncepcji miłości (Hildebrand’s Conception of Love)*, “*Roczniki Filozoficzne*” XXVIII, 2 1980.
- Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota (The Person: Object and Community)*, in: *Roczniki Filozoficzne* XXIV 2, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, Lublin 1976.
- ———, *Sign of Contradiction*, Seabury Press, New York, 1979.
- ———, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, Instytut Jana Pawła II Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Rzym-Lublin 1991.
- ———, *Kazania*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 1980.
- ———, *Zagadnienie Podmiotu Moralności*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 1991.
- ———, *Nauczanie Społeczne 1978-1979*, Ośrodek Dokumentacji i Studiów Społeczny, Warszawa 1982.
- Jacek Woroniecki, *Katolicka Etyka Wychowawcza*, t. II (*Catholic Ethics of Education volume II*); Etyka Szczegółowa cz. II (Particular Ethics part II), Kraków 1948.
- Edward Collins Vacek, *Love, Human and Divine: the Heart of Christian Ethics*, Sutherland and Knox, Edinburgh 1994.

Love received from another person changes our experience of the world. When it is mutual, it appears as a miracle; as a miracle unparalleled and not yet experienced by anyone. Spousal love is the end of the world, the end of the old world and the beginning of a totally new one. It is totally new because the life of a person in love is single and double at the same time. Saint Paul elevated spousal love above faith that moves mountains. Love is the essence of every human life, but spousal love is its aim. The mystic unification between two human beings has a special place not only in philosophy, but also in modern psychological (political) discussions. The understanding of love, its aim and form is a subject of dispute in the sphere of politics, religions, homosexual and heterosexual couples, modern philosophy and ordinary people who are (very often influenced by mass media) lost in various concepts and solutions. The main task for this work is to compare phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand's "old and outdated conception" with all these modern propositions that exist today. Since "the highest does not stand without the lowest", we will probably find a place for von Hildebrand in our modern times.