

The Idea of Value and  
the Reform  
of the Traditional  
Metaphysics of *Bonum*

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*"Intueor in rebus aliud esse quod sunt bona, et aliud esse quod sunt."*<sup>1</sup>  
– Boethius

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## Introduction

"Ens et bonum convertuntur": this is the dictum of Thomas Aquinas and other great Scholastic metaphysicians which epitomizes their view of the dependency of good on being, and the inherence of good in being. Their well-known teaching that *malum* is only a privation of good, is obviously interrelated with their teaching on the convertibility of being and good. Now many modern philosophers who treat of good, or as most of them prefer to say, of value, would deny that value is convertible with being in the Thomistic sense. It is remarkable what agreement is found on this point among philosophers who are in many respects fundamentally opposed to each other. Thus a neo-Kantian such as H. Rickert, a Munich phenomenologist such as M. Scheler, a neo-positivist such as V. Kraft, a "realist" such as G. E. Moore, would all agree that the datum which has traditionally been called *bonum* is something which is not reducible to being in the sense of "ens et bonum convertuntur." Of course their views on the way in which good is related to being diverge widely.

Now Thomists would expect that any fundamental criticism of "ens et bonum convertuntur" which is based on "value," is bound to undermine the metaphysical reality of goodness; they do not see how, without the convertibility of good and being, a metaphysics of good can be maintained. And indeed, the criticism which certain value theorists would make against this thesis seems to bear out this suspicion of the Thomists; for it is thoroughly subjectivistic, it abandons any metaphysics of good. Many value theorists hold that good, far from being convertible with being, is simply imposed on being from without by human needs, purposes, desires. Value in this sense is so little convertible with being that it rather seems to be a desecration of being. In the following, Heidegger, though he is of course not speaking in behalf of the Thomistic *bonum*, raises a protest against modern value philosophy which well expresses the mind of many Thomists:

It is important finally to realize that precisely through the characterization of something as "a value" what is so valued is robbed of its worth. That is to say, by the assessment of something as a value what is valued is admitted only as an object for man's estimation. But what a thing is in its Being is not exhausted by its being an object, particularly when objectivity takes the form of value. Every valuing, even where it values positively, is a subjectivizing. It does not let beings: be. Rather, valuing lets beings: be valid (gelten)—solely as the objects of its doing. The bizarre effort to prove the objectivity of values does not know what it is doing. When one proclaims "God" the altogether "highest value," this is a degradation of God's essence. Here as

elsewhere thinking in values is the greatest blasphemy imaginable against Being.<sup>2</sup>

But even if value philosophers succeed in avoiding value subjectivism, Thomists think that they are bound to fall into another error: they are bound to separate value from being, to break up the real unity of value and being. Thomists are not surprised to find in certain objectivistic value philosophies a tendency to regard being as in itself neutral, with value existing, at least primarily, as essences in an ideal sphere. They think that such value philosophers are bound to hold a dualism of being and value analogous to certain dualisms in the philosophy of body and soul which break up the unity of man. As a result of separating value from being, it is thought that the idea of being with which value philosophers work is a being which "has been robbed of its metaphysical-religious substance—a *Rumpf-Sein*, which is the result partly of modern 'nihilism,' partly of the positivistic rejection of philosophy in the name of science."<sup>3</sup> Thomists think that only the philosophy of good which is represented by the dictum, "*ens et bonum convertuntur*," is capable of doing justice both to the objective reality of good and to the immanence of good in beings, to the real goodness of beings.

Now in this essay we propose to begin by showing that the metaphysics of good which is epitomized in this dictum really does wrongly absorb value into being, that value is not reducible to being in the sense of the Thomistic convertibility of *bonum* and *ens*. We also propose to go on to show that the idea of value which leads us to this critique, far from being subjectivist, is a more truly objective and metaphysically potent idea of good than is found in Thomism; and that, far from breaking up the unity of being and value, our idea of value provides for a far deeper unity than is found in Thomism. We want to show that the metaphysics of good which Thomism has always striven for, can, on the basis of our idea of value, be achieved more perfectly. And so despite all the criticism of Thomistic philosophy which follows, we are in deep solidarity with this philosophy, and our results, if they are sound, point in the direction, not of an overthrow of the underlying idea of a metaphysics of good, but rather of a new foundation for this metaphysics.

We are all the more drawn to this subject since, as far as we can see, the work of rethinking the traditional metaphysics of good has not yet been systematically carried out by any of the value philosophers committed to a metaphysics of value.<sup>4</sup> Of course we do not undertake to carry this work out, but only to make a contribution towards it.

We will proceed this way. After inquiring in Chapter 1 into the exact sense in which good is convertible with being according to Thomas, we will in Chapter 2 develop the idea of importance in general, and will develop it somewhat more elaborately than it has been developed before.

Though importance is a more generic idea than value, as we will see, the idea of importance is the basis for fundamental criticisms of the Thomistic teaching on good and being. In Chapter 3 we will try to show just what value is at all. In doing this we will draw on various value philosophers, but especially on the value philosophy of Dietrich von Hildebrand. It seems to us that he has discovered the real idea of value, and that the best work of other value philosophers is only preliminary and fragmentary in comparison with what he has seen. Of course our main task will not be to give an exposition of von Hildebrand, but to get to see as clearly as we can what value itself really is; no matter how much we draw on a given philosopher, we do so only as a help in getting at the things themselves. As we develop the idea of value, we will critically consider the Thomistic *bonum*, and show why it does not do justice to the objectivity and to the metaphysical impact of value. This should dispose of the suspicion that our criticism has anything to do with value subjectivism. In Chapter 4 we will complete our treatment of value by bringing out some aspects of its unity with the being which has value. We will try to show that our results in Chapter 3, far from compromising the unity of good and being, lead us to see that this unity is far deeper than it has been conceived in Thomistic metaphysics.

## Chapter 1

### The Thomistic Teaching on Good, and on the Relation of Good to Being

The focus of my inquiry into the Thomistic teaching on good is like the focus of G. E. Moore's *Principia*: I do not inquire into the Thomistic teaching on what things are good, or even what kinds of things are good, but rather into the Thomistic teaching on what "good" is at all. This is why I will draw primarily, though by no means exclusively, on *De Veritate*, q.21, "*De Bono*," and on *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.5, "*De Bono in Communi*."

Being and good in the Thomistic sense do not *mean* the same thing; they are not convertible in the sense of being synonyms. And Thomas uses a very modern argument to show that they are distinct in their meaning:

since being is what is first conceived by the intellect, as Avicenna says, every other noun must either be a synonym of being or add something at least conceptually. The former cannot be said of good, since it is not nonsense to call a being good. (Disputed Questions on Truth, q. XXI, a.1)<sup>5</sup>

This is of course a form of the celebrated "open-question" argument of G. E. Moore. Just as Moore showed that "good" could not be identical with some kind of neutral fact, since we can meaningfully ask whether that fact is also good; so Thomas shows that "good" cannot be identical with "being," since we can meaningfully affirm that a being is also good.

Thomas is simply drawing the conclusion which follows from his premises when he goes on to maintain that the difference in meaning between being and good is based on a certain addition made by good. Now in this same article, Thomas offers a very interesting consideration of two possible ways in which one thing can add to another.

1) It adds some reality which is outside the essence of the thing to which it is said to be added. For instance, white adds something to body, since the essence of whiteness is something beyond that of body. 2) One thing is added to the other as limiting and determining it. Man, for instance, adds something to animal . . . (*ibid.*).<sup>6</sup>

But it is in neither of these two ways that good adds to being:

It is not possible, however, for something to add anything to being in general in the first way, though in that way there can be an addition to some particular sort of being; for there is no real being which is outside the essence of being in general, though some reality may be



outside the essence of *this* being. But in the second way certain things are found to add to being, since being is narrowed down in the ten categories, each of which adds something to being—not of course, an accident or difference which is outside the essence of being, but a definite manner of being which is founded upon the very existence of the thing. It is not in this way, however, that good adds something to being, since good itself, like being, is divided into the ten categories, as is made clear in the *Ethics* (*ibid.*).<sup>7</sup>

How then does good add to being, if in neither of these two ways? Thomas teaches that good adds a certain relation between being and another thing: "A thing is called a being inasmuch as it is considered absolutely, but good . . . in relation to other things (*secundum respectum ad alia*)" (q.XXI, a.5).<sup>8</sup> And the relation which makes up the idea of good is the relation of a being to some *appetitus*, that is, to the striving in a being for its own perfection: "good expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power" (D.Q.T., q.I, a.1).<sup>9</sup> Though "good" and "being" are not synonyms, it seems that "good" and "being as *appetibile*" are.

In order to illuminate *bonum*, Thomas often draws a parallel between *bonum* and *verum*. I translate *verum* as it is used in this parallel by the word "knowable." When Thomas teaches that every being is *verum* or knowable, I understand him to affirm the intrinsic openness of being to the mind of a person. It would be absurd for there to be a being which was in principle inaccessible to the knowledge of a person. If there is something which man cannot know, then this is not because the thing is intrinsically unknowable, or because man is not a person, but rather because man has limited knowing powers. In this Thomas is affirming the metaphysical ordination of being to spirit. Here is one of many texts in which Thomas draws the parallel between *bonum* and *verum*: "As good has the nature of what is desirable, so truth is related to knowledge. . . . as good adds to being the notion of desirable, so the true adds a relation to the intellect" (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q.16, a.3).<sup>10</sup> As *verum* adds *cognoscibile* to being, so *bonum* adds *appetibile* to it.

Other transcendentals such as *res* and *unum* are "in themselves," "absolute," "non-relational"; but in this they are precisely distinguished from *bonum* and *verum*, each of which consists in a certain *respectum ad alia*. It is not just that *bonum* by its nature grounds a certain relation of an *appetitus* to itself; *bonum* partly consists in this relation. Thus for Thomas a thing cannot be "good in itself" in the same sense of "in itself" in which a thing has being (*ens*) "in itself."

Since being is predicated absolutely and good adds to it the status of a final cause, the essence of a thing considered absolutely, suffices for the thing to be called a being on its account, but not thereby to be

called good. (D.Q.T., q.XXI, a.1, ad.1).<sup>11</sup>

And he says: "good exists in a thing *so far as* that thing is related to the appetite" (S.T., I, q.16, a.1, italics mine).<sup>12</sup>

Very characteristic for Thomas' teaching on *bonum* is the way in which he identifies *bonum* with final cause. He answers affirmatively the question "whether good has the character (*rationem*) of a final cause" (S.T., I, q.5, a.4). And in *The Disputed Questions on Truth* he explains:

Inasmuch as one being by reason of its act of existing is such as to perfect and complete another, it stands to that other as an end. And hence it is that all who rightly define good put in its notion something about its status as an end. The Philosopher accordingly says that they excellently defined good who said that it is "that which all things desire." First of all and principally, therefore, a being capable of perfecting another after the manner of an end is called good (q.XXI, a.1).<sup>13</sup>

It seems to come to the same thing whether we say that a being is *bonum* for another, or *appetibile* for it, or the final cause (or end) of its striving for its own perfection.

But if we are really going to understand the exact sense in which *bonum* adds to *ens* a relation to an *appetitus*, we have to clarify more fully Thomas' understanding of *ens*.

Thomas opens the first chapter of his early work, *De Ente et Essentia*, by distinguishing two different senses of *ens*.

In the first way it is divided into the ten categories; in the second way it signifies the truth of propositions. The difference between the two is that in the second sense we can call everything being about which we can form an affirmative proposition, even though it may posit nothing in reality. Thus, we call even privations and negations beings, for we say that affirmation is opposed to negation, and that blindness is in the eye. But, in the first sense, only that can be called being which posits something in reality. In this sense of the word, then, blindness and the like are not beings.<sup>14</sup>

The first sense of *ens* centers around substantial being, for some lines later we read of it: "being is predicated absolutely and primarily of substances; it is predicated secondarily and as in a qualified sense of accidents."<sup>15</sup> We will translate this first sense of *ens* by "real being," or "really existing being."

Now everything which Thomas says about *ens* in the sense in which it is the basis of *bonum*, makes it clear that this *ens* is taken in the sense of real being. For instance, when Thomas discusses the two ways in which something can add to being (*ens*), he makes the statement, as we saw, that "being is narrowed down in the ten categories" (q.XXI, a.1). Now this *ens*, which is the *ens* which forms the basis of *bonum*, is clearly *ens* in the sense

of real being.<sup>16</sup>

Notice that Thomas says "*ens* et bonum convertuntur," and not "*esse* et bonum convertuntur." *Esse* refers to the actuality of *ens*, and we could translate it as "real existence"; *ens* refers to the subject of *esse*, to the being which has *esse*, and we could, as we just indicated, translate it as "real being," or "really existing being" (*das real Seiende*), or "being as really existing." Thomas wants to say that "good" adds a certain relation to really existing being. It is clear that the *appetitus* of a creature is directed to really existing being, and not to the existence (*esse*) of being. But we have to elaborate the Thomistic *ens* still further in order to clarify it sufficiently for our purposes.

When *ens* and *bonum* are called convertible, *ens* has a somewhat different sense than when *ens* and *verum* are called convertible. "The true is more closely related to being than is good. For the true regards being itself simply and immediately; while the nature of good follows being in so far as being is in some way perfect; for thus it is desirable" (*S.T.*, I, q.16 a.4).<sup>17</sup> It is *ens* as *perfectum*, or as fully actualized in its real existence, which is the *ens* which forms the basis of *bonum*. Thus in the following Thomas proceeds from *ens* to *bonum* by going through *ens* as *perfectum*: "Every being, as being, is good. For all being, as being, has actuality and is in some way perfect; since every act implies some sort of perfection; and perfection has the character of the desirable and of the good" (*S.T.*, I, q.5, a.3).<sup>18</sup>

This particular focus of *ens* as it forms the basis of *bonum* becomes all the more understandable if we approach it through the structure of *appetitus* in a being. Thomas teaches that "all things desire their own perfection," that is, each being desires the full measure of being "due" to it according to its nature. Nor is this perfection just one among many objects of the striving of a being; it is *the* object of its striving, and whatever particular thing is striven for is striven for as leading to the perfection of the thing.<sup>19</sup> Thus the structure of *appetitus* determines that that which is *appetibile* or *bonum* for a thing is *ens* in the sense of the full measure of being due to it, or in other words in the sense of its perfection.

As we saw, the *ens* which is at stake in the Thomistic metaphysics of good and which we translate as "real being," is not *restricted* to substances; it only refers *primarily* to substances. But it also refers to accidents in a substance. Thus the perfection of a being for Thomas involves not only the fullness of its substantial being, but also the presence of those accidents proper to it. In fact in one place he distinguishes three levels of actuality or perfection in a substantial thing, of which the substantial core of the thing is only the first:

For everything is called good according to its perfection. Now the perfection of a thing is threefold: first, according to the constitution of

its own being; secondly, in respect of any accidents being added as necessary for its perfect operation; thirdly, perfection consists in the attaining to something else as the end (*S.T.*, I, q.6, a.3)<sup>20</sup>

One more crucially important fact about the Thomistic *ens* which forms the basis of *bonum*. Thomas teaches that this *ens* lies especially in the *accidentia* proper to a being. Thomas puts it this way: the *accidentia* proper to a being, though they have being only *secundum quid*, have goodness *absolute*, or *simpliciter*; the *esse substantiale* of a being, though it has being *absolute*, has goodness only *secundum quid*. Let us have the words of Thomas himself on this.

For the clarification of this point it should be noted that, as appears from what has been said, goodness is divided into substantial and accidental, just as the act of being. There is, however this difference: a thing is called a being in an absolute sense because of its substantial act of existing; but because of its accidental act of existing it is not said to be absolutely. But just the opposite is true of good. From the point of view of its substantial goodness a thing is said to be good in a certain sense, but from that of its accidental goodness it is said to be good without qualification. Thus we do not call an unjust man good simply, but only in a certain sense inasmuch as he is a man. But a just man we call good without further restriction. (*D.Q.T.*, q.XXI, a.5)<sup>21</sup>

Thus it is that Thomas' oft-repeated statement that every being, insofar as it has being, is good (cf. *S.T.*, I, q.5, a.3), could easily lead us to overlook the complexity of his own position. In reality he teaches that insofar as a being has substantial existence, it has more in being than in goodness; and insofar as it has all the *accidentia* or *actus superadditos* which are proper to it, then that being has more in goodness than in being.

This is the place to mention the way Thomas disposes of the objection of Boethius, who is quoted as saying, "I perceive that in nature the fact that things are good is one thing; that they are is another" (*S.T.*, I, q.5, a.1, first objection).<sup>22</sup> It is especially interesting to watch Thomas deal with this objection, because it sounds very much like an objection which we ourselves, and other value philosophers as well, would be inclined to make against the Thomistic position. Thomas does not give the expected response; he does not say that *bonum* adds to *ens* a certain relation to an *appetitus*. He evidently thinks there is more to the objection of Boethius, and so he gives an answer in terms of the point we are presently discussing. He says that the "center of gravity" of a thing's being lies in its substantial being, whereas the "center of gravity" of a thing's perfection and goodness lies in its accidents; and that this is what Boethius means to say.

So much on the Thomistic *ens* which forms the basis of *bonum*. Now we are in a position to understand why, according to Thomas, every being is good. In the following text Thomas shows why the substantial existence of every being is *appetibile* for the being. This gives the conclusion that, since *bonum* means *appetibile*, every being, at least insofar as it has substantial existence, must be *bonum*, or as Thomas says, that being and good are convertible, or interchangeable.

Since the essence of good consists in this, that something perfects another as an end, whatever is found to have the character of an end also has that of good. Now two things are essential to an end: it must be sought or desired by things which have not attained the end, and it must be loved by the things which share the end, and be, as it were, enjoyable to them. For it is essentially the same to tend to an end and in some sense to repose in that end. Thus by the same natural tendency a stone moves toward the center (of the world) and comes to rest there. Now these two properties are found to belong to the act of being. For whatever does not yet participate in the act of being tends toward it by a certain natural appetite. In this way matter tends to form, according to the Philosopher. But everything which already has being naturally loves its being and with all its strength preserves it . . . we are left with the conclusion that good and being are interchangeable. (*D.Q.T.*, q.XXI, a.2)<sup>23</sup>

Just as we would expect, Thomas takes the step from the substantial existence of any being to its goodness by showing why its substantial existence must be *appetibile* to the being.

It is because *ens* as *perfectum* forms the basis of *bonum* that the Thomistic theory presents itself as a thoroughly metaphysical, anti-subjectivistic theory of good. But it should be remembered that *bonum* is not so objective that a good thing is good simply, or good in itself.

A few more remarks on the Thomistic *appetitus* are in order. It is important to realize that *appetitus* in Thomas does not refer merely to the striving of a person; it encompasses the "wants" of an animal, the teleological strivings of a plant, and even the "natural" upward movement of fire, or the "natural" downward movement of a falling stone. Thus *bonum* or *appetibile* is not only that which attracts a person, but also that which "attracts" all these sub-personal beings. This is for Thomas one of the differences between *bonum* and *verum*, for *verum* is, according to him, restricted to the conformity of something with the intellect of a person.

But a problem seems to arise: if good means *appetibile*, can it not be detached from being? What if a being strives to destroy itself? What if a man tries to commit suicide out of despair? This would seem to be a case in which it is non-being rather than being which is *appetibile* and therefore

good. It seems that if good means *appetibile*, then it need not always build on being, nor simply be the addition of a certain relation to being. Now Thomas would try to overcome this difficulty on the basis of his understanding of *appetitus*. As we have already indicated, an *appetitus* is by its very nature capable of striving only for the full actuality and perfection of the being to which the *appetitus* belongs; it is *simply* a striving for self-perfection. The Thomistic position tries to apply this to the human person by teaching that the instinctive striving for self-perfection found in sub-personal beings becomes conscious in man, that is, it comes to be based on knowledge and to be freely pursued. But Thomists would reject the idea that man, in virtue of his knowledge and freedom, can desire something other than his self-perfection. The desire for self-perfection does not become replaced by other desires in man; it simply becomes fully conscious. Here then is Thomas' answer to the objection: if the only possible object of an *appetitus* in any being (whether in a person or in a sub-personal being) is the full actuality of the being which has the *appetitus*, then there is no danger of the *appetibile* diverging from being or actuality. Of course Thomas recognizes that a contingent person can desire that which is destructive of his perfection; but Thomas tries to maintain his theory of *appetitus* by explaining that such a person desires this under the aspect of his perfection (cf. *S.T.*, I-II, q.8, a.1). And so wherever there is something *appetibile*, there is being, or at least something apprehended as being.

To summarize: if we consider the perfection of a being, not in itself, but as the possible object of an *appetitus*, or as *appetibile*, then we are considering the being as good. Since this is all that good "adds" to the real being, Thomas says that good and being are "*idem secundum rem*," and differ only "*secundum rationem*," or only "conceptually" (*S.T.*, I, q.5, a.1). Good adds only what he calls a certain "conceptual relation" to a being, that is, a relation which no more affects or modifies the desired being than the act of knowledge affects or modifies the known object (cf. *D.Q.T.*, q. XXI, a.1).

It will now be clear why the Thomistic theory presents itself as one which does deep justice to the groundedness of good in real being. Precisely because good in a way adds so little to being, it gets radically absorbed in real being. But it should be remembered that good is not so radically united with being that it exists in the thing itself and that it can be perceived by contemplating only the thing itself; for the constitution of *bonum* requires, in addition to the actuality of real being, also a relation to an *appetitus*.

Let this suffice as a brief account of the Thomistic teaching on the nature of good and of the way in which good is grounded in being.<sup>24</sup> Thomas' teaching on *malum* (which goes back to Augustine) is closely

correlated to his teaching on *bonum*, and a few words on *malum* may serve to throw some further light on *bonum*. *Malum* is the absence, not of just any good, but of some good to which a being is ordered, or which is due to it. The standard example is blindness: this *malum* is said to consist in the absence of the good of sight, which ought to be in a nature endowed with eyes. This absence of a due good, which makes up the idea of *malum*, is called a *privatio* (cf. *S.T.*, I, q.48, a.3). Though the idea of *malum* is somehow correlated to the idea of *bonum*, it does exist "on a level" with *bonum*. For *bonum* is related to *malum* as being to non-being. Furthermore, there is not a form of *malum* corresponding to every form of *bonum*. Thus there is no form of *malum* corresponding to the first level of *bonum* distinguished by Thomas, that of substantial being. The absence of a substantial being is not a *privatio*; for it takes an already existing substantial being to be the subject of a *privatio*. There are forms of *malum* corresponding only to the second and third level of good: a being can fail to have those *actus superadditos* to which it is ordered, or it can fail to attain to its *finis*. We can express this "superiority" of *bonum* over *malum* in this way: *malum* always presupposes the *bonum* of at least the substantial being which is the subject of the *malum*; but *bonum* does not always presuppose any *malum*. Further: Thomas teaches that evil exists by preying on good, but that good is not in turn simply a parasite living off of evil. And further: Thomas holds that every being is good (*S.T.*, I, q.5, art.3), but of course would reject the thesis that every being is evil. These are just some of the ways in which Thomas asserts this "superiority" of *bonum* over *malum* and shows that they are not simply on a level with each other, as for instance "male" and "female" are. Here we touch on one of the deepest convictions of Thomas and his followers which underlies their thesis of the convertibility of being and good: they want to affirm not only the fundamental goodness of beings, but also the being of good, and to show that good has being in a sense in which evil does not. But I do not develop farther this side of the Thomistic position, since in this essay our focus is not equally on *malum* and *bonum*,<sup>25</sup> but primarily on *bonum*. When, however, we are later led to criticize the thesis, "*ens et bonum convertuntur*," we will inquire whether we are also led to abandon the idea that there is a being proper to good which is precisely denied to evil, or whether, on the contrary, we can throw new light on this being.

Let us now state the argument of this essay in terms of two general features of the Thomistic teaching. It maintains the objective reality of *bonum*, the being of *bonum*; and it maintains the groundedness of *bonum* in things, the real goodness of things. We will argue that the same idea of value which forces us to abandon the Thomistic way of grounding good in being, enables us to establish more adequately and more radically these basic theses as basic truths about good and being. This way of expressing

our work in this essay serves well to bring out the deep solidarity with the Thomistic position which exists despite all the fundamental criticisms which we will develop of that position.

But we are not yet ready to begin with our criticism. We propose to set aside the Thomistic teaching for a while, and to explore to the best of our ability the things themselves which are at stake in the Thomistic teaching. We will be guided by the work of certain value philosophers, and especially by that of von Hildebrand, but we will develop the phenomenology of importance and value in our own way, and will try to bring to evidence everything which we maintain. Only by proceeding in this way will we be in a position to test the Thomistic position radically, and not merely from the point of view of internal consistency.

## Chapter 2

### The Phenomenology of Importance

In sharp contrast to most studies by contemporary Anglo-Saxon value theorists, I do not propose to begin my investigation of value by studying how our value language functions. I propose to consult values themselves, and to try to learn about them through themselves. I propose to begin by offering a phenomenology of value, and to consult the usage in our value language only later in this essay, and then only insofar as it tends to clarify value data. In proceeding this way I do not disparage the study of our value language; such a study is worth undertaking in its own right. But it is hardly the most important area of value philosophy; and besides, our phenomenology of value is the foundation for the proper study of value language, as we will indicate below.

But for the present we will put aside the term "value." In this chapter we want to investigate a fundamental datum which we will call "importance;" in the next chapter we will uncover a certain kind of importance, and only then will we introduce the term "value."

#### a) Importance as a distinct moment of an object

Experience shows that some things strike us as "neutral," and as therefore unable to ground any interest of ours in them. The information contained in almanacs and telephone books, for instance, for the most part strikes us as neutral; only a small fraction of it is capable of catching our attention and awakening our interest. Such things can be known, but our conscious relation to them terminates in the knowledge of them: we do not go on to take any interest in them, we do not desire them, we neither love nor hate them: they leave us cold. But there are other things which stand out against the neutral background, and therefore enable us to take an interest in them. When a man's house catches fire, then the telephone number of the fire department suddenly emerges from neutrality and acquires great importance. Or when a man becomes hungry, then the things which he perceives as able to satisfy his hunger emerge from neutrality, and become important. Or to take a very different example: the death of a person does not strike the one who loves him as neutral, it does not strike him as some trivial fact recorded in an almanac will strike him.

Now Dietrich von Hildebrand has called "important" all those things which can motivate or interest us, that is, which can appeal to our will or

our affective center; and he has called "neutral" those things which cannot do any of this, which leave us cold.<sup>26</sup> Notice that von Hildebrand characterizes importance by referring to the interest of a possible *person*; he does not call important those things which can analogously "interest" some sub-personal being. From now on we will be using the terms "importance" and "neutrality" in his sense: "important" will not mean for us the opposite of "unimportant," or "insignificant," as it does in normal usage, but rather the opposite of "neutral." We follow Hildebrand's terms here, first of all because they are as good as or better than most others for characterizing the data we want to study; but especially because of our great debt to him in this essay and especially in the following chapter,<sup>27</sup> where we will investigate kinds or categories of importance.

Now it might be thought that the experience which leads us to call an object important is simply the experience of having some interest toward the object: as if importance contributed to a neutral being only a relation to someone's motivation; as if it were roughly equivalent in meaning to "desired." But this is not the case; when we take an interest in something, there is a moment on the object in virtue of which it can interest or motivate us. Importance designates this distinct moment on the object, and not merely the object as a point of reference for some interest. Importance is such that we can speak of our interest depending on it, as we will see in the next section.

And surely we find this moment in our experience. Let us suppose that a container of water strikes me as neutral as long as I have no thirst, but that it acquires importance as I get thirsty, and that I therefore desire it. One can hardly say that the difference between the water before and after the coming of my thirst is merely that before my thirst the water was not desired, and afterwards it was desired. My thirst does not lead merely to a new relation between me and the water — namely the relation of me desiring it — but leave the water itself unmodified. Surely the water itself presents itself very differently after I have become thirsty: it radiates as it were a certain light, it has emerged from the greyne of neutrality. It is this new moment which appears on the container of water which we call its positive importance. It is surely true that I now desire the water, whereas before I had not desired it; this relation of desire really has been added — but it is clearly not identical with the importance which the water has acquired.

Take a very different example of importance, one which will make it still clearer that importance is a distinct moment on an object. Let us recall the passage in the *Brothers Karamazov*, where Zosima, while still leading a worldly life in the army, brutally strikes his servant Afanasi in the face.<sup>28</sup> In doing this, he does not think much of his action, he quickly forgets it. But the next morning he recalls it, goes over it in his mind, and is horrified

at himself. What is important for us is the fact that Zosima does not see his action in the way he saw it the night before; the change which he undergoes does not lie simply in his attitude towards his action, that is, in the fact that he reacts towards his action with horror instead of taking it for granted; no, the action stands before him in a new light, it is invested with a new character which he had not discerned in it the night before. It has now an importance, and indeed a negative importance, which had completely escaped him when he performed the action. We could of course make a similar analysis of Zosima's relation to Afanasi. Zosima has not simply changed his attitude toward him; he rather discerns in him a positive importance which had escaped him the night before.

Let us offer further evidence for our thesis that importance is a distinct moment on an object. If the experience of an object as important were simply the experience of it as the recipient of my interest, then the experience of different kinds of importance would be simply the experience of the object as the recipient of different kinds of interest; the distinction between kinds of importance would resolve itself into one between kinds of interest. Let us briefly make the acquaintance of a distinction between two kinds of importance, and then see if the distinction really can be so resolved.

We find two fundamental kinds of importance represented in the two examples of importance which we just considered.<sup>29</sup> The negative importance of Zosima's brutal action presents itself as something which the action has in itself, which it has exclusively in virtue of what the action is. This action is lifted out of neutrality because it has a certain kind of brutality. This importance does not depend on a relation to anyone's satisfaction or dissatisfaction; thus it does not get lifted out of neutrality, does not have this negative importance because of the fact that it frightens or annoys someone. These are of course possible causes for the action acquiring further negative importance; but they do not explain the moral horror of Zosima at himself; he is responding to a negative importance which presents itself to him as intrinsic to his action, and independent of his or anyone's dissatisfaction with it. By contrast, the importance of the water shows itself to be quite subjective: it is simply the way in which the water presents itself to me because of my thirst; once my thirst has been quenched, the water loses this importance; this importance is in no way something which the water has in itself. Thus the two kinds of importance. In the next chapter we will elaborate the nature of objective importance; our present purpose in this chapter calls for an elaboration of the subjectivity of subjective importance. I propose to point to certain data which I will call "subjective aspects," and to show their similarity to subjective importance. Only then will we be in a position to show how irreducible the experience of the importance of an object is to the experi-

ence of that object as a reference point of interest.

We find that many data in our experience obviously depend in some way or other on our subjectivity, and are also experienced as dependent. When we look back on the age of Periclean Greece, and find it to be "ancient," we encounter a moment which is experienced as dependent on our position in time, on the fact that we are looking back from a point in time many centuries later; we quite clearly realize that ancient Greece is not "in itself" ancient. When an American goes to China and finds the cultural world to be "unfamiliar," "strange," "foreign," he is experiencing aspects of Chinese culture which depend on the fact that he is at home in a completely different culture; and he experiences this dependency, for he does not think that Chinese culture is in itself foreign. And it is not only our temporal and cultural perspective which leads us to see things in various subjective lights; our spatial perspective can do the same, as when mountains seem, from one vantage, "far away," or "on the horizon," or bathed in a bluish light, or when they seem, from a closer vantage, to be "towering." Yet other such subjective aspects of things depend on our body physiology, as when water feels hot or cold, or on our physical strength, as when an object which we can hardly lift feels "heavy." Still other subjective aspects depend on our past experience, as when our forward movement seems to be very "fast" because it is faster than we have ever moved before. It should be evident by now that the subjectivity of subjective importance is very like the subjectivity of these subjective aspects. In the case of this importance, the crucial factor in our subjectivity is our satisfaction or dissatisfaction; it is a relation to this which leads to the constitution of data of subjective importance.

Observe that the characteristic of subjective aspects is not simply that they imply a relation to someone; for we aim also at something relational to someone when we call a given drink "intoxicating," or a given object "visible," yet these would not belong to the data which we are focusing on here. Though a drink cannot be "intoxicating in itself," "intoxicating" does not express a subjective moment on an object, as "ancient" and "familiar" do. The causal relation to someone's intoxication which it expresses is quite objective; the openness of an object to someone's vision is, for all its relationality, also quite objective. We are not here pointing to data which imply just any relation to a person, but rather to data which are subjective aspects for a person. Applied to the importance of the water, this means that we have to distinguish between the subjective importance of the water, and the causal power of the water to confer satisfaction, which is not in the same sense subjective, even though it involves a relation to a person.

It is also important to see that these data, for all their subjectivity, are not illusions.<sup>30</sup> For their dependency on a subject is the mode of being

proper to them, they do not "claim" or "pretend" to have more being than this, as many kinds of being do, and even some kinds of importance, as we will see; they do not need more being than this in order to be themselves. This is expressed in the fact that, when we become fully aware of their subjectivity, they do not "collapse," or anyhow "disappoint" us, or seem to be only illusory. And this can also be said of subjective importance: it does not collapse as an illusion when we become aware that it is a kind of subjective aspect (though there may be other factors which can make for certain kinds of illusions in the sphere of subjective importance).

Now we are in a position to return to the objection that the experience of an object as important is simply the experience of it as the recipient of interest. If this were so, then, as we have said above, the experience of different kinds of importance would be simply the experience of the object as the recipient of different kinds of interest; the distinction between kinds of importance would resolve itself into one between kinds of interest. But this distinction between two kinds of importance cannot possibly be so resolved. For there is no kind of interest or motivation which is subjective in the sense in which subjective importance is subjective. Any experience of being interested or being motivated is itself a real event in the inner life of the interested person. Of course it might be called "subjective" in the sense of belonging to and being a real "part" of a personal subject, but it is not subjective in the sense in which the importance of the water is subjective, that is, in the sense of being a subjective aspect dependent upon someone's satisfaction. In this sense of subjective, all forms of interest and motivation are objective, and there is no possibility of distinguishing between subjective and objective forms of interest. A given experience of being motivated might also be called "subjective" in the sense of being capricious, arbitrary, reflecting something eccentric in the person motivated, and not being meaningfully correlated to some object. But this too is not subjective in the sense in which subjective importance is subjective; capricious forms of interest do not exist as subjective aspects for someone, they are rather real "parts" of someone's conscious being.<sup>31</sup> Since an event of taking interest cannot possibly be subjective in the sense of subjective importance, this importance cannot be reduced to an event of taking interest.

Further: in the sense of subjective importance, the subjective can exist only over against a person, only as an object of his consciousness. But if it can exist only over against a person, then it cannot be a real "part" of the conscious being of a person. Since taking an interest in something is a real "part" of, or a real event in someone's conscious being, taking interest cannot be subjective in the sense of subjective importance. When then importance shows itself to admit of a subjective and an objective form, we can be quite sure that this distinction cannot be resolved into a



distinction between kinds of taking interest.

Now it is not difficult to attain more positive results and to see what the distinction between objective and subjective importance does have to do with. If we just consider carefully what we have before our minds in making the distinction, we will see that we do not look to ourselves and to our state of being interested, but rather to the object of our interest; we rivet our philosophical attention on the water and on the brutal action in discussing the kind of importance which each represents; the distinction which we go on to make is a distinction of moments of the object. And since the distinction is also a distinction of kinds of importance, importance must be, as we are claiming, a moment of an object.

Further: there are indeed essential differences in the structure of our interest according as our interest is engendered by objective or subjective importance. But these differences can be discovered only by focusing our attention in a different direction, in the direction of our conscious being, and our experience of being motivated and interested. This is why different kinds of interest would be characterized in completely different terms from the terms in which the different kinds of importance are described. We would for example speak of the person going beyond himself, transcending himself when he delights in that which presents itself as objectively important, and we would show that this same self-transcendence is impossible as long as we are only attracted by a thing as subjectively important. Our discussion of the various kinds of interest would obviously be a discussion of data very different from those which are aimed at in a discussion of kinds of importance.

Here then is our first major result regarding importance: though the philosopher approaches the datum of importance by "going through" interest or motivation, it is a distinct moment on an object which he reaches, a moment irreducible to the object considered as the recipient of some interest.

There is another fundamental distinction regarding importance which has to be made in order to focus exactly on the datum of importance. When we say that the importance of the water is that in virtue of which the water can attract the interest of some person, we do not mean that the properties of the water which the thirsty man especially notices, such as its aptitude to quench thirst, *are* its importance. Importance is rather a moment which is had or borne by the water in virtue of these properties, but which is not identical with them. Of course importance is so deeply bound up with these properties that, if asked why he wants the container of water, a man would probably simply say that he wants it because it can quench his thirst. Nevertheless, it is *not* the power to quench thirst which is the importance of the water; it is rather this power in its state of being lifted out of neutrality which is its importance. After

all, the importance of the water is, as we saw, a kind of subjective aspect relative to someone's thirst; but the power to quench thirst is not a subjective aspect. Further: the importance of the water can exert no causal efficacy, nor does it enter into the causal power of the water; whereas the power to quench thirst is a causal power. As for the negative importance of the violent action, this importance is *not* the violence of the action; it is the violence in its state of being lifted out of neutrality in a certain way. Zosima may have recognized that his action was violent *before* he understood the negative importance of the action. His violence is the *ground* of the negative importance of his action, and is therefore not identical with the negative importance.

When in Chapter 4 we encounter the remarkable fact that we can often apprehend the importance of a being with greater conceptual clarity than we can those features of a being which explain its importance, we will have still further evidence for the necessity of distinguishing between the importance and these features of a being.

There is a reason why it can be quite difficult to see the distinction between the importance of a being and the factual properties of the being which ground its importance; why it can be so tempting to say that only the latter exists, and that the former is a superfluous entity. Importance is not just another property of a being, situated "next to" the other properties of the being. It is rather a certain modification of a being which embraces all the other properties which it has. There is a certain analogy with "real existence": real existence is not just another property of a being, but that which makes them all fully actual and real. In a somewhat similar way, importance is not just another property of a being, but is rather that which lifts a being with its other properties out of neutrality. Of course there are also disanalogies between existence and importance, some of which we will encounter in the subsequent investigations. For instance, in Chapter 3, section b), we will see that any datum of importance has far more "content" than merely the antithesis to neutrality, and often has a strongly qualitative character, which makes it more like a property of a being and thus less like the existence of a being.

This shows a very significant fact regarding importance: it is always found only in some being; it cannot exist by itself, like a substance, or a number; it is not a subject of being but presupposes some subject. In order to be realized, importance needs something to lift out of neutrality which is not in turn a datum of importance. Of course there are fundamentally different ways in which importance can be "in" a being, as we will see in investigating different kinds of importance. But in one way or another, every datum of importance, despite its "distinctness" as a datum, is the importance of some being.

And so we have distinguished importance from both a subjective and



an objective factor with which it might be confused: we have distinguished it from interest in an important object, and from the features of an object which especially have the importance of the object, or which ground its importance.<sup>32</sup> Once we have elaborated the positivity and negativity of importance, as we will below, we will be able to offer still further evidence for these two crucial distinctions. These are the two distinctions which explain what we mean in calling importance a "distinct moment" on an object. In the course of the following section we will add a third one.

**b) The dependency of interest on importance; the crucial distinction between the importance of a being and the power of a being to motivate.**

We have been trying to approach the datum of importance by "going through" interest and motivation; we want now to investigate the relation between importance and interest.

The moment of importance on a being is not constituted by our interest; an object does not present itself as lifted out of neutrality *because* we take an interest in it. This is clearly out of the question in the case of objective importance; objective importance would not be objective and intrinsic to the being if it were constituted by someone's interest. But in fact this holds for importance in general: importance is never constituted by the interest we take in a thing. Just the other way around: the importance of a being grounds our interest in that being. There is a fundamental connection between a thing being lifted out of neutrality and having importance, and the ability of that thing to interest us, to motivate us, to move us. As long as an object stands before us as neutral, it cannot engender our interest, or any affective experience in us.<sup>33</sup> Engendered interest presupposes importance; this interest is strictly impossible without some prior apprehension of importance. As long as the water is not apprehended as important, even though its causal power to quench thirst be ever so clearly apprehended, it cannot attract a will; as long as a violent deed is not apprehended as negatively important, even though the details of the deed be ever so clearly apprehended, it cannot fill anyone with aversion and horror at it. That "distinct moment" of importance which we elaborated above is the foundation of a being's ability to attract our positive interest, or to engender aversion.

But it might be asked whether interest is possible apart from being engendered, whether we can produce interest or desire for something out of ourselves. Now it may really be the case — it is difficult to be sure — that arbitrary free acts are possible towards what is apprehended as neu-

tral. Free acts, being free, are not engendered by their objects, but rather by free agents, and so such acts might be possible without any apprehended importance. But they would be meaningless and irrational. For instance, to desire strongly to possess that which presents itself as neutral, is irrational and arbitrary. Thus we can approach importance through our interest even when this interest does not necessarily depend on importance; for we can say that interest or desire in the form of free acts presupposes importance in order to avoid the meaninglessness of the purely arbitrary.

In stressing the correlation between interest and importance, it must not be thought that the whole object of our interest is the moment of importance on a thing. It is not just the importance of the water which the thirsty man desires; he desires the water. Only the water, and not just its importance, can quench his thirst. Indeed, if we recall that the importance of a thing is its being lifted out of neutrality, it is clear that it makes no sense to isolate the moment of importance from the rest of a being, and to pursue it alone. If we distinguish between *what* we are interested in, and that *in virtue of which* we are interested in it, we can say that the water is what the thirsty man is interested in, and that its importance is that in virtue of which he is interested in it. Or we can say that the deed of Zosima is what he comes to abhor, and that its negative importance is that in virtue of which he abhors it.<sup>34</sup> If one fails to make this distinction, and proceeds to conceive of importance as some kind of independent entity which can itself be desired, then one will not find it; our investigation will seem to be multiplying entities unnecessarily, and one will be tempted to fall back into the view that it is simply the factual being of an object which motivates us.

We come now to a distinction of great significance for understanding the nature of importance, and for preparing for a critical consideration of the Thomistic position. It might seem that the moment of importance on a thing is simply identical with the power of that thing to motivate or interest us; it might seem that, in explaining just now the sense in which we call importance "that in virtue of which a thing can interest us," we were meaning to characterize the innermost being of importance. And so it is essential to see that, in reality, the moment of importance is not rightly characterized, as to its very essence, as an aptitude or power to motivate us; it is not a moment which "exhausts itself" in grounding our interest, in moving our will or our affections. No, this power to motivate shows itself to be something which necessarily *results from* importance: *because* something is important, *therefore* it necessarily has the power to motivate. This is quite clear in the case of Zosima: the negative importance of his brutal action does not exhaust itself in simply being a power to

motivate his horror. It is very much more than such a power. When this negative importance is not grounding someone's horror, it does not disappear, or lapse into a merely potential state. But even with the most subjective kinds of importance, such as the importance which the water has for someone who is thirsty, the importance *is not* simply its power to motivate, the water in its state of being lifted out of neutrality is not identical with its power to motivate, but is rather something from which this power flows. If the importance of a being were not distinct from its power to motivate, we would not have been able, in the last section, to investigate importance while prescinding from its power to motivate, nor could we have begun the present section by considering whether interest depends on importance, or importance on interest.

All the same, this distinction might seem perplexing at first; it might seem that at least subjective importance, such as that of the water, is nothing but a power to motivate. But we can come to see that it is not, if we realize that the power to motivate is not a subjective aspect in the sense in which subjective importance is; this power indeed presupposes a person but not in such a way as to be a subjective aspect.

Let us turn to the knowability of being (being as *verum, cognoscibile*) for an instructive analogy. The knowability of a being is not identical with its being, but rather follows from its being. Even if the being is not a substantial being but only an appearance or even an hallucinated object, its "being", "thin" though it is (especially in the latter case), is not identical with its ability to be apprehended. Even when the human mind enters into the constitution of a datum, the datum once constituted does not "exhaust itself" in being able to be known, it rather grounds this ability. Now I claim that the power to motivate is related to importance in all its forms, just as the ability to be known is related to being in all its forms. Thus, even when human needs and desires enter into the constitution of importance, the importance once constituted, however subjective, does not exhaust itself in being able to motivate us. But of course the distinction between importance and the power to motivate is far more "drastic" in the case of objective importance: for here importance can be fully itself without actually exerting its power to motivate, without playing a role in anyone's motivation.

To summarize: however essential it is to importance to be able to interest or motivate a person, and however true it is that the main access which our knowledge has to the phenomenon of importance "goes through" our interest, importance is more than a power to motivate.

When then von Hildebrand offers as an "essential characterization" of importance the ability of a thing to motivate us, this has to be understood as characterizing importance in terms of what essentially flows from it; this characterization only *points* to the innermost essence of importance,

it does not get at it directly. This is no fault in von Hildebrand's characterization of importance, for importance is an *Urdatum*, whose innermost substance cannot be directly "given back" in terms of other things; it is in this sense indefinable. If we are asked, not what follows from importance, not what importance is not, not what the opposite of importance is, not what the forms and kinds of importance are, but what importance itself is, then we can do no better than follow the example of G. E. Moore and say that importance is — importance.<sup>35</sup>

Now that we have distinguished the importance of a being from its power to motivate, we have to take care to keep this power to motivate sharply distinguished from the factual features of a being which especially ground the importance. The causal power of the water to quench thirst is not its power to motivate; for this causal power presupposes no importance, whereas the power to motivate flows from the importance of a being. So we have to distinguish: the causal power of the water to quench thirst; the importance it acquires for someone as a result of being able to quench his thirst; and the power to interest someone which flows from the importance of the water. And we have to distinguish: the violent deed against Afanasi; the negative importance which this deed has in virtue of its character and of this circumstances in which it is performed; the resultant power to motivate someone's horror or aversion to it.

We have now worked out a third characteristic of that "distinctness" which importance has as a moment of a being. Above we said that importance is "more" than those features of a being which ground importance, and "more" than the being considered as the object of someone's interest; now we add that importance is "more" than the power of a being to motivate. One would suppress the datum of importance if one were to identify it with this power to motivate.

Once we understand the sense in which the interest of a person depends on importance, we are in a position to bring some clarity to the well-known slogan, "This thing is desired because it is good, it is not good because it is desired."

This does *not*, as is usually supposed, affirm of the thing some kind of objective, intrinsic importance, and reject merely subjective importance; it characterizes importance as such in its relation to our interest, it holds even for the most subjective forms of importance. Since importance grounds our desire, an apprehension of importance has to precede our desire, and so this importance can never result from our desire. On the other hand, if someone says that a thing has positive importance only because we desire it, and not vice versa, then he is not maintaining that the thing has some merely subjective kind of importance, he is affirming an apriori impossibility, an absurdity in the sphere of importance and motivation. This does not mean that we are holding that importance as

such has some surprising objectivity of it. Even though importance has to be apprehended before our interest can be aroused, it can nevertheless be ever so subjective. As our example of water shows, even when importance derives from a relation to my needs and their satisfaction, it still has to be apprehended on an object before the object can be desired. The reader will best understand my meaning if he distinguishes between the importance of an object depending on my nature with all its needs and strivings, and the importance of an object depending on the act in which I turn to it with interest: it is only this latter form of dependency which I claim is never found in any form of importance. It is only the act of taking interest in a thing which has always to be preceded by some apprehended importance.

A couple of qualifications, however, are needed, lest our contention be exposed to certain objections. It is only *my* act of taking interest in a thing which has to be preceded by some apprehended importance and which cannot constitute the importance to which it refers; the interest which *someone else* takes in a thing can of course be the reason for the importance which I find in the thing. Furthermore, it is surely possible that, once a desire has been grounded by the importance of some being, this desire in turn grounds a further datum of importance. Suppose I want to pick a flower which strikes me as very pretty. This desire is clearly engendered by the positive importance of the flower. But suppose that, as I go to pick it, someone snatches it away from me. The negative importance which this can have for me is surely partly grounded in the frustration of my will, which means that this datum of negative importance partly depends on my will, rather than my will depending on it. But as long as we see that this will is grounded in the positive importance of the flower, the thesis maintained in the last paragraph remains intact. We did not there maintain that new data of importance cannot come into being on the basis of our desire and willing, only that our desire and willing cannot come into being except on the basis of some pre-given importance. In fact, these new data serve to illustrate our thesis. For they commonly engender new elements of interest and motivation. Thus the negative importance of having my will frustrated commonly engenders some kind of irritation or annoyance. In this engendering one sees again that dependency of interest on importance which we are here maintaining.<sup>36</sup>

The fact that human motivation presupposes importance, can only be understood if the nature of acts of the person is rightly understood. What is needed is especially an understanding of the *intentionality* of personal acts, that is, of the conscious relation to an object which is essential to them; of the fundamental difference between intentional and non-intentional psychic experiences; and especially of the difference between a strict causal relation (in the sense of efficient causality) and the relation

between object and act in an intentional experience. If this is lacking, and acts of the person which are in reality intentional are thought to be caused in the way in which for example a headache is caused, then of course one will fail to see why acts of taking interest and being motivated presuppose importance. For importance is never a part of an efficient cause. Whatever importance is possessed by the bodily factors which cause headache, in no way enters into the causality which they exert. If the act of taking interest in something were caused with the same kind of causality, then it would not only be unnecessary to hold that this act is grounded in importance, but this would even be false. Of course I cannot elaborate here the nature of intentionality without getting off my subject. I presuppose the phenomenology in intentionality found in von Hildebrand, who has given us the most differentiated treatment of the subject which we possess.<sup>37</sup>

It will clarify the sense of the position which we have worked out in this and in the preceding section, and also serve to show its truth, if we consider the position which is almost the opposite of our own. In the following passage Hume describes the awakening of interest: he speaks of "active feeling," "sentiment," "disgust," "affection," etc. When he describes the cognition on which this interest is based, he restricts this cognition to neutral facts and their relations. Thus he does not recognize any cognition of importance: this cognition gets absorbed, on the one hand, in the cognition of those features of a being which are important, and on the other hand, in our interest in these facts.

... in moral deliberations we must be acquainted beforehand with all the objects, and all their relations to each other; and from a comparison of the whole, fix our choice or approbation. No new fact to be ascertained; no new relation to be discovered. All the circumstances of the case are supposed to be laid before us, ere we can fix any sentence of blame or approbation. If any material circumstance be yet unknown or doubtful, we must first employ our inquiry or intellectual faculties to assure us of it; and we must suspend for a time all moral decision of sentiment. While we are ignorant whether a man were aggressor or not, how can we determine whether the person who killed him be criminal or innocent? But after every circumstance, every relation is known, the understanding has no further room to operate, nor any object on which it could employ itself.<sup>38</sup>

Even this last sentence might be admitted, if one were to take the "understanding" as that organ which apprehends neutral facts and their relations. Hume could still come around to a sound conclusion if only he would go on to speak of another organ which apprehends the importance which is given on certain of the facts and their relations, and which is

mediated to us by our apprehension of the facts and their relations. But he thinks that these neutral facts and relations are all there is to be apprehended, and that it remains only to speak about the emergence of certain forms of interest in us; for he goes on:

The approbation or blame which then ensues, cannot be the work of the judgement, but of the heart; and is not a speculative proposition or affirmation, but an active feeling or sentiment. In the disquisitions of the understanding, from known circumstances and relations, we infer some new and unknown. In moral decisions, all the circumstances and relations must be previously known; and the mind, from the contemplation of the whole, feels some new impression of affection or disgust, esteem or contempt, approbation or blame.<sup>39</sup>

Of course the importance at stake in a given case depends on certain features of the being which has importance, as we have seen, and it presents itself to our minds according to our understanding of these facts. But importance is, with respect to the "grounding" facts, a distinct moment on the object side. Hume repeats his mistake again and again in the passage from which I have quoted; for example:

. . . when Nero killed Agrippina, all the relations between himself and the person, and all the circumstances of the fact, were previously known to him; but the motive of revenge, or fear, or interest, prevailed in his savage heart over the sentiments of duty and humanity. And when we express that detestation against him to which he himself, in a little time, become insensible, it is not that we see any relations, of which he was ignorant; but that, for the rectitude of our disposition, we feel sentiments against which he was hardened . . .<sup>40</sup>

It seems that the man who is credited with sharply distinguishing between "facts" and "values" for the first time, has drawn the distinction wrongly. He thinks that the "fact" is on the object side, and the "value" is some response in us. In reality — taking now value in the sense of positive importance — both are on the object side; we face the importance just as much as we face the facts and their relations.

And there is a further criticism of Hume to be made on the basis of our results in this section. He not only fails to discern the moment of importance; he thereby destroys the condition for the possibility of engendered interest, and of a use of freedom which is not purely arbitrary. It is unintelligible on his terms how "active feeling," "sentiment," "disgust" are possible at all. Of course in the quotes above Hume conceals from himself this unintelligibility. He thinks that the facts about the crimes of Nero suffice to make our detestation understandable. He fails to see that these facts could never engender detestation unless they presented themselves as lifted out of neutrality.

It will help us to grasp the datum of importance if we briefly consider its bearing on the forming of concepts and judgments. Let me, then, indicate why our phenomenology of importance enables us to make a radical criticism of Stevenson's emotivist theory of the logic of value judgments.<sup>41</sup> If importance is a distinct datum on an object, nothing hinders us from forming a concept of this datum, nor does anything hinder us from using this concept to predicate in a judgment this datum of some being. It does not matter whether one calls these judgments "value judgments," or restricts this term to judgments of objective importance; in either use of "value," value judgments are possible, as is truth and falsity with regard to value. But if value concepts are possible, it is unlikely to the highest degree that they do not really exist, for it is unlikely to the highest degree that the vast array of value words which we find in our language have nothing to do with the vast array of value data which we experience, that *none* of these words *ever* expresses a concept which means some value datum. And what we are led to expect, could easily be verified by going through particular value words (cf. Ch. 3, section b); it could easily be shown that most of our value words, though they often have elements of factual meaning, nevertheless also have elements of value meaning, and that the attempt to restrict this meaning to some kind of "emotive meaning" is misguided and distorts their logical structure. We are not contesting Stevenson's thesis that we often pursue ends other than affirming, ends such as persuading, in uttering a value judgment. But this does not hinder the judgment from really being a judgment, and the value concepts from entering into the judgment precisely as value concepts. In fact, it could easily be shown that the speaker needs value concepts to do the persuading he intends, to give the other a good reason for agreeing with him. And so I claim that, in uncovering importance as a distinct datum, we are enabled to overthrow from its foundations Stevenson's whole emotivist theory of value judgments. By the way, this brief analysis shows the necessity of studying our value language on the basis of a phenomenology of importance.

### c) The division of importance into positive and negative

We need not reflect long on the nature of importance before we see that it has the following remarkable characteristic: importance exists as positive and negative. For example, Zosima discovered positive importance in the humanity of his servant Afanasi, and negative importance in his act of striking him. Positive importance can be pointed out through certain attitudes and interests: it is that importance which leads us to affirm, approve, love, desire, etc. Negative importance, then, would be

that importance which leads us to reject, disapprove, hate, have an aversion to, etc. Of course, in accordance with our discussion in the last section, the positivity of positive importance does not "exhaust itself" in grounding a certain kind of interest, it is not simply a power to ground this kind of interest; and the same holds for the negativity of negative importance.

Furthermore: all importance is either positive or negative; importance must be differentiated positively or negatively before it can be real at all; there is no such thing as an importance which is undifferentiated as to positive and negative. This does not mean, however, that for every datum of positive importance there is a corresponding possible negative importance. For one thing, there is a certain kind of objective importance, which, as von Hildebrand has shown,<sup>42</sup> exists only in the positive; thus for instance, the dignity of the human person, which clearly has no negative counterpart.

The difference between positive and negative importance is obviously not identical with the difference between importance and neutrality. The former difference exists *within* the realm of importance. A thing possessing negative importance is as opposed to neutrality as a thing possessing positive importance.

"Positive" and "negative" as applied to importance clearly have a very different sense from their sense as applied to temperature, or to electricity. With regard to temperature and electricity, "positive" and "negative" do not refer to data which present themselves as positive or negative, as they do when applied to importance. Let me explain. The electrical current called positive could also be called negative: the idea is mainly to distinguish them. But positive importance could obviously not just as well be intended with the concept "negative," and vice versa. In calling beauty positively important, and intense suffering negatively important, we are not simply trying to distinguish the two data of importance, we also mean to express the positivity of the importance of beauty, and the negativity of the importance of suffering. We could not possibly apply the concept "negative" to the former importance, or the concept "positive" to the latter, however well that would serve to distinguish the two. As for negative temperatures, these could just as well be indicated positively: instead of being distinguished from positive degrees, they could be indicated as the lower degrees in a scale all of whose degrees are positive. Indeed, they could be indicated on a scale whose units are neither positive nor negative. But negative importance could never be "just as well" understood as the low degree of positive importance. There is something inalienably negative about the importance of great suffering, or about any other importance which we call negative. In the realm of

importance, "positive" and "negative" are not just conceptual devices for organizing things which could after all be just as well organized without them; there is in this realm nothing conventional about their use, they refer to data of importance, they are indispensable for speaking about the things themselves, and are fully understandable only by consulting the things themselves. Importance is positive or negative in as true and authentic a sense as human beings are male or female.<sup>43</sup>

There is a very different reason why numbers are not positive and negative in as authentic a sense as importance is. Negative numbers are a kind of invention of mathematicians, they are not "pregiven" in the sense in which the natural numbers are. It takes a stipulative definition to know what a negative number is at all, and how it functions in certain operations such as subtraction or multiplication; negative numbers and their properties are to a large extent "set up" by mathematicians. The natural numbers by contrast belong to the very nature of things, and are in no way a mathematical invention. As a result, even the positivity of the so-called positive numbers has something conventional about it; it seems to be a device for correlating the natural numbers to the negative numbers. The difference between positive and negative numbers, and positive and negative importance, shows itself clearly. The idea of negative importance is in no way "set up" by a stipulative definition. This idea is realized in for example the importance of a great suffering. And the positivity of positive importance is in no way an accretion placed on something which is in itself lacking positivity. The positivity of the importance of beauty is a decisive moment of this importance itself.

It should be clear now that the positivity and negativity found in importance is an irreducible datum which can only be known through itself. We can point to it in various ways, such as by distinguishing it from what it is not, but we cannot say what it is in such a way as to spare the reader the intellectual effort of seeing it for himself. In this it is like importance in general, which we saw above to be an irreducible datum.

There is yet another kind of positivity and negativity from which we have to distinguish the positivity and negativity found in importance. Certain kinds of interest or motivation such as love, approval, desire show themselves to be *positive* kinds of interest; other kinds, such as hatred, disapproval show themselves to be *negative*. This is clearly a positivity and negativity which really characterizes interest: it is in no way simply an invention nor is it only a way of distinguishing things which would just as well be distinguished without the concepts "positive" and "negative." But it is not the positivity and negativity of importance. Of course the interest or motivation of a person may itself have positive or negative importance. But the positivity I now have in mind does not inhere in the importance of

the interest, but in the interest itself. This positivity is a certain structural feature of interest in an object, a certain "gesture" which the interested person makes towards it — an affirming, "friendly" gesture. And so with the negativity of negative interest: this negativity is the opposite "gesture" — a rejecting, "hostile" gesture, a gesture of aversion. This is a positivity and negativity which only makes sense as a property of acts and attitudes of the person, whereas the positivity and negativity of importance is in no way restricted to these, but extends as far as importance extends. We have then two different kinds of positivity and negativity; and the positivity of acts and attitudes is, like that of importance, a fundamental, irreducible datum.

Let us return to the attempt to reduce the experience of importance to the experience of an object as the recipient of my interest. A proponent of this theory would, if confronted with the distinction between positive and negative importance, try to reduce it to the distinction between the experience of an object as the recipient of positive interest, and the experience of the object as the recipient of negative interest. We have just seen why this reduction is impossible: the positivity and negativity of importance is irreducibly distinct from the positivity and negativity of interest. But we can develop an even stronger argument: we often find that we take a negative interest in what is apprehended as positively important, and take a positive interest in what is apprehended as negatively important. An example of the first would be the man who envies someone whom he sees to be superior to himself; his negative attitude of envy is directed to what presents itself as having great positive importance — indeed, the negative attitude of envy would collapse without the apprehension of this positive importance. An example of the second would be the delight of the envious man over some harm which he inflicts on the envied man; his positive attitude of delight is directed to what presents itself as having great negative importance, and his attitude could not exist without this negative importance. This possible divergence of the positivity/negativity of interest from the positivity/negativity of importance establishes once again that importance is absolutely irreducible to a being considered as the object of interest.

One could develop this argument by considering how our attitudes often change from positive to negative with respect to the same datum of importance in a being. Thus if the envious man were to overcome his envy, and joyfully to affirm the superiority of the other, the same positive importance which had once grounded a negative attitude would now ground a positive one.

Let us hasten to add that it would be wrong to say that the envious man who hates the other who is superior to him, experiences no negative importance in the other. It is surely the case that negative interest essen-

tially presupposes some negative importance. In our example it is clear that the superiority of the other, in stinging the pride of the envious man, acquires negative importance for him, and without this negative importance his negative attitude of envy and hate would be impossible. Something directly parallel holds for his delight in the sufferings of the envied man: since these sufferings gratify his envy, they acquire for him a certain positive importance, and without this positive importance, his delight would be strictly impossible. But all the same, even though the positive attitude of the envious man presupposes positive importance, this positive importance builds on and is interwoven with a datum of negative importance; he can be said to take delight in that which has negative importance, and to take delight because of its negative importance. Something directly parallel holds for the negative attitude of the envious man. This complicated situation in which one datum of importance builds on another, obviously deserves a much fuller phenomenological investigation than we can offer here. But we have said enough to offer further evidence for our thesis that the experience of a being as positively or negatively important, is not simply the experience of that being as the object of positive or negative interest, and that therefore the experience of a being as important is not reducible to the experience of that being as an object of interest.

We are now in a position to take up again the distinction between importance and the features of a thing which ground importance. Importance can also not be reduced to these features, for they are not positive or negative at all; they usually do not even have the vaguely analogous positivity and negativity which is found in the structure of interest. The power of the water to quench my thirst does not itself have positivity like the importance which the water has in virtue of this power. This power has no negative counterpart, but the importance does; if water is for some bodily reason disgusting to someone, it thereby acquires negative importance. Or consider the action of Zosima striking Afanasi: this action is not itself negative in the sense in which its objective importance is negative. Indeed, the positivity and negativity of importance could be developed into a criterion for distinguishing between importance and that which has importance; for this positivity and negativity is always only found in the importance itself.

#### d) The critique of the Thomistic position which follows from the phenomenology of importance.

The question arises whether, in discussing positive importance, we have been aiming at the same datum at which Thomas aims in speaking of *bonum*, and whether therefore our phenomenology of importance gives us



a basis for critically considering the Thomistic *bonum*.

What leads us to answer this affirmatively is that the datum which the Thomistic position aims at with *bonum* is approached through *appetere*, even as the datum we aim at with positive importance is approached by us through interest and motivation. Of course the Thomistic *appetere* does not have the same range as our "interest" and "motivation;" for one thing, it is not restricted to persons. But it includes the motivation of persons, and refers to analogies to it in sub-personal beings. We have only to restrict the Thomistic *bonum* to that which is *appetibile* for persons, and then we would get the following kind of equivalence: whenever Thomas would say "*appetibile*," or "*bonum*," we would say "positively important."<sup>44</sup>

The matter is less complicated if we consider what Thomas says about the *voluntas*, for according to him this is essentially the faculty of a person. Thomas teaches that it can only be attracted and drawn by *bonum*; *bonum* is its object, and not just in the sense that the will *ought* to be drawn only to *bonum*, but that it *can* be drawn only to *bonum*, or at least only to that which appears to be *bonum* (cf. *S.T.*, I-II, q.8, a.1). Now if we were to speak about the object of the will in terms of our own concepts, we would say that only that which has positive importance can attract the will.

This is not to say that the Thomistic *bonum* and our positive importance *mean* the same thing. The perfection of a being in no way enters into the idea of our positive importance, as it does into the Thomistic idea of *bonum*. But this does not show that our phenomenology of importance does not aim at the same things at which the Thomistic philosophy of *bonum* aims; it only shows that we perhaps do not hold the same position which it holds regarding these things. We are entitled, then, to proceed to a critical consideration of the Thomistic *bonum* on the basis of our phenomenology of importance.

As we showed above, Thomas draws a parallel between *bonum* and *verum*. He says that just as *verum* indicates the knowability of a being, or the relation of a being to a possible knowledge, so *bonum* indicates the appetibility of a being, or the relation of a being to a possible *appetitus*. But in reality, that which Thomas calls *bonum* and we call positive importance is obscured rather than clarified by this parallel. For the intelligibility or knowability of a being is not a distinct moment of that being. The knowability of a being is not a moment of that being in virtue of which it can be known. Such a way of speaking multiplies entities unnecessarily, or more exactly, it introduces one entity in excess of what is really given. The knowability of a being is simply the being as open to a possible knowledge. But it is otherwise with the importance of a being; it is not simply the being as open to some interest. This way of speaking oversimplifies things, it omits one "entity" or rather moment which really is given. For

importance is more than such an openness; it is that moment in virtue of which a being is open to an interest, and can ground interest. We now see how crucial it is for the discussion with Thomism to distinguish between the importance of a being and its power to motivate. The Thomistic position sees the being which has importance, and also the power to motivate which flows from the importance; but it overlooks the importance itself, and so is content with grounding the power to motivate in the being. The parallel which is drawn with *verum* tends to encourage this oversight, for in the case of the knowability of a being there really is only a being, and its openness to a possible knowledge, there is no "third thing" here, and therefore nothing which directly corresponds to the datum of importance itself. If one is going to make an analogy between importance and *verum*, then it can only be the following: just as it is essential to being to be able to be known, so it is essential to importance to be able to elicit interest. The analogy with *verum* illuminates the relation between importance and the power to motivate, not the relation between being and importance. It was only in this sense that we ourselves made use of this analogy in our discussion of importance.

If we are asked for an analogy which does illuminate the relation between a being and its importance, then we might propose the following, though only with an important qualification. If we distinguish the fragrance of a flower from the flower itself, and inquire what the fragrance "adds" to a flower, it would be clearly false to say that the fragrance of a flower is simply the real existence of the flower considered as the object of someone's smelling. The fragrance is obviously more than this. Though it is caused by the flower, and is characteristic of the flower, and "completes" the flower, it is nevertheless a distinct quality, which could never be reduced to the real existence of the flower considered as the object of someone's smelling. To try to understand the datum of fragrance according to the structure which we find in the knowability of a being, leads to the suppression rather than the clarification of the datum. Now importance is like fragrance as to its distinctness, and can as little be clarified by the parallel with *verum* as fragrance can be. Having said this, however, let me call attention to a point of dissimilarity between importance and fragrance: the fragrance of a flower can detach itself from the flower, and can be experienced apart from the flower, in a way in which importance could never detach itself from the important being, and be experienced apart from this being. Importance forms in many respects a far closer union with its bearer than fragrance does with its flower. More on this in Chapter 4.

One could try to defend the Thomistic position by saying that the distinct moment which we are looking for is found in the full actuality of a

really existing being; that positive importance "adds" to a real being the full actuality of that being. Of course, this full actuality is not yet the Thomistic *bonum*; but one could say that it is this full actuality of a being which answers to our "positive importance," and that what Thomas calls *bonum* is what we call the power of a being to motivate. If these equivalencies hold, then our phenomenology of importance does not necessarily set us at odds with the Thomistic theory.

But they do not hold; the positive importance of a real being cannot be identical with the full actuality of the being as really existing. This can be established by various arguments; here we develop only three:

1. The substantial being of a thing, as well as the accidents proper to it, can be a causal agent (in the sense of efficient causality); but the importance of a being cannot, as we saw, exert causal influence, nor does it enter into the efficient causality which a being can exert. Indeed, Thomism sees the truth of this claim when it teaches that the causality proper to *bonum* is final causality, not efficient causality.

2. The substantial being of a thing, as well as the accidents proper to it, lacks the positivity of positive importance. One way to see this is to see that real being has no negative counterpart in the sense in which most forms of positive importance have the counterpart of negative importance.<sup>45</sup> Real being can only not be, or not yet be fully actual; but there is no "anti-being," no "negative actuality" which is its negative counterpart. Even if the real being which does not exist, such as the proper accident of a thing, is "called for" by the thing which lacks it, and thus makes for a privation, this privation is not itself negative in the sense of negative importance. The datum in the sphere of importance which corresponds to the absence or even the privation of real being, is the neutral. The negativity of negative importance, as well as the positivity of positive importance, is a sure criterion for the fact that positive importance is distinct from the fullness of real being.

3. If we prescind from the importance of a being — if we consider the water apart from its importance, or consider the violent act of Zosima as a neutral fact and apart from its importance — we are not left with a merely potential being; in abstracting from the importance of a being, and in considering it as neutral, we leave fully intact the actuality of it as a real being. It is one thing to consider a being as not actual but only potential, and it is obviously a very different thing to consider a being as not important but only neutral. But then importance and actuality (of really existing being) are two very different things and can in no way be identified with each other.

If we think back to our discussion of importance as a "distinct moment" of a thing, it is clear that we have just now brought to light a further aspect of this distinctness. In addition to the three aspects already dis-

cussed, we see now that the importance of a thing is irreducible to the fullness of real being in that thing.

We hold, then, that Thomas is right in saying that the full actuality of real being does not fulfill the whole idea of *bonum*; he was right to see *bonum* as adding something to this full actuality. But it seems to us that he erred in thinking that *bonum* adds only a relation to an *appetitus*; it seems to us that he failed to do justice to the datum of importance.

We do not ascribe to the Thomistic position the same emphatic denial of importance which we found in Hume; the Thomistic position seems rather to fall prey to a more inadvertent failure to do justice to the datum of importance.

Observe that we are not yet criticizing Thomas for regarding *bonum* as essentially relational to persons. For positive importance really is sometimes (in the case of that which we called subjective importance) relational in the sense of being for some person. We are criticizing him for letting the importance of a being be wrongly "absorbed" in that being, for obscuring the distinctness which importance has with respect to the being which has the importance. Insofar as "*ens et bonum convertuntur*" means to make *bonum* "immanent in" *ens* in the sense in which *verum* really is "immanent in" *ens*, we claim to have refuted this thesis. We claim to have shown that *bonum* adds more to the actuality of really existing being than a relation to an *appetitus*. This is, however, a refutation based on a very formal feature of importance, namely its characteristic distinctness as a moment. In this paper we are working towards a more truly metaphysical critique of the thesis. In order to reach this goal we have to develop the idea of what we called "objective importance." This is the subject of the following chapter.

It would fall outside our subject in this essay to elaborate the critical bearing of our "negative importance" on the Thomistic *malum*. It is clear that we would hold that a datum of negative importance is itself more than an absence or privation. Negative importance is related to positive importance, not as an absence or privation (that would be the neutral rather than the negatively important), but as importance with a "reversed sign." This is not to deny that that which *has* negative importance can sometimes (but by no means always!) be a privation in the Thomistic sense, as in the case of blindness.

As already indicated, we will show in Ch. 4 that our refutation of this Thomistic thesis does not call into question the underlying Thomistic conviction regarding the objective reality of goodness, nor the Thomistic conviction regarding the radical immanence of goodness in being; indeed we will attempt to do greater justice to this objective reality, and to this immanence than Thomism has done in teaching that "*ens et bonum convertuntur*."



## Chapter Three

### The Idea of Value, and its Metaphysical Impact

If the Thomistic teaching on *bonum* in general is sound, it will have to hold for any particular kind of *bonum*; and thus it will have to hold for any kind of positive importance, for as we saw, our "positive importance" answers in a certain way to the Thomistic *bonum*. In this chapter we will develop a particular kind of positive importance, with special attention to its metaphysical impact, and will critically consider the Thomistic *bonum* on the basis of it.

We lay great stress on the unity of this chapter with the following chapter. In this chapter we not only elaborate the idea of value, but also consider value in relation to the being which has value. And most of what we have to say on this subject goes in the direction of showing the irreducibility of value to this being. We balance the exposition of our value philosophy when in Ch. 4 we consider the unity of value with the being which has it. Chapter 4 not only completes our idea of value and protects it against misunderstanding; it also enables us to develop our critical discussion of the Thomistic theory.

#### a) The difference between value importance and the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying

In elaborating the sense of what we called "subjective importance," we investigated various "subjective aspects," for these seemed to have a subjectivity like that of subjective importance. As we saw, one of the characteristics of these aspects is that they do not claim to be "in themselves," they do not need fully objective being in order to be themselves, in fact they *cannot* exist in this way, they *can only* exist in dependency on an experiencing subject. Let us link up with this earlier discussion of ours, and consider that we also find in our experience data which, in contrast to subjective aspects, do claim fully objective being, data which claim or pretend to have being "in themselves" and not in dependency on anyone's subjectivity. This is the case, for example, with a person. If something presents itself as a person, then it claims to be independent from all levels of our subjectivity; it lies in the very sense of the person that it can become real only by being "in itself." It is clearly impossible for a person to have the same mode of being which "ancient," "unfamiliar," and "heavy" have. This is not because a person is not a property of some other

being, as those data are, but because a person needs essentially more objectivity than they do in order to be itself. This is why our perception of a person collapses if we discover that he or she depends on our subjectivity in the way in which the "ancientness" of Periclean Greece does. In this case we are aware that, since a person does not "really" exist, does not exist in himself, the person perceived becomes an illusion. Now there are innumerable many things in our experience which make this claim to independent being; thus, for example, causality, substance, necessary states of affairs, necessary essential plans, numbers, and, most clearly of all, God.<sup>46</sup>

Now the question arises, do we find data of importance which claim objective being? In elaborating above the nature of importance as a distinct datum, we encountered a difference between "subjective" and "objective" importance. Let us return to this difference and develop it further.

As we saw, the repentant Zosima is horrified at his action of beating Afanasi. If we investigate the negative importance which he sees in his action, we find that this negative importance does not show itself to be a mere subjective aspect of the action, to be something which appears only to a person who is annoyed or irritated at the violent action. If the negative importance were subjective in this way, then the violent action would be in itself devoid of this negative importance, even as Chinese culture is in itself devoid of "foreignness," but the action shows itself as "really" having this negative importance, as having it in itself. This is why we are convinced that *anyone* who fully apprehends the violent action will, no matter what satisfies him or dissatisfies him, apprehend it as negatively important. In order fully to understand the negative importance of the action, we have only to consider the action; it alone suffices to make this importance intelligible. With the importance of the water for the thirsty man it is different; the water by itself does not make this importance intelligible; one has also to consider the thirst of the thirsty man which can be satisfied by the water. The negative importance of the violent action is obviously not a subjective aspect if it can be understood "out of" the violent action itself and without any reference to any dimension of human subjectivity. (In Chapter 4 we will investigate in some detail how this kind of importance "grows out" of the important being.)

Just consider the positive importance which the action of beating Afanasi must have had for Zosima when he beat him. Beating him was not neutral, otherwise Zosima would not have done it, but Zosima did not think that the action had objective positive importance, that is, importance which was completely independent of anyone's subjective satisfaction. He rather experienced the action as lifted out of neutrality in virtue of his foul mood; it gratified this mood of his to beat Afanasi, and therefore it had importance for Zosima. No one can fail to see that this positive

importance is not on a level with, is not just a counterpart to the negative importance which Zosima discovered in his action when he repented of it; no one can fail to see that this positive importance is purely subjective, whereas the negative importance of this action does not depend on anyone's arbitrary mood but is rather objective, or "important in itself."

Now we propose to follow von Hildebrand in calling this objective importance "value importance."<sup>47</sup> We will use "value importance" to designate objective importance in general, without respect to its division into positive and negative, whereas we will usually use "value" and "dis-value" to designate positive objective importance and negative objective importance. If from time to time we follow von Hildebrand in using the phrase "importance in itself" for value importance, this should not be taken as implying that value importance exists in itself in the sense of subsisting and not being real in some being. We saw that *all importance* is real only in some being, and in Chapter 4 we will further elaborate the nonsubsisting character of value importance.

We will also use von Hildebrand's term for the other kind of importance (what we have been calling "subjective importance") and will speak of "the importance of the subjectively satisfying and dissatisfying." It is tempting to shorten this expression to "the subjectively satisfying," but this runs the danger of confounding the importance of a thing with the factual aptitude of that thing (its ability to confer subjective satisfaction on us) which grounds the importance.

We have characterized value importance as that importance which is not constituted by our subjective satisfaction and which is insofar independent of it. But various objections could be raised to this characterization; let us consider three objections.

1. One could point out that we often take delight in that which has value importance. Consider the value importance expressed by the word "admirable." An element of delight is surely essential to admiring; there is no such thing as an affectively neutral admiration. But if the importance of the subjectively satisfying involves a relation to our satisfaction, and if value importance involves a relation to our delight, where is the essential difference between the two kinds of importance?

It seems to us that von Hildebrand has given the crucial answer to this objection.<sup>48</sup> He shows that, with value importance and the delight proper to it, the value importance is the *principium* and the delight the *principiatum*; whereas with the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying, our satisfaction/dissatisfaction is the *principium* and the importance the *principiatum*. Thus the satisfaction which lies in having his thirst quenched is the *principium* of the water's importance for the thirsty man. But when we take delight in an *admirandum*, the *admirandum* in all its

value is clearly itself the *principium* of our delight, our delight is in no way the source of the value of the *admirandum*. The fact that the *admirandum* in its value is independent of and "above" our delight, that we "look up" to it in delighting in it, that we participate in an importance which is not just for us but which rests in itself, is the condition for our delighting, our exulting in the *admirandum*. But if the value importance of a being is a source of delight which source is in no way constituted as value importance by a relation to our delight, if its power to delight precisely presupposes this independence, then its power to delight is fully compatible with the objectivity which we have ascribed to it. Indeed, our analysis of this delight shows us anew the objectivity of value importance. This overcomes the objection.

Let us realize, though, that this does not yet distinguish value from disvalue, for disvalue too can be the source of delight, as in the case of the envious man who takes delight in the downfall of the man whom he envies. If he experienced the negative importance of the downfall of the other as only subjective, as not being a real objective evil, then his envy would not be gratified. Here too value importance is the *principium*, delight the *principiatum*.

2. Another objection which could be made to our attempt to characterize value importance as independent of our subjective satisfaction, begins by observing that an irritable person can, because of his irritation, experience another as having objective negative importance, or as having disvalue. This does not seem to be the case with Zosima, but it often happens that we project out of our irritation an objective reprehensibility into the person who irritates us. One sign that we have done this is that we will blame him, accuse him, pour out indignation on him, all of which presuppose that he appears to us as covered with some objective negative importance, or disvalue. (The negative importance of the subjectively dissatisfying can only ground irritation, or certain forms of disgust and anger, but not indignation.) And so the objection could be pressed: it does not at all hold true only for subjective importance that importance is constituted by a relation to our satisfaction/dissatisfaction; this seems to be able to hold for value importance as well.

Let us look more closely at the evidence on which this objection is based. Observe that it is essential that the irritable man who projects disvalues into another, hides from himself his projecting. The more he sees the dependency of the disvalue on his irritation, then the more he sees the illusory character of the disvalue, and the injustice of rebuking the other. This is also why the one who is rebuked can rightly defend himself by pointing out that he is a victim of projection, that he seems to his accuser to be covered with a disvalue only because the accuser is in a bad mood and not because he really has the disvalue. The accusing party

will recognize this as challenging his whole right to accuse, and he will realize that if he is going to persist in his accusing and reproaching, he has to insist that the other *really* has the disvalue, and that this disvalue is quite independent of his irritation. We see, then, that in showing that a given value datum is dependent on our satisfaction, one debunks it, shows it to be merely an illusory value datum. But this does not hold for the importance of the subjectively satisfying; in showing that a datum of this kind of importance is dependent on our satisfaction, one in no way debunks it, or shows it to be merely illusory. If we point out to the thirsty man that the water has importance to him only because he is thirsty, this does not rightly tend to make this datum of importance collapse as illusory; the thirsty man does not have to hide from himself this dependency of the water's importance on his thirst in order to prevent the water from forfeiting its importance in his eyes. And this is just what we would expect to find; if the importance of the subjectively satisfying is, according to its idea or essence, a kind of subjective aspect dependent on our satisfaction, then the full awareness of this dependency should have no tendency to "disappoint" our experience of subjective importance. Now if value importance really were, according to its idea or essence, a subjective aspect dependent on our satisfaction, why should this awareness tend to "disappoint" our experience of value? The answer is clear: we can be disappointed only because we know that value, according to its idea or essence, claims to be independent of anyone's satisfaction in the sense of not being constituted by it, that value needs such independence in order to be itself. And so in analyzing the evidence on which the objection is based, we see anew that subjective importance and value importance are distinguished by the fact that only the former is constituted by our satisfaction: and we thereby overcome the objection. Value importance cannot be dependent on our satisfaction, only illusory value data can be.

3. An objection similar to this one would be the following. Politicians and tyrants often use certain value words when it is clear that the only importance which they have before their minds is the importance of that which is subjectively satisfying to them. A tyrant calls it "just" when he occupies some neighboring country which is too weak to defend itself, but the truth of his motivation is that he simply wants to have more power over more people. The objection would be that the value importance of a being is not that importance which is independent of our subjective satisfaction, otherwise value words would not come so naturally to a person who is motivated merely by what satisfies him. But the solution of this objection is easy. The value word "just" in the mouth of the tyrant does not *express* the importance of what merely satisfies him; it instead *hides* this importance. This is why value words suit his purposes so well: they

hide the arbitrariness and subjectivity of his real motives. But value words can hide this only because they mean something different, only because they mean something objective in its validity, something precisely independent of our arbitrariness and subjectivity. Almost no tyrant would frankly admit that he is occupying the neighboring country simply because he feels like it; he would not dare confess the pure subjectivity of his real motives. But it suits him well to say that he is acting "justly" in occupying the neighboring country. "Just," then, must indicate a kind of importance essentially different from that importance which depends on our subjective satisfaction. We all clearly see the ugly hypocrisy and dishonesty of such a tyrant: but there would be nothing dishonest if "just" simply meant "what increases my sense of power"; there would be a cynical frankness in him, but no dishonesty. Once again we have to do with an objection against the objectivity of value importance which is based on a fact which presupposes that objectivity.

It might seem that the objectivity which value importance has and which distinguishes it from the importance of the subjectively satisfying can be expressed this way: value importance is *real* importance, the importance of the subjectively satisfying is only apparent importance. Here "real" and "apparent" are used in the sense of a "genuine" diamond as distinguished from a "fake" diamond, or in the sense of a "real" friend as distinguished from a "false" one. The distinction between real and apparent importance, however, in no way coincides with our distinction between value importance and the importance of the subjectively satisfying. For we can distinguish between real and apparent value importance, this is a distinction which is found *within* value importance; but then value importance cannot be identical with real importance. If Zosima, on the basis of his irritation, were to project disvalues into Afanasi, he would have precisely apparent value importance before his mind. When he undergoes his great change on waking up, he is aware that this value importance was only apparent, and is convinced that he now apprehends the value importance concerning Afanasi as it really is. And the reason why the distinction between real and apparent importance does not coincide with the distinction between value importance and the importance of the subjectively satisfying is obvious: real and apparent importance have to do with our cognition of importance; value importance and the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying are not epistemological notions at all, but have to do with *kinds* of importance.<sup>49</sup>

The objectivity which distinguishes value importance from the importance of the subjectively satisfying is reflected in the fact that we can agree and disagree with each other in value matters in a way which is not possible in matters of the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying. By agreeing I mean holding the same views, and by disagreeing

I mean holding contradictory views. When someone says that something is just, and his friend denies that it is just, then they contradict each other, and disagree. But if someone says that something is agreeable and therefore positively important for him, and his friend says that he finds it lacking in agreeableness and therefore neutral for him, they do not disagree. For nothing hinders them both from being right. Why should not one and the same thing be subjectively satisfying for one man, but neutral, or for that matter subjectively dissatisfying for another? Of course they would disagree if one said that something had positive importance for him, and a second man denied that it had positive importance for the first man. But this is hardly a common source of disagreement. The point is that agreement and disagreement such as are found in value matters are impossible in matters of subjective importance.

It will be clear by now, indeed it will have been clear for some time, that the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying is not related to value importance as a low degree of value importance; it is not comprehended within value importance, but is precisely distinguished from it; these two concepts aim at two radically different kinds of importance, at two fundamental "categories" of importance. This is essential to stress, because it was not seen by anyone among the original phenomenologists who wrote on value except by von Hildebrand;<sup>50</sup> and yet, until it is seen, there is no full *prise de conscience* of value. If Max Scheler, whose understanding of value is oriented around the important in itself, had seen it, he could not have maintained that the morally bad action, which is after all often motivated by the importance of the merely subjectively satisfying, is always a preferring of a lower value over a higher value.<sup>51</sup> This seems to imply that we are always motivated by some value or other, and that the worst we can do is to be motivated by a low value; which in turn implies that the importance of the subjectively satisfying is found within value and not to be distinguished from value. The observations of Alexander Pfänder on value in no way overcome this great weakness in Scheler, they rather simply serve to illustrate it well. He seems to understand "value" in a sense close to ours, for he says: "the existence of values is completely independent of men having any consciousness of them . . ."<sup>52</sup> But a few pages later he speaks as if it were only value which could interest us positively, and he mentions as value data certain things which quite clearly have only the importance of the subjectively satisfying:

If man's naive faith in value breaks down, if it gets replaced by the open rejection of value, then man's inner life becomes utterly meaningless. What is there to be glad or to be angry about, why love or hate anything, why want or make anything, if everything is after all

devoid of value? . . . But this meaningless life nevertheless keeps going on. Again and again man experiences feelings and movements of the will, and these imply the conviction that there are many things in the world which have positive or negative value. Man could get completely rid of this conviction only by putting an end to his life. But the general rejection of value usually disposes easily only of the higher values; it inconsistently stops short of the lower values which force themselves on us — the values of bodily well-being, of sensual pleasures, of money and power — so that man can have at least some shreds of meaning as he continues living his life.<sup>53</sup>

Roman Ingarden, in his essay, "Was wir über die Werte nicht wissen,"<sup>54</sup> observes that value phenomenologists have too often worked on very specific value questions, and neglected the foundational questions of value philosophy, and he proceeds to pose six foundational questions for future value philosophers. But surprisingly enough it does not occur to him to ask the most fundamental question of value philosophy: what is value at all? From what "neighbouring" data does value have to be sharply distinguished? Even though he does not seem to be aware of the categorial difference between value importance and the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying, he does not sense any fundamental lack of clarity in the idea of value which he is using. As far as I can see, only Adolf Reinach (among the original phenomenologists) took notice of von Hildebrand's discovery of this categorial difference and to some extent sensed the significance of this discovery.<sup>55</sup>

Von Hildebrand rightly identifies one of the reasons why Scheler and others failed to grasp this fundamental difference in kind.<sup>56</sup> They see that there is perhaps no being which is destitute of all value. They then proceed to maintain that, whenever any being interests me, the value of that being must enter into my motivation. They fail to see that, though a being interests me, it need not interest me in virtue of its value; it can be merely the fact that the being satisfies which makes it important for me. I may not even notice the value which a being has; the importance of the subjectively satisfying can get between me and the value of the being. As von Hildebrand puts it, they fail to distinguish the importance which a being has in itself, from the importance which it has in someone's motivation. Once we make this distinction, we can readily enough go on to see that, even if every being has some value, value is not the only kind of importance found in our experience of beings. And until this crucial distinction is made, there is no *prise de conscience* of value.

We should make it clear that in distinguishing value from the importance of the subjectively satisfying we do not claim to give a complete account of the objectivity of value. We will bring out further crucial dimen-

sions of this objectivity in the subsequent sections of this chapter, and still further ones in Chapter 4.

As we saw in Chapter 2, we have to distinguish between the importance of a being and its power to motivate; therefore we have to distinguish between the value importance of a being and its power to motivate. If this distinction is not made, then value importance, or "importance in itself," will seem to be a self-contradictory idea. For the power of a being to motivate is in a certain sense relational to a person; it presupposes a person in the same sense in which the knowability of a being presupposes a person. If the power of a being to motivate is identical with its importance, then to call a being "important in itself," and to prescind from its being "important for anyone," will seem to be as self-contradictory as calling a being "knowable in itself," without reference to anyone's knowledge. If however the importance of a being is one thing, and its power to motivate is another thing, which flows from the importance, then there is no least contradiction in the importance of the being resting in itself, yet still grounding a power of the being to motivate, which is not in the same sense "in itself."

As we indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the idea of value gives us a further basis for critically considering the Thomistic teaching on good and being. But for now we restrict ourselves to developing the criticism made at the end of the last chapter. Since value is a kind of importance, it should have that "distinctness" as a moment of a being which we discussed there. That is, it should be 1) irreducible to a being considered as an object of someone's interest, 2) irreducible to the ability of an object to engender someone's interest, 3) irreducible to those features in a being which especially ground its value, and 4) irreducible to the full actuality of real existence in a being. This is easily verified in any value datum; let us take the dignity of the human person. This dignity shows itself to be more than the human person considered as the object of some attitude such as respect, and more than the ability of the human person to command respect. For this dignity does not disappear but continues to resplend when we consider the person simply in himself and apart from anyone's respect or from any other attitude. This dignity is also irreducible to the characteristic faculties of the person such as knowledge and will, which ground this dignity. For one thing, these "grounding" faculties are many, whereas the dignity of the person is one. Finally, this dignity shows itself to be irreducible to the full actuality of real being. For we can prescind from the dignity of a man yet without prescinding from the actuality of him as a real being; we can consider a man as neutral from the point of view of value even while we consider him as ever so actual as a real being. Now all this means that that "distinctness" which we discovered above in the moment of importance and which shows that importance is not re-

ducible to being in the sense of "*ens et bonum convertuntur*," did not emerge from our investigations simply because we were thinking primarily of subjective importance; fully objective kinds of importance show forth this distinctness, good taken in the strongest, most metaphysical sense shows forth this distinctness.

A Thomist might answer us in much the same way in which Thomas answers Boethius, who is quoted in an objection as saying: "*intueor in rebus aliud esse quod sunt bona, et aliud esse quod sunt*" ("I perceive that in nature the fact that things are good is one thing: that they are is another").<sup>57</sup> Thomas' response, it will be recalled, is that the "center of gravity" of the real existence of a thing is its substantial being, whereas the "center of gravity" of its goodness lies in its proper acts and accidents, which have being only *secundum quid*. A Thomist might say that this is all we have in mind when we insist on the irreducibility of value to being, and he would say that this is not incompatible with the Thomistic position.

This Thomistic response has the merit of glimpsing a truth which we could also express this way: the really decisive value importance of a being is often grounded in its proper acts and accidents, and not in its substantial being. Thus the decisive value importance of a man depends, not on his being a man, but on the kinds of acts which he performs in his moral life. But however true it is that substantial being and value are each realized most fully at different levels in a contingent thing, this is certainly not what we have in mind when we are struck by the fact that a thing as valuable is distinct from the thing as a real being, and adds more to its real existence than simply a "conceptual relation." This latter difference is a much simpler, more basic difference than the one which Thomas has in mind.

## b) Value importance as reflected in the meaning of value words

Let us see what help our value language can offer to the philosophy of value importance. We will get a better feel for the datum of value importance if we consider those words in our language which express it. We will also be led to see some further features of value importance, and thus to develop the characterization of value importance which we began in the previous section. Let us begin by looking at several classes of words which might seem to refer to value importance but which in reality do not.

1. When we say that a given knife is a "good" knife we usually mean only that it performs efficiently the knife-function of cutting; we might express ourselves more fully by saying that the knife is "good for cutting."

Now this "goodness" is a factual feature of the knife and its function. This "goodness" of the knife is at most the *reason why* it can have importance under certain circumstances for certain people; but this presupposes that this "goodness" is not itself a datum of importance.<sup>58</sup>

2. We find a whole array of words in the economic sphere which would be misunderstood if taken as expressing importance in our sense: thus the "value" or "worth" of a piece of property, or the "value" of money. Intriguing as it would be to attempt a phenomenology of economic value, the following will have to suffice for our present purposes. A thing can be neutral as far as value importance goes, or possess a great disvalue, yet have a high market value (as when indecent movies are in demand). Again, a thing can possess a great value in the sense of value importance, yet have no market value. It can either fall altogether outside the sphere of the marketplace, as in the case of a noble personality, or a beautiful sky at night; or it can in principle be worth something in the marketplace, yet in fact be worth nothing, as a great work of art which has not yet been generally understood in its greatness. This does not deny that the value of a thing can enter into certain relations to economic value; for instance, when the neglected work of art is finally understood in its greatness and becomes worth a lot of money, its economic value depends on its value in the sense of importance. But such a dependency precisely presupposes the difference between the dependent thing and that on which it is dependent. Further: the market value of a thing depends on factors which are obviously totally irrelevant to the value importance of a thing, such as the money supply. What does the money supply have to do with the value and disvalue which the repentant Zosima perceives? It would be interesting to investigate whether there are any vague *analogies* between economic value and value as a category of importance. But if it turns out that there are, this would precisely presuppose that there is a vast difference in kind between the two notions of value. Almost all the characteristics of value which we will go on to elaborate in this chapter are found only in value as a category of importance and not in economic value. And the profound metaphysical impact of value which we will investigate is *totally* lacking in economic value. Nor does economic value ever form a unity with the valuable being in any of the ways in which, as we will see in Chapter 4, value importance forms a unity with the being which has it.

By the way, economic value also has to be distinguished from the importance of the subjectively satisfying. A thing can acquire a high market value *because* it is subjectively satisfying, or it can acquire the importance of the subjectively satisfying *because* it is worth something in the market place: in either case the distinction between economic value and



the importance of the subjectively satisfying is presupposed. The analogy, however, which economic value has with the importance of the subjectively satisfying, is much greater than the analogy which it has with value importance. For there is a certain feature which economic value has in common with the importance of the subjectively satisfying and which precisely distinguishes both from value as a category of importance: economic value as well as the importance of the subjectively satisfying both depend on human needs, desires. Thus the idea of "value" in a subjectivistic value theory is much closer to economic value than is value in our sense of an objective kind of importance. As I say, there is at most only a distant analogy between economic value and value as an objective category of importance.

3. There is yet another class of words which do not express a value datum, or express value importance in general, though it might seem as if they did. If one person proposes a meeting to another, and the other accepts the offer and says, "Good, I'll meet you at 10:00 a.m. under the tower," it is clear that "good" does not refer to a value datum, or even to any datum of importance; for it does not refer to anything at all. It would be a mistake to think that this sentence is equivalent to "it is good that we will meet under the tower." For the proposal of the first person does not call for a statement or judgment by way of response (this would be the case if he had asked a question), but rather calls for acceptance or rejection. The sense of "good" is not to intend any feature or property of a state of affairs, it is not to function in a statement or judgment, but is rather to express acceptance of the proposal. We cannot take up here the intriguing logical problem of the exact kind of meaning which "good" has in such uses; suffice it to say that "good" does not have emotive meaning in the sense of Stevenson, nor is it a verbal device for exerting influence on others.

4. This is not to deny that there is a further class of words which, at least in certain of their usages, are value words only in the sense of having "emotive meaning" but not in the sense of referring to value importance. Words like "wonderful," "terrible," "dreadful," "awful," "disgusting," which once referred primarily to certain value data, are now often used in such a way as to be reduced to mere exclamations which do not refer to anything.

But there are after all innumerable words which do express value importance in our strict sense of value. Let us make the acquaintance of some of them.

Value is expressed, or rather different aspects of value are expressed, by words and phrases such as "intrinsic worth," "intrinsic preciousness," the "dignity" of a being, the "splendor" of a being, the "nobility" of a

being, its "worthiness to be." In the many words with which we speak of the beauty of a being, we aim at its value. We compare two beings from the point of view of value when we say that one being "ranks higher" than another. If we inquire what word in Thomas comes closest to expressing value in our sense, then one of the first words to be mentioned would be his *excellencia*, as in "Deo debetur reverentia propter eius excellentiam, quae aliquibus creaturis communicatur . . ." ("reverence is due to God in virtue of His excellence, which is shared with creatures."),<sup>59</sup> or in "honor testificationem quandam importat de excellentia alicuius" ("honor is a certain bearing witness to the excellence of someone").<sup>60</sup> We have already indicated that Thomas does not leave room for value in his philosophical theory of *bonum*, and we will have more to say on this; but that is another question. Here we simply observe that *excellencia* as he often uses it seems to be very well expressive of value in our sense, it has a meaning which can be "fulfilled" only by a certain value datum. By the way, there is a certain (older) sense of the English "excellence" which can be fulfilled only by the same value datum. When we praise a man for his "moral excellence" we are praising him for his moral values.

And then there are words which express particular values and dis-values, words such as just, unjust, holy, profane, beautiful, ugly, morally good, morally evil, morally right, morally wrong, reverent, sublime, the dignity of the person. Of course most of these words do not have only value meaning; most of them also intend some aspects of the "bearer" of the value, that is, of the being which has the value. If someone tells us that a given man is a just man, we not only learn something about his moral worth, but also about the kind of acts and attitudes which are characteristic for him, and this latter knowledge too is conveyed to us through the meaning of "just." But a phrase such as the "dignity of the person" exclusively intends a value datum, even if it does so in terms of the bearer. There are still other value words which we ought to take notice of, words such as admirable, venerable, loveable, awe-inspiring. These have a meaning which refers only to a value datum and not to any aspect of the bearer, but they differ from the other value words in expressing a reference to a response of a person. But it should not be overlooked that each of the concepts expressed in these words aims at a specific value quality, and does not simply aim abstractly at the value correlate of a certain response.

It would be a great mistake if one thought (for instance as Viktor Kraft thinks<sup>61</sup>) that the differences among value words touch only the factual meaning which they express, and not their value meaning; as if the value meaning in the various value words were the same, or at most expressive of different degrees. To see the error of this view, we have only to compare

what we mean when we think of the "splendor of a man's moral character," with what we mean when we think of "the dignity of matter." It is clear that we intend here two very different value data.

This analysis of our value language enables us to go beyond our value language, and to see something about value importance itself. If we look beyond the meanings of the two phrases just mentioned, and consult the things themselves which are aimed at by the meanings, then it is clear that the splendor of a man's moral character really is a value datum altogether different from the dignity of matter; it is clear that the difference goes much farther, and is much more complex, than a mere difference of degree. This enables us to realize that the many and various words in our value language reflect an astonishing wealth and variety of value data. Once we have realized this with the help of our value language, we take a major step beyond the characterization of value importance which we offered in the preceding section.

Notice that this characteristic of value importance (that there exists a great variety and multiplicity of value data) is not exactly found in any given value datum, but in the sphere of value importance as a whole. But this leads right away to an important insight into the nature of any given value datum. Any given value datum has far more "content" than is expressed by saying that it is a kind of antithesis to neutrality which does not depend on anyone's satisfaction. These two features hold for the dignity of matter as well as for the holiness of God, and do not illuminate the specific value material of any value datum. It is as if we were to characterize color by saying that it is a qualitative datum needing at least two dimensions of space in order to exist: however true this would be of any datum of color, it would not begin to exhaust it. If there were no more to any datum of value importance than these two features, there could not exist that multiplicity and variety of value data which we have just come to see with the help of our value language. And so we can say: those value data which are most characteristic for value, have, though in very different degrees and in very different ways, a rich material plenitude, which we have not even begun to exhaust in these investigations. It will, however, not be part of our task in this essay to investigate the *proprium* of the various kinds and families of value.

### c) Value as that kind of importance in a being which makes the being worthy of a right response.

It seems that the following is profoundly characteristic for the value of a being: a being possessing a value not only can motivate us, but *calls for* a certain response; it does not just make our responding possible, but *deserves, is worthy of* a certain response. We can express the same thing from

the point of view of the response by saying that a just response is *due to* the valuable being, that it is the *right* response to it. A man of high moral stature is, in virtue of his moral value, worthy of our admiration and veneration; God is, in virtue of His Holiness, worthy of adoration, it is due to Him, it is owed to Him. It is a question of a fundamental kind of justice. It is unjust to deny admiration to a man of moral stature, or to deny adoration to God. This worthiness of a right response does not necessarily go with a moral obligation to give a right response, though it may, as in the case of adoration. It is one of the great achievements of von Hildebrand's value philosophy to have elaborated for the first time the nature of the due relation which obtains between a valuable being and the right response to it.<sup>62</sup> Once again we have to do with one of his achievements which goes altogether beyond Scheler.

One could develop the idea of due relation as part of a philosophy of human motivation, and as preparatory to a critical study of the Thomistic *appetere* and *desiderare*; but this is not our purpose in the following. We develop this idea as part of our philosophy of value, and as enlarging the basis for our critical study of the Thomistic *bonum*.

We can get an idea of due relation according to von Hildebrand if we consider that a due response is "proportioned" to the valuable being which is responded to. He distinguishes three levels of the proportion, though leaving open the possibility of differentiating the levels of this proportion much more elaborately.<sup>63</sup> If we are confronted with the justice of Socrates, then our response ought to be positive. By "ought" we mean that Socrates deserves or is worthy of a positive response, that it would be unfitting or inappropriate to give a negative response such as indignation or contempt. Secondly, our response ought to reflect the *kind* of value at stake. In the case of Socrates, our response should reflect the fact that we are responding to *moral* value. If it were simply his keen intelligence rather than his justice we were admiring, then our admiration should have a different character. It would be inappropriate to respond to his intelligence with the admiration which moral stature deserves, or to respond to his moral stature with the admiration which keen intelligence deserves. Thirdly, our response should reflect the rank or degree of the value of the being responded to. Thus the modest measure of justice found in many decent, law-abiding Athenian citizens in Socrates' day does not deserve the response which the heroic justice of Socrates deserves. Every deviation from these axiological proportions creates a disharmony *sui generis* in the world of value. And there is a further dimension to the law of due relation: when we confront a thing having value, we *ought* to give it the due or fitting response. It is not simply that, *if* we feel like responding to something having a value, *then* we ought to give a response proportionate



to the thing. And just as the character of the response depends on the degree and kind of the value, so does the urgency of the oughtness of giving it at all. It is important to keep in mind that this oughtness is, as already mentioned, not necessarily bound up with a moral oughtness, not necessarily a matter of moral obligation.

Once we grasp the nature of the "due relation" obtaining between the value of a being and the right response to the being, it is clear that this relation is altogether unlike the relation of efficient or of final causality. The fact that admiration is due to Socrates in virtue of his moral stature, is clearly different from the fact that the thought of Socrates' moral stature can engender admiration in me and thus be a cause of my admiration. The fact that Socrates is worthy of admiration is also utterly different from the fact that some good thing will come from admiring Socrates. It does not matter whether we think of *our* happiness which results from admiring Socrates, or of his happiness in being admired, or of some other good result of admiring him; we do not have to go outside the admiring and look among its results in order to find that "justice" which it has with respect to the moral character of Socrates. Indeed, the peculiar kind of axiological dependence which a due response has on its grounding value not only falls outside of efficient and final causality but outside of all four of the Aristotelian causes.

Now this "call for" a due or right response distinguishes value from the importance of the subjectively satisfying; for things important merely in virtue of satisfying us do not and cannot "deserve" a certain response from us. The importance of a wine which I like does not call for or deserve a certain interest on our part; a certain degree and kind of interest and desire is not fitting, right, due to the wine (at least if we prescind from aesthetic values that can be found in tastes). Of course a person's interest in wine can be quite disproportionate, thoroughly undeserved, as in the case of the drunk. But this, far from being an objection, precisely proves our present point. For this disproportion is grounded in certain values, such as those which are neglected by the drunk; it is not grounded in the importance itself of the subjectively satisfying, the interest of the drunk in his wine is not at odds with what the wine calls for in virtue of the importance which it derives from his satisfaction.

The fact that a valuable being deserves a right response, can be verified by looking at those responses which are essentially value responses, responses such as admiration, veneration, adoration. In saying that these are essentially value responses, we do not just mean that they ought not to be performed towards what lacks value; they *cannot* be so performed. It is impossible to admire that which presents itself as merely important in virtue of satisfying me. Now observe that these value responses are all permeated by the consciousness that the object responded

to deserves the response, is worthy of it. In admiring we are conscious of standing before an *admirandum*, before something worthy of admiration; in adoring we are conscious of standing before an *adorandum*. Love for another is permeated by the consciousness that the beloved deserves our love, indeed deserves more love than we could ever give him or her. And so our experience of value response bears out our insight into the worthiness of a valuable being to "receive its due" from a response of the person.

The fact that a being having a value is worthy of a response, is so characteristic for value that one of the profoundest "essential definitions" of value would be: "that importance of a being which makes it worthy of a certain response from us." This does not mean that the value of a being is simply identical with its being worthy of a right response; it is rather the case that this worthiness necessarily flows from the value, even as the power to motivate flows from the importance of a being.<sup>63</sup>

We have been speaking, not about value importance in general, but about value as opposed to disvalue. Now one might be tempted to hold that disvalue is directly parallel to value and that therefore beings possessing disvalue are worthy of a response of rejection, disapproval, condemnation. But to "read off" the nature of disvalue from the nature of value, is to philosophize "systematically" in the worst sense; it is to philosophize almost mechanically, and to abandon that careful attention to the things themselves which is the genius of phenomenology. If we let the disvalue of a being speak for itself, we find that its relation to a negative value response is not at all parallel to the relation of value to a positive value response. A being having a disvalue does not of itself alone seem to deserve or to be worthy of anything, not even condemnation. If a person were to take a perverse delight in what has a disvalue, instead of somehow condemning or rejecting it, this would not be unjust towards the being. It seems that certain values are needed to ground the "call" to reject something having a disvalue. What calls for indignation at the crimes of a Hitler is not only the disvalue of the crimes, but also the value of the goods which he destroyed in committing those crimes. With disvalue we have to make a distinction which we did not make with value: a distinction between the evil to which a certain negative response is due, and the grounds for this response, or the importance which calls for this response. In the case of value we do not have to go outside the value of the being to which we respond in order to find the source of the call to respond; least of all do we have to consult any disvalues. Of course we do not deny that a negative value response such as indignation ought to be proportionate to the disvalue of the being which is responded to. Thus a worse crime deserves greater indignation than a lesser, etc. But though the proportions to be observed in a negative value response depend on

the disvalue, the call to give a response thus proportioned depends not only on the disvalue but also on the "injured" values. There is another difference between positive and negative value responses: once grounded, the call to respond negatively to an evil has a completely different character from the call to respond positively to a good having a value; the character of "dueness" is completely different in each case. The dueness, then, of due relation is always grounded in value; even the due relation obtaining between a being having a disvalue and a negative value response is partly grounded in value.

As a result, due relation is far more revealing about the nature of value than the objectivity of value discussed in section a), for this objectivity is shared equally by both value and disvalue. It is perhaps even more revealing about value than the material plenitude of value discussed in section b), because disvalue has at least something of this plenitude, even if it is in no way the equal of value in this respect.<sup>64</sup>

As a result of responding to that which is worthy of our response, and as a result of being aware of this worthiness, the human person achieves a unique self-transcendence in value response. We reflect and participate in a rhythm of being above ourselves insofar as we live in a value-responding attitude. Just as in knowledge and in true conviction and true judgement we participate in one way in being, so in value knowledge and value response we participate in it in another way. Interest in things as merely subjectively satisfying does not allow such a participation in an order of things above us, it does not allow us the self-transcendence which we achieve in value response; it can even have a tendency in the opposite direction, namely to shut us up within ourselves. This transcendence of value response will be central to the critical consideration of the Thomistic *bonum* which we will offer at the end of this section.

There is yet another way of approaching value through the response which is due to it. Let us return to the subject of agreement and disagreement. Value not only makes propositional agreement and disagreement possible, as we saw; it also makes possible an analogical kind of agreement and disagreement on the level of our responses. This is a line of thought which also throws new light on the objectivity which is proper to value.

We can approach this kind of agreement and disagreement by considering a way of "being at one" and "being at odds" with another which has a certain resemblance to it. If someone desires a cup of water and another also desires it, and if there is not enough for both, it is clear that the interest of each in the water sets each at odds with the other. It is this situation of being at odds with each other or of having conflicting interests

which Stevenson especially has in mind when he speaks of "disagreement in attitude."<sup>65</sup> Now let us consider a very different case of disagreement, one which seems to us far more to deserve the name "disagreement in attitude." Suppose one man is indignant at a crime and another man, who does not deny the facts of the case, is indifferent to the crime, or is pleased with it, or tends to approve it. Here the two persons are set at odds in a completely different and unique way. This disagreement is, unlike the conflict of interest which we just considered, not essentially practical; at the most it could lead to collisions among people. It is further distinguished from a conflict of interest by having an analogy to propositional disagreement in value matters; conflicting interests have no real analogy to this. Further, the disagreement in response will often be expressed by value judgements which represent a propositional disagreement. Thus the one might call the crime wrong, and the other reject this predicate. What especially interests us is that disagreement in response is distinguished from a conflict of interest in that it presupposes that at least one of the parties of the disagreement has an attitude or response motivated by value, permeated by the consciousness that the attitude is due to the object. If we never encountered value and due relation in our experience, then this unique kind of disagreement, as well as the corresponding kind of agreement, would not be possible.

If we now resume our critical consideration of the Thomistic position, we find that it lacks the idea of due relation. The Thomistic *appetere* and *desiderare*, which as applied to man designate his striving with respect to *bonum*, refer more to the will to possess some good, and not to a value-responding will, not to a will to give things their due in the way of right response. When Thomas discusses justice as a particular virtue in the II-II of the *Summa* and characterizes it as "giving each his due," he sees something which is in many ways close to our due relation, for due relation, as we saw, can be understood as a kind of justice.<sup>66</sup> But Thomas never develops the idea of justice when he deals with man's being motivated by *bonum*; justice simply remains for him one of the four cardinal virtues. This is not to deny that Thomas himself seems to be somehow aware of the connection between value and due response. When he deals with a datum like *excellencia*, which is a pure value datum, it often comes quite natural to him to speak the language of due response: he says, for instance, that adoration is due to (*debetur*) God in virtue of His *excellencia*.<sup>67</sup> Even more striking is his treatment of charity in the II-II,<sup>68</sup> where he sees profoundly into the value-responding structure of charity; our idea of due response simply serves to clarify his meaning. But as far as I can see, Thomas never achieves a philosophical *prise de conscience* of this dueness.

Von Hildebrand's discovery of due relation does not simply put him

at odds with Thomistic philosophy; this discovery does not even add something which was simply unknown to Thomistic philosophy: it is rather the fully explicit philosophical grasping of a datum which, as we just indicated, is implicitly recognized in many places (though not consistently and in all relevant places) in Thomistic philosophy. To this extent the idea of due relation is in solidarity with Thomistic teaching.

As a result of lacking a clear idea of due relation, Thomism cannot do full justice to the objectivity which good has in the case of value. For there is a crucial dimension of the objectivity of value which shows itself in the call of value for a due response. We can put it this way: in calling for a due response, the value of a being offers a unique "resistance" to the person, a "resistance" which does not take the form of an external force, but which makes itself felt in the innermost self of the person; in calling for a due response, a valuable being shows itself to be withdrawn from the arbitrariness of the person, and to have the right to break in upon this arbitrariness, and to "claim" something from the person. This is why, as we indicated, the person transcends himself and becomes objective in a unique way in giving a due response. The transcendence achieved in due response shows forth a certain perfection of objectivity in the goodness which grounds the response.<sup>69</sup>

A being taken as a really existing being, and even as a fully actual real being, cannot offer this resistance, it cannot break in upon our arbitrariness in this way, it cannot "call for" and deserve a certain response from man. However much the person conforms to a thing considered this way (as when the person knows it), the person does not achieve that perfection of transcendence which lies in giving a due response. And certainly, in considering a being under the aspect of our perfection, as promoting our perfection, the being does not present itself with that objectivity which it has when it calls for a due response. This is why the *appetere* and *desiderare* with which we seek such a being lacks the transcendence of value response, of willing to give something its due. The lack of transcendence in *appetere* shows forth the lack of a certain perfection of objectivity in the good which grounds it.

For the first time we make good our claim that the same philosophy of value which leads to a critique of "*ens et bonum convertuntur*," also leads to a critique of *bonum* as not sufficiently objective. We proceed now to bring to light another fundamental lack of objectivity in the Thomistic *bonum*. But it must be stressed that, in doing this, we are in deep solidarity with the Thomistic idea of a metaphysics of good; we are not abandoning this idea but rather we claim to maintain it in a stronger, more radical way.

**d) The difference between value importance and a third category of importance: the importance of things which are objectively beneficial or harmful for the person.**

It would be a mistake to think that all importance is either value importance, or the importance of the subjectively satisfying/dissatisfying — as if these were the only two categories of importance. It is part of von Hildebrand's achievement in value philosophy that he has discovered a third fundamental category of importance, and elaborated its relations to the other two categories.<sup>70</sup> Here we are interested in this third category, not so much for its own sake, but insofar as we can better understand the nature of value importance by distinguishing it from this third category.

Let us suppose that all the fundamental rights of a man are protected: his right to life, to move about freely, to own property, to act according to his conscience (to the extent that this does not interfere with others acting according to their conscience), etc. Surely this state of affairs presents itself to him as having great positive importance. This is why he desired to have his basic rights protected before they were protected, and rejoices at the fact that they are now protected. But this positive importance is not merely the importance of the subjectively satisfying. The protection of his rights would not be simply neutral if he did not happen to derive satisfaction from it. It would rather be the case that this protection has an importance which he fails to apprehend. This shows that this importance has an objectivity which the importance of the subjectively satisfying lacks, for we would never say that something has the importance of the subjectively satisfying for someone even though that person fails to apprehend this importance. Further: if someone were to vindicate his rights for him, he would surely owe that person gratitude, which would however be impossible if the protection of his rights had no other importance than that of the subjectively satisfying. For to receive something merely subjectively satisfying, such as undeserved praise, in no way calls for gratitude; the importance which calls for gratitude has to be essentially more objective than the importance of the subjectively satisfying.

On the other hand, the positive importance of having his basic rights protected is not only the importance of value. This protection is also something objectively good *for the man*, something objectively beneficial *for him*, and he easily experiences it as a basic good *for himself*. The negative importance of being denied his basic rights is not only the importance of disvalue; this denial is also an objective evil *for the man*, it is something objectively harmful *for him*. This is why he could *forgive* someone who denied him his rights.<sup>71</sup> If the other were only realizing something which

has a disvalue, there would be no basis for human forgiving; forgiving clearly presupposes that someone has done something harmful *for me*. It seems that the positive importance of having our basic rights protected includes a third kind of importance which von Hildebrand calls the importance of "an objective good for the person." Its negative counterpart is the importance of "an objective evil for the person."

We can approach this new category of importance by "going through" the nature of love.<sup>72</sup> When one person loves another, he desires to do good to the other. But he does not desire to confer things merely subjectively satisfying on the other such as undeserved praise; if this were his only point of view in doing things for the other, he could not be said really to love him. Nor does he only desire to see values realized in the other; it is not simply the point of view of value which determines his deeds of love towards him. If he helps the other to develop morally and intellectually, and thus to realize moral and intellectual values in himself, this is not simply for the sake of moral and intellectual stature in a person, not simply because these things ought to be in virtue of their value; it is also because the possession of these values is a fundamental good for the person. It is not only the point of view of value but also of the objective good for the person which determines his deeds of love towards the other.<sup>73</sup>

The difference between this third category and the category of value importance shows itself clearly. An objective good for the person "addresses" a person, it "turns its face" towards a particular person, it is *for* a person. This is reflected in the way in which a person experiences an objective good for himself: since it "addresses" him, he experiences it "from within" in a certain way. Others who do not share in this objective good for him cannot experience it in the same way "from within," they can only "know about" it. Insofar as a being has value, however, it does not "address" a person in this way. Of course it involves a relation to the person in the form of "calling for" a due response, and this call, as we saw, is unlike a force applied to the person, it deeply appeals to the freedom of the person. But there is a crucial difference between this relation to a person, and the relation to a person of an objective good for the person (besides the obvious difference between "calling for" a certain response from a person, and making a "friendly gesture" towards a person).

The demand of valuable beings for a due response is a relation to a person which is not constitutive of the inner being of value in the sense in which a relation to a benefitted person is constitutive of the inner being of an objective good for the person. Let us consider an objective good for the person such as health. If we prescind from the relation of health to some

possible person *for whom* health is good and consider health "in itself," we thereby prescind from health as an objective good for the person, we strip it of all importance in the sense of this third category of importance. But if we take a valuable being such as the repentance of Zosima, and consider it in itself, and apart from anyone who ought to respond rightly to it, it stays altogether intact in its value. This is what we mean in saying that a relation to a person is not constitutive of the inner being of value. In speaking of the call for a just response we should say that this call necessarily "flows from" value, or is essentially "grounded in" value. By contrast, a relation to a benefitted person does not flow from but rather "makes up" or constitutes the being of an objective good for the person.

Von Hildebrand has not only elaborated the fundamental kinds of objective good and evils for the person; he has also shown that objective goods and evils for the person do not represent as independent a category of importance as does value importance. This is not because objective goods and evils for the person have a less distinct *ratio* of importance than does value importance; it is rather because they ultimately depend on value importance, though in very different ways, according to the different kinds of goods and evils for the person. For example, moral uprightness is a fundamental good for the person in virtue of the moral values comprised by this uprightness. This basic good for the person also depends, though in a very different way, on the ontological dignity and value of the person; neither this nor any other objective good or evil for the person would be possible if the person were worth nothing and were simply neutral from the point of view of value. Thus it is that one could not see why moral uprightness is good for the person if he could not perceive either moral values or the ontological value of the person. If then someone were to try to reduce value importance to the importance of what is objectively beneficial or harmful for the person, he would not only err, and eliminate a whole universe of objective importance; he would also make unintelligible the existence of beneficial goods and harmful evils for the person, for he would have eliminated their ground. All this needs to be more fully developed in order to be brought to full evidence; we refer for this to the work of von Hildebrand.

We are led, then, not only to grasp the essence of value importance more perfectly by distinguishing it from this new category of importance, but also to find a new characteristic of value importance: it is the ultimate ground of the importance of things objectively beneficial or harmful for the person. This brings to light a certain ultimate "friendliness" of value to the person, which deeply illuminates its nature. If the value of a being does not itself "turn its face" toward some person, it is the ground of that importance in a being which does.

Notice that this is a feature of value which distinguishes it from disvalue. In elaborating above the independence of value importance from our subjective satisfaction, and in elaborating the material plenitude of any value datum, as well as the rich multiplicity which characterizes the sphere of value as a whole, we were dealing with value importance in general, we were not distinguishing between value and disvalue. But in the last section, in dealing with "due relation," we had to do with a datum which distinguishes value from disvalue. Our work in the present section enables us to develop this crucial distinction: only the value of a being enables that being to become an objective good for the person; the disvalue of a being cannot do this, but rather gives that being the importance of an objective evil for the person.

By the way, von Hildebrand's distinction between value importance and the importance of things beneficial and harmful for the person, is absent in Scheler, and represents another of the many respects in which von Hildebrand goes decisively beyond him.

It goes without saying that the importance of this third category of importance is to be distinguished from the power of this importance to motivate; since this distinction holds for importance in general, it holds for this category of importance. But we can do more than just deduce that this distinction must be found within the third category of importance, we can also be led to see it by the following consideration. The relation to a person implied in this importance is quite different from the relation to a person implied in its power to motivate. It is specifically this importance which makes a being "turn its face" to someone; it would be false to say that the power of the being to motivate someone which flows from this importance, "addresses" that person in the same way as the importance does.

It is clear that the Thomistic theory, had it done more justice to the datum of importance, would have developed an idea of *bonum* which comes close to this third category of importance. This is revealed in the Thomistic characterization of the movement of the will towards *bonum* as *appetere*, or sometimes *desiderare*. These are forms of interest typical for our being attracted to certain things which are objectively good for us; they are not typical for the value-responding will to give a being its due. Further, in saying that every being strives for its own perfection, Thomas seems to mean perfection in the sense of the epitome of everything objectively good for the person. Just as the Thomistic *bonum* essentially involves a relation to an *appetitus*, so our objective good for the person essentially involves a relation to the objective welfare and perfection of the person. This is, however, not to identify the Thomistic *bonum* with our objective good for the person. For one thing, the Thomistic *bonum* does not do justice to the

objective good for the person as a kind of importance; it does not do justice to the fact that, in being an objective good for a person, more is added to a thing than a relation to the perfection of some being; it does not see that a moment of importance is added to a thing and that it is *qua* important that the thing "turns its face" towards someone's objective welfare. This is why I say that the Thomistic theory would have developed an idea of *bonum* which comes close to our third category only if it had done greater justice to the datum of importance. But all the same, the Thomistic *bonum* is enough like our third category of importance to enable us, on the basis of our discussion of the third category, to develop our critical consideration of the Thomistic *bonum*.

For it is now clear that this *bonum* leaves no place for value. Insofar as a being has value, it has goodness in itself and not only goodness which is *for the person*, and still less goodness which is for one person but not for another. Value is a kind of *bonum* with an objectivity which bursts the bounds of the Thomistic *bonum*. Value itself has as little *respectum ad alia* as the transcendentals *res* and *unum*, or as little as a substantial being, or the full actuality of substantial being. The value of a being is fully constituted as value prior to any "real" or "conceptual" relations to other persons. The Thomistic teaching that "*ens et bonum convertuntur*" not only fails to do justice to the distinctness of value (and indeed of all importance) as a distinct moment of a being, it also fails to do justice to the kind of objectivity which value possesses. The failure does not lie in the fact that *bonum* does not exactly mean value. Since *bonum* is said to be a transcendental property of being, it is bound to mean something broader than our value. The failure lies in the fact that *bonum* is so determined as to exclude value as a possible kind of *bonum*.

Let us put our objection this way: if we prescind from the relation of contingent beings to an *appetitus* (whether their own *appetitus* or that of another), and consider them in themselves, it follows from the Thomistic teaching that we find no goodness in them. We find at the most the full actuality of really existing being; but this full actuality is, according to Thomistic teaching, not itself goodness, it is only the basis in reality for goodness. Since goodness in a being consists in a certain relation of that being to an *appetitus*, it is no longer found in the being as soon as we consider the being in itself. Our objection is that there is in reality a kind of goodness which does not consist in a relation to an *appetitus*, and which is therefore found in things even prescinding from any relation to an *appetitus*, or to the ultimate welfare and full perfection of a being. Value is a kind of goodness which is far more radically objective than the Thomistic *bonum*.<sup>75</sup>

And so it is that, in criticizing Thomism for not doing justice to the

distinctness of value as a moment of a being, we do not, as Thomists suspect, lapse into value subjectivism; the criticism follows from the same value philosophy which also criticizes Thomism for not doing justice to the objectivity of *bonum*. By the way, it should be noticed that the objectivity of value on which the present criticism is based is quite different from that objectivity of value which lies in the fact that value calls for a right response and which was the basis of our criticism in the preceding section.

But our value philosophy not only criticizes the Thomistic position; it also complements it in a profound way. For there really is the *bonum* which Thomism primarily aims at, even if Thomism does not grasp it with full philosophical consciousness, namely the *bonum* of the objective good for the person. But the ultimate ground of this *bonum*, as we indicated, is that other *bonum* which we have called value. Value philosophy in our sense (and only in our sense) can give the Thomistic *bonum* its ultimate foundation, which it has hitherto lacked.

Now there is another respect in which the authentic idea of value complements the Thomistic teaching: value is a metaphysically more potent form of good than is the Thomistic *bonum*; the authentic idea of value enables us to more justice to the being of good than has hitherto been done. The following section will attempt to make good this further claim.

### e) Value as a fundamental dimension of being; the failure of the Thomistic position to do justice to the being of good

Josef Seifert has made a significant contribution to metaphysics by distinguishing three fundamentally different ways in which a thing can be opposed to nothingness and can possess "being."<sup>76</sup> It can first of all have *inner unity, meaning, intelligibility*; it is thereby opposed to nothingness in the sense of the chaotic. The levels within this first dimension range from the arbitrary, the purely accidental, up to that which is strictly necessary and highly intelligible. But a thing can also emerge from nothingness by *having real existence, by being fully real*. The specific opposite of this dimension of being is found not in the chaotic but in things such as meanings of words, numbers, or persons or things which exist only in the imagination of others. These things are poor from the point of view of real existence, however rich they might be from the point of view of the first dimension of being. The Thomistic *ens*, as it is used in the metaphysics of *bonum*, seems mainly to express this second dimension of being. Thus it holds both for this Thomistic *ens* as well as for our second dimension of being, that it is most fully and most properly realized in substantial being. There

is yet a third dimension of being, a third way in which a thing can be opposed to nothingness: the dimension of *having value (des Wertvollseins)*. Its specific antithesis is neither the chaotic nor the substantial, but the neutral. A thing is opposed to nothingness in a fundamentally new way when it is not only meaningful and not only fully real, but is also radiant with *excellencia*, and has the preciousness of value; when it not only *is* but *ought to be*. While he emphasizes many and various relations among these three dimensions, Seifert does hold that these represent three fundamental *rationes* of being, or three different ways of opposing nothingness, none of which can be reduced to the others.

Let us consider what a tremendous step is taken in proceeding from the mere thought of a person, to the real existence of the person. I hear a person described in detail, yet I do not know whether he really exists; then I meet him, and encounter him as existing. How much is "added" by his existence! How much more being does he possess in virtue of the fact that he is not just imagined, not just a possible person, but a really existing person! Seifert wants to say that the *excellencia* of a thing, its *dignitas*, gives the thing a "weight of being" which is altogether comparable to the "weight of being" which the thing has as really existing.

The idea is not simply that having value is irreducible to the first two dimensions of being. That is of course a condition for speaking of a *third* dimension, but it does not by itself ground a new *dimension of being*. For the importance of the subjectively satisfying is also irreducible to the first two dimensions of being; it is not an aspect of a being's inner unity, or of a being's real existence. But this importance, however distinct from the first two dimensions of being, is not metaphysically potent, it does not ground a fundamental way in which a being can be opposed to nothingness, it is not comparable, as to metaphysical impact, to having real existence. This is why a value subjectivist, who recognizes only the importance of the subjectively satisfying (and thus has a concept of "value" altogether different from ours), would never dream of attempting a metaphysics of value. We have to look at the specific nature of value in order to see its metaphysical impact, and to see why Seifert is right to find in it a new dimension of being, comparable to the first two.

But before proceeding to try to bring this to evidence, let us say something about our use of the word "being." "Being" can refer to that in a thing whereby it is opposed to "nothingness"; or it can refer to some thing which has being, to a subject of being. The two senses of being occur together in the phrase, "the being of a being" ("*das Sein eines Seienden*"). We will often speak of "a thing" or of "something" instead of "a being," so as to avoid confusing the one sense of being with the other. Thus in calling a being "a thing" we do not reduce it to the level of a



physical object; we simply mean what Thomas means in referring to an *ens* by the word *aliquid*. These two senses of "being" are of course intimately interrelated. "Being" in the sense of "the being of a thing" is in no way real apart from some thing. It is a fundamental apriori law of ontology that "being" in this sense can only be real in some subject of being. Now it is important to see that, in speaking of the dimensions of being, we speak of being in the sense of that which has being. That which is opposed to nothingness is some subject of being. It is of course true that it is opposed to nothingness in virtue of its being; but all the same, it is some being which is strictly speaking that which is opposed to nothingness. If we apply this distinction to the second dimension of being, we can say that it is *ens*, or really existing being, which is opposed to nothingness. This second dimension does not exactly lie in *esse* or real existence; it is rather the case that really existing being, in virtue of its *esse*, has that fundamental "weight of being" which makes up the second dimension of being.<sup>77</sup> And in a similar way, we will try to show that it is valuable being, or being as excellent or noble, which makes up a third dimension of being. This third dimension does not exactly lie in the value of a being; it is rather the case that being as valuable has, in virtue of its value, that fundamental "weight of being" which makes up the third dimension of being. Observe that when we use the word "value" without a definite or indefinite article, we will usually be using it in the sense of "valuable being," and thus as the direct counterpart to "really existing being" (*ens*).

Let us now try to get to see the fundamental metaphysical impact, or the "weight of being," which value has.

Let us suppose that we knew much about the existence of the human race, and also grasped many characteristic features of man, but that we were completely value-blind, and had no idea whether a human being ranks higher than a stone, or a stone higher than a human being. How little we would know about man, how blind we would be to the full being of man, however much information we might have about him! Our idea of man would be reduced to a shadow of the full being of man. Or suppose that we were to have extensive knowledge of the Hitler years in Germany, but were to have no idea whether the deeds of Hitler were good or bad. (We can make the same point by simply *prescinding* from the value of the person, or by *prescinding* from the disvalue of Hitler's crimes: in so *prescinding*, we remove something from the being of each thing which is absolutely fundamental to it.) The fundamental "loss" suffered by a being when it is apprehended apart from its value and as merely neutral, shows what a fundamental dimension of being lies in value.

Let us imagine a world totally devoid of value, a world which we experience as neutral, or at best as merely subjectively important. In such

a world we could not love, revere, venerate, admire, praise, be grateful, for all these responses, and many others besides, presuppose value. Now I am not here exactly calling attention to the intolerable boredom and despair which man would experience in such a world. I rather call attention to how different, how radically different such a world would be from the point of view of fullness of being, from the world in which we live, where all these responses are possible and justified. A world full of beings which deserve, which are worthy of love, reverence, admiration, gratitude, etc., which enable man to transcend himself, which call him to commit himself, to sacrifice, to serve, is a world which presents a totally different "face" from the one presented by a neutral world; and not only that, a world full of value is incomparably "richer in being" than such a neutral world, it possesses a basic dimension of being lacking in the neutral world. The fundamental value responses are not just "subjective reactions" of man to the world, but rather possess such a seriousness, such a rationality, such an inner meaning, that they are a mirror of the metaphysical face of the world.

It is also instructive to consider the fiction of a God who had necessary existence, infinite power, infinite knowledge, but who was devoid of holiness and goodness, and was neutral from the point of view of value. It would not be good that He exist, He would simply exist; and He would not be worthy of adoration, glorification, obedience, gratitude from man. Religion would be destroyed in its very possibility, and God would be nothing more for man than a force to be reckoned with. How incomparably richer in being, how incomparably more truly God is the God who is infinite in holiness as well as in existence, and infinite in goodness as well as in power, who is worthy of adoration and glorification from man. Even if someone doubted whether such a God really existed, he could still see, simply by reflecting on the idea of God, how much "fuller in being" a thing is in virtue of having not only real existence but of also having the dignity and splendor of value.

We can go much farther in bringing to evidence the "weight of being" which is proper to value if we consider a most important feature about the relation of a thing to the value which it has. Insofar as a thing has value, it is good that it exists, it is worthy of its existence, it ought to exist. Let us develop the oughtness which flows from having value; this will enable us to develop the argument of this section.

Zosima's act of repentance, in virtue of its value, not only exists, but *ought* to exist: it is good that it exists. His beating of Afanasi, in virtue of its disvalue, ought not to have existed: it were better had it not existed.<sup>78</sup> We do not speak here of a moral ought, of a moral obligation to repent, or not to beat Afanasi; for a moral obligation dissolves when it is fulfilled. Here

we speak rather of an oughtness which inheres in the act of repentance as a peculiar modification of its existence. We could express the non-moral oughtness which we have in mind by saying that the act of repentance is worthy to exist, is "justified" in its existence. Actually, this worthiness to be is not exactly identical with the value of the repentance, but is rather something which *results from* the value, the repentance is worthy of existence only *because* it has value. This worthiness to be is the impact of this value on the existence of the act of repentance. We can also see the difference between value and this worthiness to be, if we consider that this worthiness is not as qualitative and as "material" a value datum as the value of the repentance.<sup>79</sup> What mainly interests us here is that it is profoundly characteristic for value to confer this worthiness to be on the being which has the value.

It is tempting to go on to say that it is characteristic for disvalue to confer an unworthiness on the being which has a disvalue. But this assertion, to the extent that it sets up a neat parallel to that which holds for value, is not correct. The unworthiness to be of a violent action like Zosima's is an "effect" which seems to presuppose not only the disvalue but also certain values as its "cause." This unworthiness to be is like a sentence pronounced on the being from the point of view of value. Just as the punishment imposed on a criminal by a just judge, depends not only on the crime but also on the justice of the judge, the "unworthiness to be" of a being seems to depend not only on its disvalue but also on certain values. It seems to be a kind of "response" from the world of value to some being in virtue of that being's disvalue. It is difficult to say just what the values are which make Zosima's violent deed "unworthy of being" at all; but it is clear that value in some form is presupposed for the constitution of this unworthiness. Just as no being, as we saw, deserves a negative value response merely in virtue of its disvalue, just as certain values also enter into the foundation of the negative value response, so no being is unworthy to be merely in virtue of its disvalue, value in some way enters into the axiological cause of this unworthiness.

We do not mean to say that every value possessed by a being makes that being as a whole worthy of existing. The intellectual values possessed by a morally evil man would be unable to confer this worthiness on his existence. On the basis of our insight into the relation between value and a "worthiness to be" we should say simply that the intellectual powers of such a man, insofar as they bear value, are justified in their existence, are worthy to be; but whether his personal existence as a whole is worthy to be, is another question. It is one thing to start with values, and to establish a certain "worthiness of existence" which their immediate bearer has; and this is all we meant to do above. It is something quite different to start

with a given being, and then to establish what kind of values, and what preponderance of these values over their corresponding disvalues, is required for that being as a whole to attain the worthiness of existence of which we speak.

We are quite clear as to the fact that this "worthiness to be" is predicated only analogously of God, of a just man, of a beautiful work of art, of a just law.

By the way, it should be noticed that this way of characterizing value importance throws into relief once again its independence from our satisfaction. For the fact that something is worthy of existence is clearly not identical with the fact that it is satisfying for us; nor could this worthiness ever flow from the importance which a thing has in virtue of being able to satisfy us. And in the same way, the fact that something is unworthy of existence is clearly not identical with the fact that it is dissatisfying for us; nor could this unworthiness ever flow from the importance which a thing has in virtue of being able to dissatisfy us.

Now I have discussed the worthiness to be which flows from the value of a thing in order to bring out what a potent new dimension of being lies in value. That it is a *new* dimension of being is clear; to be "justified" in existing is something utterly irreducible to simply existing. But more than that: to be justified in existing, to be worthy to exist, is "to be" in a profound sense, even though in a very different sense from being in the sense of really existing. As long as a thing lacks value, its existence is "accidental," "bluntly factual"; a thing becomes "installed" in existence, or better, "enthroned" in existence in a fundamentally new way when it *ought* to exist, when it is *worthy of* its existence in virtue of its value. If we again take up the fiction of a neutral God, we could say: a contingent person who was, by virtue of his moral stature, worthy to exist, would be metaphysically superior to a necessarily existing person who was neutral from the point of view of value; that contingent person would "be" in a sense in which this absolute person would "not be."<sup>80</sup>

We can go even further and say that in having value, a thing has in a certain way an even more potent "weight of being" than it has in existing. Since the value importance of a thing determines whether its existence is "justified" or not, the value importance "stands in judgment" on the thing as really existing. But there is no other dimension of being which in turn "stands in judgment" on a thing as having value; a valuable thing is not "ambiguous" until seen in the light of some other dimension of being in a thing.

This is not to deny that most values come into being only in really existing things and in this sense depend ontologically on real existence. The subject of being in which value becomes real usually has to be a



subject of real existence, and value in a way receives its actuality from the real existence of its subject. Nor is it to deny another dependence of value on existence. Insofar as the value of a thing grounds the worthiness of the thing to exist, insofar as the thing not only exists but ought to exist in virtue of its value: to that extent value is a certain modification of existence. A basic dimension of value (the worthiness of a thing to exist), then, depends on existence, not only in the sense of being made real by existence, but also in the sense of being a unique modification of existence. More on all this in the next chapter. Nevertheless, value is not thereby "judged by" the existence of beings. Value is not "judged by" any dimension of being in a thing but it "judges" real existence.

It will help us to grasp the "weight of being" which a thing has insofar as it is valuable, if we consider the "non-being" which flows from disvalue. A thing which is covered with disvalue is thereby not simply accidental in its existence, but unworthy of its existence, it ought not exist, it would be better if the thing did not exist. As a result, the thing does not thereby just lack a foundation in being, but is uprooted from being. It sinks into a kind of non-being *sui generis*: not the non-being of not existing, but the non-being of being unworthy of existence. Notice that it is only in the third dimension of being that we find a contrary opposite of being. Whereas a thing can only lack the being of real being, a thing can not only lack justification in its existence, it can be unjustified, condemned in its existence.

We are now ready to return to the Thomistic teaching on *bonum*.

We began this essay by considering what Thomas said about the way in which good does and does not "add" to really existing being. He said that good does not add to real being "as limiting and determining it in the way in which 'man' adds something to 'animal'" ("per modum contrahendi et determinandi, sicut homo addit aliquid super animal"<sup>81</sup>). For in this way it is the ten categories which add to real being; they express determinate modes of real being. Since *bonum* is found within each of the ten categories, it does not add to real being in this sense. Now this conclusion is in full agreement with both the nature of positive importance, and of value. Value — by which I here obviously mean "valuable being," or "being as valuable" — is not itself a mode or kind of real being, as, for instance, "substance" is. To regard value as a mode or kind of real being would be to compromise its character as a fundamental dimension of being which is irreducible to the dimension of real being and in some ways even superior to this dimension; one would reduce the third dimension of being to the second. Of course Thomas does not give this reason when he denies that good adds to being "per modum contrahendi." But the reason which he does give (namely that good, since it is found in all modes of being, cannot itself be such a mode), is sound. In any case, the

conclusion Thomas reaches is sound. It would be a very great mistake regarding value if one were to identify it with some mode of real being; and Thomas avoids this mistake.

There is another mistake which Thomas avoids concerning *bonum*. He refuses simply to identify *bonum* with his *ens*, even with his *ens* considered as fully actual or perfected. As we saw, the full actuality of *ens* forms only the basis of the Thomistic *bonum*; it does not make up the whole idea of *bonum*. Now this feature of *bonum*, too, is in full agreement with both the nature of positive importance, and, what especially interests us here, of value. If value were simply the perfection of real being in a thing, then value could hardly represent a fundamental dimension of being which is irreducible to the dimension of really existing being. The actuality of real being is not a new dimension of being but is situated preeminently *within* real being. Needless to say, however, this is not the reason which Thomas gives for regarding *bonum* as more than the full actuality of *ens*.

But the way in which he claims that *bonum* adds to *ens* seems to us to be altogether unsatisfactory. As we saw, he claims that *bonum* adds to the actuality of a being a certain "conceptual relation" to an *appetitus*. We have already raised objections against this theory, and have argued that value adds a great deal more to *ens* than such a relation; but now that we have brought out the fundamental dimension of being which value represents, we are ready to proceed to the most radical, the most fundamental of our objections.

If value represents a fundamental dimension of being, and one which is irreducible to real being, then it is impossible that value add nothing to real being except a certain relation to human striving. For this could never "amount to" a new dimension of being. This is why the knowability of being does not represent a new dimension of being. It is indeed a profound characteristic of being that it is open to the knowledge of a person; but this openness is found within any dimension of being, and is not sufficiently "something in its own right" as to constitute a new dimension of being, it does not involve "enough" being so as to do this. The same holds for the appetibility of being. Since value *does* represent a new dimension of being, it must be "more" than the Thomistic appetibility.

One could not possibly hold that the dimension of being which lies in real being is nothing but a thing considered in a certain relation to the person; really existing being could obviously not exist in the mode of being in which the knowability of being exists. The existence of a being is incomparably more than that being considered in some relation to a possible person. But if, as we have argued, valuable being is a *ratio* of being as fundamental as the *ratio* of real being, then it too is incomparably more than that being considered in relation to a possible *appetitus*.

We conclude, then, that value makes a fundamental metaphysical "addition" to *ens*, an addition which is excluded by the Thomistic *bonum*; value represents a fundamental dimension of being which has gone unnoticed in Thomism.

We could express our present criticism of the Thomistic position in terms of "perfection." We could say that, in addition to the full measure of real being which is proper to a given thing, which is the perfection of which Thomas primarily speaks, there is also the full measure of value which is proper to a given thing and which makes that thing not only real but worthy to be real. In other words, parallel to the two fundamental dimensions of being which we have been discussing, there are two kinds of perfection which a thing can attain. Our objection is that Thomism stresses primarily the first kind of perfection, and has not noticed the fundamentally different kind of perfection which is based on value. We cannot pursue here the question as to the relations between the two kinds of perfection.

We could also put our criticism this way. If we inquire into the "being" of a valuable thing, and take "being" in the broadest sense of that which in any way "is," then we find that the value of the thing does not "add" anything to the thing but is rather comprised in the "being" of the thing. Not of course in the being of the thing in the sense of the real existence of the thing, but in the being of the thing all the same. If we take "being" in our broad sense, then the question of Thomas, "what does good add to being?" is a misguided question, which sets us looking for the value of a thing outside the being of a thing, whereas it is really to be found within the being of the thing.

This way of putting our criticism shows how this criticism, despite the fact that it is a fundamental one, nevertheless leads us to agree with one of the deepest intentions of the Thomistic teaching. We saw toward the end of Chapter 1 that Thomas affirms the being of good and the non-being of evil. Though we have found it impossible to identify good with real being (*ens*), or even to identify it with real being considered as a final cause, we have nevertheless found that good in the sense of value is a fundamental dimension of being. We of course in no way deny or disparage the order of real existence, which is central to the Thomistic metaphysics. We only maintain that the dimension of real being is not the only dimension of being, and that, if we think it is, we cannot do justice to the being of value.<sup>82</sup>

## Chapter 4

### The Unity of Value with the Being Which Has It

If we were to conclude our essay at this point, we would have developed our subject in a very incomplete way. For we would have said much about the irreducibility of value to real being, but too little about the unity of value with the being which has it. We would expose ourselves to the misunderstanding that there is no real unity between value and the being which has it, with the result that we would seem to mean that value exists in some mysterious state of detachment from being, and that beings are not really and in themselves good and valuable. And so we devote our concluding chapter to some (though by no means all) fundamental aspects of unity of value and the being which has the value.

It is essential to realize that nothing which we have said in the preceding chapter in any way hinders us from proceeding to do justice to the unity of value with the being which has it. We are under no compulsion to make the mistake which Heinrich Rickert makes in his value philosophy. "Everything which merely exists has something in common which distinguishes it from everything which has the character of value."<sup>83</sup> These words, of course, might even be taken in a sense close to ours; but Rickert thinks that they entitle him to go on:

And so the world is divided into two sharply separated spheres, which, in spite of all the relations and bonds found between them, have to be strictly separated from each other in our thinking . . . The irreal values form a closed domain which is separate from all really existing objects, which form another closed domain.<sup>84</sup>

Rickert here goes recklessly beyond what he sees. He sees that value is irreducibly distinct from the real existence of the beings which have value, as well as from all those properties which make up these beings, but he is betrayed into claiming that value forms a separate domain with respect to real being.

A similar mistake is often made in the philosophy of body and soul. If a philosopher rejects the various forms of materialism, including the more refined ones, and holds that the soul is itself something utterly non-material, then a good part of the philosophical world proceeds to denounce him for violently sundering man into two parts, and for providing for only an external connection between them. They think that distinction

means separation, and they are unable to understand those profound forms of unity which precisely presuppose distinct things as the basis of the unity. Of course I do not mean that the relation between body and soul is in all respects just like the relation between value and the being which has it. I only mean that in philosophy of man as well as in value philosophy there are crucial distinctions to be made which in no way commit us to unnatural separations.

Observe that it is not only value philosophers like Rickert who run the danger of taking the irreducible distinctness of value with respect to real being or with respect to inner meaning in a thing, as evidence for the existence of value as a separate realm. The critics of value philosophy can make the same mistake. If any of my readers think that, in virtue of my investigations in Chapter 3, I have to hold a position like that of Rickert, then they too erroneously identify distinction and separation; they follow Rickert in his mistake.

There are of course many other reasons and motives which have led certain value philosophers (such as Hartmann, and even Scheler) wrongly to isolate value from being, and also wrongly to "idealize" value. Rather than discuss them all critically (though this would be a very fruitful investigation) we turn now to a brief investigation of some aspects of the unity of value with the being which has it. We want to show that valuable beings really are themselves valuable, that their value is grounded in them, and proceeds from their innermost being. It is not as if beings, because of the irreducibility of value to real being, were in themselves neutral, with the value which enriches the world existing someplace outside of them. Indeed, we want to show that our value philosophy, in virtue of the authentic idea of value on which it is based, can do far more justice to the unity of good with a good being than can the Thomistic philosophy of *bonum* and *ens*.

#### a) Value importance, like importance in general, becomes real only in beings

Though one can call value importance "importance in itself," values and disvalues do not become real in and through themselves; they are not subsisting beings, they are not "subjects" of being. They become real only in and through some being which has them, and this being cannot in turn be a value or disvalue. Values and disvalues become real only in valuable and disvaluable (*sit venia verbo*) beings. Thus if there were only values and disvalues in the world, there could be no values and disvalues. We have been constantly presupposing this basic truth in discussing value importance. Our examples of value importance have all been examples of the importance of *some being*; and in speaking of value in general, we have

constantly spoken in terms such as "the value of a being." This belonging of importance to a being is not peculiar to value importance, but holds for importance in general, as we saw at the end of section a) in Chapter 2.

This is not to deny that there are "necessary essences," or "necessary essential plans" (to speak with Josef Seifert), or εἶδη for value importance, for value and disvalue, and for the particular kinds and families of value. Each essential feature of value which we have shown and will yet show, presupposes the existence of such "necessary essential plans." These essential plans do not exist only in individual valuable beings; Seifert has shown conclusively that these essential plans have a being "outside of" and "above" the individual beings for which they are the plans.<sup>85</sup> But the existence of such plans in no way contradicts what we just maintained; for these plans are not themselves values. They are the laws according to which values can become real; these laws are clearly distinct from the values which they make possible. Even if these plans were themselves to have some value, the dependency of value on being which we asserted above would not be contradicted, for this value would not subsist in itself, but exist only in the plans which had the value.

This leads to the question whether importance becomes real only in really existing beings, or whether at least certain forms of it can become real in entities such as "ideal beings," or such as "beings of meaning" (concepts, judgments, etc.), or beings which exist only as the objects of intentional acts, etc. I bypass this question and, for the sake of our discussion with Thomism, restrict the scope of this chapter to value importance which becomes real in really existing beings.

Not only does value importance become real only in some subject; it also forms a unity with its subject. Let us see how this is reflected in our acts of responding. We saw that it holds for importance in general that we are almost never interested in the importance itself, considered in isolation from the important being, but in the being which has the importance. We are interested in the being in virtue of the importance. This is especially verified in value importance.<sup>86</sup> We do not love the preciousness of a person, while prescinding from the person himself; we rather love a person in virtue of his or her preciousness. In admiring another, we admire the other in virtue of some value in him, we do not admire the value as distinguished from the other person. In discussing due relation, we said that what deserves a certain response is not some value as distinguished from the being which has it, but some being in virtue of its value. In respecting another person and not using him only as a means, we do not exactly show respect to the "absolute worth" (Kant) of the person; though this "absolute worth" is that which specifically grounds our respect, our respect refers to the person himself.

Of course we can perform acts of intending or conceiving value importance as distinct from the being which has it. We performed such an act in order to formulate the last sentence! But our responding seems to be directed almost always to a valuable being. And this seems to reflect the unity of value importance with the being which realizes it.

Our value language also reflects this unity, for as we saw, many of our value words (though by no means all) have a meaning which refers both to a value datum and to some aspect of the being which has it. Thus "reverence" refers both to a certain moral attitude and to its moral value.

Von Hildebrand has seen the need, not only for the concept of value, but also for concepts which refer to a valuable or a disvaluable being. Whenever he speaks of a "good" or an "evil," he means a "being having a value," or a "being having a disvalue."<sup>87</sup> Even the term "a value" often takes on for him the sense of "a valuable being."

But we want to try to find a dimension of the unity of value with the valuable being which is proper to value and which distinguishes value from the other categories of importance. We will find what we are looking for if we turn to the structure of our value knowledge, and see that our knowledge of the value of a being depends, and indeed exclusively depends, on our knowledge of certain crucial aspects of the being itself. In discussing this feature of our value knowledge, we will be led to see how the value of a being "grows out" of the being.

#### **b) The dependency of our value knowledge on our knowledge of the being which has value, and how this shows the groundedness of value in the being which has value.**

We can get to know value importance only on the basis of knowledge of the being which is valuable. We can get to know the disvalue of Zosima's violent deed only by considering the deed itself; it would be absurd for someone to apprehend this disvalue without apprehending any features of the deed, without knowing anything about its motivation, or its violence, or the circumstances in which it occurred. This is why value discussions are often conducted in terms of certain facts. If someone did not see anything wrong in Zosima's action, we would not directly try to point out its disvalue, we would rather call the other's attention to the arbitrary irritation which led Zosima to strike Afanasi, and to the absence in Zosima of any justified grievance against Afanasi, as well as to the great violence which Zosima used. This is not because we would *identify* the disvalue with any of these features of Zosima's deed, but because these features determine the disvalue of his deed; the disvalue "flashes up" in these features, it "follows" them, it is mediated to our knowledge through

them.

This dependency of our value perception on some apprehension of the being which has value importance, is not a dependency which is in any way relative to the weakness of our minds. There is of course a dependency of our knowledge which really is thus relative. Such a dependency is given whenever we need a proof in order to know something which could in principle be known immediately and without proof. Thus Thomas Aquinas holds that the only natural knowledge we have of God's existence is based on deductive proofs which start from certain features of the world. This is not because God is intrinsically knowable only by deductive proof, but rather because, from the weakness of our knowing powers, such a deduction is the only way in which we men can get to know His existence. By contrast the necessity of knowing value importance on the basis of some knowledge of its being, is not relative to any weakness in our knowing powers. It rather lies in the nature of value knowledge that it "goes through" the knowledge of the valuable being.

This feature of our value knowledge is very important for our present analysis, for it implies that the dependency of our value knowledge on the thing which has value "reflects" or "corresponds to" a real dependency of the value on the being. It implies that we can get at the character of this real dependency by "going through" the structure of our value knowledge.

In reflecting on this dependency in our value knowledge, we are led to make a crucial distinction with regard to the "being which has value." We can distinguish between this being, and those moments or features of the being which especially ground the value.<sup>88</sup> Thus a given man is the being which has the dignity of the human person; but it is especially his typically personal faculties (knowledge, freedom, etc.) which ground this dignity. Again: Zosima is the being who has the value of his repentance, but this value is grounded in the structure of the act, in the particular way in which he "takes back" and disavows his deed of violence. Let us distinguish between the being which has value and the "bearer" of value, and let us understand by the latter those "grounding moments" in a being which determine its value. We cannot here pursue the different ways in which this distinction is modified in the different kinds of value.

It will be recalled that we touched upon the concept of "grounding moments" in discussing importance in general in Chapter 2 a). But these moments, as we will see, play a stronger role in grounding value importance than in grounding other kinds of importance; only in the case of value importance do they ground importance *completely*, and without reference to the satisfaction or the objective welfare of other persons."

We make the distinction between the being which has value and the

bearer of value at this point in our article, when we are discussing value knowledge, since it is specifically the bearer of value importance which forms the basis of our value knowledge. Let us now elaborate somewhat further the structure of our value knowledge.

There is a misunderstanding of this dependency of our value knowledge which we have to identify and to exclude. In speaking of apprehending value importance on the basis of apprehending the bearer of it, we are not speaking of a *formal deduction* of value importance. Surely the apprehension of importance in our examples is nothing like a formal deduction: the disvalue of Zosima's violent action is not formally deduced from the facts about the action; nor is the value of his repentance formally deduced from any facts regarding the repentance. It is not difficult to understand why values and disvalues are never formally deduced from any facts about their bearers. As has often been observed, if an argument contains no value term in its premises, it cannot contain one in its conclusion. Furthermore: the move from premise to conclusion in a deduction involves more of a "step," more of a movement "from one thing to another," than is found in our apprehension of value importance on the basis of the bearer. The unity of a being with its value importance is so close that our knowledge cannot take such a "step" in proceeding from the former to the latter. This is why, although a conclusion is usually apprehended after apprehending the premises, value importance need not be apprehended later in time than the bearer; it can be and commonly is apprehended simultaneously with the bearer, even if in dependency on the bearer. This is also why our apprehension of value importance, though it goes through our apprehension of the bearer, is nevertheless fully intuitive; value importance is not withdrawn from our intuition as the truth of a formally deduced thesis commonly is.

This consideration is of the greatest importance for the much-agitated question concerning the deducing of "values" from "facts." If one means with "value" something like what we mean, then it is of course true, as we just observed, that no formal deduction of values from neutral facts is possible. *But this does not mean that it is impossible to get to know values and disvalues in and through our knowledge of certain facts.* Indeed, this is the very *forma* of all our value knowledge. Of course the facts on which value knowledge is based lie at a much deeper level of a being than those which reveal themselves to mere empirical observation.

There is yet another misunderstanding to be avoided. I am not saying that those features of a being which determine its value or disvalue are always apprehended with a high degree of theoretical clarity, so that one can always clearly identify them and formulate them. They might instead be grasped in an implicit way, and the person who grasps them might be

quite at a loss if asked in virtue of what particular moments a being has value importance. This is especially the case with regard to aesthetic value importance, where it can be notoriously difficult to articulate just what it is about a thing which makes it beautiful. Indeed, it is a surprising fact that we can sometimes more readily identify the value or disvalue of a being than we can those moments of a being in virtue of which it has the value or disvalue. It is necessary to stress the existence of a merely implicit apprehension of those moments in a being which explain its value importance, for it might otherwise be thought that, where value importance is apprehended without any explicit apprehension of these moments, it is apprehended without any knowledge of the bearer at all. This is in fact a fairly exact description of the mistake which Max Scheler has committed in several places.<sup>89</sup> This epistemological mistake leads him to posit an unjustified separation of values from beings.

The fact, however, that our perception of value importance can be theoretically more conscious than our perception of those features of the important being which explain and ground the value importance, leads to further evidence for the distinction between value importance and its bearer. Let us digress for a moment in order to show this. If we can identify the value or disvalue of a being, as when a personality strikes us as awe-inspiring, yet can be at a loss to say just what it is about him which explains his value stature, then this value stature (we assume that there is no mistake in the perception of it) evidently has to be distinguished from those features of the personality which make him awe-inspiring. If this were not so and if value importance really were identical with certain features of its being, then one and the same thing would, at one and the same time, both be able to be consciously articulated and not able to be consciously articulated by us, which is impossible.

But there is still more to the dependency of our value knowledge. We cannot know whether the value of a thing is a fully actual value and not just a possible value, unless we know whether the thing really exists. I can "go through" a bearer in the manner which we have been describing, even in the case of characters and events in a novel. But in order to get at the actuality of value I have to "go through" the actuality, the real existence of the valuable thing (let it be remembered that we are restricting our discussion in this chapter to the value importance which occurs in really existing beings). It would clearly be impossible (apart from certain aesthetic values) to know the actuality of value importance while as yet not knowing whether the valuable thing were only imagined, or fully actual. And so we can say that the value importance of a thing is apprehended both on the basis of the essence<sup>90</sup> of the thing (primarily those features of the essence which constitute the bearer of value) and on the basis of its

existence.

We introduced this section of our essay by saying that we were looking for a unity between value importance and beings which distinguishes the value importance from the other kinds of importance. Now it might be objected that our knowledge of the importance of the subjectively satisfying is just like our knowledge of value importance. It might seem that the thirsty man can apprehend both the character and the actuality of the subjective importance of the water for him in no other way than on the basis of apprehending its power to quench thirst. But if we ask, not just what it takes to *apprehend* the importance of a being, but what it takes to *understand why* the being has the importance which it has, then a crucial difference shows itself. The bearer of value importance not only serves as the basis for our apprehension of its value importance; it also has in itself the reason for its value importance. The nature of Zosima's action makes it completely understandable why it has a great disvalue; the nature of his repentance makes it completely understandable why it has a great value. But subjective importance, such as the importance of the water for the thirsty man, is only partially understandable in terms of the bearer of the importance. The aptitude of the water to quench thirst does not by itself make this subjective importance understandable; many people may apprehend this aptitude and yet find the water quite neutral. We have also to consider the thirst of someone which can be quenched by the water; only then can we understand the importance which he finds in the water. This does not mean that someone's thirst is part of the bearer of the subjective importance; it is rather the case that someone's thirst gives the water's power to quench thirst the "support" which it needs in order to bear importance. But in order to grasp the value of a being, we do not have to consider the being in relation to our satisfaction; our apprehension of value does not need any such support, the being itself (or the being taken in relation to some other thing to which it meaningfully refers, as in the case of an intentional act or attitude which has value) makes its value importance intelligible.

Something similar holds for the importance of a beneficial good for the person. If we consider the great good for the person of being loved by another, we find that an inquiry into the love of the other will never, by itself, disclose the importance which this love has as a beneficial good for the one who is loved. Though such an inquiry will lead us to see the value of love, it will not lead us to see the love as an objective good for the other. In order to see this we have also to consider the nature of the one who is loved, and understand why it is that, in being loved, he is so deeply benefitted; only then is it possible to find importance of the third category in the love.

Let us now move from the epistemological to the ontological and

axiological level of the analysis. We could say that our value knowledge shows that value is not only supported in being by a valuable being, but "grows out" of a being, that it "proceeds from" the existence of a being and from certain crucial elements of its essence (those which make up the bearer), and is entirely grounded in these factors.<sup>91</sup> But the importance of the subjectively satisfying does not "grow out" of a being. In comparison to value, this subjective importance seems, at least in many cases, more to be "superimposed" on a being than to "grow out" of it. As for the importance of the beneficial good for the person, it is not indeed superimposed on a being; the character of love as an objective good for the person, far from being superimposed on love, is deeply characteristic for its nature. But this character does not "grow out" of the nature of love alone, but out of the nature of love and of the human person taken together. Only the value of love "grows out" of the nature of love itself. And in general: only the importance of value "grows out" of a being, and "shows forth" the being itself. This distinguishes the groundedness of value in beings, from the dependency of the other two categories of importance on beings.

We can bring out still more the sense in which value grows out of a valuable being. Let us try to understand why value inheres in a being in a different and more radical way than many an accident inheres in its substance. An accident of a material substance, such as its color or shape, is not apprehended *on the basis* of some aspect of the being which has the property. It is almost the other way around: I come to know the material substance through knowing its properties; I apprehend the substance in and through its properties. But with value importance, I can apprehend importance only on the basis of some knowledge of the bearer. Or we can put it this way: an accident such as color can be apprehended with an immediacy which is impossible to the apprehension of value importance. Color gives itself to our minds immediately, without forcing our perception to "go through" something else; even if other things besides the color are given with the color (such as the extension of the colored body), the perception of the color does not occur *on the basis* of the perception of these other things. But value importance gives itself to the mind only on the basis of some apprehension of the important being (though it gives itself intuitively to the mind, as we saw). This seems to reflect the fact that value importance inheres in a being and depends upon it in an essentially different and deeper way than an accident like color inheres in a body.

This "growing out" of a being is not identical with the fact that value importance is intrinsic or essential to the bearer of value importance. The best way to show this is to point out properties of a being which, though they are essential to it, do not "grow out" of it as value importance grows out of its bearer. Let us take it as an essential property of matter that it is extended in space. This modality of a material body is clearly not ap-



prehended on the basis of apprehending a material body, it is not apprehended in the way in which value importance is apprehended on the basis of apprehending the being which has it. Our apprehension of the extension of a material body does not "follow" our apprehension of that material body. Extension in space can be grasped with the same immediacy with which the extended being can be grasped. Our knowledge of extension in material bodies shows, therefore, that not only an accident but even a modality can fail to "grow out" of a being in the way in which value grows out of a valuable being.

In "growing out" of a being, value shows itself to be thoroughly "formed" by the being, to be "full of" the being, to be a kind of radiance of the being.<sup>92</sup>

Once we see this, we can go farther and understand that the objectivity of value involves far more than simply not being generated by our subjective satisfaction, and far more than not being for someone's objective welfare. For this characterization of value's objectivity strictly speaking leaves open the possibility that value is after all dependent on some other level of human subjectivity. For instance, it might seem to leave open the possibility that values are constituted by our social structures, or by our historical era. But if value "grows out" of a being in the sense explained, then it participates in the objectivity of the being which has value; and it is as little constituted by the human subject as are the real beings in which we find value.<sup>93</sup>

Let us conclude this section by observing that the results which we have achieved in discussing the unity of a being with its value do not hold for that value importance which could be called "borrowed." If we think of the importance which a means has, of the fact that it is desired for the sake of an end possessing value and not for its own sake, we have before our minds a kind of "borrowed" value importance; the means "borrows" value importance from the value of the end.<sup>94</sup> Or if we think of the way in which an object becomes precious through its contact with a beloved person — consider, for example, how precious the books, the clothes, etc., of a beloved person become for the one who loves him or her, especially after the death of the beloved person — then we have before our minds another kind of "borrowed" value importance. Borrowed value importance can of course exist only in beings, and is borne by them, and is insofar dependent on them; but it does not inhere in them in the way in which the value importance which we have been investigating inheres in its bearer. Borrowed importance cannot be perceived by considering only the being which has it; we have also to consider the being, and especially the value of the being, from which it is borrowed. This reflects the fact that it does not grow out of its bearer in the way in which non-borrowed, or, as

we could say, "originary" value importance does.

**c) Our final criticism of the Thomistic position: it cannot do justice to the fact that the being is really good.**

We have by now disposed of the Thomistic objection that value philosophy compromises the real immanence of good in beings, and thus the real goodness of beings. If the value of a being "grows out" of the being, if it receives its whole character from the character of the valuable being, and receives its actuality from the real existence of the valuable being, then it is clear that the being *really is itself* valuable. Any attempt to put values in an ideal sphere and to hold that they primarily exist there, and that beings are in themselves neutral is, in our judgment and for the reasons we have given, utterly opposed to the true nature of value and being. The thesis of Heidegger that values are a "desecration" of being is, as far as the authentic idea of value goes, *the very opposite of the truth*. It is rather a desecration of a being to ignore the value preciousness which proceeds from a thing and which, as we saw, makes up such a fundamental dimension of the being of the thing.

Indeed, we have to turn the objection against the Thomistic position itself: it is this position, and not the insights of authentic value philosophy, which compromise the immanence of good in beings. For according to Thomas, as we saw in some detail in Chapter 1, being is not good *simpliciter*, or in itself, but only insofar as it is *appetibile* for another or for itself. In being *appetibile* or *bonum*, a being does not *really* acquire anything, but only *conceptually*. This is not to deny that, according to Thomas, being is, in virtue of its very nature (and of the nature of *appetitus*) *appetibile*. Thomas of course holds this, even as he holds, and quite rightly, that being is, in virtue of its very nature (and the nature of the person), knowable. But the Thomistic teaching on *bonum* implies that there is a very definite sense in which beings are in themselves neutral, and not really good. For if we prescind from the character which beings acquire in virtue of being final causes of an *appetitus*, then the goodness of these beings disappears; while their being remains intact their goodness has been eliminated. We can probe a given being ever so profoundly: we will never, as long as we stay with that being and with its nature and actuality, find goodness in it. We will find indeed the basis for goodness; but goodness itself is given only when we go outside the being and see it in relation to an *appetitus*.

It is clear that our "value" is far more truly *in* beings than is the Thomistic *bonum*; it grows out of them and is proper to them in a way which is quite impossible for the Thomistic *bonum*. Beings have value far more radically than they have *bonum* in the Thomistic sense. Beings are

more truly and properly valuable than they are *bonum*: for they are valuable "in themselves," but "in themselves" they lack *bonum*, even as they lack the importance of the subjectively satisfying or the importance of the beneficial good for the person. Though we insisted above that value is in various respects "more" than the Thomistic *bonum*, this criticism, far from having the effect of breaking up the immanence of good in beings, enables us to do much greater justice to this immanence.<sup>95</sup>

To conclude: we hold with Thomism the being of good and the real goodness of beings; and we submit that these fundamental metaphysical truths can be adequately and convincingly maintained, not on the basis of the traditional idea of *bonum*, but only on the basis of the authentic idea of value.

## NOTES

### Introduction

1. From his *De Hebdom.*; quoted by Thomas in *Summa Theologiae*, I, q.5, a.1, first objection. "I perceive that in nature the fact that things are good is one thing: that they are is another." This and all other English translations of texts from the *Summa* will be taken from the first volume of the two-volume translation of the *Summa* by the fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York, Benzinger).

2. Krell (ed.), *Martin Heidegger: Basic Writings* (New York, 1977), p. 228.

3. Helmut Kuhn, "Eine Philosophie des Sich-Verlierens: Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889-1977)," in *Communio* Heft 6 (Nov./Dez. 1977), p. 560. "Die auf Nietzsche zurückgehende Trennung aber der Werte vom Sein . . . setzt ein Sein voraus, das seines metaphysisch-religiösen Gehaltes beraubt ist — ein Rumpf-Sein, das Resultat teils des modernen Nihilismus, teils der positivistischen Leugnung der Philosophie im Namen der Wissenschaft." J. B. Lotz, in his "Sein und Wert. Das Grundproblem der Wertphilosophie," in *Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie* 57 (1933), pp. 557-613, develops this and other objections against modern value philosophy, and tries to show that only the Thomistic *bonum* can do justice to the unity of being and good.

4. There is of course the significant work of Edith Stein, *Endliches und Ewiges Sein* (Wien, 1962), in which she attempts a kind of synthesis between the phenomenological realism in which she was formed and Thomistic metaphysics. But she devotes only a few pages to the relation between value and *bonum* (pp. 293-296), and thinks that the idea of value can be easily "absorbed" into the Thomistic teaching on *bonum*. Even though she is working with Scheler's idea of value, which as we will see, differs from our idea of value in some crucial points, it is still surprising that she does not notice any fundamental problems in bringing together value and *bonum* in a unified metaphysics of good. The idea of reforming the traditional teaching on *bonum* on the basis of value philosophy does not occur to her.

A work by a value philosopher which comes somewhat closer to the project which we will attempt in this essay is Johannes Hessen, *Lehrbuch der Philosophie, II: Wertlehre* (Munich/Basel, 1959), pp. 39-61. A good deal closer to us is Hans Reiner, *Die Grundlagen der Sittlichkeit* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1974), pp. 145-160. But neither of these two authors deals at any great length with the Thomistic *bonum*, and with the Thomistic objections to value philosophy. And they do not touch on a number of the basic objections to the Thomistic *bonum* which are central to my essay.

### Chapter I

5. Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, translated by Robert Schmidt (Chicago, 1954), p. 6. Henceforth, *D.Q.T.* All quotes, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from Volume III. "Cum autem ens sit id quod primo cadit in conceptione mentis, ut dicit Avicenna, oportet quod omne illud nomen vel sit synonymum enti; quod de bono dici non potest, cum non nugatorie dicatur ens bonum; vel addat aliquid ad minus secundum rationem . . ." (q. XXI, a.1).

6. *D.Q.T.*, p. 5. "Uno modo quod addat aliquam rem quae sit extra essentiam illius rei cui



dicitur addi; sicut album addit super corpus, quia essentia albedinis est praeter essentiam corporis. Alio modo dicitur aliquid addi super alterum per modum contrahendi et determinandi; sicut homo addit aliquid super animal . . ." (q. XXI, a. 1).

7. *D.Q.T.*, p. 5. "Non autem potest esse quod super ens universale aliquid addat aliquid primo modo, quamvis illo modo possit fieri aliqua additio super aliquod ens particulare; nulla enim res naturae quae sit extra essentiam entis universalis, quamvis aliqua res sit extra essentiam huius entis. Secundo autem modo inveniuntur aliqua addere super ens, quia ens contrahitur per decem genera, quorum unumquodque addit aliquid super ens; non aliquod accidens, vel aliquam differentiam quae sit extra essentiam entis, sed determinatum modum essendi, qui fundatur in ipsa essentia rei. Sic autem bonum non addit aliquid super ens: cum bonum dividatur aequaliter in decem genera, ut ens, ut patet in *I Ethicor* . . ." (q. XXI, a. 1).

8. *D.Q.T.*, p. 25. "Nam unumquodque dicitur esse ens in quantum absolute consideratur; bonum vero . . . secundum respectum ad alia" (q. XXI, a. 5).

9. *D.Q.T.*, Volume I, p. 6. "convenientiam ergo entis ad appetitum exprimit hoc nomen *bonum*" (q. I, a. 1).

10. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, p. 91. Henceforth, *S.T.* "sicut bonum habet rationem appetibilis supra ens, ita verum habet ordinem ad cognitionem. . . . sicut bonum addit rationem appetibilis supra ens, ita et verum comparisonem ad intellectum" (I, q. 16, a. 3).

11. *D.Q.T.*, p. 7. "Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod, cum ens dicatur absolute, bonum autem superaddat habitudinem causae finalis; ipsa essentia rei absolute considerata sufficit ad hoc quod per eam dicatur aliquid ens, non autem ad hoc quod per eam dicatur aliquid bonum . . ." (q. XXI, a. 1, ad 1).

12. *S.T.*, p. 89. "Sicut autem bonum est in re, in quantum habet ordinem ad appetitum . . ." (I, q. 16, a. 1).

13. *D.Q.T.*, p. 7. "In quantum autem unum ens est secundum esse suum perfectivum alterius et conservativum, habet rationem finis respectu illius quod ab eo perficitur; et inde est quod omnes recte definientes bonum ponunt in ratione ejus aliquid quod pertineat ad habitudinem finis; unde Philosophus dicit in *I Ethic.*, quod *bonum optime definiunt dicentes, quod bonum est quod omnia appetunt*. Sic ergo primo et principaliter dicitur bonum ens perfectivum alterius per modum finis . . ." (q. XXI, a. 1).

14. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, translated by Armand Maurer (Toronto, 1949), p. 28. "Uno modo, quod dividitur per decem genera; alio modo, quod significat propositionum veritatem. Horum autem differentia est, quia secundo modo potest dici ens omne illud de quo affirmative propositio formari potest, etiamsi illud in re nihil ponat; per quem modum privationes et negationes entia dicuntur: dicimus enim quod affirmatio est opposita negationi, et quod caecitas est in oculo. Sed primo modo non potest dici aliquid quod sit ens, nisi quod in re aliquid ponat. Unde primo modo caecitas et huiusmodi non sunt entia . . ." *De Ente et Essentia*, Chapter I.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 29. ". . . ens absolute et per prius dicitur de substantiis, et per posterius et quasi secundum quid de accidentibus . . ." (Chapter 2 in the Marietti edition).

16. Consider, for example, his discussion of mathematical entities, which he terms *entia quaedam*. He poses the objection that, if every being is good, then mathematical entities should be good; yet Aristotle denied this. Thomas answers: "Ad quantum dicendum quod mathematica non subsistunt separata secundum esse: quia si subsisterent, esset in eis bonum, scilicet ipsum esse ipsorum. Sunt autem mathematica separata secundum rationem tantum, prout abstrahuntur a motu et a materia" (*S.T.*, I q. 5, art. 3, ad 4). It seems that the *ens* which is *bonum* is only substantial, subsistent being, or that being, such as an accident, which is real in a substantial being; this is why it is to be expected that mathematical entities, which lack this being, should also lack goodness.

17. *S.T.*, p. 92. ". . . verum propinquius se habet ad ens, quod est prius, quam bonum. Nam verum respicit ipsum esse simpliciter et immediate: ratio autem boni consequitur esse, secundum quod est aliquo modo perfectum; sic enim appetibile est" (I, q. 16, a. 4).

18. *S.T.*, p. 25. "Respondeo dicendum quod omne ens, in quantum est ens, est bonum. Omne enim ens, in quantum est ens, est in actu, et quodammodo perfectum: quia omnis actus perfectio quaedam est. Perfectum vero habet rationem appetibilis et boni . . ." (I, q. 5, a. 3).

19. Cf., for instance, *S.T.*, I-II, q.1, a.5, where Thomas answers negatively the question "whether one man can have several last ends." It is important to realize that, with regard to the perfection for which man is said to strive, Thomas distinguishes *that in which* man attains his perfection, which is God; and the *possession* of his perfection, which is happiness (I-II, q.2, a.7).

20. *S.T.*, p. 29. "Unumquodque enim dicitur bonum, secundum quod est perfectum. Perfectio autem alicuius rei triplex est. Prima quidem, secundum quod in suo esse constituitur. Secunda vero, prout ei aliqua accidentia superadduntur, ad suam perfectam operantiam necessaria. Tertia vero perfectio alicuius est per hoc, quod aliquid aliud attingit sicut finem" (I, q. 6, a. 3).

21. *D.Q.T.*, p. 25. ". . . sciendum est, quod, ut ex dictis patet, sicut ens multiplicatur per substantiale et accidentale, sic bonitas multiplicatur; sed tamen inter utrumque differt. Quia aliquid dicitur ens esse absolute propter suum esse substantiale, sed propter esse accidentale non dicitur esse absolute . . . De bono autem est e converso. Nam secundum substantialem bonitatem dicitur aliquid bonum secundum quid, secundum vero accidentalem dicitur aliquid bonum simpliciter; unde hominem injustum non dicimus bonum simpliciter, sed secundum quid, in quantum est homo; hominem vero justum dicimus simpliciter bonum" (q. XXI, a. 5).

22. *S.T.*, p. 23. ". . . intueor in rebus aliud esse quod sunt bona, et aliud esse quod sunt" (I, q. 5, a. 1, first objection).

23. *D.Q.T.*, p. 10. "Respondeo dicendum, quod cum ratio boni in hoc consistat quod aliquid sit perfectivum alterius per modum finis, omne id quod invenitur habere rationem

finis, habet et rationem boni. Duo autem sunt de ratione finis; ut scilicet sit appetitum vel desideratum ab his quae finem nondum attingunt, aut sit dilectum, et quasi delectabile, ab his quae finem participant; cum ejusdem rationis sit tendere in finem, et in fine quodammodo quiescere; sicut per eandem naturam lapis movetur ad medium, et quiescit in medio. Haec autem duo inveniuntur competere ipsi esse. Quae enim nondum esse participant, in esse quodam naturali appetitu tendunt; unde et materia appetit formam . . . Omnia autem quae jam esse habent, illud esse suum naturaliter amant, et ipsum tota virtute conservant . . . Ipsum igitur esse habet rationem boni" (q. XXI, a. 2).

24. For more on the Thomistic teaching, see Fritz Joachim von Rintelen, *Values in European Thought* (Pamplona, 1972), pp. 302-305, 317-416.

25. For more on the Thomistic *malum*, see Charles Journet, *The Meaning of Evil* (New York, 1963), especially ch. ii.

## Chapter 2

26. Von Hildebrand, *Ethics* (Chicago, 1972), chs. i and ii. These chapters form the starting point for our investigations in this chapter.

27. Let us state more exactly our debt to von Hildebrand in this essay. In sections a, c, and d of ch. iii we simply explain in our own way his discovery of value. In the present chapter and in ch. iv we attempt to build on his work and to carry it further. The dialogue with the Thomistic *bonum* which is dispersed throughout our essay also builds on his work; he did not develop this dialogue himself in his writings.

28. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Book VI, 2, c. At the time of the incident which we report, his name was of course not yet Zosima, but we will here and below call this great Dostoevsky figure by the name by which he is primarily known.

29. In distinguishing these two kinds of importance we follow von Hildebrand, *op. cit.*, p. 34 and ff. In ch. iii, section a of this essay we will develop von Hildebrand's distinction between these two kinds of importance much more fully than we do here.

30. On the presuppositions for an illusion, see Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis objektiver Wahrheit* (Salzburg/Munich, 1976), pp. 135-146. On the difference between illusion and appearance, see Seifert, *ibid.*, and von Hildebrand, *What is Philosophy* (Chicago, 1973), ch. v.

31. These and other senses of subjectivity have been distinguished by von Hildebrand in many places; see especially *What is Philosophy*, pp. 153-159.

32. It is clear that in distinguishing importance from these two factors, we hold a position which in many ways resembles G. E. Moore's rejection of the "naturalistic fallacy." But we cannot here go into more detail in stating our relation to Moore.

33. Von Hildebrand has brought out this aspect of importance in his *Ethics*, p. 24.

34. This distinction has been made by von Hildebrand within the importance which we

will later call value importance; see *Das Wesen der Liebe* (Regensburg, 1971), pp. 104-107. The distinction, however, seems to hold for all importance.

35. G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge, 1966), p. 6 and ff. Even as Moore insisted that "good" cannot be defined, so we insist that "importance" cannot be defined, and that we can get to know importance only through itself. But we sharply differ from Moore when he proceeds to say, in the famous paragraph 6 of the *Principia*, that since good is indefinable, there is nothing more to be said about it. On the contrary, we hold that a datum like importance can, for all its indefinability, be analyzed, be characterized in many ways, as indeed we are attempting to do in this chapter. For significant clarifications regarding "definition," see Josef Seifert, "Essence and Existence," in *Aletheia*, I, 1, pp. 54-58.

36. The necessity of adding this last qualification was pointed out to me by Josef Seifert.

37. Von Hildebrand, *Ethics*, ch. xvii. See also the significant development of von Hildebrand's analysis of intentionality which has been made by Josef Seifert, *Leib und Seele* (Salzburg/Munich, 1973), pp. 91-98; 307-310.

38. David Hume, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (La Salle, Ill., 1966), p. 130.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

40. *Ibid.*

41. It need hardly be mentioned that Stevenson's fullest development of his emotivist theory of value is his *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, 1975).

42. Von Hildebrand, *Ethics*, Ch. 11, "Ontological and Qualitative Values," especially pp. 131-132.

43. I have here been developing an impulse I received from Heinrich Rickert: "Nur das sei noch bemerkt, dass 'negative' Zahlen oder 'negative' Temperaturen oder 'negative' Elektrizität nicht in dem hier gemeinten Sinne negativ sind, sondern ebensogut als positiv bezeichnet werden könnten, während beim Wert sich die Positivität niemals mit der Negativität vertauschen lässt." *Allgemeine Grundlegung der Philosophie* (Tübingen, 1921), p. 118. The English translation in the text is my own.

44. But the reverse does not hold; we cannot say that wherever we say "positive importance" Thomas would say *bonum*. For sometimes he would say not *bonum* but *pulchrum*, which for Thomas is not a subdivision of *bonum* but which is distinguished from it.

45. I deliberately say that *most*, but not all, forms of positive importance have the counterpart of negative importance. See our remark on this point at the beginning of section c. But even when a form of positive importance has no negative counterpart, its positivity distinguishes it from the actuality of real being, for this actuality cannot be positive in the sense of positive importance.

## Chapter 3

46. On the "claim to objectivity" which many beings make, see the literature referred to in note 30.

47. Von Hildebrand, *Ethics*, p. 35. He introduces the term "value" in Chapter 3, which is the most important passage in his writings on the nature of value in general. We draw heavily on this chapter in the present section of our essay. For a good short exposition of von Hildebrand's value philosophy, see Balduin Schwarz, "Die Wertphilosophie Dietrich von Hildebrands," in *Die Münchener Phänomenologie*, ed. by H. Kuhn, E. Ave-Lallement, R. Gladiatori (Den Haag, 1975), pp. 125-138.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 35-38.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-56.

50. Already in his doctoral dissertation of 1912 von Hildebrand showed that the difference between value and the importance of the subjectively satisfying was a fundamental difference in kind. This dissertation was originally published in Husserl's *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* (1916), and has been reprinted by the Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft (Darmstadt, 1969); in this reprint see pp. 49-50. The difference in kind between value and the importance of the subjectively satisfying is elaborated in the *Ethics*, p. 40 and ff.

51. Max Scheler, *Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* (Bern/Zurich, 1966).

52. Alexander Pfänder, *Ethik in kurzer Darstellung* (Munich, 1973), p. 43. "Die Existenz der Werte ist durchaus unabhängig davon, ob Menschen ein Bewusstsein von ihnen bekommen oder nicht . . ."

53. *Ibid.*, p. 48. "Ist daher der naive Wertglaube dahingegangen, ist an seine Stelle die offene Wertverneinung getreten, so wird das eigene Seelenleben völlig sinnlos. Wozu sich freuen und ärgern, wozu lieben und hassen, wozu wollen und schaffen, wenn doch alles wertlos ist? . . . Aber dieses sinnlose Leben läuft trotz allem weiter. Immer wieder treten Gefühle und Willensregungen auf und heben den ihnen einwohnenden Glauben mit empor, dass es vielerlei Wertvolles und Schlechtes in der Welt gebe. Völlig vertreiben liesse sich dieser Glaube nur, wenn man das Leben selbst vernichtete. Allerdings hat die allgemeine Wertverneinung gewöhnlich nur gegenüber den höheren, idealeren Werten leichtes Spiel. Vor den aufdringlicheren, niederen Werten, vor den Werten des leiblichen Wohl- und Übelbefindens, der sinnlichen Genüsse, des Geldes und der Macht hält sie sich dagegen inkonsequent zurück, um doch noch dem Weiterlauf des Seelenlebens einen gewissen ärmlichen Sinn zu lassen." The English translation in the text is my own.

54. Roman Ingarden, "Was wir über die Werte nicht wissen," in *Erlebnis, Kunstwerk und Wert* (Tübingen, 1969). Despite the unclarified notion of value with which Ingarden works, this is an important essay which deserves careful study on the part of value philosophers.

55. Adolph Reinach, "Die Überlegung; ihre ethische und rechtliche Bedeutung," in his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Halle, 1921), p. 146 and ff. Reinach builds much of his subsequent analysis of "deliberation" on von Hildebrand's categorial distinction between value and the importance of the subjectively satisfying.

One of the few contemporary value philosophers who has seen this categorial distinction, and who is aware of it in von Hildebrand's early writings, is Hans Reiner, *op. cit.*, pp. 138-145. He designates the distinction by speaking of "absolute" and "relative" value. He is, however, not aware of the full development of this distinction in von Hildebrand's later writings, where it is developed with far greater differentiation and clarity than in Reiner.

56. *Ethics*, p. 43.

57. *S.T.*, I, q. 5, a. 1, first objection.

58. *Ethics*, pp. 64-65.

59. *S.T.*, II-II, q. 84, a. 1, ad 1.

60. *S.T.*, II-II, q. 103, a. 1.

61. Viktor Kraft, *Die Grundlagen einer wissenschaftlichen Wertlehre* (Wien, 1951), p. 21. "Aus der Systematik der Werte geht klar hervor, was schon aus ihrer Analyse in einen sachlichen Gehalt und den Wertcharakter zu ersehen war, dass der Wert eigentlich nur einer, eben der Wertcharakter überhaupt, ist und dass die Wertarten, die Werte, nicht eigentlich Differenzierungen des Wertes sind wie die Abstufungen des Wertes nach seiner Höhe, sondern in der Verbindung des Wertcharakters mit den Klassen des Sachgehaltes bestehen. Es sind allgemeine Objektbeschaffenheiten oder Subjektzustände, durch welche die Wertarten konstituiert werden."

62. Von Hildebrand's fullest discussion of due relation and value response is to be found in the *Ethics*, ch. xvii. See the development of these themes in *Das Wesen der Liebe*, especially in the first seven chapters. In the present section of this essay I draw primarily on *Ethics*, ch. xvii.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 237-238.

63-a. This important distinction is precisely missing in Franz Brentano's contribution to value philosophy, *Vom Ursprung sittlicher Erkenntnis* (Hamburg, 1969). When we read a sentence such as, "Wir nennen etwas gut, wenn die darauf bezügliche Liebe richtig ist," we might at first think that *richtige Liebe* is for Brentano a *criterion* for value; but in the crucial passage on good and *richtige Liebe* (para. 23-27), it becomes clear that good is nothing more than being-an-object of *richtige Liebe*. And this is the way, Brentano's disciples have understood him; cf., G. Katkov, *Werttheorie und Theodizee* (Brünn/Wien, 1937), especially pp. 17 and ff., where he explains in what sense "good" is for him a *Scheinprädikat*. Brentano and his school seem to have missed the qualitative character of value, and its character as a "distinct datum"; to have reduced value to an object considered as a reference point of *richtige Liebe*, or in our terms, of a due response.

64. The primacy of value over disvalue which we have discovered in investigating the ground of due relation, is also reflected in our motivation. It is impossible to be indignant at a Hitler without affirming the values of those goods against which Hitler's crimes were committed; we can be indignant only when this flows from a commitment to these goods. The disvalue of a being can enable us to give a negative value response to the being only when the disvalue is considered together with certain values. But the value of a being does not need any disvalue in order to unfold its power to motivate a positive value response. Of course one cannot give a due response to a valuable being without the readiness to reject certain things possessing a disvalue. But this is simply to draw the consequences from a value-responding commitment to a valuable being; the valuable being does not need the disvalue in order to unfold its power to motivate a positive value response.

By the way, something similar seems to hold for the negative importance of objective evils for the person. It seems to be impossible for me to flee from them (taking them as objective evils and not just as subjectively dissatisfying) without affirming, if only implicitly, certain objective goods for me. I cannot flee from a disease as an objective evil for me without affirming my health as an objective good for me.

65. C. L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, 1975), Ch. 1, "Kinds of Agreement and Disagreement."

66. *S.T.*, II-II, q. 58, a. 1.

67. *S.T.*, II-II, q. 84, a. 1.

68. *S.T.*, II-II, q. 23, a. 6.

69. Josef Seifert has this unique kind of objectivity in mind when he discusses the call of moral obligation in a concrete moral situation. He speaks of the "Unerbittlichkeit der Realität" of this moral call, and even says: "Einerseits durch die Majestät der sittlichen Pflicht, andererseits durch die Tatsache, dass eine Verpflichtung auch bei erfolgloser Handlung vorliegen kann, besitzt die sittliche Pflicht sogar eine überlegene Wirklichkeit und Objektivität, die jene des Handlungsobjektes in mancher Hinsicht übertrifft." *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung* (Salzburg/Munich, 1976), p. 45 (my italics).

70. *Ethics*, ch. iii, p. 49 and ff. See also ch. vii and ch. xxix. Von Hildebrand elaborated this third category of importance for the first time in his essay, "Die Rolle des 'Objektiven Gutes fuer die Person' innerhalb des Sittlichen," in *Die Menschheit am Scheideweg* (Regensburg, 1955), pp. 60-85. In *Das Wesen der Liebe* von Hildebrand greatly developed his philosophy of this category of importance, especially in ch. vii.

71. *Ethics*, pp. 51-53.

72. *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

73. It should be added that there is a tremendous difference between desiring an objective good for myself, and desiring an objective good for another out of love for him. Not only do I achieve in the latter case a fundamental self-transcendence which is completely absent in the former case; the very nature of the importance changes from the first to the second case. In *Das Wesen der Liebe*, ch. vii, von Hildebrand has given a masterly analysis of what it

means to participate out of love in the objective goods for another. But in this essay we restrict ourselves to showing that the importance of this third category is essentially *for someone*; we cannot go into the fundamental difference which arises according as that "someone" is myself or another.

74. See *Ethics*, p. 56 and ff.; pp. 89-94; see also the discussion in *Das Wesen der Liebe* of how the experience of value and of the objective good for the person are interrelated in love.

75. I was enabled to bring this point out more clearly with the help of the short manuscript of Josef Seifert which is published as an appendix to this essay.

76. Josef Seifert, "Die Verschiedenen Bedeutungen von 'Sein' — Dietrich von Hildebrand als Metaphysiker und Martin Heideggers Vorwurf der Seinsvergessenheit," in *Wahrheit, Wert und Sein* (Regensburg, 1972), pp. 316-321. In this section of my essay I build on this important contribution to the metaphysics of value.

77. Observe that the difference between a subject of being and the being which the subject has, is altogether different from the difference between a substance and its accidents and modalities. The subject of being does not "bear" being as a substance bears accidents and modalities; nor does being inhere in a subject as accidents and modalities inhere in a substance. We can also see the difference this way: once we have distinguished a substance from its accidents and modalities we can, with respect to that substance, distinguish again between the being of the substance and the subject of this being (that is, the substance itself). The same distinction can be made with regard to any accident or modality of a substance.

78. On this *Seinsollen*, see von Hildebrand, *Die Idee der sittlichen Handlung* (Darmstadt, 1969), pp. 69-71.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

80. This has been profoundly seen by Romano Guardini in a discussion of adoration. Let us quote a passage which, even though it is taken from a primarily religious text, nevertheless beautifully expresses the philosophical insight with which we are presently dealing in our essay. "In der Anbetung neigt sich . . . das Geschöpf vor Dem, der es erschaffen. Aber wie und warum? Nicht so wie etwa ein Mensch, der mit einem schwachen Boot auf dem Meere fährt, vor dem Sturm nachgeben muss, oder wie ein Arzt, der um das Leben eines Kranken gekämpft hat, sich vor der Krankheit machtlos erkennt. Das alles wäre ein blosses Überwundenwerden, aber keine Anbetung . . . das Geschöpf beugt sich anders vor Gott: nicht nur, weil er mächtig ist, sondern weil er würdig ist . . . Vor einem Gott, der nur Macht wäre, könnten wir uns nicht in Ehren neigen, nur unterliegen. Er ist aber auch nicht nur Macht, sondern auch Sinn. So gross Gottes Macht, so gross ist auch seine Wahrheit. So vollkommen seine Herrschaft, so vollkommen ist auch seine Gerechtigkeit. *So viel er wirklich ist, so viel ist er heilig*. Gottes Sein und Können und Herrschen sind an jeder Stelle gerechtfertigt durch seine Wahrheit und seine Güte. Wenn der Ausdruck erlaubt ist: Gott ist nicht nur einfach Gott, sondern Er verdient es zu sein" (italics mine). *Glaubenserkenntnis* (Freiburg/Wien, 1963), p. 16.

81. *D.Q.T.*, q. XXI, a. 1, p. 5.

82. We would also hold with Thomism, though this has not been our subject in this essay, that evil in the sense of disvalue is, as we indicated above, a kind of non-being, although we would not identify this non-being with the absence or privation of real being (though it is often based on such a privation). Just as the being of value is not the being of really existing being, so the non-being of disvalue is not itself the privation of the being of really existing being.

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83. Rickert, *op. cit.*, p. 114 "Alles was bloss existiert, hat etwas Gemeinsames im Vergleich zu dem, was den Charakter des Wertes besitzt . . ."

84. *Ibid.*, ". . . so gliedert sich die Welt in zwei scharf gesonderte Sphären, die bei allen zwischen ihnen bestehenden Beziehungen und Verbindungen begrifflich streng auseinander gehalten werden müssen . . . Die irrealen Werte stehen als ein Reich für sich allen wirklichen Gegenständen gegenüber, die falls eben ein Reich für sich bilden."

85. Josef Seifert, "Essence and Existence," in *Aletheia*, I, 1, p. 77 and ff.

86. Von Hildebrand has developed this point for value in *Das Wesen der Liebe*, pp. 104-107.

87. *Ibid.*, footnote 35, pp. 104-107.

88. This distinction was first suggested to me by Josef Seifert.

89. Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, pp. 40-41.

90. Certain critics of von Hildebrand should take notice of the fact that he fully recognizes this fact. "Ich kann die Schönheit der Liebe nicht erfassen, ohne auf die Liebe hinzublicken, ich kann die Gerechtigkeit nicht kontemplieren, ohne ein gerechtes Verhalten zu betrachten, nicht ein konkretes, aber das die Gerechtigkeit im allgemeinen fundierende Verhalten." *Das Wesen der Liebe*, footnote 35, p. 104.

91. For related thoughts in von Hildebrand, see *Ethics*, ch. vii, "The Categories of Importance as Properties of Beings," especially pp. 87-89.

92. It may be that W. D. Ross is aiming at this fundamental feature of value when he speaks of good as a "consequential" property of a being rather than a "constitutive" one; see *The Right and the Good* (Oxford, 1930), p. 120 and ff.

93. In his *Towards an Ontology of Morals* (Evanston, 1971), Henry Veatch ably criticizes certain forms of value subjectivism found in Anglo-Saxon value theorists such as Stevenson and Hare. But he holds that it is Moore's idea of "good" as indefinable which opened the way for these forms of subjectivism, and that it is only the Thomistic theory of *bonum* which can ultimately overcome them. My essay in effect argues that Moore, for all his weaknesses (cf. note 35), saw something of the greatest importance in holding the indefinability of good and in warning against the "naturalistic fallacy," and that his deepest insights, once they have been clarified by the true idea of value, are seen to lead, not into subjectivism, but towards a fully objective philosophy of good, towards a philosophy of

good which overcomes value subjectivism more radically and more convincingly than can the Thomistic theory.

94. On this kind of "borrowed" importance, see *Ethics*, p. 61 and ff.

95. For the full clarification of this crucial criticism of the Thomistic theory I am indebted to the manuscript of Josef Seifert which appears as an appendix.

## Appendix

### BEING AND VALUE. THOUGHTS ON THE REFORM OF THE METAPHYSICS OF GOOD WITHIN VALUE PHILOSOPHY.

by Josef Seifert

*Towards the end of my work on this essay, Dr. Josef Seifert made available to me an unpublished manuscript of his, which helped me to bring more clarity to certain points of my analysis. Rather than merely giving him credit in a footnote for his help, it seemed to me more just to include his whole manuscript in an appendix. It is of course with his permission that I put his short text in the following appendix, first in the German original, then in an English translation. J.F.C.*

Ein verbreiteter Einwand gegen die Wertphilosophie lautet, die Wertphilosophie löse in einer unverantwortbaren Weise das Gute (den Wert) vom Sein los. Im Gegensatz dazu sei der Wert (das Gute) in der thomistischen Fassung als *appetibile* viel tiefer im Sein verwurzelt. Die Trieb- und Strebensstruktur eines Seienden und die Geeignetheit (meist eines andern Seienden), eine solche Strebensstruktur zu erfüllen, ergeben eine feste Verankerung des Wertes im Sein.

Dieser Einwand, der auf manche Formen neokantischer und auch phänomenologischer Wertphilosophie zutreffen mag (Kant, Rickert, Hartmann, bis zu gewissem Ausmass Scheler), verfehlt das tiefste Wesen wahrer Wertphilosophie, die den Wert (das Gute) in einer so tiefen Weise im Sein verankert wie dies nie zuvor in der Geschichte der Philosophie erreicht wurde.

Dieser Beitrag zur metaphysischen Begründung des Wertes (Gutes) im Sein setzt allerdings die entscheidende Klärung des Wertbegriffs voraus, die D. von Hildebrand durch seine Unterscheidung dreier Bedeutsamkeitskategorien, durch die Klärung derselben als Seinsproprietäten, und durch verwandte Beiträge geleistet hat.

Wenn der Wert richtig als objektive und in sich ruhende positive Bedeutsamkeit eines Seienden gefasst wird, oder noch genauer als in sich ruhende Kostbarkeit eines Seienden, ist zunächst klar, dass der Wert ganz in der Eigenart — und in vielen Fällen in der realen Existenz — eines Seienden gründet, also keineswegs vom Seienden losgelöst ist oder gar einen Gegensatz zur Realität bildet. Der Wert eines wirklichen Seienden ist selbst real und wirklich — eine echte Seinsproprietät.

Der Wert ist allerdings eine einzigartige und auf nichts anderes zurückführbare Seinsproprietät und von sonstigen Eigenschaften eines

Seienden ganz verschieden.

Der Wert, den wir als die Würde der menschlichen Person bezeichnen, gründet ganz im Sein und Wesen der menschlichen Person, ihrer Erkenntnisfähigkeit, Freiheit, Fähigkeit, sittlich gut und böse zu sein, usf. Der Wert der Gerechtigkeit oder Liebe gründet ganz im Sein und Wesen bestimmter Akte oder Haltungen der Person. Diese Werte werden auch nur real, wenn die Seienden, die sie teils "tragen", teils "begründen", wirklich werden. Im Falle der Existenz dieser Seienden existieren auch die Werte dieser Seienden in untrennbarer Einheit mit diesen, wenn auch in ganz verschiedener, ihnen entsprechender Weise. In diesem Sinn kann also von einer Trennung von Wert und Sein, wie bei Rickert, innerhalb der Wertphilosophie von z. B. von Hildebrand absolut keine Rede sein.

Doch ist auf Grund der Abgrenzung des Wertes als in sich ruhender Bedeutsamkeit eines Seienden von der Bedeutsamkeit eines Seienden als "objektivem Gut für die Person" und erst recht von der Bedeutsamkeit eines Seienden als "bloss subjektiv befriedigend für eine Person" eine noch viel tiefere Erfassung der Verankerung des Wertes im Sein möglich. Während die eben erörterte Verankerung des Wertes im Sein nämlich in ähnlicher Weise auch auf das objektive Gut für die Person und das subjektiv Befriedigende zutrifft, charakterisiert die im folgenden zu besprechende gerade den Wert *als Wert*.

Im Falle des werttragenden Seienden kann man nämlich unmöglich sagen, dass das Seiende, für und in sich betrachtet, neutral wäre bzw. die Wertbedeutsamkeit nicht besässe. Im Falle des bloss subjektiv Befriedigenden und sogar des objektiven Gutes für die Person gilt, dass diese Bedeutsamkeit einem Seienden nicht in dem zukommt, was dieses Seiende in sich selber ist, sondern nur gewissermassen "in Relation auf" ein anderes Seiendes, bzw. auf dessen Strebungen, Triebe, oder auch Glück. Diese Arten der Bedeutsamkeit charakterisieren wirklich, wie Thomas es dem *bonum* überhaupt zuschreibt, ein Seiendes nicht in sich (*in se*), sondern nur in Bezug auf etwas anderes (*ad alia*), obwohl zu bedenken ist, dass es sich nicht buchstäblich um zwei Seiende handeln muss, da ja z.B. das eigene Sein eine Quelle des Glücks für das Subjekt dieses Seins werden kann. Das Seiende, das in diesen zwei Bedeutungen des Wortes (subjektiv befriedigend oder objektives Gut für die Person) "gut" genannt wird, ist bloss gut für ein anderes Seiendes bzw. in Relation zu etwas anderem (Streben, Glück, etc.). Daher wäre ein Seiendes im Licht dieser Bedeutsamkeitsarten, bzw. wenn es keine andere Bedeutsamkeit als diese Bedeutsamkeitsarten besässe, in sich selber neutral und nicht ein Gut zu nennen. Die Gutheit *erhält* es hier erst durch eine Relation zu etwas ausser seiner selbst Liegendem. In radikalem Unterschied dazu steht die Bedeut-

samkeit des Wertes, die allein erst eine wahrhaft metaphysische Fassung des Guten ermöglicht. Diese Bedeutsamkeit zeichnet nämlich ein Seiendes in seinem ureigensten Sein selber aus. Hier wäre es sinnlos zu sagen, dass ein Seiendes, welches wertvoll ist, in sich selber neutral sei. Nein, zu sagen, ein Seiendes besitze Wert in diesem klassischen Sinn, zielt gerade darauf ab, dass ein Seiendes in sich selber nicht neutral, sondern in sich selbst kostbar ist. Dies zeigt, dass die Wertbedeutsamkeit nicht in dem Sinne ein vom Seienden unterschiedenes Bedeutsamkeitsmoment ist wie dies vom subjektiv Befriedigenden und vom objektiven Gut für die Person gesagt werden muss: deren Bedeutsamkeit liegt in gewisser Weise "ausserhalb" der betreffenden Seienden, bzw. "in ihnen" bloss insofern als sie auf ein anderes Seiendes bezogen sind. Auch das *bonum* im thomistischen Verständnis fügt etwas zu einem Seienden in dem Sinne hinzu, wie Thomas in *De Veritate* ausführt, dass es Gutheit nur in einer Relation des Seienden zu einem *appetitus* als von diesem *appetitus* Erstrebenswertes (ein *appetibile*) besitzt. Im Vergleich dazu fügt die Wertbedeutsamkeit (obwohl sie sich niemals aus einem neutralen Seinsbegriff ableiten oder auch nur auf das Sein als real oder als verstehbar zurückführen lässt) dem Seienden nichts hinzu, insofern nämlich als sie dem Seienden als was es in sich selber ist innewohnt, als seine innerlichste Kostbarkeit sozusagen.

Wertbedeutsamkeit ist also viel intimer und metaphysischer mit dem Seienden, das sie besitzt, verknüpft und verwachsen, als das scholas-tische *bonum*, oder auch als das objektive Gut für die Person. Wertbedeutsamkeit durchdringt das Seiende, das sie besitzt, von innen her. Der Wert des Seienden ist nicht nur keine loslösbare Entität, er ist nicht einmal in dem Sinne "loslösbar", in dem das thomistisch gefasste *bonum* von demjenigen verschieden und lösbar ist, was das gute Seiende in sich selber ist. Der Wert liegt im Seienden, in dem Herzen des Seins. Der Wert kommt dem Seienden zu als was dieses in sich selber ist, unabhängig von aller Relation auf das Glück oder den *appetitus* einer Person oder eines Seienden "ausserhalb seiner".

Wert ist so untrennbar eins mit dem Seienden, das ihn besitzt, dass wir fast die Rede von "Werten," die manchem Leser eine eigenständige und loslösbare Wirklichkeit nahelegen mag, ersetzen könnten: Anstatt so häufig von dem "Wert eines Seienden" zu sprechen, könnten wir öfter "von dem Seienden als in sich selber wertvoll", oder vom "Seienden insofern es in sich selber kostbar ist", sprechen. Wert ist daher ein viel metaphysischerer Begriff des Guten, bzw. erlaubt eine ungleich metaphysischere Fassung des Guten als der thomistische Begriff des "Guten" als *ens qua appetibile*. Man kann sagen, eine wahrhaft metaphysische Fassung des Guten, eine wirkliche Verankerung des Guten im Sein, so dass das Seiende nicht letzten Endes in sich selber (ohne Relation *ad alia*

betrachtet) neutral, sondern gut ist, ist ausschliesslich im Lichte wahrer Wertphilosophie möglich. Eine solche Wertphilosophie muss daher gegen die thomistische Fassung des Guten den Vorwurf erheben, dass diese das Gute nicht genügend im Seienden verwurzelt.

Damit ist selbstverständlich nicht behauptet, dass jenes "Zusammenfallen von Sein und Wert", als welches man diese letzte metaphysische Einheit von Sein und Wert auch bezeichnen könnte, bedeutet, dass der Wertbegriff auf einen neutralen Seinsbegriff reduziert werden könne. Bedeutsamkeit in sich im Sinne des in sich Kostbaren (Wert) — die Nicht-Identität des Begriffes "in sich kostbar" mit "in sich bedeutsam" kann hier nicht näher begründet werden — stellt eine letzte unreduzible Urgegebenheit dar. Der Begriff des Seins also solcher könnte im neutralen Sinn verstanden werden; auch der Begriff der beiden ersten Seinsdimensionen, wie ich sie an anderer Stelle nannte, des Realseins und des Intelligibelseins, kann nicht den Wertbegriff ersetzen. Wertvollsein selbst ist eine Urdimension des Seins, die sich weder auf das Realsein noch auf das Intelligibelsein zurückführen lässt. Auch sind die obigen Ausführungen über die Einheit von Sein und Wert nicht dahingehend misszuverstehen, als ob der Wert eines Seienden irgendwie mit einer anderen Eigenschaft desselben Seienden strikt identisch wäre, so als wäre der Wert des Erkennens oder der Person einfach identisch mit dem Erkennen und der Person selbst, so als wäre der Wert des Glücks einfach dasselbe wie das Glück. Scheler, Moore und Ross haben diesen Punkt in ihrer Abweisung der *naturalistic fallacy* überzeugend dargelegt. Der Wert eines Seienden ist also zwar völlig im Sein dieses Seienden begründet, diesem zuinnerst innewohnend, aber doch ein "selbständiges Moment" der Bedeutsamkeit, das Ross mit gewissem Recht als *consequential property* bezeichnet hat. Der Wert erwächst aus dem Seienden, gründet in ihm, zeichnet dieses selbst aus, erhebt es selbst aus dem Neutralen ohne Bezug auf einen *appetitus*. Der Wert ist dem Seienden eigen, aber lässt sich nicht wegen dieser innigsten Verbundenheit und Einheit mit dem Seienden, dessen Wert er ist, auf irgendeine andere Eigenschaft, die nicht Wertcharakter hat, reduzieren. Der Wert eines tiefen Glücks ist nicht einfach dieses Glück selbst, der Wert der Person ist nicht diese selbst, der Wert eines Erkenntnisaktes ist nicht einfach das Erkennen selbst, sondern stellt eine metaphysische Urgegebenheit *sui generis* dar. Er ist einerseits echte Seinsproprietät, andererseits mit keiner anderen Seinsproprietät zu identifizieren. Diese Verschiedenheit des Wertes (und seines Realseins) von allen anderen Eigenschaften eines Seienden wurde auch im thomistischen Begriff des "*bonum*" bzw. in der thomistischen Identifizierung des Wertes mit der Relation eines Seienden auf einen *appetitus* übersehen. Also weder die Verschiedenheit des Wertes, die Verschiedenheit seines



Seins von dem Seienden, in dem er gründet, noch seine metaphysisch untrennbare, tiefe Verbundenheit mit dem Seienden (*in se*), dessen Wert er ist, wurde in der thomistischen Lehre vom *bonum* erkannt.

Und dennoch ist die klare Herausarbeitung des Wertes und seiner Beziehung zum Sein in keiner Weise anti-thomistisch. Im Gegenteil, viele Thesen des Thomismus können überhaupt nur auf dem Boden einer adäquaten Wertphilosophie verstanden werden, z.B. eine Reihe thomistischer Thesen über den Vorrang der Liebe über Hoffnung und Glauben, über Gottesliebe, Gotteshass und Verzweiflung, über die Schöpfungszwecke und die Analogie zwischen unendlichem und endlichen Gütern, über das unendliche Gut als *primum analogatum* aller endlichen Güter. Ja, wir müssen noch weiter gehen: Die innersten Anliegen des Denkens von Thomas von Aquin können ausschliesslich auf der Grundlage einer adäquaten Wertphilosophie wirklich gewahrt und tiefer begründet werden. Das gilt vor allem für das Bemühen, die letzte Verbundenheit des Guten mit dem Sein aufzuweisen, die Hierarchie der Güter zu begründen, die Tatsache darzutun, dass der absoluten Gutheit und Werthaftigkeit (*excellencia*) Gottes Liebe und Anbetung gebührt (*debetur*), die zeitlos gültigen Prinzipien moralischer Gutheit aufzuweisen, und für andere Grundanliegen des Thomismus. Es wurde hier hinsichtlich der Einheit von Sein und Gut (heit) angedeutet, könnte aber auch in bezug auf alle diese anderen Themen erwiesen werden, dass eine adäquate Wertphilosophie ein viel tieferes Wahren und Begründen der eigentlichsten Anliegen des Thomismus erlaubt als ein eng am Buchstaben oder auch an gewissen systematischen Grundsätzen von Thomas sich orientierender Thomismus.

A widespread objection to value philosophy says that value philosophy separates good (value) from being in an unjustifiable way. In opposition to this, good (value) as *appetibile* in the Thomistic understanding, is much more deeply rooted in being. The drives and strivings of a being and the fitness (usually of another being) to fulfill such strivings, make for a strong anchoring of value in being.

This objection may be valid against many forms of neo-Kantian value philosophy and even against many forms of phenomenological value philosophy (against Kant, Rickert, Hartmann and even Scheler to a certain extent); but it misses the deepest essence of true value philosophy, which anchors good (value) in being much more firmly than has ever been done before in the history of philosophy.

This contribution to the metaphysical foundation of good (value) in being, presupposes, however, the crucial clarification of the concept of value that Dietrich von Hildebrand accomplished by distinguishing the

three categories of importance, by showing the sense in which they are properties of being, and by his other related contributions.

If value is rightly grasped as the objective and intrinsic positive importance of a being, or even more precisely as the intrinsic preciousness of a being, then it is clear that value is completely grounded in the particular character — and in many cases, in the real existence — of a being, and thus is not at all separated from beings, nor in any way opposed to reality. The value of a real being itself is real and actual — an authentic property of being. It can, like the being itself, be real or merely possible, etc.

The value, for example, that we call the "dignity of the human person" is grounded completely in the being and essence of the human person, in his power to know, his freedom, his capacity to be morally good or evil, etc. The value of justice or love is grounded completely in the being and essence of specific acts or attitudes of the person. These values only come into existence when the beings (some of which "bear" them, and some of which "ground" them) come into existence. Whenever these beings exist, the values of these beings exist in an inseparable union with them, although in a completely different way, in a way appropriate to values. For this reason, there can simply be no question of a separation of value and being in the value philosophy of von Hildebrand, as there is in the value philosophy of Rickert.

But we can go farther and say that by distinguishing value as the intrinsic importance of a being, from the importance of a being as an "objective good for a person," and all the more from the importance of a being as "purely subjectively satisfying to a person," we can grasp much more deeply the anchoring of value in being. For in respect to the foundation of value in being discussed so far, value does not decisively differ from the importance of the "objective good for the person" or from the importance of the "merely subjectively satisfying" — both of which have an analogous kind of foundation in being. The kind of anchoring in being which we are going to discuss applies exclusively to value as value.

In the case of value-bearing being, it is impossible to say that the being, considered for and in itself, is neutral or does not possess value-importance. In the case of the merely subjectively satisfying and even of objective goods for a person, it is true that the importance of a being does not belong to that which the being is in itself, but only, so to speak, to the being "in its relation to" another being, or rather in relation to its strivings, drives, or happiness. (This is the way Thomas characterizes *bonum* in general). These two kinds of importance do not characterize a being in itself (*in se*), but only *ad alia* (although we have to bear in mind that there do not have to be literally two beings, since, for example, the existence of a being can be a source of happiness for the subject of this existence). The

being which is called "good" in either of these two meanings of the word (in the sense of the subjectively satisfying or the objective good for a person) is merely good for another being, or in relation to something else (strivings, happiness, etc.). Thus, if a being had no other kind of importance than one of these two kinds, it would be neutral in itself and would not rightly be called good in itself. Such a being gets its goodness only through a relation to something lying outside the being.

In radical difference to this stands the importance of value, that alone renders possible a true metaphysical grasping of good. This importance characterizes a being in its own innermost being. Here it would be senseless to say that a being which is valuable is, in itself, neutral. No, to say a being has value in this classical sense precisely indicates that the being in itself is not neutral, but is in itself precious. This shows that value importance is not a moment of importance distinct from a being, at least not in the sense in which this has to be said of the subjectively satisfying and of objective goods for a person, whose importance lies, in a certain sense, "outside" the being in question, or "in" it only insofar as it is related to another being. This also holds for *bonum* in the Thomistic sense, for it "adds" something to a being in the sense that, as Thomas explains in *De Veritate*, q.21, the being has goodness only in relation to an *appetitus*, as being an *appetibile*, i.e. worth striving for by this *appetitus*. In contrast to this, value (although it never could be derived from a neutral understanding of being, or even reduced to reality or intelligibility) "adds" nothing to a being, for it dwells within the being as what it is in itself, so to speak, as its inmost preciousness.

Value is, therefore, much more intimately and metaphysically united and merged with the being that has it, than is the scholastic *bonum* or, for that matter, the objective good for a person. Value "permeates from within" the being that has it. The value of a being is not only *not* a separable entity; it is not even "separable" in the sense in which the Thomistically understood *bonum* is distinct and separable from what the good being is in itself. Value lies in the being, in the heart of the being. Value belongs to the being as what it is in itself, independently of all relation to the happiness or the *appetitus* of a person or a being "outside" of it.

Value is so inseparably one with the being which has it that our speaking of "values" (which suggests to some readers an independent and separate reality) should almost be replaced by another way of expressing the truth meant: instead of speaking so frequently of the "value of a being," we should perhaps speak more often of "the being insofar as it is precious in itself." Value is thus a much more metaphysical conception of good; it permits an incomparably more metaphysical understanding of

good than does the Thomistic idea of good as *ens qua appetibile*. One can say that a true metaphysical understanding of good, a true anchoring of good in being — so that a being is not ultimately (i.e., without considering its relation *ad alia*) in itself neutral, but is good — is only possible in the light of true value philosophy. Hence, such a value philosophy must object to the Thomistic understanding of good as not being sufficiently rooted in being.

This is obviously not to claim that a "coinciding of being and value" (which this ultimate metaphysical unity of being and value might be called) means that the concept of value could be reduced to a neutral concept of being. Importance in itself in the sense of preciousness in itself (i.e., value) — the difference between the concepts "precious in itself" and "important in itself" cannot here be more fully elaborated — represents an ultimate, irreducible datum. The concept of being as such could be understood in a neutral sense; the concepts of the other two fundamental "dimensions" of being (as I have called them elsewhere) — real being and intelligible being — also cannot replace the concept of value. "To be valuable" (*Wertvollsein*) itself is a fundamental dimension of being, that can be reduced neither to "real being" nor to "intelligible being."

Further, the above explanation of the unity of being and value should not lead to the false idea that the value of a being could be in any way strictly identical with another characteristic of the same being, as if the value of knowledge or a person were simply identical with knowledge or the person himself; as if the value of happiness were simply the same as happiness itself. Scheler, Moore, and Ross (in their rejection of the naturalistic fallacy) have convincingly demonstrated this fact.

And so we can say: the value of a being, although it is completely grounded in the being of a being, and thoroughly inheres in a being, nevertheless remains a "distinct moment" of importance which Ross with a certain justification has designated a "consequential property." Value grows out of a being, is grounded in it; it characterizes the being itself, lifts it out of neutrality without any relation to an *appetitus*. Value is proper to the being itself, is the inner preciousness of the being itself; but despite this inner bond and unity with the being whose value it is, value cannot be reduced to any other characteristic (of that being) that does not have the character of value. The value of a deep happiness is not simply the happiness itself, the value of a person is not this person himself; but is a fundamental metaphysical datum *sui generis*. It is on the one hand a genuine property of a being; on the other hand not identifiable with any other property of a being.

This difference between value (and its reality) and all other characteristics of beings, has also been overlooked in the Thomistic understand-

ing of "good," especially in the Thomistic identification of value with the relation of a being to an *appetitus*. And so it is that the Thomistic doctrine of *bonum* fails to recognize both the irreducibility of the being of value to the being of the entity which grounds it, as well as the deep and unbreakable metaphysical union of value with the valuable being itself.

Nonetheless, the clear explication of value and its relation to being is in no way anti-Thomistic. On the contrary, many theses of Thomism can only be understood at all on the basis of an adequate value philosophy: e.g., a series of Thomistic theses about the superiority of charity over hope and faith; about love of God, hatred of God, and despair; about the purpose and goal of creation; about the analogy between eternal and temporal goods; and about the eternal Good as the *primum analogatum* of all temporal goods.

Indeed, we must go even farther: the central concerns of the thought of Thomas Aquinas can only be truly maintained and firmly established on the basis of an adequate philosophy of value. This is especially true regarding his effort to show the ultimate union of good with being, to ground the hierarchy of goods, to demonstrate that love and adoration are due (*debetur*) to the absolute goodness and preciousness of God, to show the timelessly valid principles of moral goodness. It was hinted at here regarding the unity of being and *bonum*, and it could be pointed out regarding all of these other themes, that an adequate philosophy of value permits a much better maintenance and foundation of the specific concerns of Thomism, than does either a strictly literal Thomism, or even a Thomism which (only) adheres to certain systematic principles of Thomas.

*Translated by John Barger*