

not the same as being 6'. Travelling to London is not the same as being in London. In order for motion to be an accident it would have to be stable in being. It is not, though; therefore, it cannot be an accident and it certainly cannot possess *esse*.

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**ETHICS** by Dietrich von Hildebrand, [Hildebrand Project], Steubenville, Ohio, 2020, pp. li + 500, £16.99, pbk

This study can be recommended for many reasons. It is Dietrich von Hildebrand's most comprehensive volume on morality, and a primer for the rest of his philosophy – with insights on value-response that will, in turn, animate other notable parts of his oeuvre (such as his *Aesthetics*). It is also a richly-sourced treatise, entering into dialogue expertly with a wide variety of traditions in moral thinking – both ancient and modern – to produce an original, encompassing, and thorough presentation of its subject. But above all, *Ethics* presents the reader with a serious invitation and a challenge to strive for the highest form of ethical existence, found in the morality of the saints – a morality that rests squarely on a life of value-response.

Would an ethics that gives primacy to the morality of the saints still belong to philosophy? The fact that the book's original title (when published in 1953, in English) was *Christian Ethics* might give one pause. And yet, the shortening of the title to just *Ethics* in later editions is a move in the right direction. Not only is the bulk of Hildebrand's analyses here carried out in a strictly philosophical context, but also the reference to Christianity is asserted on the 'undeniable and manifest reality' of Christian matters that are open to phenomenological investigation and deserving inclusion – as the pinnacle of moral life – in a treatment that addresses the 'totality of morality'.

Hildebrand's *Ethics* presents a theory of objective value in general, and of moral value in particular, as necessitating appropriate volitional and affective responses, and instilling thereby an *ordo amoris* at the heart of personal subjectivity. In this sense, *Ethics* strikes a surprising chord with C.S. Lewis's *The Abolition of Man*. But whereas Lewis focuses on defending traditional morality and the natural law by showing the calamitous failure of the new moralities (especially Nietzsche's), Hildebrand proposes an organic re-appropriation and revision of classical moral theory in light of the crucial realisation that there is not just one monolithic hierarchy of goodness. Rather, there are three essentially different points of view

on goodness. This is the insight that demands – for Hildebrand at least – a modification of the groundplan of traditional ethics that nonetheless coheres with its spirit and augments it like a cathedral.

Hildebrand's *Ethics* makes its case through a series of high points in the argumentation like peaks in a mountain range. The first such occurs in Chapter 3, shortly after discussing 'importance' – understood as when an object for consciousness motivates our will or elicits a response. Here Hildebrand distinguishes three categories of importance: the subjectively satisfying, value (as absolute goodness), and *bonum* (i.e., objective goodness for the person). Especially the distinction between the first two kinds raises well-known problems both for an exclusively teleological understanding of every good as relative to our nature, as well as for an exclusively privation-based theory of evil and moral disvalue. The articulation of value-response goes on to become the backbone of Hildebrand's *Ethics*, and we find Hildebrand's profound expression of realist phenomenology particularly in his account of value as an 'ultimate datum', 'grasped in an original intuition', 'undeducible and fundamental' yet also found (as Scheler similarly puts it) 'on the back of our attitude or action'. In fact, values merit and require a response from the spiritual centre of the person. Thus, particularly in chapters 15–19 Hildebrand discusses moral value as a source of moral obligation, and distinguishes between various kinds of value-responses – e.g., theoretical, volitional, and affective. Of special note are Hildebrand's analyses of inner affective responses and fundamental attitudes (in chapter 25 *et passim*). In a turn against consequentialist ethics, and without succumbing to emotivism, Hildebrand claims that affective responses that are freely sanctioned can be also be endowed with moral value. It is at this juncture of affective response that the case for the previously mentioned morality of the saints is most poignantly made, when Hildebrand goes on to describe charity as a value-response that displays intrinsic, overflowing goodness. The final parts of the *Ethics* return to the problem of evil and reformulate it with a view to inner centres, focusing particularly on concupiscence and pride as roots of disvalue. In these final passages Hildebrand's text strikes almost an existential chord, as he describes the psyche of various concupiscible and proud characters with an almost poetic sensibility, in a way that effectively turns the reader towards his or her better angels.

For this reader, Hildebrand's text delights not only because of the clarity of its exposition but also for how it creates a polyphony between a wide variety of ethical approaches – from Plato and Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, Kant and Scheler, to only name a few – which he countenances with fairness and expert attentiveness. However, *Ethics* does not reduce itself by becoming merely a scholarly commentary on the works of other philosophers. Hence, Hildebrand's readings in the ethical tradition are strategic rather than merely expository. For instance, Hildebrand criticises Aristotle's 'mesotes theory of virtue' for reducing the difference between virtue and vice to means and extremes on a spectrum of acting.

Now, I call this reading strategic because it requires of the Aristotelian to re-appropriate Aristotle's claim that the virtuous man must also rejoice in noble actions as an affective value-response – a love for the noble. To give another example of a strategic reading: whereas commentators of Kant are seldom convinced by the postulate of the soul's immortality on the basis of the connection between moral merit and reward, Hildebrand finds Kant's postulate entirely credible on the new basis of the objectivity of moral values – as if Kant was actually more correct than he and his commentators knew.

Concerning this edition of *Ethics*, a word of congratulations ought to be extended to the Hildebrand Project for making this classic of realist phenomenology both affordable and accessible to scholars and first-time readers alike. It includes a superb and extremely helpful introductory study by John F. Crosby which presents the context and salient arguments of Hildebrand's *Ethics* with clarity and cohesiveness. Crosby also helps the readers of Hildebrand by correcting unhelpful or premature interpretations of this work, while also contributing to its critical reception by signaling some of Hildebrand's shortcomings constructively – *Amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*. The editor has also updated all textual references to current editions, while also adding where else in Hildebrand's extensive oeuvre one may find continued discussions.

All in all, this is an edition that remains faithful to Hildebrand's original text, though this, too, has entailed a certain editorial decision. The editors of the German translation of this text (in the *Gesammelte Werke*) added chapter breaks and subtitles, likely with the author's approval. In the English edition there are several lengthy chapters that could have benefitted from this division of the text, for ease of reading. Still, no serious student of ethics should find Hildebrand's original English version daunting or unmanageable, written as it is in limpid English and animated by a powerful vision for a life of value-response.

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**STREET HOMELESSNESS AND CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL ETHICS** edited by James F. Keenan SJ and Mark McGreevy, *Orbis Books, Maryknoll, 2019, pp. xxxiii + 278, \$45.00, pbk*

Writing the review of this book at the height of the pandemic is quite odd, for most of the all too many homeless men and women on the streets of Oxford have all been found accommodation. This perhaps testifies to the way in which local authorities may well be able to end swiftly the problem of homelessness, but I am fairly convinced that once the crisis is over, men