Care as an Affective Value Response: Exploring a Modern Catholic Approach to the Philosophy of Care[1]

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Abstract*: Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889–1977), a student of Edmund Husserl and Adolf Reinach, a younger colleague of Max Scheler, and a vocal opponent of the Nazis, was a well-known figure among the early circles of phenomenology in Munich and Göttingen. After his exile to the U.S. in 1940, he became better known in his adopted land as a Catholic thinker. Sister Marie Simone Roach (1922–2016) was a highly influential nurse and a care theorist famous for her proposal of the 6Cs of nursing, now adopted as part of an official code for the standard of care by the Department of Health in England. In this paper, I will explore a modern Catholic approach to the philosophy of care, using some of the ideas about love developed by Hildebrand, inspired by Roach's references to him in her theory of care.*

In the first section, I will introduce two of the central elements of love proposed by Hildebrand: intentio benevolentiae *and* intentio unionis. *In the second section, I will analyze Hildebrand's concept of self-transcendence, focusing on his distinction between two types of dedication: self-donation and self-sacrifice. In the third section, I will explore the idea of human dignity as a value of a person demanding our care, using Hildebrand's idea of the general beauty of an individual as well as his analyses of dignity and reverence.*

The purpose of the paper is to suggest a way in which a Catholic ethics of the fundamental value of a person and one's appropriate response to it can be rationally understood, rather than dogmatically declared, providing a theoretical foundation for the Catholic practice of care as well as contributing to a genuine philosophical understanding of caring in general.

Introduction

[1] I would like to thank everyone who has commented on the previous versions of this paper, especially Toshiro Terada, my teacher, and Riku Yokoyama, my friend and colleague, as well as anonymous reviewers for *Tetsugaku*, for their encouragement and helpful suggestions.

The purpose of this paper is to explore a modern Catholic approach to the philosophy of care based on suggestions of Sister Marie Simone Roach (1922–2016), inspired by Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889–1977), in order to provide a theoretical foundation for the practice of care among a great number of professionals, such as nurses and caregivers at nursing homes, as well as teachers and others who work for social institutions of the Church, adhering to its tradition and teachings. Roach was a highly influential Catholic nursing expert and care theorist who propounded the famed 6Cs of nursing, which have recently been adopted as the official standard of conduct by the Department of Health in England (Bradshaw 2015). In her influential *Caring—the Human Mode of Being* (2002), Roach relies on the concepts of value response and transcendence developed by Hildebrand, a significant contributor to early phenomenology. Hildebrand was known in the English-speaking world as a Catholic thinker; however, his work in phenomenology, especially his insightful account of values and valuing, is currently receiving much attention.[2] In her account, Roach mainly makes use of Hildebrand's earlier work *Christian Ethics* (1953); thus, in this paper, I develop and expand her theory of caring—care as an affective value response—with reference to Hildebrand's more extensive discussions of relevant concepts in his later tome, *Das Wesen der Liebe* (1971), recently translated as *The Nature of Love* (2009).

As I shall demonstrate below, Roach, by following Hildebrand and understanding caring as an affective value response, opens up a promising discourse concerning what may be called a "phenomenology of the dignity of human persons",

[2] Hildebrand started his career as a philosopher in Munich and Göttingen as a part of the early circles of phenomenologists. As one of the beloved doctoral students of Edmund Husserl, he published two essays in the *Annals for Philosophical and Phenomenological Research* and was considered, along with Edith Stein and Martin Heidegger, one of the most promising young philosophers by his friend Max Scheler (Schuhmann 1992; Scheler 1973, 312). He was forced to exile in the U.S., however, after active political engagement against the Nazis in Austria through publication of a magazine highly critical of the totalitarian regime. In the U.S. Hildebrand worked as a professor of philosophy at Fordham University and had been seen by the public prominently as a Catholic thinker and a writer. Although he has thus been almost forgotten as a phenomenologist, there has been a recent surge of attention to Hildebrand in the English speaking world. The circle of his former students and their associates in the Hildebrand Project has been holding conferences and publishing English translations of his works, including his *magnum opus, The Nature of Love*, in 2009, involving such prominent figures as Roger Scruton and John Finnis. Notably, there is an entry about Hildebrand in a newly published Routledge Handbook about emotion (Müller 2020). In addition, Hildebrand's account of love is also increasingly attracting attention in his native Germany (Enders 2018).

in an attempt to understand human caring as experienced by those who *perceive* dignity in the human beings they care for, rather than just *inferring* the presence of such value from a dogma. The doctrine of the dignity of human persons—the teaching that human persons are absolutely valuable and thus demand corresponding treatment—is not only one of the cornerstones of the Catholic social teaching that defines and shapes the professional guidelines of numerous social institutions of the Church; it is also the principle that serves as a guide for many individuals in their vocation, regardless of their religious beliefs.[3] It is my view that we can learn about human dignity and caring through Roach, one of its most experienced practitioners and insightful theorists, and Hildebrand, a master phenomenologist of love and an inspiration for Roach.

In the first section, I will briefly explain the basic elements of Hildebrand's theory of love, *intentio benevolentiae* and *intentio unionis*. In the second section, I will examine self-transcendence and dedication, the aspects of love discussed by Hildebrand that Roach adopted for her theory of care. Finally, in the third section, I will discuss the issue of the fundamental value of the person, that is, human dignity, as the general beauty of an individual found in all human beings.[4]

1. *Intentio Benevolentiae* and *Intentio Unionis*

[3] The following is stated in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*: "A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person" (Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace, §132). In the Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct for Caritas Internationalis, an umbrella organization for Catholic social institutions all over the world, the importance of human dignity is thus highlighted: "Human dignity and the social nature of the human person are the foundation and inspiration for a moral vision of society . . . " (Caritas Internationalis, 2014). Note that there are a tremendous number of people employed in Caritas organizations worldwide, and many of them are non-Catholic and non-Christian; however, they are still expected to follow such Codes. In Germany alone, there were 693,082 employees in 2018, about 195,925 more than the number of employees of the U.S. Postal Service in the same year (Caritas Germany 2020; United States Postal Service 2021). For the centrality of human dignity in the value structure of nursing in general, see Erikkson (1997, 71–73).

[4] Burgos (2018) considers Hildebrand as belonging to the personalist tradition, along with his fellow philosophers with Catholic inclination, such as Max Scheler and Edith Stein. Personalism was an alternative to the atomistic individualism and totalistic communism of the age, influenced by Christian and Jewish religious traditions, as well as Kantianism, relating itself to phenomenology, existentialism and neo-Thomism. (Burgos 2018, 1−25, 123–124, 225).

According to Hildebrand, love is an affective value response. First, love is a value response in that it is elicited by value that inheres in the beloved. "It is essential for every kind of love that the beloved person stands before me as precious, beautiful, lovable" (i.e., "objectively worthy of being loved") (Hildebrand 1971, 33; Hildebrand 2009, 17). Second, love is a value response that is affective, like veneration, enthusiasm, and admiration, because it belongs to the realm of the heart, which he considers to be the affective part of the soul; the beauty of the beloved affectively touches the lover—the lover is, for example, delighted by it and affectively moved by it (Hildebrand 1971, 65–68, 74–77; Hildebrand 2009, 41–43, 48–50). Thus, in another work, *The Heart*, Hildebrand claims that "love is essentially a voice of the heart" (Hildebrand 2007, 67). "The lover wants to pour his love into the heart of the beloved, he wants to affect his heart, to fill it with happiness; and only then will he feel that he has really reached the beloved, his very self" (Hildebrand 2007, 67). In addition, according to Hildebrand, love is the most affective value response, in that it engages one's whole person, as explained below.

Love is an emotion, but it differs from merely being affected by something; rather, it is essentially intentional. More concretely, love is more than just an emotion in that it involves the following two types of intentionality: *intentio benevolentiae* (IB), which seeks to benefit another, and *intentio unionis* (IU), which seeks union with another.[5] IB and IU serve as key concepts in Hildebrand's analysis of love in *The Nature of Love*, in which he explores various forms of love, from conjugal love to love of one's neighbor.

IB "consists in the desire to make the other happy; it is above all else a real interest in the happiness, the well-being and the salvation of the other" (Hildebrand 1971, 5; Hildebrand 2009, 51). It is "a certain goodness toward the other, the breath of goodness", which "confers happiness giving the other a unique and indeed irreplaceable gift (Hildebrand 1971, 79-80; Hildebrand 2009, 51-52). Moreover, it is "a gift of full of goodness, a stream of goodness surrounding the other, a spiritual embrace of the other with goodness", which involves "deep solidarity", "deep interest in and concern for their well-being", and "making their well-being our own concern (Hildebrand 1971, 80; Hildebrand 2009, 52). IB is a source of solidarity among people because it puts them into a "we" relationship with other people, since it consists of sharing interests for the sake of each other.

[5] For brief descriptions of both IB & IU, see Hildebrand (1971, 77–80); Hildebrand (2009, 50–52). For a more detailed account, see Hildebrand (1971, 169–198); Hildebrand (2009, 123–146) for IU and Hildebrand (1971, 199–240); Hildebrand (2009, 147-180) for IB.

IU aims at the unification of two persons—especially of their hearts—through mutual dedication. According to Hildebrand, "if . . . the heart of the beloved is filled to the brim with longing for one, with joy in one's presence, with the desire for spiritual union with one, then the lover feels content. He feels that he possesses the soul of the beloved" (Hildebrand 2007, 67–68). Mutual love, which deepens through love and the return of love, is a wellspring of a more profound sort of happiness. Mutual love is based on an I-Thou relationship and thus is essentially a relationship between two persons, which is distinct from a subject-object relationship. Further, it is at the same time a relationship between a heart and another heart, involving more of the affective region of a person rather than the rational or volitional regions.

2. Transcendence and Dedication: Self-donation and Self-sacrifice

(a) Transcendence and dedication

According to Roach, Hildebrand's concepts of transcendence and dedication help one understand the nature of professional nursing care (Roach 2002). Roach refers to a fundamental insight proposed by Hildebrand in a brief passage in his earlier work, *Christian Ethics* (Hildebrand 1953). Roach quotes Hildebrand:

> The difference between an appetite or an urge and a value response clearly reveals the essential immanence of the first and the transcendence of the second. . . . There is a yawning abyss between the nurse who ministers to us with care because she wants to appease her motherly instincts and the nurse who surrounds us with all possible attention and care because of her love of neighbor and her real sympathy for our suffering and needs. (Roach 2002, 126–127)[6]

As Roach points out, Hildebrand's theory of value starkly contrasts with subjectivism. Something has value not because I value it; rather, I value something because it has value (Roach 2002, 125). Here, I will not go into the general debate between value subjectivism and objectivism. Following Hildebrand, what Roach emphasizes is that value lies not in my feeling of self-satisfaction; rather, there is a factual difference between feeling good or feeling content and responding to value: "the value about or

[6] Hildebrand 1953, 220.

for which I care is not in my self-satisfaction per se but in that for which I care" (Roach 2002, 125).

Here, Roach is referring to the famous distinction, made by Hildebrand in his *Ethics*, between responding to the merely subjectively satisfying and value response.[7] As another example, there is a clear distinction between someone who goes to save another's life so as to fulfil an urge for adventure and someone who does so in order to rescue that person (Hildebrand 1953, 220).[8] "In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value-response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation" (Hildebrand 1953, 230–231). It is the "capacity to *transcend* the frame of immanent trends" that is the capacity of the value response "to grasp things important-in-themselves, to be able to be affected by them, and to be motivated by them in [one's] responses" (Hildebrand 1953, 231).

Of course, this does not deny that such a response can involve other wishes and urges. As Hildebrand explains:

> What matters in these cases is not whether there exists such an urge or not, but what underlies our action, the motivation for it. The character of value-response in our helping a person in a dangerous situation is not disturbed by the fact that we have an urge for unfolding our energies in this direction. The presence of such an urge does not, as such, frustrate our transcendent value-response if only our intervention is motivated by a value and not by a striving to fulfill or appease our urge or appetite. (Hildebrand 1953, 220 fn. 26)

It is not wrong for a nurse to have a "motherly" urge to help her patients as long as it is not her motivation, which can happen, in my opinion, for example, in the absence of the overriding intentionality of care. Consequently, caring for someone else is primarily for the sake of that person; in this sense, caring is transcendent, since it goes

[7] Hildebrand does not discuss this point in detail in Hildebrand (1971) and merely indicates his discussion in Hildebrand (1953) to the reader (Hildebrand 1971, 31–32; Hildebrand 2009, 15–17). Another example Hildebrand discusses in *Ethics* is the following:

> There is an essential and decisive difference between a priest for whom preaching is the realization of oratorical talent, an occasion to unfold this gift, and a priest for whom preaching is motivated by the desire to spread the word of God and to serve the eternal welfare of his brethren. (Hildebrand 1953, 220)

[8] This may strike readers as an odd example; I suggest that perhaps Hildebrand was thinking about a situation in World War I, in which many young Germans were quite enthusiastically involved.

beyond our own concerns, although, of course, we also derive personal satisfaction from it.

Roach does not explore Hildebrand's philosophy in much further detail, partly because Hildebrand's theory of love is still underdeveloped in the work Roach cites. Hildebrand later develops his theory and presents it in a more detailed manner in his *magnum opus*, *The Nature of Love* (*Das Wesen der Liebe*); however, the work remained untranslated into English until very recently, so it was probably not easily accessible to Roach. Thus, in the following, I would like to look at Hildebrand's discussion of transcendence and dedication in his *Liebe* to fill in the necessary details of an insightful observation made by Roach.

According to Hildebrand, "the specific mark of love is . . . the character of self-donation [dedication ("Hingabecharakter")], indeed its transcendence" (Hildebrand 1971, 33; Hildebrand 2009, 17). Hildebrand calls "dedication" ("Hingabe") a response to a subject of value through recognizing its value in a way that transcends any benefit to oneself (Hildebrand 1971, 33; Hildebrand 2009, 17). This is a key concept in Hildebrand's theory of love, as he declares in the very conclusion of the tome that when we want to analyze the essence of love properly, we need to differentiate the three forms of dedication corresponding to three different types of love: self-donation (in natural love), self-sacrifice (in love of neighbor), and religious-devotion (in *caritas*) (Hildebrand 1971, 486–487; Hildebrand 2009, 373–374).

Before I discuss different types of dedication further, I would like to make an important note regarding terminology. Since there is much confusion regarding the translation of "Hingabe" into English, I will proceed as follows.[9] I call the type of dedication associated here with natural love "self-donation", as a translation of the expression "Selbstschenkung". Note that I use this word exclusively to mean this specific type of dedication, while the English edition also uses it as a translation of "Hingabe". Second, I call the type of dedication associated with love of neighbor "self-sacrifice". This is my proposed translation of "Selbsthingabe", which is distinct from "Selbstschenkung". As we shall see, this means the temporal silencing of the self rather than its abandonment. Finally, the third kind of dedication, which I shall call "religious devotion", is associated with the love of God, or *caritas*. Although I will not discuss "religious devotion" in this paper due to its theological nature, I note

[9] For self-donation, see Hildebrand (1971, 80–82); Hildebrand (2009, 52–54), for self-transcendence, see Hildebrand (1971, 267–293); Hildebrand (2009, 200–220). For neighbor-love, see Hildebrand (1971, 81 fn. 25, 276–280): Hildebrand (2009, 53 fn. 4, 208–210).

that Hildebrand holds that there is a significant difference between love of neighbor and *caritas* in terms of their different natures of dedication, as well as in numerous other aspects.

(b) Self-donation and self-sacrifice

Dedication in natural love is called "self-donation" ("Selbstschenkung"). Hildebrand describes this by using the term "enthronement", which means placing the beloved at the center of the realm of self-concern, which Hildebrand calls "Eigenleben".[10] I shall call it "Own-life" in this paper. This indicates that the welfare of the beloved correlates with that of the lover—in more traditional language, the beloved becomes an "alter Ego" (Hildebrand 1971, 219; Hildebrand 2009, 162).[11] Hildebrand writes:

> I *make a gift* as it were of my subjectivity [Own-life] to the beloved person. Rather than stepping out of my subjectivity [Own-life], or crossing over it as I do in pure value-response, I unfold my subjectivity [Own-life] in a unique way in and through this self-gift. We can express this giving of my subjectivity [Own-life] and the incomparable self-donation [dedication] that goes with it by saying that I make the beloved person the "lord" of my subjectivity [Own-life]; his or her subjectivity [Own-life] becomes mine insofar as my happiness depends on his or hers. (Hildebrand 1977, 293; Hildebrand 2009, 220)

This gift of self involves essentially IU, which is itself "an irreplaceable gift for the beloved person" (Hildebrand 1971, 180; Hildebrand 2009, 131). A typical example of this is an ideally Catholic conjugal love of mutual self-giving, in which a husband and a wife serve each other. Thus, natural love is not self-sacrifice; one does not say: "I want to marry you only for the sake of your happiness, so that you might be happy—my own happiness is not important" (Hildebrand 1971, 191; Hildebrand 2009, 139).

In the case of love of neighbor, however, there is no such personal and intimate self-donation. Of course, the neighbor is a subject of our concern in love of neighbor. However, the neighbor still appears as just a neighbor. Hildebrand writes: "The moment of 'for the other' is eminently present in loving my neighbor; in being moved by love of neighbor I can be deeply moved by the pain of my neighbor and can be

[10] The English version sometimes keeps the German term and sometimes uses "subjectivity" (cf. Hildebrand 2007, 200 fn. 1).

[11] ". . . since I love him he becomes an *alter ego*, but not an extension of my ego. My participation in his life is a consequence of love and not the basis of love" (Hildebrand 1971, 219; Hildebrand 2009, 162).

filled with compassion for him, and yet this "for him" does not belong to my subjectivity [Own-life] . . ." (Hildebrand 1971, 277 fn. 83; Hildebrand 2009, 208 fn. 4). "The moment of 'for the other', proper to all categories of love, shows itself differently in love of neighbor" (Hildebrand 1971, 277 fn. 83; Hildebrand 2009, 208–209 fn. 4). The neighbor is loved *qua* neighbor, so the neighbor does not occupy a personal space at the center of our concern, our Own-life. Thus, Hildebrand also describes it as stepping out of our Own-life. He writes:

> In contrast to a friend, brother, or a spouse, a neighbor does not reach into my subjectivity [Own-life], and this despite the fact that in loving a neighbor I share in his life in an ultimate way. For my neighbor as neighbor is not a source of happiness for me; in contrast to all other categories of love my happiness is not thematic in my relation to my neighbor. Thus in love of neighbor I step out of my subjectivity [Own-life] in a specific way. (Hildebrand 1971, 277 fn. 83; Hildebrand 2009, 208–209 fn. 4).

A neighbor can move our heart as a subject of charity; however, this only occurs temporarily, and the neighbor remains a neighbor. This seems reasonable, since, in Hildebrand's framework, once a neighbor occupies a special place in us, the neighbor has already become our friend and thus has become a subject of natural love.

Hildebrand insists that dedication is not self-abandonment, although Roach uses the term (Roach 2002, 126); it is simply a temporal state in which a neighbor occupies one's mind as the thematic subject. He writes:

> I am by no means abandoning my subjectivity [Own-life], or losing interest in it, or dying to it. What is meant is only that the well-being of my neighbor, on which I am focused in loving him or her, has as such no relation to my subjectivity [Own-life]. Thus my subjectivity [Own-life] in no way ceases to exist. (Hildebrand 1971, 279; Hildebrand 2009, 210)

Thus, what characterizes love of neighbor is self-sacrifice ("Selbsthingabe") rather than self-donation ("Selbstschenkung"). Hildebrand writes: "there is in true love of neighbor an element of self-donation [self-sacrifice ("Selbsthingabe")], which we can see in the ardent interest for the well-being of the other, in the stream of goodness

directed to the other, in the full thematicity of the neighbor" (Hildebrand 1971, 81 fn. 25; Hildebrand 2009, 53 fn. 4).

Love of neighbor is therefore more strongly associated with IB, with elements like "the flowing goodness, the readiness to sacrifice, the unique taking seriously of the other, the committing of oneself to the other" (Hildebrand 1971, 81 fn. 25; Hildebrand 2009, 53 fn. 4). However, love of neighbor is not completely free of IU, since without it, love of neighbor cannot be said to be love. In love of neighbor, IU aims at a union in "the Kingdom of Christ", that is, more secularly phrased, in the community of good "neighbors" (Hildebrand 1971, 277 fn. 83; Hildebrand 2009, 139). "Here too a return of love is desired, but here this means that I desire that my neighbor approaches me in the attitude of love of neighbor, or to say it better, that the love of neighbor reigns in his heart" (Hildebrand 1971, 277 fn. 83; Hildebrand 2009, 139). In this sense, we hope that our practice kindles a love of neighbor in our neighbor so that we can be unified in this way.

What about care? What kind of dedication is required in it? Is it more similar to self-donation, as in the cases of natural love, such as familial love and friendship love? Or is it more like love of neighbor, involving a stepping out of Own-life?

Perhaps there is no definitive answer to these questions, as care is multifarious, practiced by people with different motives and interests toward people with different roles and needs, although caring itself is "*the* human mode of being", according to Roach. As she writes elsewhere:

> The manner in which caring is expressed by a mother or father of family, by a doctor for patients, by a lawyer for clients, by an engineer for a specific project, by a housekeeper for domestic detail, differs; that one is caring, however, does not derive from a specific occupational or professional role. Caring is, as it were, the call to be human. One cares in a variety of ways; that we care is what we share as human beings. (Roach 1997, 15)

Caring can be professional or private, willing or unwilling, short-term or long-term, familial or institutional, friendly or hostile, receptive or unreceptive. In this sense, caring is as diverse as human relationships themselves and thus is also a dynamic process, especially considering its intersubjective aspects. Consequently, the need for

recognizing the individuality of each case of caring should be noted, and there should be a separate discussion for each individual type of caring.[12]

Now, despite its manifold nature, there is something that is common to all forms of a certain kind of caring, that is, the special way we see the human being as someone demanding our care just by virtue of being human. Both Roach and Hildebrand believe that it is the human dignity that inheres in human beings that demands and elicits our love of neighbor, our care for the human person in general. Many nurses agree with them; indeed, dignity is considered one of the foundational values of nursing theory. As one of its leading theorists, Katie Eriksson writes: "Human dignity is connected to the most fundamental value of caring, that is, to unprejudiciously confirm the patient's absolute dignity as a human being", which is "grounded in one's humanity" (Eriksson 1997, 71). In the next section, I shall explain why such people may experience all human persons as deserving our care, using some of the ideas provided by Hildebrand.

3. Human Dignity—The General Beauty of an Individual in All?

According to Hildebrand, a person has two important roles to play in love: the subject of love and the cause (motivation) of love. He writes:

> Love always refers to an individual and unique person as this individual being . . . . Although it is the beauty of this individual that wounds my heart, in the act of love I am entirely directed to the person himself and in fact to the whole person. After all, I do not love the beauty of this person but the person himself . . . . We have to distinguish between that which motivates our love

[12] Is there anything that can be said that is specific to professional care by nurses? Roach may think that neither self-donation nor self-sacrifice fully apply. A patient is not part of our Own-life; however, it is also not exactly the case that one goes completely out of Own-life, since, as Roach says, a nurse can find her work fulfilling (Roach 2002, 127). In professional care, the welfare of the patient becomes part of the concern of the caring person because it is legitimately a part of self-fulfillment for the practitioner, while selflessness, in terms of self-abandonment, is not proper. Perhaps we can suggest that a nurse needs to have a place for her patient in the realm of her personal concern, not only as her patient, but as someone she cares for. While a nurse is not likely to think that she is responsible for the general welfare of the patient, she may be in some way concerned with it. There is something disturbing about a nurse who is completely indifferent to the welfare of a patient in other aspects, such as the death of the patient's child, even though the child is not her patient.

> and that to which our love refers. (Hildebrand 1971, 104; Hildebrand 2009, 72).

Hildebrand claims that the subject of love is not the general beauty of love, which awakens one's love in the beloved, but the person *per se*. Beauty draws a lover to the beloved, but what is loved is not the beauty but the person. This is clear when we remember, as discussed in the first section of this paper, that according to Hildebrand, IB and IU, which comprise the essence of love, are both directed toward a person as an individual.

Also, Hildebrand holds that it is the general beauty of an individual (the beauty of a person as a whole) that is responsible for awakening love in us.[13]

> In the love for a friend and even more in a spousal love, we see with particular clarity the central place of this value, the preciousness of this unique individuality. What grounds and engenders our love for the other person is the beauty and preciousness of this unique personality as a whole. (Hildebrand 1971, 41; Hildebrand 2009, 23)

It is the value of the whole individual person that elicits and legitimates our love as a value response to the person. Hildebrand writes: "The individuality of the whole personality stands before us as precious and beautiful; only in this way can the person awaken love in us" (Hildebrand 1971, 41; Hildebrand 2009, 23).

A person with such a general beauty may also be beautiful in terms of virtues such as wisdom and courage. It appears, however, that the beauty of an individual somehow transcends the beauty of the aggregation of such virtues in the sense that the appeal of general beauty is not exhaustible through describing objective personality features. Hildebrand writes:

> . . . love has to do with the overall beauty and preciousness of this individuality, which is a fundamental value datum; and while this value is nourished by many vital, spiritual, and moral values, it can never be completely analyzed into these nor can it be directly formulated as these can be. The overall beauty of this individuality is not able to be classified. (Hildebrand 1971, 40–41; Hildebrand 2009, 22–23)

[13] For the general beauty of an individual, see Hildebrand (1971, 40–41, 400–401), Hildebrand (2009, 21–24, 302).

Hildebrand points out that when we contemplate an individual, the beauty of the whole person, rather than that of his or her particular features as distinct parts, shines through, revealing the person as a precious individual worthy of love. This is why it is difficult to explain why we love someone, why "we cannot indicate the value qualities that motivate our love in the same way that we can indicate them in explaining, say, our esteem for another person" (Hildebrand 1971, 40; Hildebrand 2009, 22). Thus, we often simply say "because thou art thou" (Seifert 2015, 31).

When we apply this theory of the general beauty of an individual to care theory, the following problem arises. In the context of professional caring, such as nursing and elderly care, caregivers do not always have opportunities to become close to those for whom they care. However, if caring is also an affective value response, caregivers should be able to find beauty and its underlying value in the subject of care.

Hildebrand holds that in love of neighbor, we respond to the ontological value of a person as a being created in the image of God (Hildebrand 1971, 358; Hildebrand 2009, 269). Roach, similarly, believes that the value we respond to is the dignity of the human being as God's image (Roach 2002, 8). It is too hasty to dismiss these claims by saying that Hildebrand and Roach are here just stating their religious beliefs, which do not deserve further attention from philosophers; in my view, it is precisely here that they are making important observations as to how we should understand our experience of human dignity.[14]

[14] For a good discussion of human dignity and Catholicism, see Rosen (2018, especially 90–104). Rosen points to the significance of the Catholic influence on the legislation of the German constitution after World War II and offers an insightful comparison between Catholicism and Kantianism. Rosen claims that in the Catholic conception of dignity, human freedom is not seen as an absolute source of value, as some Kantians seem to think (although they think that human freedom can be restricted by the freedom of others via our rationality). Throughout his discussions, Rosen refers to John Paul II as a central figure who espouses the concept without mentioning (and perhaps also without noticing) that Karol Józef Wojtyła (later John Paul II) was a philosophy professor and phenomenologist who wrote his dissertation "on the possibility of grounding a Christian ethic on the ethical system developed by Max Scheler" (The Holy See 2014). Scheler, a close friend of Hildebrand, holds a view of dignity that is diametrically opposed to Kant's "formalism", which, in his opinion, depersonalizes human persons through its fixation on its rationalistic conception (Zachary 2014). Scheler seeks the ground of dignity through phenomenology and finds it in "the absolute value of the individual person given in the act of love, an act that reveals the other as a wholly unique and irreplaceable person" (Zachary 2014, 269). Hildebrand and Roach, along with John Paul II (and thereby the Magisterium of the Church), seem to follow a similar line.

To begin with, Roach believes that such an experience of human dignity is a fundamental attitude, common to all human beings. More broadly understood, caring is "grounded in an attitude of *religio* before all creation", especially such an attitude to human persons (Roach 2002, 3). Roach refers to the idea of *religio* in the work of Hildebrand, explains it in terms of "reverence for all of creation", and opposes it to "the reductionist, mechanistic paradigm that has shaped modern Western culture" (Roach 2002, 108). According to Roach, however, the feeling of *religio* that is specific to human dignity is not something that is unique to certain religions such as Christianity; rather, it is universally rooted in our common humanity: "Respect for human life has foundations in the natural awareness of the sacred in the customs of peoples, as well as enshrined in faith traditions" (Roach 2002, 19).

Upon closer examination, we find that Hildebrand is also making an interesting phenomenological observation: "Every love of neighbor necessarily has the *consciousness* of the ontological dignity of one's neighbor, *of the beauty* that he has apart from his particular individuality and cannot lose as long as he lives" (Hildebrand 1971, 358; Hildebrand 2009, 269, my italics). Elsewhere, he describes "the ontological value of a person" as "the value which a human person possesses as such" (Hildebrand 1953, 131). This value demands a corresponding value response; to "respond in the right way" to "our neighbor" is "due" "to the dignity of our neighbor as a human being" (Hildebrand 1953, 189). This dignity—this beauty—of the beloved is something that is intuitively given, since the beauty is directly (intuitively) perceived, according to Hildebrand, as given. In his value epistemology, "perception is more than mere sense perception" (Hildebrand 1960, 172). For example, "when we hear the Fourth Symphony of Beethoven we perceive not only the tones but also the melody, harmonies, the entire structure of the symphony; above all, we perceive its beauty" (Hildebrand 1960, 172). Thus, he also says in his discussion of love: "the object unfolds in its qualitative character before my mind, in contrast to the mere understanding of the concept" (Hildebrand 1971, 77; Hildebrand 2009, 50).

We have seen that Hildebrand thinks that human dignity inheres in our being created in the image of God (*imago dei*); perhaps, then, we can say that we all appear "beautiful" because we are, in a certain way, similar to God, who is, by definition, ultimately beautiful. Hildebrand seems to think that this has something to do with our rationality, freedom, and immortality, which make it possible for us to commit spiritual and moral acts (Hildebrand 1953, 130–132, 141). Note that it is not that each of these human characteristics or their aggregation is perceived as a being with dignity—as beautiful—in a human being; rather, each individual human person

appears beautiful—is perceived with dignity—as a whole being, by virtue of having these characteristics. Again, it is the object itself and its beauty that are perceived in a given value perception, according to Hildebrand. Further, it is also important to note here that Hildebrand is not making a dogmatic assertion. Like Roach, he claims that "we do not need to start from God in order to grasp . . . the dignity of man" (Hildebrand 1953, 162–163).[15] Finally, according to Hildebrand, human dignity calls for "our respect and love", or for our "respect, reverence, and gentleness" (Hildebrand 1953, 131, 361).

Based on these discussions, I would like to propose an approach to human dignity in the spirit of both Hildebrand and Roach. Perhaps our intentionality—"our personalistic attitude" (as Husserl called it) (Moran 2009, 93)—toward persons we are called to care for is such that we find dignifying beauty in all individuals. Respect for human dignity is thus broadly understood as a kind of reverence, which Hildebrand understands as "a response to the general value of being as such, to the dignity which all being . . . possess, to the value of the . . . ultimate 'positivity' of being" (Hildebrand 2016, 36). Thus, "Only the person who possesses reverence is capable of real enthusiasm, of joy in so far as it is motivated by values, *true love*, and obedience" (Hildebrand 2016, my italics).

Of course, we do not always *see* others as beautiful, radiating human dignity. Hildebrand says that, for example, a thief "may be blind to the value of justice and to the offense against human dignity" (Hildebrand 1953, 406). Further, such concealment of human dignity may be something that is much more prevalent in our lives, especially since we live in an age in which the pragmatic viewpoint is overly emphasized.[16] We are often closed to values of others due to our self-centeredness (Hildebrand 2016, 36).[17] For example, a "concupiscent man" is "interested in the world only as a means in procuring pleasure for himself" (Hildebrand 2016, 37). For such a person, "the world is sealed, silent, stripped of all mystery, deprived of all depth, flat and limited to one dimension" (Hildebrand 2016, 36).

How can we then overcome such deprivation and develop our reverence for human beings, for their dignity? Such a lack seems to be prevalent in the modern world. As Hildebrand writes:

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[15] Full-fledged charity, however, requires loving God, according to Hildebrand (Hildebrand 1953, 458; Cf. Hildebrand 1971, 358–360; Hildebrand 2009, 270–271).

[16] I discuss how we can become blind to human dignity in an article comparing Hildebrand with J. David Velleman (Kikuchi 2020, 116–120).

[17] Hildebrand 2016, 36. Note that this work is an English translation of a German work published much earlier, in 1933.

> The attitude of reverence is especially opposed to all pragmatic conduct. The contrary of a reverent attitude toward being results when everything is considered only as a means, as an instrument for subjective and fortuitous aims, when all is used as a coin for which something can be exchanged; when nothing is taken seriously for its own sake . . . . (Hildebrand 2016, 43)

In my view, nurses are better situated to be reverent toward human dignity because, as Hildebrand points out, "the value of a human being reveals itself to our mind in certain situations in a specifically drastic manner", "for instance, when someone is tortured and injured, or when his life is in danger" (Hildebrand 1953, 101). However, nurses are often under strong pressure from difficult work environments, stress-inducing patients and colleagues, and the mechanized worldview of medicine. (Physicians are under even stronger pressure, I assume, in the sense that they are almost forced to see patients from the medical perspective, at least most of the time.)

Hildebrand and Roach would perhaps suggest that it helps to be a good Catholic; Hildebrand, for example, claims that the Catholic liturgy has just such an effect, to help us develop reverence for all creatures, including our neighbors (Hildebrand 2016, 42).[18] Here, we should be reminded of the fact that Hildebrand was an enthusiastic member of the Third Order of Franciscans; he described St. Francis as someone who was "full of sweet regard for all creation, even for non-living things . . . [his] heart was flooded with inexpressible joy as he beheld the sun, the moon, and the stars" (Hildebrand 1963, 33–34). He quotes Thomas of Celano: "he called all creatures brothers and with secret art penetrated to the inner nature of the

[18] A concept that may be relevant to this is that of divinization or deification (*theosis*). Gregory the Great understands the human fall as the loss of the ability to contemplate and the recovery from it as (a foretaste of) salvation: "this restored power enables us to contemplate and to be transformed by the divine light that renews and strengthens us, widening our hearts so that we can perceive others, ourselves, and indeed the whole creation as refulgent with God's glory" (Dysinger 2019, 264). Hildebrand also connects reverence toward and the dignity of being with religious contemplation and salvation: "In this right and appropriate attitude toward being as such [reverence], this affirmation free from obtrusiveness, this silent, contemplative disposition toward being as being, the world begins to disclose itself in its entire depth, differentiation, and plenitude of value" (Hildebrand 2016, 42).

very creature with the sharp look of his heart, as if he had entered already into the freedom of the glory of the children of God"[19] (Hildebrand 1963, 33).

However, I suggest that there are also other possible ways to develop our sense of reverence for human dignity. To begin with, we can try to be more contemplative than active, so that we are not overwhelmed by pragmatic (e.g., practical, technical, financial, etc.) perspectives. Another way is to *trust* the general personal beauty of the cared-for person in various ways. For example, we can attempt to "grasp" that human dignity inheres in every person, as many people apparently do (otherwise, it would not have been included in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights);[20] clearly it helps to believe in its existence, although it may be hidden from our hearts, since if we think that it is there, it is easier for us to find it. As another example, perhaps we can try to see human dignity in people through empathy, by taking the perspective of those who love them. It seems reasonable to assume that such beauty tends to appear more clearly in the eyes of those who are close to them, such as their family and friends. As Hildebrand points out, love empowers us "to see value more clearly": "turning lovingly to someone opens our eyes and lets us grasp all the values that one would never see as long as one lived in an indifferent attitude" (Hildebrand 1971, 41; Hildebrand 2009, 23).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have proposed an approach to care based on the theory of love of Dietrich von Hildebrand and the theory of care of Sister Marie Simone Roach in order to explore a modern Catholic philosophical theory of care as an affective value response. In the first section, I briefly introduced two key concepts in Hildebrand's theory of love, *intentio benevolentiae* and *intentio unionis*. In the second section, I discussed his idea of transcendence and dedication, hinted at by Roach's comment about care as an affective value response, and explored its possibility further using the framework of thought suggested by Hildebrand's later work. In the third and final section, I explored the concept of human dignity as the general individual beauty of all human persons, based on Hildebrand's analyses of beauty, dignity, and reverence.

[19] Hildebrand (1963, 33). Note that the piece from which this passage is quoted is a translation of a work that had been written about forty years earlier in Germany, as a commemoration of 700 years of the Franciscan Orders there, in 1921, although this is not noted in the new book (Hildebrand 1921).

[20] Cf. Hollenbach (2014, 256).

In light of the discussions above, I would like to conclude my paper with two suggestions for further research. First, I would like to emphasize the importance of the practitioner's perspective in learning about human dignity. Human dignity, which seems to be so fundamental to the experience of caregivers, is not simply dogmatically *believed*, but richly *felt*, given that love, even love of neighbor, is an affective value response. Philosophers tend to analyze the normativity of human dignity as an abstract concept, and theologians are eager to ground it from a dogmatic or exegetical standpoint; both of these approaches, however, seem to leave "human dignity" an open question in the face of skepticism, especially in the pluralistic world of today.[21] However, as Roach points out, there seems to be something fundamentally human about our reverence for human dignity. Thus, I suggest that a phenomenology of the dignity of the person can be a promising line of research, and for this, it is crucial to refer to accounts by a practitioner such as Roach, someone who can *see* such dignity in her patients, in the form of the beauty of their humanity, even in challenging circumstances, in her daily confrontation with difficult patients, despair due to misfortune, or the mechanistic worldview of modern medicine.

Second, I suggest that phenomenologists can also learn from the Catholic intellectual tradition.[22] What is the common characteristic among human beings that underlies our experience of human dignity? Integral to a phenomenology of dignity is a phenomenology of personhood, and there is a rich tradition of phenomenology of personhood among Catholic philosophers, from Augustine to Edith Stein, who have seen in our *imago dei* our dignity.[23] Perhaps our ability to love—to care—proves to be crucial, if, as Roach believes, we human beings have been "created by love, for love, and to love" (Roach, 3).[24]

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[21] Cf. Hollenbach (2014).

[22] The close connection between early phenomenology and modern Catholic thought is another topic that is currently receiving much attention (cf. Baring 2019).

[23] Cf. Spencer (2018). Levinas is perhaps the most important figure in what I call "phenomenology of dignity". Cf. Atterton 2014. Levinas claims that already in the recognition of the Other—in the experience of the face of the Other—there is the felt need to help the person (Atterton 2014, 278). Levinas' view seems "radically other centered" in comparison to that of Hildebrand, and comparison between the two thinkers is "a project waiting to be carried out" (Crosby 2009, xxxi).

[24] According to the "functional interpretation" of the *imago dei*, human beings are "in God's image by being delegated by God to exercise the kind of care for creation that God's love for all creatures leads to (Hollenbach 2014, 254–255).

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