

## ЕТИКА ТА ЕСТЕТИКА

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### CONSCIENCE IN N. HARTMANN AS MEANS OF RETHINKING MODERN VALUES

*N. Hartmann's idea of conscience as a means of actualization of values from the ideal world into the real world is relevant in the context of its application in the rethinking of modern values, which emphasize negative, pessimistic, defeatist, and fatalistic worldviews and thinking which leads to destructive ethical behavior. The **purpose** of the article is to examine the importance of the concept of conscience in N. Hartmann's philosophy of values and determine the aspects of practical implementation of this concept for the rethinking of modern values since conscience is at the center of structuring of values. The historical-comparative method, the method of philosophical reconstruction, and the systemic approach are used in the article. N. Hartmann's stance on the idea of conscience, which relates to value of life, is investigated from the point of view of the philosopher's subjective approach to values. In the article, the attention is drawn to such concepts of his philosophy of values as the "feeling of value" and "valuational consciousness" which shed light on the ways that his objective ideal values are constituted in the real world by a priori emotional means of the subject. In the article, the author emphasizes the possibility of the application of N. Hartmann's idea of conscience as an inner voice from the ideal world of values, as a peculiar "innate pure ethical consciousness" for the rethinking of stereotypical and postmodern modern values from the point of view of the value of human life. The practical value of the article is that it proposes the ontological criterion for the rethinking of modern values, since if the value of human life is a universal value and conscience is innate or pure ethical consciousness, then the stereotypical worldview paradigms, including postmodern, can be verified on this basis for their truthfulness or falsity.*

**Key words:** pure ethical consciousness, personality, modern values, emotional apriorism, value of life, phenomenological approach to values.

**Introduction.** The modern world is characterized by rapid and extreme changes, both of technological and social nature, which makes it hard to keep track of the values that are constantly being reshaped and rethought to new needs. The modern era is characterized by the decline of traditional values, the rise and emergence of new values, the rapid rise of individualism, and relativism, and the change of ethical paradigms, which in totality poses a challenge to the understanding of modern values. Consumerism, extreme attention to the materialistic side of things, and ignoring the spiritual, and social aspects of human life pose danger to the ethical essence of a human being and can lead to societal breakdowns. From this perspective, N. Hartmann's idea of conscience as a voice from the outer transcendent world that "directs" humans into an Apriori emotional perception of values is important to investigate in the context of it being the guide to comprehend and determine the usefulness of values for a human being. The value of life, in this case, serves as a reliable criterion of moral judgment and of identification of values. The apriorism of values in N. Hartmann's views can be interpreted in the context of life as a fundamental value.

The problem of conscience is in the focus of attention of many researchers. Particularly, M. Hoecamp et al. [5] examine conscience through the prism of the philosophy of personalism of P. Kohnstamm, whose views influenced the idea of conscience in a child who is becoming a personality and emphasized the importance of education in the creation of one's conscience. The authors state that God is the one who leads the human by speaking to a person's conscience. They also say that there is a strong connection between Kohnstamm's explanation of personality as the uniqueness of a person and his plea for education that is characterized by differentiation and the desire to develop the child's intelligence, talents, and qualities. D. McConnel and J. Savulescu [11] try to present a balanced view of the value of conscience. They claim that consciences are dynamic, they interact with the best moral human judgments to shape moral values. They object to C. McLeod's claim that conscience encourages its retooling, arguing that it creates a motivational barrier to the change of moral judgment. Also, they state that this motivational barrier enables the conscience to play a valuable role – compensate for the limitations of moral judgment.

M. Machinek [10] explores the issue of the freedom of conscience and its definition. He states that it is important to point out the various dimensions of conscience, arguing that it can be defined as moral self-consciousness in its deepest personal dimension, and can be described as the guardian of moral integrity, and what is common. He touches upon the relationship with God and claims that only when these three dimensions are considered, the freedom of conscience can be achieved. L. N. Ibrahim et al. [6] investigate conscience in the context of its connection with God's voice in human life. They state that the main essence in the connection between God's voice and conscience is reflection that comes with matters of universality and particularity. They also claim that humans should find balance in identifying profane and sacred values, while the existence of God's voice in conscience is contestable due to opposition of worldly and spiritual matters. E. V. Garcia [2] aims to offer concrete guidance for engaging in acts of conscience in morally virtuous ways. He argues that the agents are subject to two basic duties: duty to oneself and duty to others related to demands of civility. He states that people need to rethink their views on conscience and integrity with to duties to others.

A. Itaparica [7] examines the emergence of consciousness as an epistemic faculty and its pivotal role in the development of conscience as a moral faculty, establishing the connection between consciousness and the genesis of conscience. C. Coady [1] explores the concept of conscience in the context of its nature. He outlines the essential features of conscience and its significance for a coherent moral psychology. He argues that conscience is a complex concept that resists reduction to its component features. He also discusses the significance of various distortions of the concept helping to avoid conceptual confusion both theoretically and in practice. Researchers in various aspects analyze the concept of conscience, however, attention should be drawn to the idea of conscience as the criterion of value judgment, a clear ethical consciousness not influenced by stereotypes and norms.

The article explores the phenomenological philosophy of value of N. Hartmann and investigates conscience as the main method of realization of ideal values and their transition into the real world. Consequently, the article focuses on exploring the role of conscience as an a priori feeling of value and its role in the rethinking of modern values, specifically the ones that are fatalistic and defeatist by nature, and propagate disruptive, harmful, and unethical behavior. Conscience in N. Hartmann's views can be treated as a peculiar "pure ethical consciousness", which is independent of the established worldview traditions, and therefore, it can be a universally significant criterion of the constitution of values, their identification, and the analysis about their truthfulness or falsity. Such exploration is grounded on the concept of conscience as it is understood by N. Hartmann and with the connection to the value of life, which the philosopher mentions in his work, and I develop in the article as an ontological criterion for the verification of values by their usefulness for the good moral life of a human and their utility for solving ethical dilemmas in the context of rethinking modern values.

**The purpose of the study** is to investigate the possibility of practical application of the idea of conscience as a tool for the verification of values as good or bad precisely from the point of view of the value of life.

**Methods of research.** Among the methods used in the article, one can single out the historical-comparative method, the method of historical reconstruction, and the systemic approach.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **1. The phenomenological approach to values in the philosophy of N. Hartmann**

N. Hartmann builds his phenomenological axiology based on the criticism of the philosophical ideas of I. Kant. The philosopher criticizes the Kantian formal approach to values, believing that “an ethics exclusively of the Ought is a moral delusion, is a blindness to the value of the actual. No wonder that, historically, pessimism follows in its track. In a world stripped of values and profaned, no one could tolerate life” [3, p. 36]. To my mind, ethical formalism, including Kantian, does not point to a certain way of realization of values from a certain moral rule, since it requires a great number of specifications and interpretations of concepts. The erosion of moral values and the blurring of norms of ethical behavior often due to ethical formalism leads to the vagueness of such moral values, which in turn may lead to the neglect of the phenomenon of the will to life, destructive and harmful unethical behavior. Criticizing I. Kant’s ethical formalism and looking for ways of transforming values from the ideal world into the real world, N. Hartmann connects his axiology with the subject and develops a phenomenological variant of solving this issue. He emphasizes the “feelings of values”, and “valuational consciousness” of the subject, which indicates the direct dependence of values on the subject and his phenomenological intentions, particularly emphasizing conscience.

Phenomenological intentions are usually deciding in the constitution of values. For example, as L. Kopciuch states, “Value consciousness is, in fact, a process composed of three main moments. These are: (i) the assumption of an inner attitude by emotional awareness (e.g., admiration, awe, affirmation, objection, indignation, scorn, rejection, dislike); (ii) the awareness of the object towards which this attitude is taken; (iii) the awareness of the basis or criterion that determines the assumption of the attitude” [8, p. 43]. Thus, such dependence on the subject is an indicator of the phenomenological formation of values in N. Hartmann’s axiology. In addition, N. Hartmann believes that “valuational consciousness... is a sense of value, a primal, immediate capacity to appreciate the valuable” [3, p. 86]. In its essence, the “feeling of values” of N. Hartmann has an a priori dimension, thus, in my opinion, he develops emotional and axiological apriorism, since “the apriorism of thinking and judging is accompanied by an apriorism of feeling, the intellectual a priori by an emotional a priori which is equally independent and original” [3, p. 177]. Meaning humans, as subjects, possess an a priori ability to “feel” and “perceive” the values. The philosopher believes that “the apriority of values is even more unconditional, more absolute, than that of the theoretical categories... The whole responsibility for the legitimacy and objectivity of the standard of values falls upon the distinctively aprioristic vision of values – that is... upon the sense of value” [3, p. 192]. However, even if all values according to N. Hartmann are absolute, then the subjective “sense of value” is the basis of their coherence with the actual world. As N. Hartmann believes, “the apriorism of emotional acts is just as “pure,” original, autonomous and “transcendental” an authority as the logical and categorical apriorism in the domain of theory” [3, p. 178]. In this sense, Hartmann’s “apriorism of emotional acts” has a transcendental dimension, which is associated with the moral and axiological subject.

N. Hartman’s phenomenological approach to values also lies in the fact that he claims that “every moral value is a value of disposition, but all disposition is towards someone” [3, p. 212]. That is, in the context of the realization of moral values, one subject is related to other subjects who take part in moral behavior, specifically “only a being who can will, act, set up ends and pursue them, who can foster dispositions and feel values, is capable of moral conduct, either of a positive, or negative kind. Such a being is a moral subject, a person” [3, p. 214], who manifests certain phenomenological intentions.

The philosopher notes that “every person, every human peculiarity is filled with them (*values*), is significant and unique... Each is a world in miniature, and not only as a specific structural entity but also as a specific structural value” [3, pp. 39–40]. To some extent, N. Hartmann’s approach to values is, in my opinion, anthropocentric, however, such anthropocentrism is based on phenomenological intentions because it is the subject that has a “feeling of values” in its structure [3, p. 38].

**Emotional interpretation of the nature of values.** In the context of the phenomenological approach to the constitution of values, N. Hartmann also tends to an emotional interpretation of the nature of values. In particular, he speaks of “the emotional apriorism of the sense of value” [3, p. 176], stating that “every moral preference position is intuitive... It does not first wait for a judgment of the understanding. Comprehension of ethical reality... is transfused with valuations” [3, pp. 176–177]. He also states, that “the apriority of the knowledge of them (*values*) is no intellectual or reflective apriority, but is emotional, intuitive” [3, p. 185]. Hence, in the understanding of N. Hartmann, emotional understanding and interpretation of values is no less important than other types of a priori senses. In this context, N. Hartmann develops a phenomenological approach to values, because the basis of the axiological situation is the subject with his emotions, will, and choice. He believes that “there is a pure valuational a priori which directly, intuitively, in accordance with feeling, penetrates our practical consciousness, our whole conception of life, and which lends to everything which falls within the range of our vision the mark of value or anti-value” [3, p. 177]. According to the philosopher, the subject “for in his practical conduct outward or inward, he is always the carrier of moral values and disvalues... He is himself at the same time an ontological and an axiological entity” [3, p. 269]. In such a perspective, Hartmann’s “subject” and “personality” acquire their meaning depending on their possession of values and are axiological by nature.

N. Hartmann combines emotional apriorism of values with the ideas of the “philosophy of life” since he believes that a person needs to have “an elemental feeling which connects all things and relations that come within his range of vision with the value of life, and he thereby separates them into goods and evils” [3, p. 187]. In this sense, the category of “value of life” [3, p. 187] is a criterion for the division of things into what’s beneficial for the human and what’s harmful. In the same context, N. Hartmann believes that “...a thing can be valuable only through its relation to a value itself” [3, p. 189]. In this aspect, the philosopher is close to the pragmatic criterion of value formation.

### 1.2. Conscience as the means of realization of values

The ways of realization of objective transcendent ideal values of N. Hartmann are through phenomenological acts, one of such phenomenological acts, the primal way to actualize values is through the idea of conscience. N. Hartmann understands conscience as the inner voice in a human that guides one’s conduct, and tells a human what is good and what is bad. He states that “...that which we call conscience is at bottom just this primal consciousness of value, which is found in the feeling of every person” [3, p. 200]. Moreover, conscience is not just the inner voice from the ideal world of objective values or a subjective intuition, it is also a reflective and dynamic process connecting personalities with the ideal world of values. The idea of conscience, in this case, works as an intermediary between the hierarchical Apriori structure of values and the subject, guiding them towards higher, more valuable values which result in morally beneficial and ethical behavior.

P. Pandit states that “Hartmann endorses that the moral worth of any actions depends on the valuational qualities they produce... a morally good person can distinguish himself as how he morally ought to be from the moral valuations of his actions. To overcome the rigorism of Kant’s theory, Hartmann relocates the focus of the moral worth from the universality of moral law and applies the moral worth to moral values or goods of the actions and relates it with the agent” [12, p. 415]. In this case, the agent is an active bearer of values who possesses valuational feelings.

For N. Hartmann how conscience expresses itself is “...most exactly the emotional apriority of the valuational consciousness, the obscure, half-conscious sense of value... the so-called “voice

of conscience” is a basic form of the primal consciousness of value... the most elemental way in which the sense of value gains currency among men” [3, p. 201]. At the same time, N. Hartmann defines conscience “... as the voice of God in man, (which) fits only too closely the concept of emotional a priori” [3, p. 201]. However, in such a case, the “manifestation of values”, whatever their nature, is initially possible only through the subject, who is the “carrier” of conscience. From this point of view, the idea of conscience in N. Hartmann as a moral principle in a human is one of the ways of actualization of ideal values in the real world through the autonomous subject on a phenomenological basis. N. Hartmann believes that conscience “...is a self-dependent and self-active power in man which is set apart from man’s will. It really is the influence of a “higher” power, a voice from another world – from the ideal world of values” [3, p. 201]. That is, “conscience is the revelation of moral values in actual consciousness ... It is a primitive form of the sense of value” [3, p. 202]. In this aspect of interpreting conscience as an axiological basis, values should also be understood as transcendental conditions for assessing reality, and conscience as a phenomenological basis for the existence of values.

N. Hartmann emphasizes the transcendentalism of values, saying that “in the revolution of the ethos, the values themselves do not shift. Their nature is super-temporal, superhistorical. But the consciousness of them shifts. From the whole realm it cuts out... a little circle of something seen” [3, pp. 88–89]. In the same context, N. Hartmann notes that “...values have actually an existence in themselves, independent of all imagination and longing. It means that the consciousness of them does not determine values, but that values determine the consciousness of them” [3, p. 93]. At the same time, “values are not laws of existence; they have no binding necessity over the actual. One can never know whether in the given conduct of a man they are actualized or not” [3, p. 97]. That is, “values exist independently of the degree of their fulfilment in reality. Over against the real they signify only a claim, an Ought-to-Be, no inevitable necessity...” [3, p. 98]. He also believes that “valuational structures are ideal objects, beyond all real Being and Not-Being, also beyond the really existing feeling of value, which alone grasps them” [3, p. 180]. However, such an existence of values “on the other side of being” and “on the other side of the subject” is possible only in the form of divine consciousness, or social consciousness, that is, in cultural and historical forms. N. Hartmann also gives a leading role to ethics, since “values are not only conditions of the possibility of goods, but are also conditions of all ethical phenomena in general” [3, p. 192].

N. Hartmann raises the question of the **realization of transcendental values** and solves it in the phenomenological context. He reflects: “How do valuational principles acquire efficacy and the power to mold the real? It is easy to see that consciousness herein plays an integrating role, that values operate otherwise than categories of existence – not directly, but, if at all, through the mediation of the consciousness of value” [3, p. 67]. From his point of view, “... every reaching forth of values out of the ideal realm into the actual depends upon the part played by the subject. Among all real entities only the subject has the power of mediation” [3, p. 317]. In such a perspective, the subject is a necessary condition for the realization of values. In the hierarchy of values of N. Hartmann, the value of life occupies a central position because it enables other values to be actualized, otherwise such groups of values as aesthetic, moral, and spiritual could not be realized in the real world without the prior value that enables them – the value of life. Conscience, in this case, is the a priori guide to ethical behavior, which prioritizes the preservation and continuation of life.

## **2. Critique of modern values through conscience from the position of the value of life**

The modern world is characterized by postmodernist thought, which emphasizes the importance of the individual truth rather than objective truth. In this sense, values tend to become relative, depending on one’s judgment at a specific moment, rather than by its objective utility for the human experience. Moreover, materialistic, and consumerist ways of interpreting human nature, predominant in today’s society puts aside the spiritual human virtues, such as compassion, humility, and integrity, emphasizing the external factors of human behavior. Hence, here raises

the question on what grounds can a human judge and evaluate values, the answer to which, to my mind, is based on one's conscience in connection with the value of life. Conscience, in this case, serves as an objective *Apriori* human capacity to foresee and perceive the universal principles of right and wrong. Conscience can be comprehended as primal or pure ethical consciousness, being free of modern constructs imposed on a human by acquired experience, allows humans to evaluate the value based on its usefulness for human life.

N. Hartmann considers the "value of life" to be the criterion of values [3, p. 187]. According to N. Hartmann, "in the first series the most elementary value is that of life... only the much narrower value of life as the ontological basis of the subject, and thereby indirectly also of the moral being and value-carrier, the person" [3, p. 131].

Moreover, N. Hartmann, standing on the phenomenological position in the interpretation of values, is at the same time on the position of pluralism of values, since "a man may find himself confronted with different tasks which his own valuational consciousness imposes upon him. And these may conflict with one another. Then behind the plurality of conflicting trends there exists a plurality of directions in the Ought-to-Be and ultimately a plurality in the values themselves. If there were a single concrete supreme value, from which all others could be derived, such a conflict could not properly arise ..." [4, pp. 299–300]. From this point of view, in my opinion, the pluralism of values is methodologically related to axiological ideas, that is, subjectivism is characterized by axiological pluralism, because it is the subject that can have and experience different values that are no longer transcendent and identical for everyone. In turn, the idea of axiological pluralism can be the basis for the formation of the idea of the relativity of values. In this aspect, as J. Kuosmanen argues, for example, value pluralism in its practical dimension has a positive dimension, because it can be a characteristic of a broad political society, the main goal of which is to ensure the coexistence of consensual ways of life [9, p. 90].

In the context of N. Hartmann's phenomenological approach to values, the "source" of values is the subject, but not simply the subject as an ontological or epistemological category, but the subject as an ethical and axiological category, which is no longer considered as a subject, but as a personality, a person who determines moral and axiological priorities that are individual, unique, and hence pluralistic. Therefore, the phenomenological approach to values can also be considered the basis for the formation of axiological personalism with an emphasis on the importance of the individual and his feelings in the formation of values.

## **2.2. Conscience as a pro-life stance on the utility of values**

Often the values that degrade life, propagate degrowth, fatalism, defeatism, and overall negative destructive attitude towards life rise in prominence and influence in the modern world. This is profoundly evident in the philosophy of postmodernism, which negates the idea that objective truth exists, which is a cause of the rise of individualism with its extreme instances accentuating the irrelevance of meaning. Such prevalence of negative, or pessimistic values and ideas regarding the essence of human life leads to harmful and damaging unethical behavior. To battle this, I propose conscience with its connection to the value of human life as the criterion of judging values, which is an *aprioristic* universal tool that can be used by all of humanity. The *apriority* of conscience as an intermediary between the ideal world of values and their actualization in actual human life is a great tool since it is devoid of the acquired indoctrinated thinking of the dominant philosophical or worldview narrative. In short, through conscience, a human can make moral judgments about the usefulness of values based on a universal ontological criterion – the value of life.

In this sense, N. Hartmann accentuates that conscience has functions of freedom and responsibility. On the one hand, freedom allows the choice among values, but on the other hand, that choice has to be faithful to the inherent hierarchy of values. Hence, conscience does not simply follow the ethical norms of a society but also directs humans to stick to the objective order of values.

Critically rethinking modern values from the perspective of the value of life highlights some key aspects in nowadays attitude and position of the life-promoting values. In my opinion, there is a strong

sense of disconnection of the human societal fabric from the individual, which manifests in loneliness, unhappiness, and in total, discontent with life. Individualism, though needed, can devolve into its radical branches, and disregard the being of collective. Rapid technological progress is yet to be traced on the level of its influence on the human ethical compass, specifically because it promotes specific human behavior and demotes another. Such selectiveness of type of behavior risks detaching humanity from ethical patterns and norms that are beneficial for the human condition. Without conscience with its connection to the value of life as a guiding Apriori compass, values can quickly become dependent on the current agenda, and the impulses of expediency rather than based on human decency, empathy, and justice. Putting conscience with its connection to the value of life back at the center of value judgment and assessment offers a way toward preserving genuine moral and ethical structures and simultaneously promoting beneficial, constructive behavior. By concentrating on values such as empathy, altruism, and compassion one can preserve the relevance of beneficial values, and by their extension, beneficial moral and ethical behavior.

N. Hartmann's philosophy of values underlines the necessity of authenticity in the process of actualization of values. An authentic conscience avoids ethical relativism and uncertainty, instead, it stays connected with the objective hierarchy of values, striving at the same time for moral behavior and a higher level of values. Authenticity of conscience in this case is a criterion of staying true to such hierarchy, avoiding misjudgment, it transcends individual subjectivity and biases regarding values.

**Conclusions.** In conclusion, it is important to emphasize that the idea of conscience as a moral Apriori guide in the world of real values through the context of the importance of the value of life serves as an adequate ontological criterion for selecting beneficial and virtuous values that result in generally accepted ethical behavior. Conscience as an ontological criterion of choosing and constituting values is objective because it provides clear guidance in the world of the postmodern faltering of meaning and senses with its relativism where meaning is devoid of meaning. Conscience, as an Apriori guide provides a universal framework that can be applied by all humanity, as it centers on the question of the value of human life, which is universally accepted, transcending cultural and temporal borders.

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#### СОВІСТЬ В Н. ГАРТМАНА ЯК СПОСІБ ПЕРЕОСМИСЛЕННЯ СУЧАСНИХ ЦІННОСТЕЙ

*Ідея совісті в Н. Гартмана як способу актуалізації цінностей із ідеального світу в світ реальний є актуальною в контексті її застосування в переосмисленні сучасних цінностей, які наголошують на негативному, песимістичному, поразенському, фаталістичному світогляді та мисленні, яке призводить до деструктивної етичної поведінки. Мета статті – дослідити значення поняття совісті у філософії цінностей Н. Гартмана та визначити аспекти практичного застосування цього поняття для переосмислення сучасних цінностей, оскільки совість перебуває у центрі структурування цінностей. У статті використано історико-*

порівняльний метод, метод філософської реконструкції та системний підхід. З точки зору суб'єктивного підходу філософа до цінностей досліджено позицію Н. Гартмана щодо ідеї совісті, яка пов'язана з цінністю життя. У статті звертається увага на такі концепти його філософії цінностей, як «почуття цінності» та «оціночна свідомість», які проливають світло на способи конститування об'єктивних ідеальних цінностей у реальному світі апріорними емоційними засобами суб'єкта. У статті звертається увага на можливість застосування ідеї Н. Гартмана про совість як внутрішній голос з ідеального світу цінностей, як своєрідну «вроджену чисту етичну свідомість» для переосмислення стереотипних та постмодерністських сучасних цінностей з точки зору цінності людського життя. Практична цінність статті полягає в тому, що пропонується онтологічний критерій переосмислення сучасних цінностей, бо якщо цінність людського життя є універсальною цінністю і якщо совість – це вроджена, або чиста етична свідомість, то стереотипні світоглядні парадигми, в тому числі постмодерністські, можна верифікувати на цій основі на їх істинність чи хибність.

**Ключові слова:** чиста етична свідомість, особистість, сучасні цінності, емоційний апріоризм, цінність життя, феноменологічний підхід до цінностей.