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Nicolai Hartmann's Ethics. Feeling and Cognition of Values: Between Emotionalism and Rationalism

Nicolai Hartmann is one of the most important representatives of German material value ethics. This school emerged in the 20th century primarily through Max Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, though some of its characteristic ideas had already been developed by earlier thinkers (e.g. Blaise Pascal or Franz Brentano). One of the characteristic motifs of material value ethics is the idea that values are apprehended in an emotional way. Hartmann's adherence to material value ethics shines through clearly from the content he develops in various axiological-ethical texts. It is also confirmed by various scholars of his works.¹ The fact of this affiliation should not, therefore,

¹ For example: Emmanuel P. Mayer OFM, *Die Objektivität der Werterkenntnis bei Nicolai Hartmann* (Maisenheim am Glan: Westkulturenverlag Anton Hain), 15; Ewald Th. Van der Vossen O. Praem, *Die letzten Gründe der Innerweltlichkeit in Nicolai Hartmanns Philosophie* (Roma: Libreria Editrice dell'Università Gregoriana, 1963), 200–201; Hans Michael Baumgartner, *Die Unbedingtheit des Sittlichen: eine Auseinandersetzung mit Nicolai Hartmann* (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1962), 129–130; Hans Reiner, *Die philosophische Ethik. Ihre Fragen und Lehren in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1964), 124–127, 138–140.

raise any doubts. Another question, however, is what are the characteristic features of this affiliation and the detailed modifications that Hartmann introduces into the views typical of this school of thought. This is an important problem because Hartmann is an original thinker, and this originality also translates into his position in ethics and leads to transformations of motives typical of this school. It is also important to note that the development of Hartmann's thinking was significantly determined by the influence of Kantian thought, and this was expressed not only in the "Neo-Kantian" period in the development of Hartmann's philosophy but also, and even more importantly, in the presence of themes of Kantian provenance² throughout Hartmann's philosophy. Moreover, Hartmann himself states that the material ethics of value is a synthesis of Kantian apriorism and Nietzschean value diversity.³ This rooting of Hartmann's thought in the Kantian heritage makes the problem of the specificity of Hartmann's position within the material ethics of value extremely intriguing because the typical point is that the whole idea of a material ethics of value was constructed by Max Scheler in conscious opposition to the formal ethics of Immanuel Kant. It is evidenced both by the very title of Scheler's work (*Formalism in Ethics and Material Ethics of Value*), as well as by the enumeration of those features of Kantian thinking with which, according to Scheler,

Cf. also Frédéric Tremblay, "Ontological Axiology in Nikolai Lossky, Max Scheler, and Nicolai Hartmann", in: *Nicolai Hartmanns Neue Ontologie und die Philosophische Anthropologie. Menschliches Leben in Natur und Geist*, hrsg. von Moritz von Kalckreuth, Gregor Schmiegel und Friedrich Hausen (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2019), 202–207. Tremblay studies the relationships between axiology of Lossky and those of Scheler and Hartmann.

² In this sense, it is difficult not to agree with the term "Post-Neo-Kantianism", which was formulated by Andrzej Noras to describe the specificity of thinkers who passed through the Neo-Kantian stage in their development, and then worked out their own original concepts. Cf. Andrzej J. Noras, "Postneokantyzm wobec Kanta", *Idea. Studia nad Strukturą i Rozwojem Pojęć Filozoficznych*, 16 (2004): 79–88. Cf. also Alicja Pietras, "Nicolai Hartmann as a Post-Neo-Kantian", in: *The Philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann*, ed. Roberto Poli, Carlo Scognamiglio, Frederic Tremblay (Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 2011), 237–251.

³ Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, "*Kants Metaphysik der Sitten und die Ethik unserer Tage*", in: Nicolai Hartmann, *Kleinere Schriften*, Bd. 3: *Vom Neukantianismus zur Ontologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1958), 350. According to Hartmann, Kantian ethics, which formulates only a "formal law", and contemporary ethics, which is a material ethics of value, have essentially the same tendency to be the same metaphysics of morality. And it is no coincidence that the basic thesis of Kantian ethics, the apriorism of the moral law, can be incorporated into material value ethics.

material ethics should enter into discussion (first of all, formalism and – what I am particularly interested in – Kantian intellectualism).⁴

There are many threads within which one can follow the specifics of Hartmann's approach. In this article, however, I will deal with only one of them, specifically the problem of the emotional and rational elements in the broadly understood account of value. By taking up this issue, I want firstly to define Hartmann's concept; secondly, I want to point out its immanent problems and certain ambiguities. In analyzing this problem, I will take up an issue that belongs to the most important ethical-axiological questions, for any claims about values presuppose that we have knowledge about values, that we can know them. This cognition (in the broadest sense, as the apprehension of something) can, among other things, take place in a rational way (ethical rationalism, axiological rationalism) or in an emotional way (ethical emotionalism, axiological emotionalism). Of course, a mixed form combining the two is also possible; the task then is to determine what their role is and their scope in cognition. It is also important to note that this cognition (as well as cognition itself) can be understood in either a genetic or methodological sense. A question about cognition in the genetic sense is a question about where our knowledge comes from – what is its source? A question in the methodological sense means a question about the method of proper cognition – true cognition. The problem in the methodological sense is also the problem of justification of moral and axiological knowledge.

Hartmann dealt with the problem of how to conceive of value in various writings, even those that referred to it only indirectly (such as *Das Problem des geistigen Seins* or *Der Aufbau der realen Welt*⁵); he did so both in his "great" works and in minor articles. The following publications, however, are crucial in this respect: *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der*

⁴ Cf. Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, vierte durchgesehene Auflage, hrsg. von Maria Scheler, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 2 (Bern: Francke Verlag, 1954), 29–31 [first edition 1913–1916]; English translation: Max Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, transl. by X (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 5–7.

⁵ Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, *Das Problem des geistigen Seins. Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der Geschichtsphilosophie und der Geisteswissenschaften* (Berlin–Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1933), 134–141; *Der Aufbau der realen Welt. Umriss der allgemeinen Kategorienlehre* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter @ Co., 1940), 316.

Erkenntnis, Ethik, the article *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, and (in part) *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*.⁶

1. The concept of value consciousness in *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*

The first edition of *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* (1921), however, did not yet include a discussion of how values are learned; Hartmann did not include it until the second edition (1925), which contained a new (fifth) section titled “Die Erkenntnis idealer Gegenstände”, with a chapter titled “Sonderstellung der Wertschau”.

The act of directly apprehending value is presented by Hartmann as a non-cognitive act; it is not a theoretical act, but an emotional one – the act of feeling of value, the act of taking a stance towards something.⁷ Such are, as Hartmann emphasizes, acts of approval and disapproval, of preference and inferiority, of decisions for or against, as well as acts of love and non-love described by Scheler. Significantly, Hartmann also emphasizes that “proper cognition appears only by reflection directed at these acts”.⁸ While the acts mentioned above are as transcendent as cognitive acts, they exhibit a different orientation. They are “centrifugal” (*zentrifugal*) with respect to consciousness; their tendency is to actively modify the object. Cognitive acts, on the other hand, are essentially receptive, i.e., consciousness in them reflects the given object, as it were, takes it into itself.⁹ Feeling of value as such is not cognitive, but contains content of a gnoseological nature.¹⁰

⁶ Nicolai Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, vierte Auflage (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co, 1949) [first edition 1921, second edition 1925]; Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (Berlin–Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1926); English translation: *Ethics*, vol. 1–3, transl. by Stanton Coit (London–New York: George Allen & Unwin – The MacMillan Company, 1932); Nicolai Hartmann, *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, vierte Auflage (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1965) [first edition 1934]; English translation: *Ontology: Laying the Foundations*, transl. by Keith R. Peterson (Berlin–Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2019); Nicolai Hartmann, *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, in: Nicolai Hartmann, *Kleinere Schriften*, Bd. 1: *Abhandlungen zur systematischen Philosophie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1955), 279–310].

⁷ Cf. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 554.

⁸ Cf. *ibidem*, 555.

⁹ Cf. *ibidem*, 554.

¹⁰ Cf. *ibidem*.

To clarify this situation further, Hartmann undertakes to answer the question, "How does the gnoseological aspect in the feeling of value harmonize with its affective character?"¹¹ The answer is contained in the concept of the complex structure of the source acts of value apprehension. From a detailed perspective, value consciousness is, in fact, a process composed of three main moments. These are: (i) the assumption of an inner attitude by emotional awareness (e.g., admiration, awe, affirmation, objection, indignation, scorn, rejection, dislike); (ii) the awareness of the object towards which this attitude is taken; (iii) the awareness of the basis or criterion that determines the assumption of the attitude. Hartmann emphasizes that the second moment is simply real cognition because it begins with the recognition of a real behavior, a real act, or a real event that is the object of an equally real emotional attitude (first moment). The third moment, which Hartmann refers to as the "intuition of value" (*Wertschau*), has fundamental importance for the cognitive apprehension of value. This view of value determines the attitude one adopts, but value does not have to be something immediately and fully recognized within it. This third moment, too, is cognitive in its nature; it is no longer real cognition, however, because it is cognition of an ideal value. Thus, only the first moment (taking an emotional attitude) is not cognitive in nature, but at the same time is conditioned by two cognitive moments (awareness of a real object and awareness of an ideal value). In this sense, regarding the cognition of value that is of interest to us, we can say that the adoption of an emotional attitude is already conditioned by "some" vision of value that, as it were, "hides it within itself".

For a proper understanding of Hartmann's conception, and for a more precise determination of his attitude towards other interpretations of value apprehension proposed in material value ethics, a meticulous tracing of Hartmann's statements that appear in *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis* is necessary. This is because the ideas quoted so far do not yet make it possible to clearly determine what Hartmann's conception of value apprehension is in detail, and especially what role feeling of value plays in it. The point is that Hartmann's formulations are neither identical with the divisions present in Max Scheler's conception, nor as clear.

In fact, Scheler does not use the term *Wertgefühl*; the term he uses is *Wertfühlen*. More important, however, are the differences in understanding the nature of feeling itself. For Scheler, a person encounters values

¹¹ Ibidem: "Wie reimt sich das Gnoseologische im Wertgefühl mit dessen Gefühlscharakter?"

in one of four types of feeling experiences. These include feeling of value (*Wertfühlen*); reactions of emotional response to the value (*emotionale Antworthreaktion*); acts of preferring and placing after (*Vorziehen, Nachsetzen*); and acts of love and hate (*Liebe, Hass*). Each of these experiences – and this is extremely important – plays, according to Scheler, a different role in its details in the apprehension of value. Precisely, each of them reveals a different aspect of value or contributes in a different way to the apprehension of value.

When it comes to clarifying Scheler's understanding of the feeling of value,¹² it is crucial to distinguish between feeling and the emotional state. The feeling of which Scheler speaks is intentional (*Fühlen von etwas*).¹³ Such intentional targeting of something does not yet occur in emotional states; these are the contents of consciousness that do not "target" anything and are not directed at anything. At most it has some external cause. Scheler distinguishes three types of intentional feeling: (i) feeling one's own emotional states (e.g., I feel that my head hurts; I feel growing irritation); (ii) feeling the emotional "mood" that can be observed in the environment (e.g., the stillness of August; the restlessness of the rough sea); (iii) feeling of value.

The second type of axiological experiences are reactions of emotional response to value. They are characterized by different intentionality than the intentionality present in feeling of value. This is because the response is in its intentionality directed at some object different from value, but the awareness of value is the necessary criterion that makes the response possible. The response is made on the basis of the awareness of value, i.e., the violated value (negative response) or the fulfilled value (positive response).

Another class of emotional experiences of value are, according to Scheler, acts of preferring and placing after. These are intentional acts, but they are not directed simply at the value, but at its hierarchical position, e.g., its "height". To prefer something means "to feel that this something is more valuable than something else". Similarly, to "place something after" means "to feel that this something is less valuable than other relevant objects". Preference, understood in this way, is something different from choosing. Scheler insists that preferring does not mean

¹² Cf. also Leszek Kopciuch, "Fenomenologia poznania wartości (Max Scheler – Dietrich von Hildebrand)", *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* 37(3) (2009): 165–180.

¹³ Cf. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, 269–274; *Formalism in Ethics*, 255–260. Cf. also Eugene Kelly, *Material Ethics of Value: Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann* (Dordrecht–Heidelberg–London–New York: Springer, 2011), 17–40.

choosing at all; rather, every choice is already based on preference. I can only choose what I prefer over other possibilities.

The final group of emotional experiences associated with values are, for Scheler, acts of love and hate. These acts are intentional, and the objects at which they are directed are always the person. Love broadens human sensitivity to values, while hatred narrows it. In Scheler's typology of the emotional life of a person, the direct cognitive function in relation to values belongs to feeling of value and the acts of preferring and placing lower. However, the reactions of emotional response to value and to love and hate have only indirect significance for such cognition.

In the context of Scheler's detailed typology, how does Hartmann's conception of feeling compare with it? First, all those experiences that Scheler presents as qualitatively different are treated by Hartmann (in *Grundzüge*) as examples of a single emotional "feeling of value" (*Wertgefühl*).¹⁴ Second, there is no chance in Hartmann's conception to isolate and highlight the specificity of feeling of value itself, which is so characteristic of Scheler's account. Third, Hartmann's conception (as presented in *Grundzüge*) includes a specific ambiguity about the nature and precise location of feeling of value in relation to other related experiences. This issue is particularly important because it directly concerns the proper placement of emotional and non-emotional factors in the overall structure of the act of value apprehension. Therefore, this issue is of fundamental significance for resolving the dispute between rationalism and emotionalism in axiology and ethics.

The above-mentioned ambiguity can be precisely traced if we try to answer the question, does the term "feeling of value" refer to the whole of the intrinsically complex emotional act or is it rather only an element of it? To answer this question and thus show the above-mentioned ambiguity, reference will first be made to two quotes:

[1] The fact that the entire consciousness of value, the correct "intuition of value" is achieved through a circuitous route, through the consciousness of attitude, there is nothing that degrades the primary act of value-feeling itself or gives it the stigma of something secondary. The emotional moment of the acts of feeling of value is only a way in which value consciousness manifests itself.¹⁵

¹⁴ Cf. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 554.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, 555: "Daß also das volle Wertbewußtsein, die eigentliche 'Wert-schau', den Umweg über das Bewußtsein der Stellungnahme nimmt, daran ist nichts, was den primären Akt des Wertgefühls selbst herabsetzte oder zu et-

[2] Here, however, we will deal exclusively with the latter, or third moment, the primary feeling of value. Regardless of its root in a complex emotional act, this feeling is nevertheless *autonomous*. It is not yet a conscious grasping of the structure of value, it is not an *object-oriented intuition* of value. It can, however, at any time become a conscious perception of the value when we reflect on its content.¹⁶

What conclusions can be drawn from these passages? According to the wording of the first quotation, the situation of value apprehension, taken as a whole, is as follows: there is an emotional element (the first moment), which is, however, only a mode of manifestation of value awareness. Viewed holistically, the act of apprehending value (taken as a whole) is *Wertgefühl*, feeling of value. In turn, this also means that the acts of feeling of value (*wertfühlende Akte*) comprise ordinary emotional experiences (the first moment).

However, this picture of feeling of value is complicated by the next statement (in the second quotation). According to this passage, feeling of value is not to be understood as an overall experience consisting of three moments, but rather as the third moment of this experience alone. Feeling of value (the third moment) does not have to be fully conscious, nor does it yet bring about an objectification of value. It can become such only when the proper cognition contained in the act of reflection is directed toward it. This solution, which should be positively emphasized, gives a clear place to theoretical reflection carried out by an axiologist or ethicist. At the same time, however, this discrepancy in the understanding of what is feeling of value is extremely puzzling, partly because it can be seen in the statements that appear on one page of the work in question. More important, however, is the fact that this discrepancy raises the question of what the proper meaning of this feeling is, which must be, after all, distinguished from an emotional experience in the usual sense.

An explanation can be found in the subsequent pages of *Grundzüge*, where Hartmann analyzes two types of visions or intuitions (in the

was Sekundärem stempelte. Das emotionale Moment der wertfühlenden Akte ist nur die Erscheinungsweise des Wertbewußtseins“.

¹⁶ Ibidem: “Wir nun haben es ausschließlich mit der letzteren zu tun, mit dem dritten der genannten Aktmomente, dem primären Wertgefühl. Dieses nämlich ist, ungeachtet seines Eingebettetseins in den komplexen emotionalen Akt, nichtsdestoweniger *autonom*; es ist nur noch nicht bewußtes Erfassen der Struktur, *nicht gegenständliche Anschauung* des Wertes. Es kann aber, wo sich die Reflexion auf seinen Inhalt richtet, jederzeit zur bewußten Wertanschauung werden“.

sense of direct cognition): stigmatic intuition and conspective intuition. The former remains oriented towards individual, singular values, while the latter is collective in nature and directed towards sets and broader systems of values. Feeling of value is a stigmatic intuition. Hartmann compares value intuition to sensory awareness: “[...] a kind of grasping which could also be compared to the grasping that takes place in perception and which is a kind of experiencing of value, empiricism of value, perception of value – through feeling as an organ of value grasping”.¹⁷

The notion of value blindness is another idea that is also outlined in *Grundzüge*. This notion is characteristic of various concepts in material value ethics, most notably that of Dietrich von Hildebrand.¹⁸ Hartmann treats value blindness as an essential form of axiological delusion. Such value delusion is negative in nature and consists in the fact that the person does not see the value in question at all. Hartmann does not explicitly resolve whether there is such a thing as positive illusion, as he writes that the question of the existence of positive illusions is “principally difficult to resolve”.¹⁹ The view that axiological illusion is only negative seems to resonate with Hartmann's understanding of values as objects independent of the subject, to which the subject reacts by feeling. Insofar as value is actually apprehended at all, the content of that apprehension is and must be determined by value itself. Hartmann writes as follows:

[...] where an illusion of value can be demonstrated, it always turns out later that the positive feeling of value was nevertheless right and the negative, i.e. questioning felt value, was not. It is so, for example, with feeling of value by someone who loves (love is not “blind”!). It is the case, for example, of the moral revolutionary, the unrecognized and stoned bearer of [new] ideas, or the artist who intuitively follows new paths.²⁰

¹⁷ Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 557: “[...] eine Art des Erfassens, die wiederum vergleichbar wäre derjenigen der Wahrnehmung, eine Art Werterfahrung, Wertempirie, Wertwahrnehmung – durch das Fühlen als Wertorgan”.

¹⁸ Cf. Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis. Eine Untersuchung über ethische Strukturprobleme*, dritte durchgesehene Auflage (Valendar-Schönstatt: Patris Verlag, 1982), 47–86.

¹⁹ Cf. Hartmann, *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, 561.

²⁰ Ibidem: “[...] wo nur irgend Werttäuschung nachweisbar ist, erweist sich hinterher immer, daß das positive Wertgefühl doch irgendwie Recht hatte, das negative aber, d. h. die Bestreitung gefühlter Werte, Unrecht hatte. So ist es mit dem Wertgefühl des Liebenden (Liebe ist nicht ‘blind’!), des moralischen Revolutionärs, des verkannten und gesteinigten Ideenträgers, des Künstlers, der tastend neue Wege geht”.

However, as pointed out earlier, in the same way that Hartmann's conception of feeling is general, as is evident when juxtaposed with the conception formulated by Max Scheler, a similar conclusion can be drawn regarding Hartmann's conception of axiological illusions. In this case, however, it is primarily the concept of negative axiological illusions formulated by Dietrich von Hildebrand. Von Hildebrand presented an extended concept of axiological blindness in his doctoral thesis entitled *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, where he distinguished between (i) full constitutive value blindness, (ii) partial constitutive value blindness, and (iii) subsumption blindness.²¹

That is why a more general question then arises: what is it that has made Hartmann's research so clearly inferior – especially in its level of detail – to that of Scheler and von Hildebrand? I will attempt to provide an answer to this question only at the end of this article, after I have presented the views contained in Hartmann's other works.

2. The concept of value feeling in *Ethik*

How is feeling of value understood in Hartmann's next important work on the subject, *Ethik*? In chapter XIII ("Schelers Kritik des Intellektualismus"), while presenting the main ideas of material ethics of value, Hartmann uses the term "feeling of value" (*Wertgefühl*) to signal its source and its apriori character. He calls this apriority of feeling a "factum" of ethical reality:

The apriorism of thinking and judging is accompanied by an apriorism of feeling, the intellectual a priori by an emotional a priori which is equally independent and original. The primal consciousness of value is a feeling of value, the primal recognition of a commandment is a feeling of that

²¹ Cf. Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis. Eine Untersuchung über ethische Strukturprobleme*, dritte durchgesehene Auflage (Valendar-Schönstatt: Patris Verlag, 1982), 47–86. But also on the level of understanding the feeling of value, Hildebrand's subtle and emotionally nuanced descriptions lead to detailed distinctions of the emotional experience of values: (i) feeling of value (*Wertgefühl*); (ii) seeing values (*Wertsehen*), and (iii) knowing values (*Kennen von Werten*). Cf. *ibidem*, 25–36. Cf. also Leszek Kopciuch, "Dietricha von Hildebranda krytyka relatywizmu etycznego: ślepotą na wartość i inne argumenty", *Idea. Studia nad Strukturą i Rozwojem Pojęć Filozoficznych* 26 (2014): 175–189.

which unconditionally ought to be, the expression of which is the commandment.²²

For Hartmann, even Kant's "rational" moral law was merely a "later" intellectual account of a value previously grasped in emotional feeling.²³ It is striking, however, that Hartmann here again uses the term "feeling of value" in a very general sense – understanding it, in principle, as any affective experience of value. This can be seen, for example, in the fact that he also uses the act of preferring (*Vorziehen*) as an example of such an affective apprehension of value.²⁴

Thus, also in *Ethik*, one can find an approach to the feeling of value that differs from the subtle distinctions and divisions that Max Scheler proposed within the emotional apprehension of value (the feeling of value, the act of emotional response to value, love and hate).²⁵ In a way, it is understandable that Hartmann's simplistic picture of value perception here is only due to the introductory and preliminary character of this chapter. At the same time, however, one cannot fail to note that a similarly broad understanding of value perception will also appear in other works by Hartmann such as *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie* or the article *Vom Wesen sittlicher Vorderungen*.

In *Ethik* – more explicitly than in *Grundzüge* – Hartmann considers the question of feeling of value in the context of the division between ordinary (everyday) practical consciousness and theoretical consciousness. The feeling of value is a component of everyday consciousness and determines the nature and scope of values pursued in human action.²⁶ However, it also contains the limitations associated with this conscious-

²² Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 177; *Ethik*, 105: "Neben den Apriorismus des Denkens und des Urteils tritt ein Apriorismus des Gefühls, neben das intellektuelle A priori ein ebenso selbständiges und ursprüngliches emotionales A priori. Primäres Wertbewußtsein ist Wertfühlen, primäre Anerkennung eines Gebotes ist ein Fühlen des unbedingt Seinsollenden, dessen Ausdruck das Gebot ist".

²³ Cf. *ibidem*, 178; *Ethik*, 106.

²⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, 178–179; *Ethik*, 105–107.

²⁵ Let us note, however, that Eugene Kelly observes here the similarity between Hartmann's and Scheler's positions: "Hartmann goes as far as to suppose that for every value there corresponds a unique cognitive feeling in which it is given. Scheler writes in a similar way". Cf. Kelly, *Material Ethics of Value*, 31. Such an opinion is right, provided that we take into account Hartmann's typically very general and thus not precise understanding of feeling of value.

²⁶ In *Ethik* Hartmann also compares feeling to the voice of conscience. Cf. *Ethik*, 120–122; *Ethics*, vol. 1, 200–202.

ness: its incompleteness and perspectivism, its historical limitations, individual preferences, but also its errors, omissions, and illusions:

Moral consciousness in this sense is indeed never complete, and is perhaps never free from error in its application, that is to say, in the actual valuation which it confers upon actions and dispositions. But it is nevertheless always a genuine consciousness of values. And that is sufficient for the analysis of the phenomenon, in order to discover its valuational structure and to determine it conceptually.²⁷

That is why theoretical consciousness, revealed in ethical and axiological considerations, plays such a large role in a cognition of values. On the one hand, its task is to conceptualize the values revealed in the feeling of value and, on the other hand, to recognize the errors contained in everyday consciousness. Nevertheless, the theorist's investigations are also based on the primary axiological consciousness brought by the theorist: "Even the philosopher in his investigations brings such a thing with him".²⁸ In both cases, in everyday consciousness and in theoretical consciousness, the primordial emotional awareness of value is thus the starting point. This analogy of the role fulfilled by emotional consciousness, however, does not alter the fact that the rational work of the philosopher is framed by Hartmann as a form of illuminating and correcting emotional apprehension, primarily in terms of the falsifications it contains: "Finally, moreover, it is the business of the ethicist to scent out falsification".²⁹ However, theoretical consciousness in relation to values, even if it is broader in scope than everyday consciousness, is not unlimited in scope; on the contrary, there is a limitation in it similar to the limitation accompanying the primary emotional feeling of value: "Philosophical investigation can only grasp what can be grasped by the living moral sense as to values".³⁰

²⁷ Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 101; *Ethik*, 53–54: "Sittliches Bewußtsein in diesem Sinne ist zwar auch nie ein vollständiges, und vielleicht kein irrumsfreies in seiner Anwendung, d.h. in der tatsächlichen Bewertung, die es Handlungen und Gesinnungen angedeihen läßt. Aber es ist doch immer echtes Wertbewußtsein. Und das genügt für die Analyse des Phänomens, um in ihm die ethischen Wertstrukturen aufzudecken und begrifflich zu bestimmen".

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 103; *Ethik*, 55: "Auch der forschende Philosoph bringt ein solches schon mit".

²⁹ *Ibidem*; *Ethik*: "Zudem, schließlich ist es Sache des Ethikers, der Fälschung auf die Spur zu kommen".

³⁰ *Ibidem*, 231; *Ethik*, 144: "Philosophische Wertforschung kann nur erfassen, was dem lebendigen moralischen Wertgefühl faßbar ist". Cf. also *Ethics*,

In *Ethik*, however, one can also find more detailed considerations related to the types of affective experiences identified by Scheler, i.e., the act of preference, already precisely understood, and the acts of emotional response to value. In the case of acts of preference, Hartmann refers directly, but critically, to Scheler's concept and states that Schelerian preference is not able to indicate an unambiguous and one-dimensional axiological hierarchy. Hartmann believes that there are at least two possible orders (hierarchies) of values: the order of power (strong and weak, stronger and weaker values) and the order of high value (high and low, higher and lower values). The greater our negative reaction when someone's value does not materialize, the stronger the character of the violated value. The greater our positive reaction when someone realizes a value, the higher that value is. The order of gradable height and the order of power of values are precisely two types of hierarchizing values.³¹

In the case of the emotional response to value, Hartmann refers to Scheler's views only critically, for he believes that Scheler's concept of the criteria determining the hierarchy of values is too general³² and does not allow for the grasping of detailed positions that differ in their substance (content) of values. That is why Hartmann refers to the views of Dietrich von Hildebrand and his concept of the response to value, seeing in it a tool capable of grasping the subtle differences between values – grasping, through various details, the type of response to value: "For each value there is one, and only one, attitude corresponding to its na-

vol. 2, 388: "[...] our actual emotional discrimination is bound fast to the material and axiological differences [...] We must leave undetermined, whether there be some other of procedure which would make such projection possible, without eliminating the feeling for values; and this would depend upon retaining it, since the feeling for values is the only cognitive authority which could test the projection by the scale of heights. [...] Yet it would a ways be possible that there might be an analysis especially directed to valuational grades, perhaps on the basis of a qualitative analysis of the materials. But evidently at the stage which investigations has reached, we are not capable of answering this question"; *Ethik*, 497–498: "[...] das lebendige Wertgefühl an die materialen und axiologisch-qualitativen Unterschiede fest gebunden bleibt [...] Ob es ein Vorgehen anderer Art gibt, daß solche Projektion ermöglicht – und darauf käme es an, denn das Wertgefühl ist die alleinige erkennende Instanz, welche die Projektion auf die Höhenskala ablesen konnte – muß dahingestellt bleiben. Möglich wäre es immerhin, daß es eine speziell auf die Werthöhe gerichtete Analyse gäbe, etwa auf Grund der qualitativen Materialanalyse. Aber diese Frage reicht der Stand der Wertforschung offenbar nicht heran".

³¹ Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 2, 51–64; *Ethik*, 251–261.

³² Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 2, 387; *Ethik*, 497.

ture, only one emotional reaction, the response suited to it. No one can find one and the same thing both 'very neat' and 'inspiring'. The latter may apply to a great work of art, the former to a witty remark".³³

This approach, even if Hartmann himself does not explain it in detail, has an important justification. Scheler *de facto* distinguished this type of axiological experience but did not devote much attention to it (in *Formalismus in Ethik* one can find only about half a page on the subject). It is Dietrich von Hildebrand – which is the unanimous opinion of various researchers of his works³⁴ – who developed this question in his ethics in an extremely detailed and advanced way (distinguishing, for example, between theoretical responses, affective responses, and volitional responses). It is significant that Hartmann relies on the opinions that von Hildebrand formulated in this regard. He writes: "This law, correctly understood, would undoubtedly furnish us with a basis for the phenomenology of grades in a scale of values, and not only for the larger intervals in a whole group, but for the finer and often imponderable gradations of moral values among themselves".³⁵ Von Hildebrand, while outlining the idea of a value response, did not himself, in Hartmann's view, provide all of the possible detailed distinctions in the realm of value that reveal themselves in nuanced kinds of value responses. These detailed distinctions, even if not readily expressible in language, must be capable of being described in indirect terms. It is this task – continuing the achievements of Scheler and von Hildebrand – that Hartmann sets for axiology and ethics.³⁶

³³ Ibidem, 57; *Ethik*, 255: "Für jeden Wert gibt es eine, und nur eine, seinem Wesen entsprechende Art der Stellungnahme, bzw. der gefühlsmäßigen Reaktion, die ihm zukommende Wertantwort. Niemand kann ein und dasselbe ‚ganz nett‘ und zugleich ‚begeistert‘ finden".

³⁴ Cf. e.g. Bernard Wenisch, *Wertantwort und Selbstverwirklichung. Kritische Bemerkungen zu philosophischen Voraussetzungen heutiger Theologie*, in: *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein. Festgabe für Dietrich von Hildebrand zum 80 Geburtstag*, hrsg. von B. Schwarz (Regensburg: Verlag Josef Habel, 1970), 237; Herbert Spiegelberg, *The Phenomenological Movement. A Historical Introduction* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), 236; John F. Crosby, *Dietrich von Hildebrand: Master of Phenomenological Value-Ethics*, in: *Phenomenological Approaches to Moral Philosophy*, ed. J. J. Drummond, L. Embree (Dordrecht–Boston–London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2002), 477.

³⁵ Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 2, 57–58; *Ethik*, 256: "Diese zweifellos richtig erschaute Wesensgesetzlichkeit wäre sehr wohl imstande, die Grundlage für eine Phänomenologie der Werthöhe abzugeben, und zwar keineswegs nur für die großen Hohenabstände ganzer Wertgruppen, sondern sicherlich auch für die feineren oft unwägbareren Distanzen sittlicher Werte untereinander".

³⁶ Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 99–104; *Ethik*, 52–56.

In *Ethik*, however, one can also point to some modifications in Hartmann's understanding of axiological blindness. "There are such things as education and lack of education of the sense of values, talent and lack of talent for the discernment of them. There is such a thing as individual maturity of the power of discrimination, in the individual man, and there is the historical maturity in mankind".³⁷

3. The concept of value feeling in *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen* and *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*

Hartmann's next text, important for the problem of the feeling of value, is a postwar article *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen* (1949). Several ideas important for understanding how we experience values also appeared in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie* (1934), more specifically in chapters 33 and 49 (33: *The Context of Life as Ontological*, especially point (b): *The Reality in Value References*; 49: *The Realm of Values and its Way of Being*). Particularly relevant here is the concept of the connection between acts of feeling of value³⁸ and emotional-transcendent acts.³⁹ Mostly, however, ideas concerning value feeling formulated in *Zur Grundlegung* are presented by Hartmann in a broader, more summarized, and systematic way in the article *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*. That is the reason for referring to that article, together with certain selected concepts from *Zur Grundlegung*.

This is the first part of *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*:

Everything ends with the question of how this feeling of value is constructed. But let us say at the outset that a thorough analysis of the act, which should be expected here, has not yet been made. Interesting remarks formulated by Scheler do not suffice, they are too general. Although there are

³⁷ Ibidem, 228; *Ethik*, 142: "Es gibt auch Unbildung und Bildung des Wertgefühls, Begabung und Unbegabtheit für Wertschau. Es gibt ein individuelles Reifen des Wertorgans im Einzelmenschen, und es gibt ein geschichtliches Reifen des Wertorgans in der Menschheit". Cf. also Leszek Kopciuch, "Krytyka relatywizmu etycznego u N. Hartmanna", *Edukacja Filozoficzna* 41 (2006): 157–170.

³⁸ In *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, Hartmann uses both the term *Wertgefühl* (value feeling) and also *wertfühlende Akte* (value feeling acts), and *Wertfühlen* (value feeling).

³⁹ The concept of the emotional-transcendent acts was also presented in Hartmann's *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, 117–119.

many studies referring to this problem, they do not reflect what is at the core of the phenomena.⁴⁰

In explaining the core of this, Hartmann points to the essential rooting of feeling in practical situations, which means that the emergence of this feeling is not at all a matter of a person adopting a value-oriented cognitive stance. The feeling of value appears in those people who find themselves in practical situations to which the given values are related. But another condition of the appearance of the feeling is the possession of personal qualifications by the person (such as the right moral attitude, openness to the value, moral maturity, etc.⁴¹). The relation between situating the person in a particular practical situation and feeling of value is a consequence of the more primary relation that exists between a particular practical situation (or type of practical situation) and a particular value (or type of value). However, this kind of relationality of values was already discussed by Hartmann in the *Ethics*, where he pointed out (i) the relationality of values in relation to the situation, (ii) the relationality of values in relation to the person as subject of action, and (iii) the relationality of values in relation to the person as “object” of action.⁴²

It must be noted that the idea of practical conditions of value feeling, and its practical role was already presented by Hartmann in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*. Hartmann states therein that value feeling belongs to the broader structure of diverse emotional-transcendent acts that determine human existence in the world. All these acts have a valuational tone.

The feeling for values in life itself has the ontological function of continuously emphasizing the value and disvalue accents that we encounter in eve-

⁴⁰ Hartmann, *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, 299: “Es kommt nun alles weitere auf die Frage hinaus, wie dieses Wertfühlen geartet ist. Da muß indessen gleich gesagt werden, daß die genaue Aktanalyse, die hier zu erwarten ist, bisher noch nicht gegeben worden ist. Die aufschlußreichen Hinweise, die Scheler gegeben hat, genügen nicht, sie bleiben zu sehr im Allgemeinen stecken. Es gibt wohl eine Reihe von Forschungen, die hier anknüpfen, aber sie setzen nicht am Kernphänomen an”. But at the same time, Hartmann emphasizes the groundbreaking role of Scheler, who demonstrated that there are objective regularities in feeling of value”. Cf. *ibidem*.

⁴¹ While Hartmann does not make references to other concepts here, these are themes that have been advanced by Dietrich von Hildebrand, including in his habilitation dissertation *Sittlichkeit und ethische Werterkenntnis*, as well as in his work the *Ethics* (first titled *Christian Ethics*).

⁴² Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 206–216; *Ethik*, 138–147.

rything real and makes its reality palpable. We feel the immovably real in its hardness most strongly where it touches the feeling for values. Neither the value indifferent nor the unreal excites us. The sphere of what is lived through and experienced is selected in advance by the reaction of the response to value.⁴³

What is significant for our topic, is that Hartmann also emphasizes that acts of value feeling are doubly "transcendent". Firstly, they are directed towards some real situation that is transcendent to consciousness (e.g., real action, real behavior);⁴⁴ secondly, they are also directed towards an ideal and self-existing value that is also transcendent to reality.⁴⁵ As a result, it must also be noted that – in this respect – Hartmann's concept contains a similar ambiguity to the concept presented in *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*:⁴⁶ (i) an object of the value-feeling is something real; (ii) an object of the value-feeling is an ideal value. Of course, it is easy to explain this ambiguity. However, to eliminate it, one must consider again that Hartmann uses a very broad understanding of the value feeling. Only in this way can value feeling be directed to both the real world and ideal values at the same time.

One must also note that in *Zur Grundlegung*, Hartmann repeats explicitly the opinion that feeling of value is not cognition of value: "[...] we are not really dealing with cognition of values – at least not primarily – that is, not with a grasp of values, but with our being-seized by them instead. Humankind cannot remain neutral to felt values; we are moved by them in value feeling, seized by them, determined in our feeling of them".⁴⁷ As regards the problem of a cognitive nature of value feeling –

⁴³ Hartmann, *Ontology: Laying the Foundations*, 225; *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 195: "Das Wertgefühl im Leben selbst hat diese ontologische Funktion, daß es durchgehend an allem Realen, das uns begegnet, das Wertbetonte und Unwertbetonte heraushebt und in seinem Realitätsgewicht fühlbar macht. Wir fühlen eben das unverrückbar Reale in seiner Härte am Stärksten dort, wo es das Wertgefühl tangiert. Weder das Wertindifferente noch das Irreale regt uns auf. Der Umkreis des Erlebten und Erfahrenen ist von vornherein durch das Ansprechen der Wertantwort seligiert".

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibidem*, 225; *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 195.

⁴⁵ Cf. *ibidem*, 318–319; *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 284.

⁴⁶ Cf. footnote 14, 15.

⁴⁷ Hartmann, *Ontology: Laying the Foundation*, 320; *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 285: "[...] es sich nicht eigentlich um ein Erkennen der Werte handelt – wenigstens nicht primär –, nicht also um ein Erfassen der Werte, sondern eher um ein Erfasstwerden von ihnen".

“cognitive” in the strict sense of the word – Hartmann’s standpoint presented in *Zur Grundlegung* is still the same as in *Grundzüge*.

In *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen* Hartmann also repeats the thesis formulated in *Ethik* that philosophical reflection is secondary to the feeling of value arising in specific practical situations.

This philosophical awareness of value is not a primary feeling of value, but is secondary, faded. It can indeed be called an authentic view of value, i.e., a broad overview of the values that the feeling makes available. But it is not the same as the feeling that prevails in a given valid morality, or the feeling that prevails in a given era. Ethics is not a living ethos at all – neither of the individual nor of his era [...].⁴⁸

Hartmann also develops the motif signaled in *Ethics* of the historical conditioning of feeling, which makes it possible for feeling to “speak” differently in different situations (cultural and individual). However, its multiplicity and diversity – Hartmann emphasizes it in a similar way to the ideas presented in *Zur Grundlegung*⁴⁹ and particularly in the reading *Das Wertproblem in der Philosophie der Gegenwart* (1936)⁵⁰ – is not an argument for value relativism. The different practical situations in which the feeling of value appears update different values. In line with the idea still developed in *Ethik*, Hartmann believes that values are relationally related to particular life situations, in which they only acquire their importance and meaning.⁵¹ The relative reference of different values to dif-

⁴⁸ Hartmann, *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, 306: “Aber dieses Wertbewußtsein ist nicht das ursprüngliche Wertfühlen, sondern ein sekundäres, verblaßtes. Man kann es wohl noch echte Wertschau, und zwar verbreiterte Überschau der fühlbar gewordenen Werte nennen, aber es ist nicht identisch mit dem einer geltenden Moral, auch nicht mit dem der zur Zeit herrschenden. Die Ethik ist überhaupt nicht lebendiges Ethos, weder das des Individuums noch das ihres Zeitalters [...]”.

⁴⁹ Cf. Hartmann, *Ontology: Laying the Foundation*, 319–320; *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, 284–286.

⁵⁰ Cf. Hartmann, *Das Wertproblem in der Philosophie der Gegenwart*, in: Hartmann, *Kleinere Schriften*, Bd. 3, 327–332; first edition 1936.

⁵¹ Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 247–262; *Ethik*, 154–165. The relationality occurs even between the ideal ought to be and the real world. In *Ethik* Hartmann writes: “For the Ought-to-Be of values, even the ideal Ought-to-Be, does not exist for the ideal sphere itself – in which values are not something that ‘ought-to-be’ but something that ‘is’ – but exclusively for the sphere of actuality (including the real actional sphere of the subject). The Ought-to-Be is through and through an Ought-to-be-Real” (*Ethics*, vol. 1, 304); *Ethik*: 195: “Denn das Seinsollen der Werte, auch das ideale, besteht nicht für die ideale Sphäre selbst – in der die Werte ja gar nicht seinsollend, sondern ‘seiend’

ferent situations inevitably results in different forms of feeling. At the same time, this is a manifestation of the necessary connection between feeling and value.

The historical conditions of value-feeling are supplemented by Hartmann's enumeration of "subjective" factors related to the specifics and limitations of personal consciousness. The first is the so-called "limited capacity of axiological consciousness", which means that a person is not able to feel too many different values at the same time. This limited capacity (or narrowness of axiological consciousness) is related to the emotional character of experiencing values. This is why only some of them can be grasped simultaneously at any given time: "While human consciousness can grasp any number of objects to which it gains access, it cannot be grasped by any number of objects. [...] As a matter of fact, probably every single value, or at least every closed group of values, has a tendency to capture the whole man, to take possession of him, displacing other values".⁵² Another "subjective" factor influencing the feeling of value is the degree of maturity that characterizes a person – the greater the maturity, the more values can be felt. The next factor is the axiological illusions and delusions connected with the person's life experience and their talents and abilities.

In Hartmann's view, "these limiting conditions (objective and subjective) characterize not only the feeling of value that emerges in the individual person, but also broader supra-individual ethos; thus, the "consciousness of the objective spirit" also always remains limited and tied to the limitations of the bearers, i.e., individual persons and their personal spirit. Thus, also the value consciousness alive in individual cultures, civilizations, or epochs is characterized by "narrowness".

All these factors, which have the effect of limiting the range of values available for feeling, mean that the feeling of value – whether in the individual subject or in the cultural subject – can be metaphorically

sind – sondern ausschließlich für die reale Sphäre (einbegriffen die reale Akt-sphäre des Subjekts). Es ist von Hause aus ein Realein-Sollen". Cf. also Leszek Kopciuch, *Wolność a wartości: Max Scheler, Nicolai Hartmann, Dietrich von Hildebrand, Hans Reiner* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo UMCS, 2010), 64–71; cf. also Kopciuch, "Krytyka relatywizmu etycznego u N. Hartmanna".

⁵² Hartmann, *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, 307–308: "Ein menschliches Bewußtsein kann wohl beliebig vieles erfassen, das ihm zugänglich wird, aber es kann nicht von beliebig vielem erfaßt sein. [...] Im Grunde hat wohl gar jeder einzelne Wert, zum mindesten aber jede geschlossene Wertgruppe, die Tendenz, den ganzen Menschen zu erfassen, gleichsam von ihm Besitz zu ergreifen und andere Werte zu verdrängen".

described by Hartmann as a “spot light” that always illuminates only a certain section of the realm of values, but never its entirety. This creates a basis for expecting a broader view of value from theoretical reflection, even if it inherits the limitations of feeling.⁵³

It is worth noting, however, that while stressing the connection between the feeling of value and the specifics of the situation and the values related to it, Hartmann also allows for the possibility of feeling of value in situations different from those in which one is currently participating. Understanding the nature of such situations, their conditions, and their components makes it possible for such a thing as “re-experiencing value” to occur. This idea, Dilthey’s in its provenance, is realized especially in a mature historical consciousness.

In *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, Hartmann emphasizes again – similar to earlier works, including *Ethik, Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*, and others⁵⁴ – that the relation between feeling and value is different from the relation between will and value:

The will is free with respect to values; it is not compelled to follow the moral demand that comes from them, even when it has fully grasped and realized them. On the other hand, the feeling of value is not free with regard to them, it is in a very clear sense compelled by them: once the understanding of a value has been opened up, it cannot go back, it cannot “feel” or take a different position from that indicated by the value. It cannot feel trust and loyalty as disreputable, deceit and deception as laudable. It may be value-blind, but that means something completely different: it does not “speak” of values, it does not grasp them at all, and this is true wherever the man has not yet matured in the understanding of situations and conflicts. But once he has accepted a certain value, he can no longer deny it, he can no longer regard a positive value as negative. In short: the feeling of value, where it has appeared at all, points unmistakably, like a scale, to a value, uninfluenced by the will and its various motives, uninterrupted also by the tendency to self-justification inherent in the person.⁵⁵

⁵³ The issues of historically changing ethos were analyzed by Hartmann in *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, 195–200.

⁵⁴ Cf. for example: *Der Aufbau der realen Welt*, 316; *Das Problem des geistigen Seins*, 129–150; “Systematische Selbstdarstellung”, in: *Kleinere Schriften*, Bd. 1, 38–42 [first edition 1933].

⁵⁵ Hartmann, *Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, 302–303: “Der Wille hat Freiheit den Werten gegenüber, er ist nicht gezwungen, der sittlichen Forderung zu folgen, die von ihnen ausgeht, auch wenn diese durchaus erfaßt und bewußt ist. Das Wertgefühl dagegen ist nicht frei ihnen gegenüber, es ist in einem ganz eindeutigen Sinne von ihnen gezwungen: es kann, wenn ihm einmal das Verständnis eines Wertes aufgegangen ist, nicht mehr zurück, kann nicht anders ‘fühlen’ oder Stellung nehmen, als wie er es vorschreibt. Es kann nicht Treu

There are values that determine content of the feeling of value. The will of a person and their feeling of value are, therefore, in a different relation to value itself; only will is free in relation to value. The authentic feeling of value is determined by an ideal and self-existent value. Value itself, on the other hand, is neither produced by the feeling nor is it a component of it. The sense of self-existence and ideality of value was analyzed by Hartmann in detail in *Ethik*.⁵⁶ It should be noted here again that the concept of the “non-free” feeling being determined by value is fully coherent to the concept of the negative character of axiological illusions.

Conclusions

- i. Regardless of the differences in detail and the differing emphases, what emerges from Hartmann's writings is a more or less uniform picture of value feeling. Hartmann understands it as the affective way of apprehending or experiencing values, which only through axiological-ethical reflection can transform into the axiological or ethical cognition of values (cognition in the proper

und Glauben als verwerflich, Betrug und Hinterlist als ehrenvoll empfinden. Es kann wohl wert blind sein; aber das bedeutet etwas ganz anderes: da spricht es auf die Werte nicht an, es erfährt sie gar nicht, und das ist überall der Fall, wo der Mensch noch nicht zum Verständnis der betreffenden Situationen oder Konflikte herangereift ist. Ist aber einmal ein bestimmter Wert aufgegangen, so kann er ihn nicht mehr verleugnen, kann nicht das Wertvolle für wertwidrig erklären. Oder kurz: das Wertgefühl, wo es überhaupt vorhanden ist, zeigt wie das Zünglein an der Waage eindeutig auf den Wert, unbeeinflusst vom Willen und seinen vielerlei Motiven, unbeirrbar auch von der Tendenz der eigenen Person, sich gerechtfertigt zu sehen“.

⁵⁶ Cf. Hartmann, *Ethics*, vol. 1, 217–254; *Ethik*, 133–159. Cf. also the second edition of the *Ethik*, which includes a footnote that Hartmann added in this edition to explain what the self-existent being of value is and to refute some criticisms that followed the first edition of *Ethik*. Cf. Nicolai Hartmann, *Ethik*, zweite Auflage (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1935), 149. Cf. also: Kopciuch, *Wolność a wartości*, 62–77. I have also emphasized the importance of this footnote in the article *Nicolai Hartmann's Conception of Freewill in the Context of the Debate Between Compatibilism and Incompatibilism*. It will be published in a collective book *Studies on the Philosophy of Nicolai Hartmann: New Historical and Philosophical Perspectives* (draft title) by the Walter de Gruyter publishing house (most likely next year). This “footnote” in the second edition of *Ethik* was also pointed out earlier by Ewald Van der Vossenbergh, *Die letzten Gründe der Innerweltlichkeit in Nicolai Hartmanns Philosophie*, 8.

sense of the word). As Hartmann believes, cognition is a transcendent act, an act of grasping its object. Thus, cognition of value must be an act of grasping value. However, as Hartmann thinks, to feel value means rather to be grasped by value.

- ii. Hartmann's concept of the value feeling proposes a general approach; this is particularly noticeable in the inclusion in the feeling of value of such experiences which, for instance, for Scheler constituted other classes of axiological experiences. A similar conclusion is reached when Hartmann's concept of feeling is juxtaposed with Dietrich von Hildebrand's concept of the feeling of value, especially with the division within feeling itself (seeing value, feeling value, knowing value). However, both these conclusions require some additional explanation: they refer only to the feeling of value in its precise sense. The classifications of emotional-transcendent acts that Hartmann proposes in *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie* refer to acts that are not identical with feeling of value. Feeling of value is only an element of them.
- iii. Hartmann's concept, more than Scheler's or von Hildebrand's, seems to attribute a positive role to the rational factor, even if it remains constantly based on the source emotionality of feeling. This is because feeling of value remains the final deciding instance; it is also the factor limiting the base axiological experience on which the philosopher works. So, it is worth noting that a more radical departure from emotionalism in favor of a rationalistic methodology will only take place in the area of German material value ethics in the philosophy of Hans Reiner, for whom the feeling of value becomes only an additional and complementary instance – appearing only when other, “rational” ways of grasping values and their obligations fail.⁵⁷
- iv. This raises a more general question: what is it that makes Hartmann's research so clearly inferior – especially in its detail – to that of Scheler and von Hildebrand when it concerns the issue of how we come to know values? This question is all the more pertinent because in many other theoretical areas – including axiology and ethics – Hartmann formulates extremely elaborate distinctions and classifications. This is the case, for example, with the

⁵⁷ Cf. Hans Reiner, *Pflicht und Neigung. Die Grundlagen der Sittlichkeit, erörtert und neu bestimmt mit besonderem Bezug auf Kant und Schiller*, Monographien zur philosophischen Forschung, Bd. 5 (Meisenheim am Glan: Westkulturverlag Anton Hain, 1951), 174–175.

antinomy of free will and value, the material analysis of particular groups and types of value, or types of duty. Two hypotheses can be found here as explanations. Firstly, Hartmann's philosophy is dominated by an ontological orientation, on being rather than on knowing it. This is the character, apart from *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, of all Hartmann's "great" works. Secondly, Hartmann seems to simply accept those detailed findings and divisions that Scheler and Hildebrand formulated on the emotional apprehension of value. This is directly evidenced by the statements formulated in *Ethik*. He accepts them because he thinks they are right.

- v. Hartmann's ethic also develops the motif of the historical conditioning of feeling, which makes it possible for feeling to "speak" differently in different situations (cultural and individual). The historical conditions of value-feeling are supplemented by Hartmann's enumeration of "subjective" factors related to the specifics and limitations of personal consciousness.
- vi. The rational elements in the recognition of values do not concern the genetic level of cognition; they are, rather, situated at the level of justifying the correctness of axiological cognition. At the genetic level, the thesis presented by Hartmann is the thesis common to the material ethics of values: values are experienced through feeling. Human value consciousness is primarily emotional. Only in value feeling are values "given" to us at all.
- vii. Hartmann's understanding of value feeling is characteristic of an ontological perspective. This feeling – because it "attacks us", we are not free in the face of it – is, in fact, one of the important testimonies that, in Hartmann's view, speak for the ontological self-existence of values and their plurality.

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Summary

The purpose of this article is to identify the most important emotional and non-emotional elements of Hartmann's understanding of "feeling of value" and to point out the ambiguities associated with this notion. The most important stages in the formation of this concept are delineated by the publications: *Grundzüge einer Metaphysik der Erkenntnis*, *Ethik, Vom Wesen sittlicher Forderungen*, and (in part) *Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie*. In all of these texts, Hartmann treats feeling

of value as a proper way of knowing value, in relation to which philosophical cognition of value is only secondary and dependent. Hartmann's understanding of feeling of value in ethics is, however, very broad, so that, to some extent, it loses the subtle divisions that were characteristic of the views of Max Scheler and Dietrich von Hildebrand. At the same time, however, Hartmann's concept introduces several new elements that are important for the understanding of the nature of the feeling of value, such as, among others, the limited capacity of the axiological consciousness, the shifting horizon of values, or the relational reference of values to the person as the subject and addressee of an action and the reference to the situation in which a given action is taken. Moreover, to a greater extent than Scheler and von Hildebrand, Hartmann seems to develop a field for the presence of rational elements in the cognition of values. It is also characteristic of Hartmann's conception to treat feeling of value – in a precise understanding – as part of the broader and more primary structure of the emotional-transcendent acts that constitute human existence in the world.

Keywords: Nicolai Hartmann, material value ethics, emotionalism, feeling of value, rationalism, Immanuel Kant, Max Scheler, Dietrich von Hildebrand