

Table of contents:

<i>The First Archival Material Presented in “Wojtyła Studies” – Introduction</i>	2-6
Karol Petryszak	
<i>John Paul II’s Letter to the Dean of the Department of Philosophy</i>	7-10
Sydney Sadowski & Grzegorz Hołub	
<i>Truth, Freedom, and Self-Determination:</i>	
<i>Person and Act as a Meta-Ethics for Veritatis Splendor</i>	11-21
Grzegorz Hołub	
<i>The Role of Consciousness in Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy</i>	
<i>of the Human Person</i>	22-41
Jarosław Merecki SDS	
<i>“I am needed”: The Fundamental Point of the Logic of Love</i>	
<i>According to Karol Wojtyła. Preliminary Remarks</i>	42-53
Dariusz Radziechowski	
<i>“Maturity Is Within Love, Transforming Fear.” Love as the Proper Act</i>	
<i>of the Person in Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Anthropology</i>	54-72
Jacob W. Francois	
<i>“Things, Persons, and God” and the full meaning of “Auto-teleology”</i>	
<i>according to Karol Wojtyła</i>	73-97
John P. Hittinger & Thomas C. Schaeffgen, OP	

The First Archival Material Presented in “Wojtyła Studies” – Introduction

It seems that Karol Wojtyła’s intellectual legacy no longer holds awe for scholars. Are we doomed to reading his papers as a closed set? There may be new and crucial materials that will broaden our perspectives of reading and understanding his work. While preparing the first issue of *Wojtyła Studies*, the editorial team was aware of the latest archival discoveries made in Poland and as such has decided to publish translations of some of the elements of them regularly in future issues.

In this issue, we will begin by presenting a letter which was probably written to the Dean of the Department of Philosophy, Fr. Józef Życiński, by John Paul II. The letter is undated, however, it is possible to establish an approximate date of sometime after 1989 but before 1991. That it was written after 1989 is certain however the 1991 date is more questionable. Three pieces of information support the dating the letter to this time period:

1. The explanation contained in the letter refers to the situation in Soviet Union and Soviet bloc countries (especially Russia), indicating that this letter was written after the first declaration of independence by the Soviet Republics (the first was in November 1988). The content of the letter suggests that it was written sometime after the first declarations of independence. This is why Fr. Hołub has proposed 1989 as the earliest date.
2. John Paul II mentions Leszek Kołakowski and his activity at Oxford University. This, *prima facie*, could indicate 1991 as the latest possible date of writing the letter because Kołakowski was employed at Oxford University until 1991. On the other hand, two doubts may be raised. First, it is too optimistic to presuppose that John Paul II had updated information about Kołakowski. Second, it is an unwritten convention that the academic title is tied to a particular University, notwithstanding the employment relationship.
3. From 1988 to 1991, the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow was Bishop Józef Życiński. The philosophical context of the letter’s content suggests that he could be the addressee. However, we should emphasize that this is only a hypothesis.

The importance of presenting this material is foremost a straightforward pointer to three pieces of information:

1. Wojtyła's intellectual and philosophical formation—let us underline the passage in which John Paul II presents the impact of Wais' textbook on him, a wholly overlooked issue in Wojtyła's studies.
2. John Paul II's outlook on the Polish philosophical milieu.
3. The role of Polish philosophy in supporting Soviet bloc countries as seen through the eyes of John Paul II.

It is not known why this letter was found among Cardinal Marian Jaworski possessions. The sources which could explain this are not available at this time.

With this in mind, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with the content of the letter translated by Sydney Sadowski (ed. Fr. Grzegorz Hołub).

The Short History of the exploration of Wojtyła's legacy

In order to make the range and issues contained in the set of newly discovered materials more familiar to international readers, we are presenting, in this introduction, elements of this set with short descriptions. This includes some references to broader projects and published materials which are presented or discussed.

In 2019, a two-person group of researchers, Marta Burghardt and Karol Petryszak, began work on the critical edition of Karol Wojtyła's philosophical works. The editor of the entire series is Fr. Grzegorz Hołub. Soon after, the group expanded to include Fr. Dariusz Radziechowski. This project is funded by Instytut Dialogu Międzykulturowego im. Jana Pawła II w Krakowie [The Institute of Intercultural Dialog of John Paul II in Krakow]. Our main archival reservoir is the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow. Their collections include philosophical papers written by Wojtyła from the early 1950s until his papal election in 1978. During the first visits to the archive, we were not convinced that it would be possible to find anything new. We expected to see some previous versions of well-known articles or other papers. However, it turned out that we repeatedly found astonishing new things. Here is a list of only the important and completely new materials found in the archive:

1. A lecture from March 7, 1954: *The Teaching of St Thomas Aquinas on Love* [Nauka św. Tomasza z Akwinu o miłości], given at the Catholic University of Lublin. The content of it is very interesting. Wojtyła not only presents St. Thomas Aquinas' teaching on love – he entirely agrees with Angelic Doctor – but he also carries out a devastating critique of Scheler's philosophy, pointing out that both Scheler and phenomenology as a method cannot quite reach Thomism despite apparent similarities in certain areas.
2. There are three versions of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis, one from 1953 and two from 1954. In 2023, the translation of the 1954 version (by Grzegorz Ignatik) was presented in *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, ed. by Fr. Antonio Lopez FSCB (et al.).¹ From the first page of this translation, the reader knows it is based on the 1954 version.² Unfortunately, there is no indication of which version from 1954 Ignatik used as the basis for his translation. I checked and it is, of course, the later version that is almost identical to the first published version from 1959.³ That is a very good choice but vague and only seemingly revealing, especially in light of the fact that in the following folder in the archive are two other (previous) versions, which must be used if someone wants to prepare a critical edition – and so it is in this case. Discussing the first two volumes of the English critical edition should be conducted precisely and more extensively.⁴ I mention this here because after reading the second volume, one might conclude that the translated version is the first or only preserved. But this is not true. Moreover, the version from 1953 has many phrases which Wojtyła changed in 1954 (the first version). These changes are essential in studying Wojtyła's intellectual/philosophical formation. Regardless, it is important to mention a fact discovered and developed by Petryszak, that in 1953 Wojtyła defended his habilitation thesis with different conclusions than those presented in the 1959 edition and the archival version translated by Ignatik.⁵

¹ K. Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*. "The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," vol. 2, edited by Antonio López et al. Translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023, 383-500.

² Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 383.

³ Wojtyła. *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach system Maksa Schelera*. Lublin: TN KUL, 1959.

⁴ The volumes are: Wojtyła. *Person and Act and related essays*. "The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," vol. 1, edited by Antonio López et al. Translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021; and Wojtyła. *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*.

⁵ K. Petryszak. "Evidence of Karol Wojtyła's thought formation as preserved in archival materials." *Logos i Ethos* 61, no. 1 (2023): 7-28.

3. We also found the almost complete, ‘raw,’ translation of Scheler’s book *Der Formalismus in der Ethik...* This translation (including notes) into Polish gives us very good insight into Wojtyła’s understanding of Scheler’s philosophy.⁶ The edition of this book from 1921 is preserved in the archive in the set from the Cardinal Wojtyła private library and contains the original notations and notes made by Wojtyła as well as sections of the text he had underlined.
4. The first two versions of *Love and Responsibility* — after Fr. Radziechowski’s comparison — present philosophical material which is very different from the well-known 1960 version.

As is emphasized above, this short list presents only the most critical archival discoveries from the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow to date.

Apart from the abovementioned project, Petryszak discovered other archival materials that shed some light on Wojtyła’s early philosophy. Some of these were discovered as part of a research project, “Kwerenda archiwalna teczek habilitacyjnych Karola Wojtyły” [Archival research of Karol Wojtyła’s postdoctoral files] founded by the Poland National Science Center [no. 2023/07/X/HS1/00725]. Here is the list of them:

1. In the Archive of the Jagiellonian University: a) Some letters from this collection shed some light on the little-known article by Wojtyła: “Traktat o pokucie w Dekrecie Gracjana w świetle rękopisu gdańskiego Mar. F. 275.” (“A Treatise on Penance in the *Decretum Gratiani* in Light of the Gdańsk Manuscript Mar. F. 275”). Over 100 letters, postcards, and note cards from Wojtyła to Adam Vetulani some of which show that he was very engaged in and greatly enjoyed his work.⁷ b) Crucial contextual information about issues elaborated on by the students of the Theology department at the Jagiellonian University, where Wojtyła defended his habilitation thesis. This material reveals that Scheler and phenomenology – especially in the context of ethics and religion – were well-known in this milieu. This represents an essential contribution in studying Wojtyła’s very early philosophical thought.

⁶ Cf. Petryszak, “The Origins of Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Anthropology as Recorded in *Coll.[atio]* and *Corr.[igenda]* Included in the Notes for his Habilitation Thesis.” *Wojtyła Studies* 1, no 1 (Feb. 2024): 110-125. Petryszak “The Perspective of Archival Discoveries in the Study of Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy.” *The Person and the Challenges* 13, no. 2 (2023): 117-132.

⁷ Wojtyła, “Traktat o pokucie w Dekrecie Gracjana w świetle rękopisu gdańskiego Mar. F. 275.” *Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne KUL* 4, no. 1 (1957): 31-71.

2. In the Archive of the Catholic University of Lublin: a) three reviews of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis (by Stefan Swieżawski, Aleksander Usowicz, and Władysław Wicher) which can help us understand why his conclusion was changed in 1954. b) A master's thesis reviewed by Wojtyła in the academic year 1954/55 titled *The Teaching of St. John of the Cross on Man According to his Work "Ascent of Mount Carmel"* [Nauka o człowieku u św. Jana od Krzyża według jego dzieła *Droga na górę Karmel*] by Fr. Eliaz T. Zbyszyński OCD. This material can be helpful in better understanding Wojtyła's approach to the Mystical Doctor's philosophical thought (especially the anthropological). c) Other contextual materials present the broader context of Wojtyła's early years at the Catholic University of Lublin.⁸

The above discoveries are just the tip of the iceberg. Based on the material and information collected during work in the archives, we can say that new tips and guidance indicate that much of the material presents Wojtyła's philosophical (and probably theological) thoughts in a way that is more profound, comprehensive, and closer to his true thinking which hopefully will continue to be exposed in still undiscovered material. This is a task for all researchers, not just Polish researchers alone. However, it must be made only by those researchers who know the original language of the source material as well as their own mother tongue. It is an essential indication in the context of the translation section of *Wojtyła Studies*, which aims to present and bring the new material closer to everyone who reads it in English. We believe these new materials shared in current *lingua franca* will contribute to the further development in the study of Wojtyła's thought.

The aim of this introduction is to encourage you to familiarize yourself regularly with new translations of short but crucial new materials prepared by knowledgeable philosophers and Polish users.

Karol Petryszak⁹

⁸ Not all of them are presented in the famous book *Obecność. Karol Wojtyła – Jan Paweł II w Katolickim Uniwersytecie Lubelskim. Dar i odpowiedzialność*, edited by Andrzej Szostek & Maria Filipiak. Lublin: TN KUL, 2008.

⁹ Karol Petryszak – The Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow, Poland
e-mail: karol.petryszak@upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0001-9058-4721

John Paul II's Letter to the Dean of the Department of Philosophy

translated by Sydney Sadowski¹

edited by Grzegorz Hołub²

Dear Reverend Dean,³

I have carefully read the text of your paper entitled: “Per un progetto di filosofia aperta alla fede.” This report was presented during the meeting of the Commission, which works on the renewal of philosophy in Church teaching. I am pleased that Fr. G. Cottier is participating in this work, and on the margin of his statement I would like to present own thoughts in this area.

My contact with Christian philosophy, and indirectly with philosophy in general, dates back to the time when, during the German occupation, I joined the secret Theological Seminary in Krakow, while also being a worker in the Solvay factory. I independently completed the entire philosophy course required at the Seminary and at the same time at the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University. I never attended philosophy lectures. So, in a sense I am self-taught in this area. However, from the very beginning I understood that philosophy was very important for my faith, especially from the perspective of the priesthood and pastoral activity.

From my own experience, I know the philosophical study program as it was in force at that time. Metaphysics played a primary role. Other philosophical subjects went hand in hand with it, namely: logic, epistemology, psychology, cosmology, and history of philosophy. Sociology was taught in the context of Catholic social teaching and ethics was taught together with the principles of moral theology.

¹ Sydney Sadowski – The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Poland
e-mail: lisa.sadowski@doktorant.upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0002-9117-4086

² Grzegorz Hołub – The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Poland
e-mail: grzegorz.holub@upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0002-0312-3693

³ The letter is probably addressed to Rev. Prof. Józef Życiński, who was Dean of the Department of Philosophy at the Pontifical Academy of Theology in Krakow (1988-1991). It seems that this letter was written after 1989. (Ed. note.)

Krakow had some very outstanding professors during this period, for example: Rev. Prof. Konstanty Michalski, a great expert in medieval philosophy and Rev. Prof. Jan Salamucha, from the Polish school of logic. In my time, a particularly outstanding figure at the Faculty of Philosophy was Rev. Prof. Kazimierz Kłósak, educated in Lovanium, a man of inexhaustible work, whose merits in defending the Catholic worldview in the clash with Marxism cannot be overestimated. When it comes to Catholic social teaching, a very outstanding figure was Rev. Jan Piwowarczyk, one of the founders of “Tygodnik Powszechny,” which was established in Krakow the day after the end of the German occupation.

Before entering the Theological Seminary, I was a student of Polish philology at the Jagiellonian University, with an emphasis on literature. This one year of study allowed me to understand the importance of the language and also prepared me for understanding what contemporary linguistic philosophy is, both in the Anglo-Saxon and Baltic varieties.

The event that determined my philosophical vocation was the textbook that Rev. Prof. Kazimierz Kłósak gave me at the beginning of my seminary studies. I had to learn this metaphysics on my own, but this study was something of a revelation and a breakthrough.⁴ I then realized that philosophy is an indispensable tool for a thorough interpretation of reality and as such it is indispensable in the study of a theologian. Not without significance was my further academic “curriculum”: First, a doctoral dissertation on faith in St. John of the Cross, which, in a way, prepared me to understand the meaning of the subject of thinking, believing, and experiencing the mystery of God. In turn, a postdoctoral thesis on Max Scheler - namely, to the extent that his system can be used to build Christian ethics. Scheler introduced me to the world of post-Cartesian philosophy, in a sense, to Husserl’s school, but he himself crossed the threshold that Husserl failed to cross, even though he set himself such tasks: “zurück zur Gegenstand.” Scheler crossed this threshold with his philosophy of value, which, although it attributes great importance to the subject experiencing value, accepts the extra-subjective existence of value itself. For this reason, the conclusion of my habilitation thesis was that Scheler’s system is not sufficient to build a Christian ethic, but can, incidentally, be very useful for it. As a result, my habilitation in moral theology took me to the Faculty of Philosophy of the Catholic University of Lublin rather than to the Faculty

⁴ Wojtyła means the following book: K. Wais, *Ontologia czyli metafizyka ogólna*, Towarzystwo “Biblijoteka Religijna,” Lwów 1926 [Ontology, namely General Metaphysics]. (Ed. note.)

of Theology. I was lecturing there at the Department of Ethics, but actually I was focusing more and more on anthropology, so I went in that direction, which was also the focus of your statement during the meeting of the Commission.

It should be added that anthropology was not a separate subject in the seminary. Its particular elements were included in the principles of moral theology, and from another perspective - in psychology and sociology. Already before the war, and more so after it ended, there was a very lively discussion in Poland between ethicists and psychologists, or sociologists of morality. The positivist school had outstanding representatives in the persons of professors such as Józef Kotarbiński, Tadeusz Czeżowski and Maria Ossowska. At the time of my lectures at the Catholic University of Lublin, this discussion with ethical positivism was something more important than the discussion with Marxism. My successor in the department of ethics, Rev. Prof. Tadeusz Styczeń was very thoroughly prepared in this field, as well as in the field of Anglo-Saxon positivism, associated with the Viennese School and such names as Stevenson, Ayer, and even the young Wittgenstein. Marxists did not hide the fact that they had no ethics of their own, which is why they were more willing to use positivism. At the same time, Marxists themselves paid more and more attention to anthropology.

I am writing about this in order to explain my own path at the Faculty of Lublin, which is marked by the work *Love and Responsibility*, and in turn *Person and Act*, as well as a number of other publications on personalistic issues, partly printed also in *Analecta Husserliana* by Prof. Anna T. Tymieniecka.

To conclude this autobiographical introduction, I would like to add that in pre-war Poland, in addition to the already mentioned Krakow Faculty, the Lvov-Warsaw school of logic developed, widely known in the world with such names as Łukasiewicz, Tarski, Ajdukiewicz, who later lectured at Western universities. In this field, Polish philosophy had a somewhat leading role. The methodology of sciences also originated from there, including the methodology of metaphysics, which was developed at the Catholic University of Lublin primarily by Rev. Prof. Stanisław Kamiński. Marxists respected logic and methodology and tried to use it for their own purposes. Instead, they fought against phenomenology, which had its main representative in Prof. Roman Ingarden, and found a very good reception in university circles, especially at the Catholic University of Lublin. Even more than phenomenologists, Marxists fought Thomism and Catholic philosophy, but they did not dare to liquidate the University of Lublin, and their methods of

struggle strengthened the school of Lublin Thomists, among whom the leading figure is still Rev. Prof. Albert Krapiec OP. In addition to him, mention should be made of Prof. Stefan Swieżawski, who transplanted his version of Thomism to Poland and was able to educate many students in the same spirit.

Thus, unlike in other countries, Marxism in Poland encountered considerable opposition and essentially failed to overcome it, despite the methods of administrative struggle used. Yes, it had to adapt to it to some extent, which soon led to the creation of a revisionist trend, the most outstanding representative of which is the Oxford professor Leszek Kołakowski.

The reason I am writing about this is so that my thoughts, which I would like to attach to this letter, will find some clarification in this academic biography. I also think that it would be useful for the whole matter to study how the situation of philosophy was formed in neighboring countries subjected to the domination of Marxist ideology. Some information can be provided by students from these countries studying at the Catholic University of Lublin and Western universities today, but, in actuality, they already belong to the post-Marxist era. Among the countries mentioned, Russia itself is the most important. You were at the philosophical congress in Moscow, so you realize that there was a process of moving away from Marxist ideology, but knowing the direction in which philosophical circles in this huge country are going is not without significance for the whole picture, especially since today both Orthodox and Catholic higher theological schools are being established there. So, the problem of the meeting between faith and philosophy will be very pertinent again in this area. Of course, one cannot omit such figures as Soloviev and Berdyaev, thinkers emblematic of the entire Byzantine and Russian traditions, which, although in touch with Western thought, at the same time walked their own paths.

With heartfelt blessing,

John Paul II

**Truth, Freedom, and Self-Determination: *Person and Act* as a Meta-Ethics
for *Veritatis Splendor*¹**

Grzegorz Hołub²

Abstract

The encyclical *Veritatis splendor* is a theological writing but contains many philosophical and ethical ideas. It undertakes many fundamental moral issues and, in this way, gives answers to some progressive tendencies in the moral Catholic theology, particularly operating in Europe and America. This article traces some of these issues, e. g. new proposals on the relation between truth and freedom, the fundamental option, or new tendencies in understanding the structure of the moral act. Then, it shows that papal corrections and critical comments present in the document have deep roots in his philosophical writings, particularly in his main anthropological treatise *Person and Act*. This article confirms, more generally, that many ethical investigations, including those belonging to theological ethics, have their background in metaphysical and anthropological assumptions. Consequently, there is, in principle, an interplay between reason and faith, philosophy and theology. That is what makes Catholic thought strong and attractive.

Keywords

moral theology, philosophical ethics, philosophical anthropology, *Veritatis splendor*, *Person and Act*

¹ This article is a modified version of the presentation delivered at the conference, “Approaching the Mystery of the Person: Person and Act at the Center of Karol Wojtyła’s Thought,” Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family at the Catholic University of America, November 3-4, 2023, Washington D. C.

² Grzegorz Hołub – The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Poland

e-mail: grzegorz.holub@upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0002-0312-3693

Introduction

The treatise *Person and Act* is the fruit of Karol Wojtyła's mature thinking on the person. His project of philosophical anthropology finds in it its original expression, although the author points out that some parts need further elaboration and refinement. Wojtyła's method, applied here, is very original and for some philosophers controversial. He starts the investigation of the person from inquiring into the person's acts and then moves more in depth to his reality. Using a phenomenological method, Wojtyła tries to gather and describe all the available phenomena of the person and then ask about their deeper reasons. From *phenomenon to foundation* – as he later put it in *Fides et ratio* claiming that “we cannot stop short at experience alone; even if experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises.”³ Thus, he proposes to employ and then to connect two methodological moves: phenomenological reduction with metaphysical reduction. The person is first to be discovered and described on the level of how he appears, including his manifold acts, and then on the level of being, which provides essential answers as to the core of his existence. The reduction is then not about simplifying or excluding but about looking for right reasons either on the phenomenological level or on the metaphysical one.

Karol Wojtyła brought his vision of the person into his papal teaching and documents. The encyclical letter *Veritatis splendor* announced and published in 1993 is one of the examples of such an influence. Although, as a theological writing that is based on a larger spectrum of works primary of the religious character, the encyclical reflects Wojtyła's philosophical approach to the person in some important points. It seems that the main concepts of *Veritatis splendor* are truth and freedom; in fact, all discussions on morality are focused on them. Only later are there such notions as creative mind (conscience), fundamental option or considerations concerning teleologism, consequentialism and proportionalism. On all of them Wojtyła's *Person and Act* sheds some light and, in this way, constitutes a kind of anthropological and ethical background. This article will concentrate only on three important issues: the relation between freedom and truth, an approach to the notion of the fundamental option and a critique of the partial and insufficient approach to the moral act. It seems that philosophical reasons for these three conceptual issues have firm foundations in Wojtyła's anthropological treatise.

³ John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), no. 83.

Freedom and Truth

A discussion concerning the mutual relation, which joins these two categories is very long and we can trace some of its important moments to medieval philosophy and theology. However, modern discussions introduced some radical proposals, which permeated into Catholic moral theology. The dilemma seems to be simple: what is more the fundamental category in human action – freedom or truth? The progressing skepticism concerning the possibility of cognition of objective truth, typical for modern philosophy, and its successive weakening seems to work for the sake of freedom. Then what we possess is the uncertainty concerning truth which comes in various manifestations of freedom; it is not difficult to guess what will take a leading role. In the extreme scenario the priority of freedom is presented by European existentialists, notably by Jean-Paul Sartre for whom there is no objective truth and which is produced or generated by free and unfettered human acts.⁴

This kind of debate takes its place as to the understanding of the person's conscience. John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Veritatis splendor* (VS) announced in 1993,⁵ makes reference to some theologians who subscribe to the concept of conscience understood more in a voluntarist than rationalistic fashion. In no. 55, the document states, “in their desire to emphasize the ‘creative’ character of conscience, certain authors no longer call its actions ‘judgments’ but ‘decisions’: only by making these decisions ‘autonomously’ would man be able to attain moral maturity.” Thus, freedom prevailing over objective truth is to lead to moral maturity and genuine human fulfillment. The conscience operating on the basis of decisions and not judgments clearly shows that freedom is put before truth.

The encyclical rejects such an approach in a number of places. For example, in no. 61 we read,

in the practical judgment of conscience, which imposes on the person the obligation to perform a given act, the link between freedom and truth is made manifest. Precisely for

⁴ Sartre gave priority to human will and freedom. He was convinced that there is no human nature, that man simply is, that he is what he wills, and finally – “Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself.” J.P. Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, trans. C. Macomber, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007). Of course, Sartre cannot be accused of being a nihilist because he also mentions our responsibility for our undertakings. But at the same time, there is no place for objective truths in his philosophical position.

⁵ John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993).

this reason conscience expresses itself in acts of ‘judgment’ which reflect the truth about the good, and not in arbitrary ‘decisions.’

The importance of truth and its priority in the sphere of conscience recurs constantly in the document. The following expressions are used to emphasize this point: “to have a ‘good conscience’ (1 *Tim* 1:5), man must seek the truth and must make judgments in accordance with that same truth” (VS, no. 62); “it is always from the truth that the dignity of conscience derives” (VS, no. 63); or “freedom of conscience is never freedom ‘from’ the truth but always and only freedom ‘in’ the truth” (VS, no. 64).

In the works of Karol Wojtyła, particularly in his *Person and Act*, the priority of truth is stressed, including its role in the sphere of conscience. Wojtyła expresses quite a strong thesis when he claims that “the relation to truth is rooted in the very potentiality of man’s personal being.”⁶ Thus, the person is fundamentally, we would say – metaphysically oriented to search for the truth, including truth about himself. And this constitutes a basis for his further operations, namely operations of the will. This dependence is reflected in the structure of conscience. Wojtyła quite openly declares that “the proper and complete function of conscience consists in subjecting the act to truth,”⁷ and consequently that “freedom contains dependence on truth, and this is manifested with full vividness in conscience.”⁸ Finally, Karol Wojtyła formulates one of his main thesis, namely that “freedom as independence from possible objects of volition presupposes freedom as self-dependence,”⁹ and that self-dependence is a dependence on the truth discovered by the person, the truth about values and particularly about the value of the person himself. Let us elaborate on this important claim.

The freedom from possible objects of volition is also the freedom from their images; sometimes the latter can exert a stronger influence on a person than the objects themselves and this demands a firmer self-control. Moreover, self-dependence is a dependence on the theoretical truths discovered by the person and even more on the practical ones associated with values. Karol Wojtyła was aware that the latter category must be precisely specified. Thus, he

⁶ K. Wojtyła, “Osoba i czyn,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, (Lublin: Wydawnictwo TN KUL, 1994), 201. Although the book was translated into English, this important part is not in the main text but in critical apparatus. See K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik, (Washington D. C.: CUA Press, 2021), 604.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 258.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, 263.

distinguished values present in a person from the value of the person himself.¹⁰ The discernment and appreciation of the values in the person is important but insufficient. They make up the person's personality and his relations but they do not exhaust his entire preciousness; there is something more fundamentally valuable in the person. Searching for the knowledge of the truth the person must reach his real depth and touch on the value of the person as such. Only adherence to this value gives the person a real independence from objects, their images, and secondary values (i.e. values in the person which can be changeable, that come and go). In order for this fundamental value, objectively associated with the person, to play such a decisive role, it must be not only felt and emotionally experienced but it must be properly objectivized by the reason.¹¹

The Fundamental Option

The concept of the fundamental option is very much a fruit of twentieth century philosophical and theological thought. In the encyclical there is no direct mention about contemporary authors adhering to this notion, although the development of post-conciliar Catholic moral theology, particularly in German speaking countries, has many references to this concept. The relation between the person and his acts may be considered on various levels including a very fundamental one; then it may take a form of a fundamental option. As John Paul II in *Veritatis splendor* claims as to the proponents of this project,

they speak of a 'fundamental freedom', deeper than and different from freedom of choice, which needs to be considered if human actions are to be correctly understood and evaluated. According to these authors, the *key role in the moral life* is to be attributed to a 'fundamental option', brought about by that fundamental freedom whereby the person makes an overall self-determination, not through a specific and conscious decision on the level of reflection, but in a 'transcendental' and 'athematic' way. (VS, no. 65)

¹⁰ In his book *Love and Responsibility*, he put it this way, "the value of the person as such must be clearly distinguished from the particular values present in a person." K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H.T. Willetts, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981), 122.

¹¹ Before the publication of *Person and Act*, Karol Wojtyła argued with Max Scheler regarding the role of emotions in the structure of moral act. He decisively rejected the priority of emotions over reason because only the latter can guarantee access to the objective good of the person. He puts it this way, "the whole objective ethical order [...] consists of the ethical value itself, although not as the intentional content of feeling but as the real perfection of the person." See K. Wojtyła, "An Assessment of the Possibility for Building a Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler's System," in: K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D. C.: CUA Press, 2023), 494.

Thus, it seems to be an expression of a nuanced thinking about a human freedom where a transcendental freedom is distinguished from a categorial freedom; the former determining the person on a deeper level and more independent from his vulnerable nature and changing circumstances. Understandably, the relation between such an option and particular acts will be less strict. As *Veritatis splendor* puts it, “particular acts which flow from this option would constitute only partial and never definitive attempts to give it expression; they would only be its ‘signs’ or symptoms” (VS, no. 65). In other words, the manner of self-determination taking place on the level of the fundamental option cannot be fully translated into a set of particular acts. But it probably also works in the opposite direction: all acts of this or that kind cannot substantially influence and change the fundamental option. Thus, the person lives as if in two spheres of freedom. Consequently, it brings with it some serious consequences in the moral realm; but the more fundamental question is about the concept of the person itself.

The encyclical offers some critical remarks against this project. In no. 67 we read that “to separate the fundamental option from concrete kinds of behaviour means to contradict the substantial integrity or personal unity of the moral agent in his body and in his soul.” Or, “judgments about morality cannot be made without taking into consideration whether or not the deliberate choice of a specific kind of behaviour is in conformity with the dignity and integral vocation of the human person.”

The project of the fundamental option seems to assume that the person is divided into two metaphysical spheres, say, inner man and outer man; correspondingly, there are two kinds of freedom: one typical for an inner man finding its expression in a thematic and general decision and one belonging to an outer man and associated with categorial, particular acts. It goes without saying that the former is construed as a “pure freedom”; the latter in turn is marked and burdened with human weaknesses and limits from external circumstances; let’s call it “conditioned freedom.” Such an anthropological vision is rooted in post-Cartesian and post-Kantian philosophy and is rather alien to Catholic anthropology. Anthropological dualism is not a part of the Catholic tradition and Karol Wojtyła in his philosophical writings subscribed to a different vision which is characterized just by substantial integrity and personal unity.¹² Consequently, *Person and Act* and his other works offer a rationale to this papal thesis.

Karol Wojtyła was fully aware that the human person is a very complex reality and is marked by a kind of duality. However, he was far from dualism; his metaphysical interpretation

¹² See also: G. Hołub, *Understanding the Person. Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021), 43-58.

of this complexity resulted in a vision of the person being a substantial subject of existence and action (*suppositum*) as well as a personal subject. One is not opposed to the other but strictly associated with it; the personal subject is in a sense rooted in *suppositum* and the latter reveals its potentiality through the former, namely through the personal one.¹³ Another approach employed by Wojtyła to prove a personal unity in its multiplicity was done by distinguishing in the person two indispensable and interwoven spheres: interiority and exteriority. The person is at the same time his interiority and exteriority;¹⁴ one cannot exist without the other, for example, exteriority always fuels interiority with various data and values, and the latter is shown and manifested only through the former, namely through exteriority.

Correspondingly, acts of freedom never concern one sphere of human life only; they stem from the whole personal complexity and their consequences influence the whole of personal reality. Particular decisions are inserted within broader and more general decisions (personal options), in a sense they stem from them, and their consequences usually put their mark on those general options. For example, if one of such options is a decision to be a good and upright man, then particular, categorial decisions have their roots in it; permanently wrong and morally evil acts committed must lead a given individual to a conflict with the fundamental option, and as *Veritatis splendor* puts it, “it is revoked when man engages his freedom in conscious decisions to the contrary, with regard to morally grave matter” (VS, no. 67). Thus, the fundamental option does not remain untouched by a series of conscious moral mistakes.

Personal Moral Act

The encyclical letter *Veritatis splendor* deals with some new proposals arising in Western European and American theological circles as to what decides of the morality of an action. In this context, two proposals are mentioned: consequentialism and proportionalism (which can be generally describe as versions of teleologism). As *Veritatis splendor* briefly states:

the former (consequentialism) claims to draw the criteria of the rightness of a given way of acting solely from a calculation of foreseeable consequences deriving from a given

¹³ Wojtyła puts it this way, “the *suppositum humanum* must somehow manifest itself as a human self: metaphysical subjectivity must manifest itself as personal subjectivity.” K. Wojtyła, “The Person: Subject and Community,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, trans. by Th. Sandok, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 225.

¹⁴ Wojtyła puts this claim in a following way, “remaining the object of both experiences – from within and from outside – I myself am first and foremost for myself not only ‘inwardness’ but also ‘outwardness’.” Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 99.

choice. The latter (proportionalism), by weighing the various values and goods being sought, focuses rather on the proportion acknowledged between the good and bad effects of that choice, with a view to the “greater good” or “lesser evil” actually possible in a particular situation. (VS, no. 75)

In fact, both of these theological positions stress the importance of two factors having to do with a moral act: circumstances and personal intention (*finis operantis*). In effect, there are no absolute morally evil acts because everything depends on given circumstances (which are independent of the acting subject) or on the personal intention, which in fact, as can be claimed, is always good.¹⁵

John Paul II in the encyclical letter questions this position. His reasoning goes as follows,

One must therefore reject the thesis, characteristic of teleological and proportionalist theories, which holds that it is impossible to qualify as morally evil according to its species — its ‘object’ — the deliberate choice of certain kinds of behaviour or specific acts, apart from a consideration of the intention for which the choice is made or the totality of the foreseeable consequences of that act for all persons concerned. (VS, no. 79)

The Pope points out that without “the object of the human act” possessing its own intrinsic end (*finis operis*), there is no possibility to formulate a just moral judgment. The intrinsic end is independent of intentions and in fact the person realizes that it is a part of the objective structure of a given action. It is very much associated with the truth, which human reason constantly tends to and reveals, even if partially because things (including mode of actions) are what they are and not what we want them to be.

The objects of the human act should be ordered to “the ultimate good, which is God” but in finite perspective it should serve the person in his complexity and richness. In a personalistic perspective, underpinning the encyclical, those objects are to be understood as an “ordered complex of ‘personal goods’ which serve the ‘good of the person’: the good which is the person himself and his perfection” (VS, no. 79). If they are not personal goods, it is because they are intrinsically evil and no good intention or whatever set of circumstances can change it.

¹⁵ In American and European philosophical and theological circles there was a very advanced discussion concerning proportionalism. Thus, arguments for and against it are well established. See e.g. *Proportionalism. For and Against*, ed. Ch. Kaczor, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999).

Hence, the discernment of the object of the act and its internal end is so important. Sometimes it can be difficult because of the complexity of the act. Nevertheless, the Catholic moral tradition hinges on a conviction that this is possible, particularly with the help of Thomistic metaphysics (e.g. a helpful distinction between essence and existence).

Karol Wojtyła in his main treatise *Person and Act* stresses, a number of times, the importance of truth. He has a quite complex understanding of this category.¹⁶ His general position is that in the person's acts an indispensable role is played by the context of truth. Thus, there is not only the subject acting and the object of the action but also the all-encompassing context of truth. Consequently, the person must be always characterized by "relation to truth" and even by "subordination to truth." For example, Wojtyła claims that

in the interior dynamic of the will we discover the relation to truth, which differs from the relation to objects of volition, is deeper than that relation. The relation to truth is not exhausted in the structure of volition considered as the intentional act, but it does determine this act's rootedness in the person.¹⁷

In a sense the relation to all objects is determined by this context of truth; it is a permanent orientation of the person to truth. Consequently, we can repeat after Robert Sokolowski that the person is "the agent of truth."¹⁸

This being conditioned by truth has a special relevance in the sphere of morality. Wojtyła claims that "the moment of truth is essential in the lived-experience of value. This is the truth about this or that object as this or that good."¹⁹ Thus, the object of the personal act must be discerned in the light of truth, which amounts to a proper reading of its inner end. The latter in turn is decisive as to the moral action. The moral act is objectively good when it respects this intrinsic end; intention and circumstances are supplementing categories.

Moreover, that good may be considered as the good for the person, which works for the sake of the good of the person himself; a similar distinction – as mentioned above – is originally introduced by Wojtyła in his book *Love and Responsibility* (values for the person; the value of the person). In *Person and Act*, he presents how objective good becomes the good for the person, which consequently strengthens the good of the person. Wojtyła claims that a transitive

¹⁶ See G. Hołub, "Karol Wojtyła's Thinking on Truth," *International Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 61, No. 4 (December 2021), 387-396.

¹⁷ Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 240-241.

¹⁸ R. Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1.

¹⁹ Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 244.

outcome of the moral act is preceded by an intransitive one. The person acting upon a properly discerned internal end of the object brings about an external outcome, which, say, is morally good. But that transitive effect causes some important changes in the person. First, through his act, the person actualizes his potentiality; he is becoming more himself than he was (ontological becoming). Second, acting along a properly discerned intrinsic end of the object builds him up, as if, from inside; it makes him morally good or evil.²⁰ It may be pointed out here to the so-called “moral residue” which is first (despite its external effect) brought about in the person and then substantially contributes to his fulfillment.

Conclusions

Karol Wojtyła did bring his philosophical vision of the person into his papal writings, and we can draw some conclusions from this fact. First, in the background of *Veritatis splendor* Wojtyła’s anthropological and ethical theses are present; this presence is not accidental but substantial. These theses constitute the philosophical core of this document and lend support to further theological investigations. Second, the philosophical claims of Wojtyła are quite clearly associated with the Thomistic school of thought;²¹ it seems that it is St. Thomas read today with some help from modern and contemporary insights, notably from phenomenology and personalism.²² Maybe that is the reason why a good number of transcendental philosophers and theologians oppose this encyclical. Finally, an investigation having to do with tracing Karol Wojtyła’s philosophical ideas and theses in his papal documents seem to be quite promising; it may show us more and more how *fides* and *ratio* strengthen each other and work for the sake of each other. Drawing on the complementary of these resources shows what makes Catholic theology strong and attractive.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 252ff.

²¹ The presence of Aquinas’ theses is slightly covered here. Prima facie, Wojtyła in his treatise *Person and Act* makes occasionally direct references to Thomistic claims. However, the book is underpinned by this philosophy to a considerable degree. Thus, the Thomistic spirit is present in Wojtyła’s philosophy and in this way, it is a contemporary application of it. Of course, a broader approach is possible. It would be interesting to read *VS* in the light of Aquinas’ *Summa*, that is, to investigate how the latter constitutes the background of the former. However, this is not the aim of this article.

²² From many remarks scattered around Wojtylian publications, it is clear that phenomenology and personalism are the lenses through which Wojtyła reads Aquinas, not the other way around. Although appreciating the legacy of the latter, Wojtyła is aware that modern and contemporary philosophy contributed something, which was poorly analyzed in the work of great Aquinas, notably consciousness and interiority.

Bibliography

- Hołub, G., “Karol Wojtyła’s Thinking on Truth,” *International Philosophical Quarterly* Vol. 61, No. 4 (December 2021), 387-396.
- Hołub, G., *Understanding the Person. Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2021).
- John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998).
- John Paul II, *Veritatis splendor*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1993).
- Proportionalism. For and Against*, ed. Ch. Kaczor, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1999).
- Sartre, J.P., *Existentialism is a Humanism*, transl. C. Macomber, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).
- Sokolowski, R., *Phenomenology of the Human Person*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- Wojtyła, K., *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H.T. Willetts, (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981).
- Wojtyła, K., “Osoba i czyn,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, (Lublin: Wydawnictwo TN KUL, 1994), 43-344.
- Wojtyła, K., *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik, (Washington D. C.: CUA Press, 2021).
- Wojtyła, K., “The Person: Subject and Community,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, trans. by Th. Sandok, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 219-261.
- Wojtyła, K., “An Assessment of the Possibility for Building a Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler’s System,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D. C.: CUA Press, 2023), 383-500.

The Role of Consciousness in Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy of the Human Person

Jarosław Merecki SDS¹

Abstract

The text places Karol Wojtyła's concept of consciousness in the context of the development of the modern philosophy of consciousness. This development – from Descartes to Husserl – led to its opposition to the classical philosophy of being, so that eventually being itself was considered a product of consciousness. In this article, I present the rationale for Wojtyła's belief that the theme of consciousness – and, more broadly, the dialogue with the philosophy of consciousness – is worth addressing within the framework of what is known as classical philosophy, i.e., the philosophy of being derived from ancient and medieval sources. After presenting an understanding of the essence and functions of consciousness in the philosophy of person developed by Wojtyła, I point out the implications of this approach for epistemological and moral issues.

Keywords

consciousness, phenomenology, metaphysics, transcendence, person

¹ Jarosław Merecki SDS – Pontificio Istituto Teologico Giovanni Paolo II per le Scienze del Matrimonio e della Famiglia, Vatican City
e-mail: merecki@me.com • ORCID: 0000-0001-8457-2935

In Karol Wojtyła's philosophy, the analysis of the role of consciousness in the structure of the human person is mainly found in his anthropological *opus magnum*, the book *Person and Act*. Nonetheless, important observations are scattered in other texts as well, among which the essay *Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man* is of special interest to our topic.

The Cartesian Turn

Wojtyła's analysis takes place in the context – and in critical discussion – of a certain current of modern philosophy, which has been defined as the philosophy of conscience. Even what Pope John Paul II says on the subject of consciousness in his work *Theology of the Body* possesses a specific importance in comparison with the philosophy of consciousness and the vision of man implied by it (firstly, because of the way in which the epistemological question is posed). The philosophy of consciousness is rooted in Cartesian doubt – in Descartes' methodical doubting – which (with the test of doubt) seeks to identify the sphere of the indubitable and the absolutely certain. Ultimately, it finds this sphere in the content of consciousness: *cogito-sum*. It is worth noting that Descartes' doubt was methodical, that is, it did not arise from skepticism regarding man's ability to arrive at the knowledge of truth. Rather, Descartes sought to counter the skepticism of his time with an argument that was irrefutable. This endeavor was a matter of finding a point in human knowledge where no rational doubt was possible. However, this methodical procedure implied a number of relevant consequences – not only with regard to the epistemological question, but also in connection to the very ontology of the person. Among these consequences was the division of man into two different substances (body and soul). The connection between them ultimately became mysterious. On the one hand, we have consciousness, which is identified with that which is specifically human. On the other, there is the body, which was regarded as an element of the material world. From this view, which says that man is composed of two substances, there arose what we may call “anthropological dualism.”

The Cartesian vision is loaded with epistemological consequences, including those that relate to the function of consciousness in the cognitive process. With it, in fact, the meaning of knowledge changes – it will no longer be understood as contact with an existing reality that is independent of consciousness, but rather will be identified with thinking about what is given in consciousness (prof. Tadeusz Styczeń wrote that in the Cartesian turn, “*cognosco*” is replaced

by “cogito”²). Before Descartes, in ancient and medieval philosophy, the first philosophy was identified with metaphysics; now epistemology has taken its place. However, it is epistemology understood in a particular way; it is different from how it was viewed before Descartes. Its starting point is the self-consciousness of the subject. Wojciech Chudy, a Polish scholar and collaborator of Tadeusz Styczeń (who, in turn, was Wojtyła’s successor to the chair of ethics at the Catholic University of Lublin), wrote in his study on the genesis of the modern philosophy of consciousness:

The indubitable character of the act “I think” induces the author of the *Discourse on the Method* to the adventure that takes its model in Archimedes. Descartes wants to epistemologically base the whole edifice of the philosophical system [...] on the reflexivity of consciousness connected with the individual structure of the self.³

Using the mirror metaphor (which will also be useful to us in the analysis of consciousness in Wojtyła’s thought), Chudy thus describes the Cartesian turn in the way of understanding the nature of knowledge: “In analyzing the space between two mirrors facing each other, [Descartes] focuses not on what constitutes the efficient cause and initial object of the mirroring, but on the mirroring itself and on the process of mirroring.”⁴

Beginning with Descartes, the perspective of subjective consciousness, the consciousness of the self (*cogito*), and what is given in consciousness (*cogitationes*) will increasingly mark how epistemological, ethical, anthropological, and metaphysical problems will be set. For our topic, i.e., the way in which Wojtyła approached the problem of consciousness, what is important is the point that this perspective had been adopted by the father of phenomenology, Edmund Husserl. Whereas in his philosophy of the person, Wojtyła had proposed to enrich the metaphysical approach to anthropology with the results of the phenomenological method, he did not want to follow Husserl in the idealistic turn that had led him toward a form of transcendental idealism. The phenomenological method can help in describing the way phenomena present themselves in consciousness, but in itself, it still does not determine their metaphysical status. Phenomena could represent real objects, independent

² Cf. T. Styczeń, *Essere se stessi è trascendere se stessi. Sull’etica di Karol Wojtyła come antropologia normativa [To be oneself is to transcend oneself. On Karol Wojtyła’s Ethics as Normative Anthropology]*, in: *Metafisica della persona*, (Milano, Bompiani, 2003), 808-809.

³ W. Chudy, *Rozwój filozofowania a „pułapka refleksji” [The Development of Philosophy and the “Reflection Trap”]*, (Lublin, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1995), 125.

⁴ *Ibid.*

of consciousness, but they could also be understood as being constituted by consciousness itself. When confronting this problem, Husserl ultimately gave an idealistic answer – phenomena are “produced” by pure consciousness. Andrzej Póltawski, a student of Roman Ingarden, who was a renowned connoisseur of Husserl’s philosophy and, at the same time, a friend and collaborator of Wojtyła, characterized Husserlian epistemology as follows:

The conception of knowledge as a synthesis of the object from impressions had ultimately led to transcendental idealism. In fact, for Husserl the fundamental structure of knowledge is given in the schema: the immanent content of perception – it takes in the intention (supposition) as a possible real transcendent object in front of consciousness in a sense particular to Husserl’s conception. Accordingly, knowledge of reality is only “the constituting” of the objective senses as intentional correlations of the acts of “pure consciousness.” Such a conception excludes from the outset any authentic, concrete contact of man with the surrounding world – it excludes it as an original fact of both experience and man’s being. Originally and in itself, man is a “pure consciousness.”⁵

We know that, historically, this idealistic turn of Husserl caused a rupture in the bosom of the phenomenological movement. Some of Husserl’s disciples – such as Roman Ingarden, Edith Stein, or Max Scheler – did not share their master’s choice, choosing instead the path of realist phenomenology. In this context, the title of the work Ingarden devoted to the discussion with his master is significant: *Controversy over the Existence of the World*.⁶ Wojtyła, who encountered phenomenology in its realist version through Scheler’s work, was also convinced that Husserl ultimately did not remain faithful to his methodological postulate of “returning to things in themselves” and that he did not fully exhaust the potential of the phenomenological method. That is to say, Wojtyła did not think that Husserl’s idealistic turn logically followed from the use of this method; to the contrary, he was convinced that its proper application and the appropriate metaphysical interpretation of its results led to another, realistic version of phenomenological philosophy. It was precisely in the analysis of the essence and functions of consciousness that Wojtyła disassociated himself from the founder of phenomenology. Moreover, the problem of consciousness turned out to be the key point – not only for the epistemological question, but for the entire philosophy of the person.

It is worth noting that John Paul II returned to this problem in his address given at the

⁵ A. Póltawski, *Po co filozofować* [Why Philosophise], (Warszawa, Oficyna Naukowa, 2011), 242. According to Husserl, consciousness is an absolute being in the sense that “*nulla ‘re’ indiget ad existendum*,” while all transcendent *res* are dependent on consciousness.

⁶ Cf. R. Ingarden, *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, (Tübingen, De Gruyter, 1965).

Catholic University of Lublin to the representatives of the academic world during his pilgrimage to Poland in 1987. In referring to the text of the Book of Genesis, the Pope sought to reveal what constitutes the “*differentia specifica humana*” by reflecting on man’s original solitude. Realizing his solitude – at the beginning, man is alone – man discovers his “diversity and superiority” (Tadeusz Styczeń’s expression) in front of the world.

How does man come to have consciousness of his otherness and superiority? How does he become a being that not only is conscious but is also self-conscious? If our interpretation is right, for John Paul II, the decisive point in this process is constituted by the moment of specifically human knowledge. Man begins to experience himself as a subject, and we can say that, on the experimental level, he is born as a person, in the act of knowledge. Let us try to deepen the meaning of this decisive moment.

The Person as Transcendence

In *Person and Act*, Wojtyła proposed a succinct definition of the personal being: “Transcendence is another name of the person.” Person means transcendence. Of course, this is not transcendence in the sense of the philosophy of religion. Transcendence here refers to the fundamental structure of a personal being. A similar definition was given by German author Hermann Krings, who described the personal being as “reflexive transcendence,” while Polish author Stanisław Judycki suggested that an even better definition would read: the personal subject is a retro-transcendence.⁷ As we shall see, these definitions explicitly indicate what is present in Wojtyła’s analysis of the person, since for him, too, the essential trait of transcendence that constitutes personal being is its reflexivity (however, with an important distinction found in reflexivity itself that will assist in grasping the nature of consciousness).

What do we mean by characterizing the person as transcendence? In Wojtyła’s sense, transcendence (or rather “horizontal transcendence,” since he also speaks of vertical transcendence) consists in the subject’s going out of himself toward what is different from himself, in “the crossing of the boundary of a subject toward an object.”⁸ The object of knowledge is reflected in consciousness, but it is also – at the same time – internalized by the subject. It is precisely through this process that the metaphysical subject takes the form of the

⁷ Cf. H. Krings, *Transzendente Logik*, (München, Kösel Verlag, 1964), 46-76. Krings’ book is cited by S. Judycki in *Bóg i inne osoby. Próba z zakresu teologii filozoficznej* [God and Other Persons. An Essay on Philosophical Theology], (Poznań, W drodze, 2010), 87.

⁸ K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik, (Washington, CUA Press, 2021), 221.

concrete and unrepeatable “I.” Thus, personal subjectivity is born on the plane of lived experience.

Judycki calls this the “metaphysical birth,” a birth that is different from biological birth, although it has its foundation in the physical event. The subject who is born in this way is able to distinguish himself, to maintain a detachment from the three spheres: from the sphere of matter marked by mutability, from the sphere of immutable logical or mathematical principles, and finally also from the content of his consciousness (even in this case, when the person can say that he possesses his own consciousness, he is not completely identified with it).⁹

How does this birth take place? In his analysis of the original solitude in the *Theology of the Body*, John Paul II wrote, “Self-knowledge goes hand in hand with knowledge of the world.”¹⁰ But in the genesis of the person, there is a chronological order: it is through the knowledge of the world that consciousness and self-consciousness “click.” In the beginning, we find what medieval authors call *simplex apprehensio*, simple contact with reality and the first assimilation of its content. At this moment, man assimilates the content of the act of knowledge and at the same time, detaches himself from it. He experiences his irreducible subjectivity: this is *his* knowledge. However, before knowledge and consciousness, there is already being, which now becomes the object of knowledge and enters the person’s interiority as the content of his consciousness. Thus, consciousness and self-consciousness also come into being through this first contact with being. Judycki writes:

Simplex apprehensio leads to the constitution of the middle sphere that is between the subject and what exists (being). [...] Consciousness, understood as a flow of mental states, is a mode of realization of this middle sphere. [...] Consciousness is neither the subject – although, paradoxically, the subject is a conscious being – nor one of the objects, but it is a relation constituted from this fundamental relation that is actualized at the moment of grasping its first content.¹¹

What is also important here is the subject’s distance regarding the content of his cognitive act. Without the ability to distance himself from the objects of his intentional acts, man cannot experience himself as a subject, and so he cannot experience himself as a person. An animal, that does not possess this capacity, is totally immersed in its natural habitat and is unable to

⁹ Cf. Judycki, *Bóg i inne osoby*, 110.

¹⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, (Boston, Pauline, 2006), 150.

¹¹ Judycki, *Bóg i inne osoby*, 119.

detach either from matter or from the contents of its consciousness. Therefore, it lives in – as Helmuth Plessner called it – the “centric position.” For an animal, everything gains importance as it relates to its needs, which are rooted in its instincts – it is the center of its world. Man, on the other hand (again according to Plessner) lives in an “eccentric position,” because he is able to relativize himself. He is able to not only see everything from his point of view, but also ask the question about the objective truth of his knowledge. Wojtyła, on the other hand, writes that it is this dependence on the objective truth that makes free decisions possible:

It is this dependence that makes the will independent from objects and their presentation while giving the person superiority over his own dynamism, a superiority that we call transcendence in the act (vertical transcendence). The person is independent from the objects of his own action through the moment of truth contained in every authentic decision or choice.¹²

In John Paul II’s analysis, this process of making oneself dependent on the objective truth precisely takes place in the original solitude. Through the act of knowledge, in which man begins to experience himself (in the self-awareness that accompanies the knowledge of anything) as different from the world around him, man “wakes up” as a person, and from this moment he can say “I.”¹³ According to Wojtyła, this is also the decisive point for the understanding of human freedom.

In the metaphysical dimension, self-consciousness does not constitute personhood, but rather reveals it and makes it present on the level of experience. This point is important, especially in the context of contemporary discussions of the concept of the person. Self-consciousness has its foundation in ontic subjectivity, in the particular structure of that being in which the potentiality of self-consciousness is inscribed. This order is structural and chronological – again, being precedes consciousness. As Robert Spaemann rightly noted, none of us remembers the moment we became self-conscious. When we say that we were born on a particular day, we do not mean that a subject of self-consciousness was born then – a crying child was born who would become self-conscious at some point. On the other hand, however, without a real potentiality inscribed in his being, the child could never reach the moment when

¹² Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 241.

¹³ “With this knowledge, which makes him go in some way outside of his own being, man at the same time reveals himself to himself in all the distinctiveness of his being,” John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, 150.

he is capable of developing a conscious relation with his own being. After all, in discussions with Descartes, his opponents noted that the description of the stream of consciousness only allows us to assert that there are *cogitationes*; the Cartesian step from *cogito* to *sum* already contains in itself a metaphysical thesis, that is, one moves from consciousness to the subject of consciousness.

Consequently, we can speak of two horizons on which the experience of the person unfolds: the horizon of being and the horizon of the self. Man, in his knowledge and desires, is naturally turned toward *being*, which fills his consciousness and, at the same time, leads him to the experience of the self as the subject of knowledge and desire. Instead, the separation of the two horizons leads either to theories in which the world is seen as somehow “produced” by consciousness (as occurs in various types of philosophical idealism), or to the reduction of the act of knowing of the organism’s particular mode of adaptation to the environment (as occurs in epistemological evolutionism). As Wojciech Chudy noted:

Man’s turning in the reflective act toward himself possesses its ‘background’ in the consciousness of the horizon of the self, realized *in statu fieri*, which constitutes the particular limit of this act that guarantees the integrity of the subject of experience and the act itself. On the other hand, this turning toward the self is accompanied by the horizon of being, which ensures that the whole cognitive process is rooted in objective reality.¹⁴

Man’s cognitive relation to the world – as the moment in which the person’s subjectivity is constituted – contains within itself a moment as a place. In Wojtyła’s analysis, this is revealed as essential. The cognitive contact with being includes in itself the moment of judgment, the moment of assertion: this is the case (or this is not the case). Man, who in the act of knowing-as it were – comes out of himself, objectifies the world, and asks a question about its truth.¹⁵ It is precisely this moment of transcendence and the reference to a truth that does not depend on the man that differentiates the person from all other non-personal beings. This moment places him on a “higher” level in relation to all beings in the world and explains his “different” position. In John Paul II’s analysis, conducted in his speech in Lublin, the Pope sees this “self-revelation” of man as occurring precisely in the moment of reflection on the act of knowledge. The Pope said:

¹⁴ Chudy, *Rozwój filozofowania a „pulapka refleksji”*, 86-87.

¹⁵ We find ourselves here at the antipodes of a large part of modern philosophy, which is summed up well in David Hume’s phrase: “We never really advance one step beyond ourselves.”

The source of man's transcendence in front of the universe, in which he lives, is found in truth. Through *reflection on his own knowledge* (italic: J.M.) man reveals himself to himself as the only being in the world, who sees himself "from within" obligated by the known truth and therefore also obligated to its recognition, in the serious case also by the acts of his free choice, by the acts of witnessing the truth. This is the ability to transcend oneself towards the truth.¹⁶

We see how, in man's reflection on his knowledge (remember: the person is a reflective transcendence), the person's logos and ethos are constituted together. The person spontaneously begins to experience herself as a witness to truth. In this experience, she discovers her diversity from the visible world and, at the same time, experiences the duty to affirm the truth she has encountered in the act of knowing. In *Person and Act*, Wojtyła speaks of the "normative power of truth," which lies at the root of moral experience. This whole process, during which the person's logos and ethos are constituted, takes place in the consciousness. At the same time, however, by its very nature, it transcends consciousness. As Wojtyła said, in the act of knowing, the person experiences her transcendence in truth. This is the point that allows Wojtyła to escape the "reflection trap" (W. Chudy's expression), that is, the closing of the consciousness in itself. This is quite characteristic for post-Cartesian philosophy, the concentration of reflection "only on the mirrored images and the activity of mirroring" without reference to the being which generated these images. According to Wojtyła, however, we cannot understand the existence and essence of consciousness apart from the being, which exists independently of it; rather, consciousness is possible only because of its relation to what transcends it.

The Problem of Intentionality

The point where Wojtyła differs from most phenomenologists is the problem of intentionality. It is precisely here that the Polish philosopher surpasses the transcendental idealism of the father of phenomenology. According to Husserl, in the intentional act, consciousness refers to the object. However, its object always remains an intentional object, it is constituted in consciousness and does not exist independently. Wojtyła, on the other hand, distinguished between knowledge and consciousness, denying consciousness the property of intentionality.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Address to the World of Culture*, Catholic University of Lublin, 9.06.1987. I include the text of this address in in appendix.

Only knowledge, characterized by transcendence, is intentional. The act of knowledge is directed toward the object that is external to it, it touches something that – in its existence – does not depend on it. It is so also in the situation in which the subject turns toward itself – in which case, we are then dealing with self-knowledge.

Self-knowledge is not identical to self-consciousness, although self-consciousness accompanies and internalizes it. However, – as Wojtyła writes – “For an act (or anything else) can be ‘made conscious’ not in a consciousness-related manner but only intentionally, thus by an act of self-knowledge.”¹⁷ Knowledge is a dynamism involving the whole person, her senses, emotions, and rationality. The subject of knowledge, however, is not – we can say with St. Thomas – senses, emotions, or even consciousness, but the person through her capacities. In Wojtyła, consciousness is not intentional and therefore cannot be the subject of knowledge. Its role is very important, but remains different.

Wojtyła distinguished two functions of consciousness, which we can call: the function of mirroring and the function of internalization (or subjectification). On the one hand, consciousness reflects within itself the content of the act of knowledge (man “reflects on his own knowledge,” as John Paul II said in his speech in Lublin). In this function, consciousness is *reflective*, it is in the act of mirroring. On the other hand, consciousness is *reflexive*, and the reflexivity of it means that: “This turning toward the subject as a function of consciousness is something different from the mirroring. In the mirroring (thanks to self-knowledge), this man, who is a subject and his own ‘I,’ is still present as an object. The reflexive turning of consciousness causes this object, precisely because it is ontologically a subject, to experience himself as a subject while experiencing his own ‘I.’”¹⁸

In its reflexive function, consciousness does not consist in the act of turning toward one’s own knowledge (such an act would be an act of self-knowledge), but instead accompanies knowledge, interpenetrates it, internalizes it, and causes the subject to experience it as one’s own (without any need for a separate reflection). Insofar as reflectivity makes the process in which man comes to the knowledge of truth (I can always question if what has been reflected in my consciousness corresponds to the reality of things) possible, the reflective function of consciousness is fundamental – not only to the constitution of the “I,” but also to the experience of its moral connection with the known truth. Consciousness is more than a mirror, but mirroring it internalizes the known truth. It makes the truth “mine” in the sense that “I” identify with it, takes responsibility for it, so that – to recall the words of John Paul II’s speech in Lublin

¹⁷ Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 135.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 143.

– the subject feels “obliged to its recognition, in the serious case even with the acts of its free choice, with the acts of witnessing to the truth.” According to Tadeusz Styczeń, only if – in our theory of the person – we take into account this whole process of mirroring and subjectification of the person’s transcendence toward the objective truth and the experience of moral duty that arises in the act of knowing the truth, can we really grasp the identity of the person.¹⁹

In John Paul II’s analysis of the original solitude in the *Theology of the Body*, consciousness is rooted in the corporeality of the subject. It is aroused by contact with the world and through it, on the experimental level, subjectivity is constituted. From the very beginning, the consciousness of the human person is not a pure, disembodied consciousness, but it is a consciousness of the embodied subject experiencing his corporeality. In light of the above considerations, we can say that the person lives his corporeality reflectively, accompanying his consciousness; he is conscious of his embodiment without the need for explicit reflection. In the text of the Book of Genesis, we see how man acquires this consciousness as it were, on the occasion of his comparing himself with the world and how it leads him to the discovery of his diversity. John Paul II writes:

The analysis of the Jahvist text will allow us, further, to *link man’s original solitude with the awareness of the body*, through which man distinguishes himself from all the *animalia* and “separates himself” from them, and *through which* he is a *person*. One can affirm with certainty that that man thus formed has at the same time the awareness and consciousness of the meaning of his own body. Moreover, [he has] this based on the experience of original solitude.²⁰

John Paul II speaks simply here of the “consciousness of the body,” that is, the reflexive consciousness of it. Man spontaneously begins to experience the body as a means of expression of his personality and therefore distinguishes and separates himself from animals.

In the situation of the original loneliness, man does not yet experience sexual difference (for John Paul II, this fact also possesses its anthropological significance), which will be revealed with the creation of the second man (woman). This idea would need a more detailed analysis, but we can point out here that the sexual determination of the body is also a part of the content of reflexive consciousness. Man experiences himself as man-woman and man-male.

¹⁹ Cf. T. Styczeń, *Essere se stessi è trascendere se stessi*, 793-797.

²⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 152. In the English edition the word “text” was mistakenly translated as “test.”

Consciousness (or even the soul as such, as spiritual beings exist beyond sexual difference) as such is not sexually determined and acquires its male or female dimension precisely through its relation to the body. The fact that this relation is, in the first moment, not reflective, but reflexive (in the sense explained above), has its significance in the context of contemporary discussions regarding the origin and meaning of sexual difference. Here, too, being precedes consciousness.

Appendix

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS JOHN PAUL II
TO THE WORLD OF CULTURE
AT THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF LUBLIN**

Tuesday, 9 June 1987

1. I cordially greet all those who have gathered today in the main hall of the Catholic University of Lublin. The visit of a former professor of this University has given the organizers the opportunity to invite *representatives of the world of culture from all over Poland, and even from abroad*. I am truly honored, ladies and gentlemen, by this invitation and by your presence here today.

I know that in addition to representatives of the country's universities and the Polish Academy of Sciences, there are also representatives of foreign universities, closely linked to the Catholic University of Lublin: from Louvain and Louvain-la-Neuve to Milan, Paris, Washington, Eichstätt, Nijmegen and Tilburg.

In you I meet and greet all the universities and faculties in the homeland, beginning with the oldest university, *the Jagiellonian University in Krakow*, to which I owe my studies and first academic experiences. These experiences have left *deep marks on my consciousness and on my entire personality*. Perhaps this is because they are linked first of all to the period preceding the Second World War, then – above all – to the period of foreign occupation, and finally to the first years of the post-war period. The memory of what the University – Alma Mater – is always alive in me. Not only the memory, but *the awareness of the debt* incurred for life.

2. This is why I feel the need to begin my discourse by referring *to the University as a particular environment, a community* in which teachers and students, professors and students, representatives of different generations, meet, united by a common purpose and task. This is a task of primary importance in the life of man and in that of a society, a nation and a State.

As I speak to you, illustrious ladies and gentlemen, I have before the eyes of my soul *all these environments*, these communities, in which *the service of knowledge – that is, the service of truth* – becomes the foundation of man's formation. We know that Someone said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" (*John 8:32*). During the Eucharistic Congress in

Poland, to which I am invited and in which I am taking part, these words of Christ resonate with special force precisely here, in the university hall, in the context of the encounter with the Polish world of culture and science.

These words echo and at the same time complement those of St. Paul: “Speak the truth in love” (cf. *Eph* 4:15). By serving the truth for the love of the truth and for the love of those to whom we transmit it, we build a community of men free in the truth, we form a community of men united by love of the truth and by reciprocal love in the truth, a community of men for whom love of the truth constitutes the principle of the bond that unites them.

3. I have the opportunity to approach the *basic problems of your environment*. In various reports by scientists that I have been able to read in recent years, I have found expressions of profound commitment to the truth known and transmitted, from which can be deduced just demands for themselves and for students, in a climate *permeated by a “note” of profound concern*. We have so many gifted young people; in the generation of today’s students and young scientists who populate our institutes, there is no shortage of talent!

Do they have all the necessary facilities for their studies to bear full fruit? Here, in their homeland?

This question concerns *the present*, university work environments, contacts with the cutting-edge centres of world science. This question also *concerns the future*. What are the prospects of this generation? Job prospects! This problem also exists in many Western European countries. *Life prospects*, first of all: housing! The need for a roof for young married couples and for families!

We need to ask ourselves these questions. They are purely and exclusively *an expression of concern for man*. The university has always been the place of this *caring concern*. In the past it was called “fraternal help.”

In the spirit of this request for solidarity, I allow myself to repeat the question to you, because the *university*, by its very nature, *serves the future of man and of the nation*. Its task is to constantly awaken in the social conscience the problem of this future. And it must do so tirelessly and uncompromisingly. We have *so many promising young people*. We cannot allow them not to see *a future for themselves in their own country*.

Therefore, as a son of this country, I dare to express the opinion that we must reflect on the many problems of social life, structures, and the organization of work, right down to the very foundations of the current state system, *from the point of view of the future of the Polish young generation*.

Universities and institutes cannot afford to back down from the need to bear witness in this sector that is essential and fundamental to the very existence of Poland.

4. If I have begun with the environment – that is, with the university understood as a special community – I have done so *in consideration of the question of subjectivity*: a very essential problem for the whole nation. This subjectivity is formed everywhere, in the various workplaces of our homeland. The work environments of industry and agriculture are called to this. All families and every man are called to this. Subjectivity is born from the very nature of personal being: *it corresponds above all to the dignity of the human person*. It is the confirmation, the verification and at the same time the demand for this dignity, both in personal life and in that of *the athenaeums*; universities, which operate according to a varied methodology, *are especially called to this*. And they are called “from within,” by reason of their own constitution, which is indispensable for the service of truth. They are also called, in a certain sense, “from without”: in consideration of the society in which they live and for which they work. Society expects its universities *to consolidate its own subjectivity*, to demonstrate the reasons that underlie it, and the motives and initiatives that serve it. Closely linked to this is *the demand for academic freedom*, or rather for a just autonomy of universities and institutes. This autonomy in the service of the truth known and transmitted is, in a certain sense, a basic condition of the subjectivity of the whole society, within which universities carry out their mission.

Was this not *the goal* that shone before the eyes of our rulers, in the Piast dynasty and later the Jagiellonian dynasty, when they founded and rebuilt the first university in Poland? I dare say *yes*.

5. This question is linked to the problem – perhaps even more fundamental – that concerns *the “constitution” of man: man’s place in the world*. In the cosmos. To deal with it, it is essential *to return “to the beginning,”* to the “arché.”

This is a problem of enormous importance for the various disciplines that deal with man and the world, for example, palaeontology, history, ethnology. *Sciences* of this kind develop on the basis of *empirical methods*. They seek the clues and proofs that can be extracted from the examination of the remains that bear witness to the oldest traces of man in the heart of the earth. Allow me, at this point, to bring in *a biblical text*. It certainly has no value from the point of view of the principles and methods of empirical science. It has, however, *a symbolic importance*. We know that “symbol” means a sign of convergence, of encounter and of reciprocal adhesion of elementary data. I think that the text of the Book of Genesis, which I will quote – without any pretensions of exactness from the point of view of empirical science – also has its own and specific meaning *for the intellect* itself that *seeks* the truth about man.

Here is the passage: “So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all cattle, and to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for the man there was not found *a helper fit for him*” (Gen 2:19-20).

So, whatever we learn from the empirical method (or rather, from many methods) on the subject of the “beginning,” the text just cited seems to possess a formidable “symbolic” importance. Indeed, *it goes to the very roots of the problem*: “man’s place in the cosmos.” One could also say that it constitutes a certain *expression of the convergence* of all that is contained in the investigations carried out with the methods of empirical sciences. In fact, all of them, in their search for the original traces of man, are guided by a certain fundamental concept of man. They possess an answer, at least elementary, to the question: How is man distinguished from the other beings of the visible cosmos?

Man, “from the beginning,” distinguishes himself from the entire visible cosmos, especially from the world of beings that are, to a certain extent, closest to him. All of them are *an object for him*. He alone remains *the subject* in their midst. The Book of Genesis itself speaks of man as a being created in the image of God and in his likeness. Moreover, in the light of the passage cited, it is clear at the same time that man’s *subjectivity* is essentially associated *with knowledge*. Man is a subject in the midst of the world of objects, because he is capable of cognitively objectifying everything around him. In fact, through his own intelligence *he is “by nature” oriented* toward truth. Truth contains the source of man’s transcendence with respect to the cosmos in which he lives.

It is precisely through reflection on his own knowledge that man reveals himself to be the only being in the world who “from within” sees himself bound to the known truth: bound and therefore also “obliged” to recognize it, if necessary, *through free choice*, with acts of testimony in favor of the truth. This is the capacity to transcend himself in truth. Through reflection on his own knowledge, man discovers that the way he exists in the world is not only totally different from every other, but even distinct from – and superior to – every other in his own sphere. Man is simply aware of being *a personal subject, a person*. He is confronted with his own dignity.

The biblical text speaks, in a certain sense, of the first and elementary truths (he imposed “names”), through which man has established and affirmed his own subjectivity in the midst of the world. At the same time, it can be said that this description announces, *in a certain way “in advance,”* the entire *cognitive process* that decides the history of human culture. I would not

hesitate to say that the first book of the Bible *opens the perspective of every science and of all sciences*. Reality – all reality, all its aspects and elements – will constitute from then an incessant challenge for man, for his intellect. *All* modern and contemporary gigantic development of science is already announced and begins in this description. And no new era of scientific knowledge goes substantially “beyond” what has been outlined in this description, in a figurative and elementary way.

6. The *biblical paradigm* of “man in the midst of the world” contains, as we see, a set of elements that do not cease to determine our thinking about man. They do not cease to touch upon the very *foundations of his subjectivity*, and also – at least in perspective – that relationship that is established, on the one hand, between the “naming” of objects and the cognitive process that develops gradually, even in the form of the multiplicity of sciences, and, on the other, *the consolidation of man’s place in the cosmos* as subject. The further the effort to know, that is, the discovery of the truth about objective reality, goes, the more the reason for human subjectivity deepens. This reason concerns not only and not so much man in the midst of the world, as *man among men*, man in society.

It can be said paradoxically that, as the progress of knowledge about the world grows (in the macro and microscopic dimensions), man must increasingly *defend, in the field of progress of scientific-technical civilization, the truth about himself*.

In the name of the truth about himself man must also resist a *double temptation*, namely, that of *subordinating the truth about himself to his own freedom* and that of submitting to the world of things. He must resist both the temptation of self-deification and the temptation of self-deprecation. According to the expression of a medieval author: “Positus est in medio homo: nec bestia, nec Deus!” This, moreover, belongs to the biblical paradigm of the Book of Genesis. Already “from the beginning” man is seduced by the temptation to subject the truth about himself to his own will, and thus to place himself “beyond good and evil.” He is tempted by the illusion of knowing the truth about good and evil only when he himself decides about it.” Your eyes would be opened, and you would be like God, knowing good and evil” (*Gen 3:5*).

At the same time, man is called “from the beginning” to “subdue the earth” (cf. *Gen 1:28*), which naturally constitutes the “natural” fruit and, at the same time, the practical “prolongation” of knowledge, that is, of “dominion” through the truth over the rest of the creatures.

Here I would like to touch at least on the problem of protecting the natural environment, which is so urgent today throughout the world. This is, as far as I know, an extremely important problem in Poland as well. To master the earth also means to respect its laws, the laws of nature.

In this field, as you well know, science has a great task before it, through the efforts of wise control over the forces of nature and careful management of its resources.

However, “subduing the earth” also means: *not subordinating oneself to the earth!* Not allowing man to be “reduced” either cognitively or practically to the order of objects: preserving the subjectivity of the person in the sphere of all human “praxis,” *ensuring this subjectivity also in the human community*: in society, in the State, in the various work environments and even in collective recreation.

I think that this is the ultimate reason and the meaning of what are today called: *human rights*. On the basis of methodical knowledge, therefore, of science, we find here the meeting point with philosophy and, in particular, with ethics and, in a certain sense, also with theology. 7. The period of the Enlightenment, and even more so the 19th century, developed the thesis *of the antinomy between science and religion*. This antinomy has also given rise to the opinion (especially in Marxism) of the alienating character of all religion. The reduction of “man to the world”, *to the dimensions of absolute immanence*, contained in this conception, carries with it not only Nietzsche’s problem of the “death of God,” but also – as has been progressively noted – *the perspective of the “death of man,”* who, in such an essentially “materialist” vision of reality, does not have a definitive, eschatological orientation, nor any other transcendent possibilities, and is thus equated with the rest of the objects of the visible cosmos.

The aforementioned position was proclaimed with determination and taken for granted and even “postulated” in various circles as synonymous with the sole scientific method, even more so, with the “scientific concept” of the world.

Today, a less absolute conviction can be seen in this field. The paradigm of the “man-subject” (which, as has been said, has its roots in the Book of Genesis) seems to be *appearing again* – through a side door, not always through the main entrance – *in the consciousness* of men and societies, including the world of science. Nor is religion any longer seen as the adversary of the intellect and its cognitive possibilities. Rather, *another kind of expression of the truth about man in the world is being rediscovered in it*. There is no doubt that this goes hand in hand with a new way of perceiving the dimension of transcendence, which is exclusively proper to man as subject. It is – in a certain way, according to the first impression – a question *of transcendence through truth*.

It also seems that modern man is becoming increasingly aware of the fact that *God* (and therefore also religion), and especially the God-Person of the Bible and the Gospel, the God of Jesus Christ, remains the ultimate (and definitive) *guarantor of human subjectivity, of the freedom of the human spirit*, especially in conditions where this freedom and subjectivity are

threatened not only theoretically but also practically by a system and a scale of values, by a one-sided technocratic “ethos” (or rather, anti-ethos), by the spread of the model of consumerist civilization, by various forms of systemic totalitarianism.

In this way, we return to the ancient paradigm of the Bible: God the Creator, but also *the Ally of man. God of the Covenant! Father!*

8. Finally, I would like to express my special joy that such an eloquent encounter with the world of Polish science took place *in Lublin*. This city has a historical eloquence. I am not referring only to the eloquence of the “Union of Lublin,” but to everything that constitutes the historical, cultural, ethical and religious context of this “*union*.” The whole great historical process of the encounter between *the West* and *the East*. The mutual attraction and repulsion. Repulsion, but also attraction. This process belongs to our entire history. Perhaps “yesterday” more than “today”; however, it is not possible to separate “today” from “yesterday.” The nation is constantly living its entire history. And the Church of the nation, too. And this process is not over.

No one will deprive the people living here, especially the scientists, of the responsibility for the ultimate success of such a historical process in this place of Europe! And of the world! In the place of a “difficult challenge.”

Thus, the question symbolically represented by this city – Lublin – (and perhaps also by this University: the Catholic University of Lublin) *has not only a Polish dimension, but a European* and even a universal one. I had this dimension in mind when, following the example of Paul VI, who proclaimed *Saint Benedict* Patron of Europe, I saw the need to extend this “Patronage” to two other figures: the apostles of the Slavs, the *holy brothers of Salonica Cyril and Methodius*.

All three of them lived before the historical time of Poland, our homeland. But *they have also prepared* – in a certain way – this time and our past millennium.

May heaven grant that we may faithfully, authentically and creatively continue this *great heritage!*

“To the eternal King of the ages, honour and glory for ever and ever” (*1 Timothy* 1:17). “*Soli Deo*”: I conclude with these words which were the episcopal emblem of Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, Grand *Primate of the Millennium*, who here, in Lublin, began his episcopal service to the Church in Poland.

Bibliography

- Chudy, W., *Rozwój filozofowania a „pułapka refleksji”*, (Lublin, Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL, 1995).
- Ingarden, R., *Der Streit um die Existenz der Welt*, (Tübingen, De Gruyter, 1965).
- John Paul II, *Address to the World of Culture*, Catholic University of Lublin, 9.06.1987.
- John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, (Boston, Pauline, 2006).
- Judycki, S., *Bóg i inne osoby. Próba z zakresu teologii filozoficznej*, (Poznań, W drodze, 2010).
- Krings, H., *Transzendente Logik*, (München, Kösel Verlag, 1964).
- Póltawski, A., *Po co filozofować*, (Warszawa, Oficyna Naukowa, 2011).
- Styczeń, T., *Essere se stessi è trascendere se stessi. Sull'etica di Karol Wojtyła come antropologia normativa*, in: *Metafisica della persona*, (Milano, Bompiani, 2003).
- Wojtyła, K., *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik, (Washington, CUA Press, 2021).

**“I am needed”: The Fundamental Point of the Logic of Love
According to Karol Wojtyła. Preliminary Remarks**

Dariusz Radziechowski¹

Abstract

This article tries to demonstrate the thesis postulated by Karol Wojtyła, according to which a person needs love to truly be a person. The starting point of consideration is Wojtyła’s little-known letters to Teresa Życzkowska. He argued that the foundation of “the inner logic of love” is the objective awareness that “I am needed.” Man needs to love and be loved to realize himself as a person. Such love cannot be the “use” of the other person, but the gratuitousness of a gift that is both offered and received. Love does not appear as a finished “product,” and it requires molding (culture). The specificity of the human act makes it possible not only to perceive and affirm the values of the other person, but also to help their manifestation. And what is more, if the human act not only expresses itself externally, but also remains within the subject, love is always a self-giving and self-growth.

Keywords

Karol Wojtyła, love, person, culture, ethic, anthropology

¹ Dariusz Radziechowski – The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Poland
e-mail: dariusz.radziechowski@upjp2.edu.pl • ORCID: 0000-0002-5272-5033

Introduction

Unambiguously defining the concept of “love” and its corresponding reality is not an easy subject. An important analysis in this regard is provided by reading the work of Rev. Karol Wojtyła entitled *Love and Responsibility*, first published in 1960.² In it, the author takes up in turn the issues of (1) “the person as affected by the sexual urge,” (2) “the love which grows up on this basis between man and woman,” (3) “the virtue of purity as an essential factor in that love,” and (4) “the question of marriage and vocation” (*LR*, 16). All this is aimed at discovering ever more deeply the nature and “the inner logic of love” (*LR*, 230). However, this is not about applied logic *sensu stricto* (the application of general logic to a specific, extralogical field), but a simple indication of the unique nature of the “inside” of love.

In this article, we attempt to analyze this “inner logic of love” based on the study *Love and Responsibility* and other texts by Wojtyła related to it, especially the two letters he wrote to Teresa Życzkowska, née Heydel. In particular, we wish to draw attention to the starting point of human love, which is, as Wojtyła noted, the awareness that “I am needed” by the other person.

Notes on the bibliography

The conclusions found in the study *Love and Responsibility* have a prehistory. The approach to the subject was born, as the author himself emphasized, from (1) pastoral experience, especially among academic youth (in Krakow starting in 1949), and (2) the Gospel and the Teaching of the Church. These two sources provided Wojtyła with an ascent to philosophical reflection (see: *LR*, 15-17), which found expression first in shorter – though still significant – articles,

² Subsequent editions of the book:

(0) K. Wojtyła, “Miłość i odpowiedzialność” [excerpts from the book], *Znak*, No. 5 (1960), 561-614.

(1) K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (Lublin, TN KUL, 1960).

(2) K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (2nd ed., Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 1962); English transl.: K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, transl. by H.T. Willetts, (London, Collins, 1981) – in further references: *LR*.

(3) K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (3rd ed., Londyn, Katolicki Ośrodek Wydawniczy “Veritas,” 1962).

(4) K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, (3rd ed., Lublin, TN KUL, 1982).

(5) K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, (4th ed., Lublin, TN KUL, 1986).

especially in: “Instinct, Love, Marriage”³ (1952), “The Religious Experience of Purity”⁴ (1953), “Thoughts on Marriage”⁵ (1957), “Propaedeutics of the Sacrament of Marriage”⁶ (1958), and “The Formation of Love”⁷ (1960). In addition, in the academic year 1958-59, this philosophical reflection featured in monographic lectures at the Catholic University of Lublin (see: *LR*, 9), and it finally took the form of the study *Love and Responsibility*.

It is worth noting, as recent archival research has shown, that the study *Love and Responsibility* had two different manuscript versions⁸ and corresponding typescripts,⁹ as well as an extensive manuscript outline, which was an intermediate version.¹⁰ This was not a book written on the spur of the moment, but a “meditation” on love and marriage born of experience, which ultimately took the form of a philosophical study. Moreover, in the year of the first edition of the work in question, Wojtyła also published a literary work under the pseudonym Andrzej Jawień, entitled: “The Jeweler’s Shop. A Meditation on the Sacrament of Matrimony, Passing on Occasion into a Drama,”¹¹ in which he expressed the same content in poetic language.

In the following years, the theme of love and marriage returned many more times in Wojtyła’s works and teaching. It is necessary to point out such publications as: “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Postulates”¹² (1965), and “On the Meaning of Spousal Love (On the Margin of Discussion)”¹³ (1974), which was written in reference to the discussion that took place on the margins of his study *Love and Responsibility* between Karol Meissner OSB and Andrzej Szostek MIC. Other noteworthy publications include: “The Family

³ K. Wojtyła, “Instynkt, miłość, małżeństwo,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* 42 (1952), 1-2, 11; reprinted in: K. Wojtyła, „*Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*”, ed. J. Hannelowa, (Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 1979), 36-50.

⁴ K. Wojtyła, “Religijne przeżywanie czystości,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* 6 (1953), 1-2; reprinted in: K. Wojtyła, „*Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*”, 51-60.

⁵ K. Wojtyła, “Myśli o małżeństwie,” *Znak* 42 (1957), 595-604; reprinted in: K. Wojtyła, „*Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*”, 414-424.

⁶ K. Wojtyła, “Propedeutyka sakramentu małżeństwa,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 56, No. 1 (1958), 20-33.

⁷ K. Wojtyła, “Wychowanie miłości,” *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21 (1960), 1; reprinted in: K. Wojtyła, „*Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*”, 88-92.

⁸ AKMKr, AKKW CII-10/113; AKMKr, AKKW CII-10/113b.

⁹ AKMKr, AKKW CII-10/114; AKMKr, AKKW CII-10/114a.

¹⁰ AKMKr, AKKW CII-10/114.

¹¹ A. Jawień [= K. Wojtyła], “Przed sklepem jubilera. Medytacja o sakramencie małżeństwa przechodząca chwilami w dramat,” *Znak* 12 (1960), 1564-1607; English transl.: K. Wojtyła, *The Jeweler’s Shop. A Meditation on the Sacrament of matrimony, Passing an Occasion into a Drama*, transl. by B. Taborski (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1992).

¹² K. Wojtyła, “Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulaty,” *Roczniki Filozoficzne* Vol. 13, No. 2 (1965), 5-25; English transl.: K. Wojtyła, “The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Postulates,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, transl. by T. Sandok (New York [etc.], Peter Lang, 1994), 279-299.

¹³ K. Wojtyła, “O znaczeniu miłości oblubieńczej (Na marginesie dyskusji),” *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, Vol. 22, No. 2 (1974), 162-164.

as a ‘Communio Personarum’. An Attempt at Theological Interpretation”¹⁴ (1974) and “Parenthood a ‘Communio Personarum’”¹⁵ (1975). As for the period of the pontificate, during which this topic was by no means forgotten, we should mention above all the Wednesday catechesis entitled: *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*¹⁶ (1979-1984), *Letter to Families*¹⁷ (1994) and *A Meditation on Givenness*¹⁸ (1994/2006), which should be regarded as a development of the theme.

Letters to Teresa Życzkowska (née Heydel)

An example of Wojtyła’s actual use of pastoral experience as an inspiration and source for reflection on love and marriage are two letters he wrote to Teresa Życzkowska (née Heydel; 1931-2023), most probably in December 1956 and January 1957. These letters were a continuation and completion of the conversations she had with Wojtyła after 1952, when, as a twenty-one-year-old student, she listened to retreats preached by him and later became a participant in the so-called “Środowisko” [“Environment”] – a special academic pastoral care led by Wojtyła.¹⁹ It is also worth mentioning that, on December 10, 1956, Wojtyła led an Advent day of recollection for young people, while on December 16, 1956, he led a day of recollection for engaged couples, the topic of which was the religious side of marriage.²⁰ It is possible that it was the reflections of these days that gave the impetus to write the letters cited above.

A related correspondence was included by the addressee in her memoirs of her meeting with Wojtyła,²¹ written in 1994 and also made available to George Weigel, who, with her

¹⁴ K. Wojtyła, “Rodzina jako ‘communio personarum’. Próba interpretacji teologicznej,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 83, No. 3 (1974), 347-361; English transl.: K. Wojtyła, “The Family as a Community of Person,” in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 315-327.

¹⁵ K. Wojtyła, “Rodzicielstwo a ‘communio personarum’,” *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 84, No. 1 (1975), 17-31; English transl.: K. Wojtyła, “Parenthood as a Community of Person,” in Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 329-342.

¹⁶ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, transl. by M. Waldstein, (Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2006).

¹⁷ John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, Vatican transl. (Boston, St. Paul Books & Media, 1994).

¹⁸ John Paul II, “Medytacja na temat «bezinteresownego daru»,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* Vol. 98, No. 8 (2006), 628-638; English transl.: John Paul II, „A Meditation on Givenness,” *Communio* Vol. 41 (2014), 871-883, transl. by M. Mac-Kinnon. This meditation was originally signed on 8 February 1994 (six days after Pope John Paul II signed *Letter to Families*), but was not printed until 2006.

¹⁹ See: T. Życzkowska, “Od Beskidów i Bieszczad do Watykanu,” in: *Zapis drogi. Wspomnienia o nieznanym duszpasterstwie księdza Karola Wojtyły*, (ed. 2nd, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława BM Archidiecezji Krakowskiej), 319-327.

The term “Environment” is used to describe the saucers gathered around Wojtyła, mainly students, who in 1952-1978 had him as their pastor and participated in various joint outings (trips to the mountains, canoeing). Wojtyła was “Wujek” [“Uncle”] to them and maintained lively contacts even during his pontificate.

²⁰ See: A. Boniecki, *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, (ed. 2nd, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 2000), 128.

²¹ Życzkowska, “Od Beskidów i Bieszczad do Watykanu,” 323.

permission, published it in his famous biography of Pope John Paul II, *Witness to Hope*, in 1999.²²

The subject of the letters that Życzkowska, then still Heydel, received was the nature of love. These were not superficial thoughts or hermetic academic deductions handed down to a student by a master, but an invitation to think together. In his second letter, Wojtyła wrote directly, “Dear Teresa! [...] I have to tell you a few things (think together with you).”²³ Wojtyła did not so much want to convey his specific “prescriptions” for love as to enter into a dialogue that would lead to bringing the problem closer, looking at it together. The spiritual director led and was at the same time an attentive listener to the students, sensitive to their life questions, plans, and choices.

In the letter, dated December 1956, Wojtyła began by pointing out the false impression of him held by the male and female students in his pastoral care who thought he was aiming only to lead them into marriage.²⁴ He then stressed that his aim was something else. He wrote:

Everyone [...] lives, above all, for love. The ability to love authentically, not great intellectual capacity, constitutes the deepest part of a personality. It is no accident that the greatest commandment is to love. Authentic love leads us outside ourselves to affirming others: devoting oneself to the cause of man, to people, and, above all, to God. Marriage makes sense [...] if it gives one the opportunity for such love, if it evokes the ability and necessity of such loving, if it draws one out of the shell of individualism (various kinds) and egocentrism. It is not enough simply to want to accept such love. One must know how to give it, and it’s often not ready to be received. Many times it’s necessary to help it to be formed.²⁵

It is this problem of “forming” love that Wojtyła’s letter is aiming at. This is because he noticed that it was precisely here that his students faced difficulty. In the following letter, he subjects this problem to closer scrutiny, pointing out several questions for consideration:

²² G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York, Cliff Street Books – HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 101-102.

²³ *Ibid.*, 101.

²⁴ See: *Ibid.*, 101: “People like to think that Wujek would like to see everyone married. But I think this is a false picture.”

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 101.

1) I don't want you ever to think this way: that life forces me to move away from the perspective of something that is better, riper, fuller, to something that is less good, less mature, less attractive. I am convinced that life is a constant development toward that which is better, more perfect—if there is no stagnation within us. 2) After many experiences and a lot of thinking, I am convinced that the (objective) starting point of love is the realization that I am needed by another. The person who objectively needs me most is also, for me, objectively, the person I most need. This is a fragment of life's deep logic, and also a fragment of trusting in the Creator and in Providence. 3) People's values are different and they come in different configurations. The great achievement is always to see values that others don't see and to affirm them. The even greater achievement is to bring out of people the values that would perish without us. In the same way, we bring our values out in ourselves. 4) This is what I wanted to write you. Don't ever think that I want to cut short your way. I want your way.²⁶

The thoughts evoked can be distilled to several theses that are worth examining in more detail. First: the ability to love constitutes personality. Next: the point of departure of love is the consciousness that "I am needed." And finally: love requires formation, education.

The ability to love constitutes personality

Commenting on the letters to Heydel, George Weigel has stated that, for Wojtyła, love was "the truth at the very center of the human condition, and love always meant self-giving, not self-assertion."²⁷ Indeed, Wojtyła noted that it is impossible to separate the person from love. And this is the fundamental thesis: love is personal, and therefore involves the world of people and God. The ability to love is in the very essence of being a person. A cat, a flower, or a stone by its nature is not capable of love. Only a person is, in his potentiality, capable of love – love that is always a gift of self (self-giving), not a selfish defense of one's rights (self-assertion)²⁸. Love,

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 101-102.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 101; see: *LR*, 96-99.

²⁸ See: John Paul II, *A Meditation on Givenness*, 875: "Man is drawn up into the mystery of God by the fact that his freedom is subjected to the law of love, and love creates interpersonal communion. [] God, man's Creator, is not only the omnipotent Lord of all that exists, but is also a God of communion. This communion is where that special likeness between man and God is played out. Through man, this likeness should radiate out to all of creation so that it becomes the "cosmos"—man's communion with all that is created and creation's communion with man. St. Francis of Assisi is one such figure in whom the truth about the communion of creatures found a special expression. The right and fitting place for communion, however, is first and foremost man—man and woman whom God has called from the beginning to be a sincere gift of self for one another."

therefore, must consist of some kind of stepping out of oneself, of transcending one's own selfishness, of revealing oneself to another person. It is risk-taking, because my love can be accepted, but it can also be rejected, betrayed, exploited. By stepping out of myself, I show the other person myself, reveal myself to him in my talents and weaknesses, and receive a positive or negative response, which only the other person can give. The aforementioned cat, flower, or stone – unlike a person – cannot respond to my love.

Significantly, Wojtyła stressed that love is a more important aspect of man's personality than even his intellect. Love is an action that goes outward, to another person and to God. The intellect allows this potential movement to be systematized, thoroughly considered, but the actual affirmation of the other person requires the fulfillment of an act, which is precisely personal love. Of course, what is meant here is "authentic love" – I.e. love as relating in act of will to the other in such a manner as to treat the other as end/good in him/her self – and not any false substitutes for it that are actually various forms of selfishness practiced under the banner of love. Only this authentic view of love precludes using the other, in negative terms. Love, as a choice for the good of the other is a rational act. It is a will that is a rational appetite/desire (see: *LR*, 80-82).²⁹ Accordingly, love is more important to man's personality than intellect in the sense that intellect is a necessary condition for love and that it is ordered toward a higher and more profound act in and through the person. Therefore, when speaking of love, there is no need to add "personal," since authentic love cannot be otherwise.

The beginning point of love is the consciousness that "I am needed"

Wojtyła, claiming that the starting point of love is the awareness of "I am needed," by no means points to a purely utilitarian aspect. On the contrary, he demands that love remain at the personal level and in no way be subject to objectification. There is a danger of objectification, since in an interpersonal relationship both the one "who acts" (the subject) and the one "to whom the action is addressed" (the object) is a human being – a person, a woman or a man. To reduce to an object and "use" by "x" some "y" (or vice versa) denies authentic love.

Wojtyła's insights into the nature of love through his attention to the phenomenon of "being needed" can be considered in at least two dimensions.

First, if person "x" asserts the love of "y" ("x" affirms "y") it means that "x" needs the love of "y" ("x" needs affirmation from "y"). At the same time, it is important for person "x"

²⁹ See: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I^a-II^{ae}, q. 6, a. 2, ad 2: "voluntas nominat rationalem appetitum."

not only to know (realize) that he is loved by “y,” but also that he is needed by “y” (i.e., that “x” needs the love of “y”; “x” needs to affirm “y”). Here we touch on the reciprocal nature of love (see: *LR*, 84-88). Love is always about the person, and not about his particular – aesthetic or pragmatic – qualitative emolument (e.g., a beautiful body or practical skills). To be sure, these emoluments can provide a point for getting to know each other. For example, “x” notices “y” because he sees this or that qualitative attribute in him. But in turning to love, one cannot stop at this value separate from the person. Authentic love is always about the whole person, not just some valuable quality of the person.

Second, and this is shown forcefully in Christian doctrine, the need for love goes back to the very mystery of one’s own existence. If love means the mutual “being needed” of person “x” and person “y,” then it can be thought that this is inscribed in the nature of the person, which logically points to God, who first loved man with this love. And man, by loving the other person, does “justice toward the Creator” (see: *LR*, 209-261).

Love needs to be formed

The above-mentioned image of love may seem idealized and thus even unrealistic or at least difficult to realize. Wojtyła was aware of this. He wrote that the culture of the person in married life requires not only formation, but even heroism, to be faithful to that “inner logic of love” of which he wrote in *Love and Responsibility* (*LR*, 230)³⁰ – or, generally speaking, a “life’s deep logic,” as he expressed himself in a letter to Życzkowska.

Wojtyła emphasizes that “x”—“y” love does not appear as a ready-made “product.” Infatuation is not immediately pure betrothed love. It requires work, which in almost every case proceeds somewhat differently. Even if “y” is ready to receive the love of “x,” this “x” must know how to offer this love (and vice versa). Love, Wojtyła wrote, “is often not ready to be received. Many times it’s necessary to help it to be formed.”³¹ This involves seeing values and affirming them, especially seeing values that others do not see. And, even more so, it involves bringing out values that, without the other person’s help, perhaps would never manifest themselves. Thus, we bring out the values in ourselves.

³⁰ It is worth noting that the very concept of “the inner logic of love” was added by Wojtyła only in the second revised and supplemented edition of his 1962 study *Love and Responsibility*.

³¹ G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 101.

Wojtyła here refers to St. Thomas Aquinas and his concept of the human act, which is always realized in a double profile: *transiens* and *immanens*.³² The former objectifies itself in some external product, while the latter remains in the subject, constituting its intrinsic value, its own culture of the person. Thus, if “x” helps “y,” he also helps himself. What is key is that when the person loves the person, the act is good in the sense that it is good for the other, but it is also good in the sense that it is good for the agent as ordered toward fulfilling the need of the other and as forming the virtuous disposition of friendship, justice, and so on, in the agent.

However, it should be remembered that the specificity of human action (praxis) includes not only “factuality” (“x” does this or that), but also “duty” (“x” should act in a certain way). For Wojtyła – unlike for I. Kant – this duty was the personal element of the act and morality, and thus a call to fulfill oneself, to be a person to the measure of the person. It is therefore a norm of conduct, in contrast to Kant, for whom it was only a postulate of the norm, as reason (according to Kant) could not arrive at the essence of good and evil. Wojtyła therefore emphasized the distinction between being good or bad *in some respect* (lat. *secundum quid*) – e.g., a good engineer, doctor, painter – and the ethical qualification of being good or bad *as a person* (lat. *simpliciter*). Applying this distinction to love, it was obvious to Wojtyła that “x” cannot love “y” solely in some respect, e.g., because of “y’s” beautiful body and sexual attractiveness, in which case love becomes a de facto use of “y” (at least potentially). For love to be really personal, it must be a desire for the good of the whole of that person.

The man – let us repeat, citing Wojtyła’s philosophical magnum opus entitled *Person and Act* –

being the agent of the act, [...] at the same time fulfills himself in it. He fulfills, that is, he realizes or, in a sense, brings to proper fullness the structure that is characteristic of him on account of his personhood, on account of the fact that he is somebody and not merely something. It is the structure of self-governance and self-possession.³³

And this is resolved in morality: “Man as a person is somebody, and as somebody he is good or evil”³⁴, as “human acts remain in man thanks to moral values, which are the objective reality

³² See: St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I^a, q. 5; K. Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis,” in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 266.

³³ K. Wojtyła, “Person and Act,” [in:] K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, transl. by G. Ignatik, (Washington, CUA Press, 2021), 253.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 254.

most closely coherent with the person.”³⁵ While it is theoretically possible to “exclude before the parenthesis” moral reality, as Wojtyła stressed, “morality [...] always remains closely connected with man as a person.”³⁶ This applies in a special way to love.

Conclusions

Karol Wojtyła approached love with great sensitivity. It seems that he was looking for the right language to express the mystery we call love. Emphasizing the importance of the objective awareness that “I am in need” of the other person, yet not as an “object of use,” but precisely as a “person,” allows us to see love as a value that allows a person to truly be a person. The analysis of the act and its profiles points to the reciprocity of the interpersonal relationship and the actual gratuitousness of love, which is formed and realized exactly in reciprocity. In a broader perspective, the problem of love in Karol Wojtyła’s thought must be analyzed more largely, taking into account the thought of St. Thomas and St. Augustine. This article is an introductory treatment of the topic and an invitation to further and deeper analysis and discussion on the subject of love.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Bibliography

- Boniecki, A., *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, oprac. A. Boniecki (ed. 2nd, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 2000).
- Jaweień, A. [Wojtyła, K.], "Przed sklepem jubilera. Medytacja o sakramencie małżeństwa przechodząca chwilami w dramat," *Znak* 12 (1960), 1564-1607.
- John Paul II, "A Meditation on Givenness," *Communio* Vol. 41 (2014), 871-883, transl. by M. Mac-Kinnon.
- John Paul II, „Medytacja na temat «bezinteresownego daru»,” *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* Vol. 98, No. 8 (2006), 628-638.
- John Paul II, *Letter to Families*, Vatican transl., (Boston, St. Paul Books & Media, 1994).
- John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, transl. by M. Waldstein, (Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2006).
- Thomas Aquinas St., *Summa Theologiae*.
- Weigel, G., *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York, Cliff Street Books – HarperCollins Publishers, 1999).
- Wojtyła, K., "Instynkt, miłość, małżeństwo," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 42, 1952, 1-2, 11.
- Wojtyła, K., "Miłość i odpowiedzialność," *Znak* 5 (1960), 561-614.
- Wojtyła, K., "Myśli o małżeństwie," *Znak* 42 (1957), 595-604.
- Wojtyła, K., "O znaczeniu miłości oblubieńczej (Na marginesie dyskusji)," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* Vol. 22, No. 2 (1974), 162-164.
- Wojtyła, K., "Parenthood as a Community of Person," in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 329-342.
- Wojtyła, K., "Person and Act," in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, transl. by G. Ignatik (Washington, CUA Press, 2021), 93-416.
- Wojtyła, K., "Propedeutyka sakramentu małżeństwa," *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 56, No. 1 (1958), 20-33.
- Wojtyła, K., "Religijne przeżywanie czystości," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 6 (1953), 1-2.
- Wojtyła, K., "Rodzicielstwo a 'communio personarum'," *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 84, No. 1 (1975), 17-31.
- Wojtyła, K., "Rodzina jako 'communio personarum'. Próba interpretacji teologicznej," *Ateneum Kapłańskie* Vol. 83, No. 3 (1974), 347-361.
- Wojtyła, K., "The Family as a Community of Person," in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 315-327.

- Wojtyła, K., "The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Postulates," in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 279-299.
- Wojtyła, K., "The Problem of the Constitution of Culture Through Human Praxis," in: Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 263-275.
- Wojtyła, K., "Wychowanie miłości," *Tygodnik Powszechny* 21 (1960), 1.
- Wojtyła, K., "Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulaty," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* Vol. 13, No. 2 (1965), 5-25.
- Wojtyła, K., „*Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*”, ed. J. Hennelowa, (Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 1979).
- Wojtyła, K., *Love and Responsibility*, transl. by H.T. Willetts, (London, Collins, 1981).
- Wojtyła, K., *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, (3rd ed., Lublin, TN KUL, 1982).
- Wojtyła, K., *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, (4th ed., Lublin, TN KUL, 1986).
- Wojtyła, K., *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (2nd ed., Kraków, Wydawnictwo Znak, 1962).
- Wojtyła, K., *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (3rd ed., Londyn, Katolicki Ośrodek Wydawniczy "Veritas", 1962).
- Wojtyła, K., *Miłość i odpowiedzialność. Studium etyczne*, (Lublin, TN KUL, 1960).
- Wojtyła, K., *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, transl. by T. Sandok (New York [etc.], Peter Lang, 1994).
- Wojtyła, K., *The Jeweler's Shop. A Meditation on the Sacrament of Matrimony, Passing an Occasion into a Drama*, transl. by B. Taborski (San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1992).
- Życzkowska, T., "Od Beskidów i Bieszczad do Watykanu," in: *Zapis drogi. Wspomnienia o nieznanym duszpasterstwie księdza Karola Wojtyły*, (ed. 2nd, Kraków, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława BM Archidiecezji Krakowskiej), 319-327.

Archival materials of the Archives of the Metropolitan Curie in Cracow [= AKMKr]

AKKW CII-10/113

AKKW CII-10/113b

AKKW CII-10/114

AKKW CII-10/114a

“Maturity Is Within Love, Transforming Fear.”

Love as the Proper Act of the Person in Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophical Anthropology

Jacob W. Francois¹

Abstract

This article presents Wojtyła’s “logic of the gift” in terms of man’s ability to fulfill himself through relationships of self-gifted love. As man continues to grow in his maturity through relationships of *communio personarum*, the human being can fulfill his task to become *someone* who is capable of relationships of love that transcend his fear of disclosing himself to the “other.”

Keywords

Wojtyła, fear, love, freedom, self-gift

¹ Jacob W. Francois – University of St. Mary of the Lake (Mundelein, IL)
e-mail: j.francois@dbqarch.org • ORCID: 0000-0002-7973-0908

*Maturity is also fear;
the end of cultivation is already its beginning,
the beginning of wisdom is fear,
based on a different layer of the same soil
where there is no need to escape,
only space
with which we measure grandeur.
We enter this space,
we depart from that beginning,
and so we slowly return:
for maturity is within love,
transforming fear.²*

In Karol Wojtyła's poem "Thoughts on Maturing," he muses upon the love within the heart of man as it matures through his confrontation with fear. Intrinsic to Wojtyła's personalistic philosophy is the idea that the human person is a creature who cannot be fulfilled on his own; he desires intimacy and union which gives rise to his need for self-gifted love.³ Thus, the human person must confront the fear that accompanies his self-disclosure to the other in a sincere gift of self. This poem condenses Wojtyła's philosophy into a concrete paragraph where the reader will see three major themes that run throughout his philosophical anthropology: 1) maturity is confronted fear, 2) the fruit of maturity allows for self-gift and 3) love is the proper act of the person. The topic of this article seeks to explicate Wojtyła's phenomenology of the gift within

² K. Wojtyła, "Myśli o Dojrzewaniu – Thoughts on Maturing," in: K. Wojtyła, *Poezje – Poems*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011), 224-225.

„Dojrzałość jest także bojaźnią.

Kres uprawy zawiera się już w jej początku -

początkiem mądrości jest bojaźń -

lecz spoczywa już na innych warstwach tej samej gleby,

nie jest już potrzebą ucieczki,

jest przestrzenią, którą mierzy się wielkość.

Przenikamy do tej przestrzeni,

oD.C.hodzimy od tego początku i tak wracamy powoli:

dojrzałość jest bowiem w miłości, która przemienia bojaźń.”

³ Cf. A. Flood, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Love: Aquinas on Participation, Unity, and Union*, (Washington, D.C., CUA Press, 2018). This is a good source to view a more Thomistic interpretation of love which served as the foundations of Wojtyła's personalistic approach of self-gifted love.

the interiority of the human person that overcomes fear as he makes an act of love through the disclosure of his interior “I.”

Self-Gift Transforming Fear

In St. John Paul II’s *Meditation on Givenness*, he shared that his spiritual director had once told him: “Perhaps God wills to give that person to you.”⁴ This became a milestone for the young Polish thinker who eventually come to see that all that exists is not independent of itself but is rather contingent and based upon a theology of the “gift.” Employed in macroscale, the theology of the gift shows that all being is contingent upon God who gives creation to itself. In a word, creation did not have to be at all! Thus, the relationship between creation and Creator constitutes a *communio* if fully employed through reciprocity between both parties (the only party who might not be pulling its weight is humanity).

One cannot speak of the philosophy of givenness in creation without reference to a Giver. Wojtyła’s philosophy relies on the argumentation contained within the Christian tradition (particularly Aquinas) which provides philosophical reasoning for the existence of God. Despite the tradition’s firm philosophical proofs for the existence of the Creator, Wojtyła believes that a philosophy of givenness provides an alternative route that can crack even the staunchest atheist’s disbelief. “There are times when all men, even nonbelievers, glimpse the truth of the *givenness* of creation and begin to pray, to acknowledge that all is a gift from God.”⁵ Thus, a philosophy of gift allows non-believers to see the truth of the twofold gift in the thought of Wojtyła.⁶ Namely, the radical gift is the gift of man’s person to himself (“I”) *ex nihilo* from God and the second is the fundamental gift which is creation as a whole (“thou”). It is in this knowledge of the givenness of creation and man’s gift of himself that allows mankind to discover reality anew for the first time. He describes this twofold gift as follows:

⁴ John Paul II, “A Meditation on Givenness,” *Communio: International Catholic Review* Vol 41, No. 4 (2014), 871.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 872-873.

⁶ M. Sherwin, “John Paul’s Theology of Truth and Freedom: A Dissident Phenomenology in a Thomistic Anthropology,” *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 3, No. 3 (2005), 545. Sherwin notes the difference here between Thomas and Wojtyła: “Thomas’s preferred word to express reality is ‘being,’ John Paul’s preferred term is ‘truth’.” It is from this Johannine theology “you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:32) that Wojtyła shows that the liberty of the human person is contained within man’s confrontation with the truth.

Creation thus means not only calling from nothing to existence and establishing the world's existence as well as man's existence in the world, but, according to the first account, *bārēšît bārā*, it also signifies *gift*; a fundamental and “radical” gift, that is, an act of giving in which the gift comes into being precisely from nothing.⁷

The “radical gift” is the Creator's willingness for the good of another to be. It is in this “radical gift” that man realizes that he is free because he is *a person*; a creature who is willed for his own sake. To understand the “radical gift,” man must confront the fear of relationship (thou) both within himself as *suppositum* and his relationship with the “other” (other persons both divine and human). As man grapples with this inner drama, he grows in maturity which allows him to be capable of giving himself through an act of love for the “other” which in essence, is something beyond himself, man's transcendent desire. This inner drama is what how one Thomistic theologian refers to as the “existential human nature” which resides within man. Sherwin notes that for “for John Paul the ‘truth about man’ is that although he suffers many limitations, being subject to suffering and death, he has a deep and restless desire for something greater (both a desire for truth and for freedom). Moreover, he experiences an inner summons to a higher life.”⁸

This higher life can be understood through man's disposition to utilize the philosophy of gift. The human person becomes aware that he must resist the urge to close himself off to the “other.” If man shuts in on himself, he becomes isolated and alone with his own gift; thereby rejecting the nature of the gift. Oftentimes when man is *incapable* of receiving the gift of his person or chooses not to give the gift of himself, it stems from *a place of fear*. Man must actualize his freedom in order to receive the gift. If he acts in freedom, he then forms himself through his human acts (*Actus Humanus*) and forms his destiny, his personal mission.⁹ Understanding the inner dynamic of our relationship to ourselves (through his *suppositum* and his interior “I”) should become “a source of enrichment for each of us. We would be in grave danger were we to be unable to recognize the richness in each human person. Our humanity

⁷ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, (Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2006), 180.

⁸ Sherwin, “John Paul's Theology of Truth and Freedom,” 547.

⁹ Wojtyła is building upon the philosophy of St. Augustine. Sherwin notes that “Perfect freedom, for Augustine, is not freedom *from*, but freedom *for*; it is the freedom to engage in the morally beautiful actions of the virtues, all of which are ways of loving God and neighbor.” M. Sherwin, “Freedom and the Fearful Symmetry: Theological Reflections on Freedom's Relationship to Truth,” *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 15, No. 4 (2017), 1096-1097. It is only in man's use of freedom *for* his personal mission as a gift, rather than self-preservation and creating boundaries with the world that he can act upon reality.

would be in peril were we to shut [in] ourselves.”¹⁰ If man chooses to close in on himself, his ability to dive more deeply within his human nature is suppressed because he negates the freedom of the gift. In confronting his fear, the man dares to be *someone*! It is this confronted fear that matures man in his self-possession and allows him to actualize himself through relationships of self-gift.

The fear or incapacity to give oneself through a sincere gift of self is coined by Wojtyła as “original solitude.”¹¹ Wojtyła uses the imagery of Adam in the book of Genesis who does not find a suitable partner in the garden. “*Man is ‘alone’: this is to say that through his own humanity, through what he is, he is at the same time set into a unique exclusive, and unrepeatabe relationship with God himself.*”¹² Man wrestles with his existence, not understanding the depths of his person and his relationship with God. Man becomes acutely aware of his solitude through fear.

When man does find a suitable partner, the man discovers a paradox (in his postlapsarian state). He fears of being used by the “other” while at the same time experiences the fear of isolation. In becoming aware of man’s desire for communion, he must confront the fear of his own solitude and observe how his nature compels him to become a sincere gift of self for the “other.” In his desire to be known, to know the other, man discovers the nature of disinterested love, to give himself fully and be known in the “thou” of another. “When man discovers the disinterested gift that the other human person is to him, it is as if he discovers the whole world in that other person. It is important to recognize that it can happen that this gift ceases to be disinterested and sincere in the realm of the human heart.”¹³ The desire to be loved and to act in love towards the other makes the individual confront himself in the exterior reality. He is faced with a choice: Do I surrender myself to the other? Or do I close myself off because of the fear that my gift will not be received in a relationship of reciprocal communion? These questions reveal man’s interior negotiation of trust as a result of his concupiscible state.¹⁴

Wojtyła understands concupiscence as hiding before the “other” in shame.¹⁵ Shame “shows a fundamental lack of trust, which already itself points to the collapse of the original

¹⁰ John Paul II, “A Meditation on Givenness,” 874.

¹¹ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 152.

¹² *Ibid.*, 146-153.

¹³ John Paul II, “A Meditation on Givenness,” 879.

¹⁴ Cf. V. Havel, “The Power of the Powerless,” trans. Paul Wilson, in *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe*, ed. John Keane (Armonk, NY, Sharpe, 1985). Havel speaks of the ‘lie’ that man participates in when he believes that he is alone. When man accepts the ‘lie’ of his solitude, then he becomes part of the problem of the totalitarian state, a system in which Wojtyła grew up in.

¹⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 249.

relationship ‘of communion’.’¹⁶ Concupiscence deprives the human person of mutual trust which is a fruit of communion in the intersubjectivity of the “other.” The lack of trust that can build up between two persons (either in friendship or in marriage) is based on Wojtyła’s reading of “concupiscence” and is an elaboration upon the Kantian ethical system of the categorical imperative. By elaborating upon this Kantian system (that man cannot be used as a means to an end but should rather be looked at as an end in himself), Wojtyła is able to show the self-giving of man as a “radical gift” that advances the human person’s dignity within a personalist system.¹⁷

One man can become the object of use to another. This is the utmost threat to our civilization, especially the civilization of a materially affluent world. A disinterested, loving predilection is then supplanted by the urge to take possession of the other and use him. Such an urge is a great threat not only to the other but especially to the person who succumbs to it. Such a person destroys within himself the capacity to be a gift, and thus destroys the capacity to live by the precept: “be more a man.”¹⁸

In reexamining Kant, Wojtyła uses the “logic of gift” as the cornerstone of his philosophy that prevents man from being used as an object by the “other” because of the ontology of the gift. Therefore, a “logic of the gift” shows the ontic structure of the universe as oriented towards an objective ethical system that allows for the flourishing of personalism.

What Wojtyła seeks to affirm is not just the objectivity of the other, but the objectivity of man’s interior subjectivity which promotes man’s autoteleological action that stems from the radicality of his own gift. At the heart of the creation of man *ex nihilo* is the “unique act of existence” that affirms man both as unique and unrepeatable. “The person is not merely an ‘individual humanity’ but the manner of individual existence that is proper [...] only to humanity. This way of being originates from the act that *the existence as an individual proper*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Cf. K. Rickert, “Wojtyła’s Personalistic Norm: A Thomistic Analysis,” *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 7, No. 3 (2009), 653-678. Wojtyła “can engage in dialogue with contemporary moral theory; he can employ the Kantian language and, to some degree, the Kantian methodology, and nevertheless emerge from the process with essentially the same conclusions as one would find in the natural law.” (*ibid.* 676) Rickert clearly shows that the Wojtylian approach is not a wholesale acceptance of Kant’s philosophy, but rather is “quasi-Kantian” in his approach. (*ibid.* 677)

¹⁸ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 249.

to humanity is personal.”¹⁹ Within the radicality of man as gift at his genesis, the human person discovers himself as unique because of his interior structure that is objectively subjective. Man is unique in his existence because he is personally created by the Giver in an act that is entirely subjective. Subsequently, man continues to discover the richness of his subjectivity as he differentiates himself as a human person through his intellect and will in human action. Despite the radical freedom involved as an autoteleological agent, man becomes himself through his acts or as St. Thomas says “*actiones sunt suppositorum* (actions belong to their respective *supposita*).”²⁰ It is in man’s subjective discernment that he formulates objective action that reveals the dynamism of intersubjectivity which makes him who he is. In so doing, he overcomes the fear of being a passive “something” and becomes an active “someone” who is prepared for relationships of self-gifted love.

Affirmation of the Person Through Self-Gift

As a council father of the Second Vatican Council (as a bishop and later a cardinal archbishop), Wojtyła became directly involved in the drafting of some of the council’s documents. One of the schemas that he was involved with would eventually become the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World,” also known as *Gaudium et Spes*. One of Wojtyła’s favorite lines in the document would later become one of the most quoted lines in his papacy (as John Paul II) and is located in paragraph twenty-four:

Indeed, the Lord Jesus, when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one [...] as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.²¹

¹⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays – Person and Act*, (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 185.

²⁰ *STh* II-II q. 58, a. 2.

²¹ Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), no. 24.

This line is essential in the thought of Wojtyła for two reasons: 1) it displays that the human person shares in the likeness of personhood displayed in the Divine Persons and 2) this likeness shows that the personal character of personhood and the relationality of self as gift which is intrinsic to personhood.²² This paragraph in the dogmatic constitution of Vatican II has become the canonized form of Wojtyła's "law of the gift." Wojtyła notes that not only is man a gift but "creation is gift, because man appears in it, who, as an "image of God" is able to understand the very meaning of the gift in the call from nothing to existence. He is also able to respond to the Creator with the language of this understanding."²³ Thus, man is the created substance who can understand the metaphysical structure of *creation as gift*.

As noted in *Gaudium et Spes*, man finds himself as the only creature willed for his own sake because he is *a person*.²⁴ In Wojtyła's analysis of Genesis (*Theology of the Body*), man finds himself in original solitude without the ability for self-gifted relationships prior to the creation of woman.²⁵ Man's natural desire for a relationship with the "other" gives him the impetus to mature as an agent of self-possession and self-gift.²⁶ He notes that self-possession/self-governance allows for the person to 1) receive the gift of themselves (radical gift) through self-knowledge, 2) use the freedom derived from his "unique act of existence" through an act of self-donation, and 3) receive the response of the gift from the beloved. This third action is often overlooked and is extremely significant as it brings man into communion with others through a sincere gift of self, *the other develops their personhood which is fundamentally relation*. Wojtyła emphasizes the person's need for maturity in self-possession and self-governance that bear fruit for self-gifted love as follows:

Each of us is capable of such a gift because each of us is a person, and the structure proper to a person is the structure of self-possession and self-governance. Hence, we

²² Cf. D.H. Delaney, *Viri Dignitatem: Personhood, Masculinity and Fatherhood in the Thought of John Paul II*, (Steubenville, Emmaus Academic, 2023), 87-100. Delaney does a concise presentation and analysis on Wojtyła's trinitarian and Christocentric anthropology stemming from his time at the Council in this work.

²³ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 180-181.

²⁴ Cf. A. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2016), 69-70.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁶ Cf. T. Petri, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2016). In Ch. 5 "The Spousal Meaning of the Body in *Theology of the Body*" Petri provides a wonderful analysis the 'Spousal meaning of the body' which is Wojtyła's most common usage of his underlying philosophy of giftedness and shows the need for Wojtyła's thought in wake of the confusion of *Humanae Vitae*.

are capable of giving ourselves because we possess ourselves and also because we are our own masters in the dimension of ourselves as subjects.²⁷

For Wojtyła, the degree to which someone matures is contingent on their ability to actualize their freedom. Man as a person is endowed with freedom; he can live this gift out to its fullest potential as he chooses. This philosophical belief would exfoliate itself in the pastoral setting of the confessional as Wojtyła would regularly tell penitents “you must decide.”²⁸ This is the decision of man! Man’s “radical gift” gives rise to the ontological reality that necessitates freedom on the part of the agent. If someone is coerced and isn’t free to give the gift, then there is no gift on their part, he is unable to mature as a person. The human person’s ability to actualize himself through self-gift is contingent on his ability to actualize his freedom which is a dividend of self-possession. When a man gives himself in an act of self-gift, he identifies himself with the gift, and in so doing he gives part of himself over through that gift.

Man’s actualization of himself as a gift allows him to grow in maturity of that gift through his actualization of self-governance and self-determination. “Scholastics expressed it in the phrase: ‘*persona est sui iuris.*’ Wojtyła reveals in his analyzes one more moment, necessary for the functioning of the structure of self-determination, namely self-mastery, the dominion of man ‘over’ himself, where the person controls himself.”²⁹ It is in man’s confidence as a being *sui iuris* that he becomes in-possession of the gift of himself and is able to give himself as a gift. As man gives himself as a gift to the “other,” trust is built between the two persons and a *communio* of reciprocity and affirmation of the gift occurs on the part of the beloved. In this relationship of self-gift man becomes more aware of his receptivity and the response of the “other” that allows the human person to grow in his ability to participate in this “law of the gift.” As he continues overcoming the fear of rejection and perfection of the gift in self-gifted action, man matures in the virtue of self-mastery that makes him an agent that is capable of love.

We mean freedom above all as *self-mastery* (self-dominion). Under this aspect, self-mastery is indispensable *in order for man to be able to “give himself,”* in order for him

²⁷ K. Wojtyła, “The Family as a Community of Persons,” in: *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans by Th. Sandok, (New York, Peter Lang, 2008), 319.

²⁸ G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York, Cliff Street Books, 2001), 17.

²⁹ K. Stachewicz, “Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy of Freedom,” *Teologia i Moralność* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2020), 155.

to become a gift, in order for him (referring to the words of the Council) to be able to “find himself fully” through “a sincere gift of self” [*Gaudium et Spes*, 24:3].³⁰

When man chooses to actualize self-dominion over himself, the human person dives deeper into his identity of personhood and he further develops his capacity for being a gift, both to himself, his creator, and others. If he is not able to govern himself as gift and his receptivity of the “radical gift,” then he will not be able to receive himself back as a gift through the beloved’s response to his gift. Thus, he will be unable to “find himself” in the dimension of the gift.

Every person must give himself as a personal gift for the other, even in the smallest of ways, so he is continually finding, as he further discerns, his “unique act of existence.” Wojtyła explains the finding of oneself in one’s own personal gift as follows:

*This finding of oneself in one’s own gift becomes the source of a new gift of self that grows by the power of the inner disposition to the exchange of the gift and in the measure in which it encounters the same and even deeper acceptance and welcome as the fruit of an ever more intense consciousness of the gift itself.*³¹

This phenomenological approach of receiving man’s objectivity through his subjectivity allows the person to govern himself as a concrete whole. In a way, subjectivity in Wojtyła’s thought is grounded on the acceptance of one’s interior “I” as gift; this is how the person is able to effect self-mastery.

Fundamental to enriching one’s subjective “I” is when the “I” is affirmed in the eyes of the other in what Wojtyła terms the “affirmation of the person.” “The ‘affirmation of the person’ is nothing other than welcoming the gift, which, through reciprocity, creates the communion of persons; this communion builds itself from within.”³² The affirmation of the person brings man back to himself, but in so doing, a communion of persons is bound together through their mutual self-gifted response. In the affirmation of the other(s) the human person is able to participate in the fullness of his own personhood through *communio*. This mutual recognition of persons within the community of self-giving as gift, results in the communitarian dimension of the “law of the gift” and becomes the *communio personarum* (communion of

³⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 186.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 197.

³² *Ibid.*, 188.

persons). In the *communio personarum*, the human person receives himself back from the other and can see his objectivity reciprocated and affirmed, thereby bringing about maturity within the human subject. Man becomes affirmed in his own goodness and discovers the richness and affirmation in his “unique act of existence.”

Marriage, for Wojtyła, is the most concrete example of human givenness in physical form as it gives rise to the mutual affirmation of the person through receiving the gift of one’s body through mutual reciprocity. In marriage, the bodily gift and receptivity of the other is what Wojtyła calls “spousal character.”³³ This interpretation of human sexuality shows a biological reception of the gift in the human species in its bodily character. However, the antithesis to the receptivity of the sexual act is grasped in Wojtyła’s analysis of shame. Shame is experienced when someone is “a ‘potential object of enjoyment’ for persons of the other sex.”³⁴ This is why in Wojtyła’s *Theology of the Body*, shame is the fear of being looked at as an object of enjoyment or desire; not an affirmation of oneself as a person *qua* person in the gaze of the other. This is what it means to be someone rather than something, it strikes at the heart of one’s personhood. Shame through concupiscence becomes the enemy of mature love which could potentially use the “other” and not receive the “other” as a gift. Concupiscence casts “doubt on the gift” and man falters as he questions his identity.³⁵ Man then asks questions like: “Does this person affirm my personhood? Or do they seek to use me for their own enjoyment?”

Man has a responsibility not only to affirm his *telos* in becoming a gift for the other, but also to create relationships that affirm his personhood. Man finds himself in this personalistic paradox; to fulfill his nature, he must give himself as a gift but in relationships with those who will not use him as an object of their own self-gratification. If not, he participates in relationships where he will not be received or reciprocated, and this becomes a cause for fear within himself as a battle of two egos ensue. This occurs when other “persons” have not matured enough in self-mastery to participate in the “law of the gift” for a meaningful relationship and rather focuses on one’s own ego for his personal good rather than the common good of both persons. As one Wojtylan philosopher notes “if [reciprocity] is based on the honorable good (*bonum honestum*), reciprocity will be mature, profound and immovable. If it

³³ *Ibid.*, 193.

³⁴ K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H.T. Willetts, (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981), 176.

³⁵ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 236-237.

is based solely on either the useful good (*bonum utile*) or pleasure (*bonum delectabile*), hence on the attitude of use, reciprocity will be shallow and unstable, eventually developing into a volatile arrangement of two egoisms.”³⁶ In pursuing relationships of utility, persons exfoliate their inability to actualize their freedom and therefore do not image the *communio personarum* that Vatican II envisions as the image of human community. If man is not affirmed in his personhood, he will not be able to discover his “unique act of existence” and grow in his personal mission. He needs to receive himself back through the reciprocity of the other to see himself as an object returned to himself for further self-discovery. In this affirmation of the gift by the other in the *communio personarum*, the human being discovers the “personalistic norm” where he discovers himself as person and the distinctiveness of his interior “I.” “The personalistic norm tries to emphasize the *particular position of man as a person* and the distinctness and transcendence which result from it.”³⁷ Not only does man discover that he is himself *someone* rather than *something*, but must not use the “other” as an object of use.³⁸ In acting within the personalistic norm, man can live out his “individual act of existence” and act in such a way that encapsulates that which makes him more human. The capacity of one’s humanity is determined by their ability to receive their identity from the radicality of the gift and the actualization of their *suppositum* within the cosmos.

Self-Gifted Love as the Fruit of Maturity

The idea of love as the proper act of the person is not original to Wojtyła’s thought but is defined within the Christian tradition, particularly in St. Thomas Aquinas. In the Thomistic tradition, love is defined as *amare est velle aliculi bonum* (to love is to wish good to someone).³⁹ However, what Wojtyła emphasizes in his personalistic thought is that love is intrinsically relational and can be seen in his use of the phenomenological method. This relationality between persons within the “logic of the gift” becomes the full expression of love in Wojtyła’s thought and is seen in the use of the phrase *communio personarum*. As Mary Shivanandan shares in her book *Crossing the Threshold of Love*, the idea of *communio*

³⁶ G. Ignatik, *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła’s Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love*, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2021), 132.

³⁷ K. Wojtyła, *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, (South Bend, St. Augustin Press, 2011), 74.

³⁸ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 41: “the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.”

³⁹ *STh* I-II q. 26, a. 4.

personarum in Wojtyła is not original to his thought but rather stems from his theological reflections that occurred during Vatican II. On a biographical note, the idea of *communio personarum* proves that Wojtyła's use of the term develops as a fruit of his experience of the Council which brought about a spiritual and intellectual transformation for the Polish thinker, so much that he described the Council as "a seminary of the Holy Spirit."⁴⁰

As part of the subcommittee for the redrafting the Schema on the Church in the Modern World, which met in Ariccia in February 1965, Wojtyła might conceivably have contributed the phrase *communio personarum* to the text. However, in the Wednesday Catechesis (November 14, 1979), Pope John Paul II specifically attributes the phrase to Vatican Council II: "Solitude is the way that leads to the unity which, following Vatican II, we can define as *communio personarum*."⁴¹

Communio personarum as a fruit of the *Gaudium et Spes* posits that man can only find himself through a "sincere" or a "disinterested gift of self." The sincerity of the gift given to the other is to will the good of the other as other constitutes a unity of persons.

When the "law of the gift" is freely exercised by the person, man participates in the communitarian end for which his love is destined. In his understanding of the metaphysical framework of love through self-gift, Wojtyła displays the relationship of the *communio personarum* in the language of the "I-thou" relationship.⁴² He describes these participatory relationships as a singular unity of openness to the other that forms a shared "we" between both parties who constitute the *communio personarum*.

Participation thus understood, namely as the property of the person, by virtue of which he is and remains himself in the social community, seems to condition the authentic *communio personarum* both in the "we" relations and in the "I-thou" inter-personal relations. Both consist in opening; both are shaped on the basis of the transcendence proper to the person. The "I-thou" relation opens up directly to man. *To participate*

⁴⁰ Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 155.

⁴¹ M. Shivanandan, *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage in the Light of John Paul II's Anthropology*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2001), 72.

⁴² Cf. G. Hołub, "The Person in Dialogue," in G. Hołub, *Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, (Berlin, Peter Lang, 2021), 146-163. Hołub describes the philosophical backdrop of the 'I-thou' relationship starting with Buber and closing on Wojtyła's use of the term for the sake of the *communio personarum*.

*means in this case to turn to the other "I" on the basis of personal transcendence, and thus to turn to the full truth about this man and, in this sense, his humanity.*⁴³

The essence of the *communio personarum* is contained within the mutual *givenness* of two personal "I's" becoming a shared "we." The "I-thou" relationship shows a dimension of openness to participation which is required for the *communio* in the "we-ness" of persons through self-gift. It would be impossible for someone in the "I-thou" relationship to hold back the fullness of the gift from the other within this unitive para-circumincession within the *communio personarum*. It is against the nature of the union! If one party holds back, then they will not find themselves in the highest state of love, but rather in Wojtyła's lower levels of love (either as love of attraction or desire). If one of the persons in the *communio* does not love the other as other, the relationship between them is seen rather as an object of profit or gain and they thereby fail to see the "other" as an end in itself.

Regardless of their subjective motives (either active or unintentional), when one person holds back the fullness of his gift of self, then the process of "alienation" occurs.

We hold *that alienation is in its essence a personalistic problem* and in this sense, of course, both a humanistic and an ethical one. As the antithesis of participation, alienation contributes to or (depending on what the alienating factor is) creates an occasion for *man to be* to some extent *deprived of the possibility of fulfilling himself in the community*—either in the *social* community "we" or in the *inter-personal* community "I"—"thou."⁴⁴

Alienation is a product of one's lack of maturity in personhood or the knowledge of the gift (the gift being given or the gift being received). Alienation also occurs when a lack of reciprocity makes a person impotent to participate in self-gifted relationships. Thus, others in the relationship with him feel the lack of *communio* because of the other's alienation and lack of reciprocity. The reality of alienation is not always perceived as active action but can be observed as the omission of self-gifted action. A person plagued by alienation—either out of selfishness or fear—lacks the reciprocity that constitutes meaningful relationships that bring man back to himself as envisaged in *Gaudium et Spes*.

⁴³ Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 510.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 511.

In alienation, we see fear and shame creep into the human *suppositum* that prevents him from freely choosing how to disclose himself through autoteleological action. Man is faced with the choice of how to love each person in accordance with the disclosure that he has given to each relationship. Man is free to disclose his interior “I” to whomever he chooses through an act of self-gift, but these relationships will then constitute him as a person because of his relationality. In willing the other’s good in the *communio personarum*, man becomes formed and revealed through the “I-thou” relationship. Only in mutual reciprocity which bears fruit to the mutual “we-ness” between persons does man find himself in a true communion of persons. “Love is always a mutual relationship between persons. This relationship in turn is based on particular attitudes to the good, adopted by each of them individually and by both jointly.”⁴⁵ The love within the *communio personarum* is directed through man’s autoteleology as he incorporates the good and his disposition for the good within himself to then build up the good of the *communio*.

It is within this *communio personarum* that the human person can participate, by analogy, in the *ad intra* life of the Trinity. “God imprints on humanity the mystery of that communion which is the essence of his interior life. Man is drawn up into the mystery of God by the fact that his freedom is subjected to the law of Love, and love creates interpersonal communion.”⁴⁶ The freedom contained in man, though his autoteleology, self-mastery, and self-governance exist all for the sake of love and thereby shows man as a creature who has been created in *Imago Dei*. To examine the love that exists between the divine persons, the reader must observe the levels of love that Wojtyła describes in his book *Love and Responsibility*. Wojtyła interprets the highest love as can be seen in the *communio personarum* or the *ad intra* life of the Trinity as “love as goodwill.” This analysis of love shows what is lacking in the other two notions of love: *amor complacentia* (love as attraction) and *amor concupiscentia* (love as desire). The lower levels of love lack the notion of *disinterested* self-gift. Disinterested love is demanded by the ontological nature of man who is built for self-gifted relation which in turn builds the *communio personarum*. *Amor benevolentiae* overcomes the superficialities of self-interested love which is observed in love of desire or attraction.

Love as desire is not the whole essence of love between persons. It is not enough to long for a person as a good for oneself, one must also, and above all, long for that

⁴⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 73.

⁴⁶ John Paul II, “A Meditation on Givenness,” 875.

person's good. This uncompromisingly altruistic orientation of the will and feelings is called in the language of St Thomas *amor benevolentiae* [...] Love as goodwill, *amor benevolentiae*, is therefore love in a more unconditional sense than love-desire. It is the purest form of love.⁴⁷

Rather, "love of goodwill" shows the inner capacity of man who gives his will over to the other as a sincere act of self, for their own sake. *Amor benevolentiae* requires the lover to have previously matured in self-possession to make a proper act of love of goodwill. To will the good of the other signifies that there is a disinterested gift, not interested in one's self-interest, but turned fully towards the "thou." To fully turn towards the "thou" is to confront the fear that there may never be a shared "we." This is the cost of love. However, the disinterested self-gift of *amor benevolentiae* shows the heightened relationship of disclosure between persons that can cause fear. This very real fear is present either in deep friendship, family, or one's spouse that constitutes a *communio personarum* and stems from the fact that the beloved might reject the gift of self enacted by the lover. However, fear is dispelled through the maturity of love as the persons concretize the two "I's" into a shared "we," and man in turn fulfills his nature as a *person*.

Wojtyła was aware of the human person's fear to love; he confronted this disparity at the beginning of his papacy when he stepped out onto the loggia of St. Peter's Basilica and exhorted the world to "Do not be Afraid!" Man in his fear to love questions how to give the gift of his freedom. Thankfully, Wojtyła reminds us that "freedom exists for the sake of love! If freedom is not used, is not taken advantage of by love, it becomes a negative thing and gives human beings a feeling of emptiness and unfulfillment."⁴⁸ As man matures in his gift of self through relationships of *communio*, the human person fulfills his task to become *someone* who is capable of relationships of love. By entering this "space" of disinterested love, man can mature within love that "transforms fear."

*We enter this space,
we depart from that beginning,
and so we slowly return:*

⁴⁷ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 83.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

*for maturity is within love,
transforming fear.*⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Wojtyła, “Myśli o Dojrzewaniu – Thoughts on Maturing,” 225.

Bibliography

- Acosta, M. & Reimers, A.J., *Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2016).
- Delaney, D.H., *Viri Dignitatem: Personhood, Masculinity and Fatherhood in the Thought of John Paul II*, (Steubenville, Emmaus Academic, 2023).
- Flood, A.T., *The Metaphysical Foundations of Love: Aquinas on Participation, Unity, and Union*, (Washington, D.C., CUA Press, 2018).
- Havel, V., "The Power of the Powerless," trans. by Paul Wilson, in *The Power of the Powerless: Citizens Against the State in Central-Eastern Europe*, ed. J. Keane, (Armonk, NY, Sharpe, 1985).
- Hołub, G., *Understanding the Person: Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, (Berlin, Peter Lang, 2021).
- Ignatik, G., *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love*, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2021).
- John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, trans. by M. Waldstein (Boston, Pauline Books & Media, 2006).
- John Paul II, "A Meditation on Givenness," *Communio: International Catholic Review* Vol. 41, No. 4 (2014), 871–883.
- Petri, Th., *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2016).
- Rickert, K., "Wojtyła's Personalistic Norm: A Thomistic Analysis," *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 7, No. 3 (2009), 653–678.
- Second Vatican Council. Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium et Spes*. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 7 December 1965.
- Sherwin, M., "Freedom and the Fearful Symmetry: Theological Reflections on Freedom's Relationship to Truth," *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 15, No. 4 (2017), 1085–1100.
- Sherwin, M., "John Paul's Theology of Truth and Freedom: A Dissident Phenomenology in a Thomistic Anthropology," *Nova et Vetera* Vol. 3, No. 3 (2005), 543–568.
- Shivanandan, M., *Crossing the Threshold of Love: A New Vision of Marriage in the Light of John Paul II's Anthropology*, (Washington D.C., CUA Press, 2002).
- Stachewicz, K., "Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy of Freedom," *Teologia i Moralność* Vol. 15, No. 1 (2020), 151-162.

Thomas Aquinas St., *Summa Theologiae*.

Weigel, G., *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York, Cliff Street Books, 2001).

Wojtyła, K., *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by H.T. Willetts (New York, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1981).

Wojtyła, K., *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington, DC, CUA Press, 2021).

Wojtyła, K., *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. by Th. Sandok, (New York, NY, Peter Lang, 2008).

Wojtyła, K., “Myśli o Dojrzewaniu – Thoughts on Maturing,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Poezje – Poems*, (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2011), 224-227.

Wojtyła, K., *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, trans. by K.W. Kemp and Z. Maślanka Kieroń (South Bend: St. Augustin Press, 2011).

**“Things, Persons, and God” and the full meaning of “Auto-teleology” according to
Karol Wojtyła**

John P. Hittinger¹, Thomas C. Schaefergen, OP²

Abstract

A careful examination of Wojtyła’s concept of transcendence of the person in act through auto-teleology; we lay out Wojtyła’s derivation of the notion auto-teleology from self-determination and its connection to various works of Wojtyła such as *Person and Act* and *Man in the Field of Responsibility*; in addition we carefully explore Wojtyła’s various meanings of the term “telos” as “kres” and “cel” and discuss various translations such as limit/aim and terminus/end; we then analyze a neglected passage from a revised manuscript concerning the fulfillment of transcendence in the attitudes and relationships of the human person to things, people, and God.

Keywords

Karol Wojtyła, auto-teleology, telos, transcendence, person and act, God

¹ John P. Hittinger – University of St. Thomas, Houston (TX), USA
e-mail: hittjp@stthom.edu • ORCID: 0000-0003-0660-9653

² Thomas Schaefergen – University of St. Thomas, Houston (TX), USA
e-mail: schaefercm@stthom.edu

The year 1976 was a milestone for Karol Wojtyła's philosophical development and engagement with various sectors of the cultural world.³ He met with those working on the project to translate his major philosophical work, *Osoba i czyn*, into English, he presented a series of theological meditations for a retreat to Pope Paul VI at the Vatican, and he made an extended visit to the United States as the leader of delegation of the Polish Episcopate for the 41st Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia. He traveled across the United States and parts of Canada to visit members of Polonia, often giving significant speeches about cultural, historical, and spiritual topics. But perhaps most significantly, he received invitations from both Harvard University and the Catholic University of America to make major academic presentations.⁴ Invitations to these twin centers of American academia, one secular and the other Catholic, was a clear recognition of the importance of his work for the Church, his witness for freedom and human dignity in communist dominated Poland, and his intellectual prowess as a philosopher and theologian. By all accounts his efforts were quite successful. That being said, and while Harvard professor and friend, George H. Williams, acknowledges his "great charisma, clarity and force" as a preacher, he also expressed his worries that Wojtyła's philosophical work was too bogged down by phenomenological technicality. Nevertheless, his talk at Harvard, entitled "Participation and Alienation," was very well received and eventually published in the *Review of Metaphysics* – a highly reputable and prestigious journal of philosophy – a few years later.

The talk he presented at the Catholic University of America is entitled "The Transcendence of the Person in the Act and the Auto-teleology of Man."⁵ Perhaps also wishing to avoid tamping

³ A. Boniecki, *The making of the Pope of the Millennium: Kalendarium of life of Karol Wojtyła*, (Stockbridge, Mass.: Marian Press, 2000), 713-718; G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1999), 223-225.

⁴ G.H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1981), 200-202. See his own reminiscences of his visit to Harvard in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, Vol. 45 (1976), 380f.

⁵ He had submitted this article for the 6th International Philosophical Conference, June 1976. "The Transcendence of the Person in Action and Man's Auto-teleology." Published in *The Teleologies in Husserlian Phenomenology*, ed. A.-T. Tymieniecka, Vol. 9 of *Analecta Husserliana*, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), 203-212. A variation of the talk was delivered in English by Cardinal Wojtyła at the Catholic University of America, July 29, 1976. Author Hittinger retained a copy of the manuscript from the reception on the day it was delivered. We shall designate the first published version as "version A." The version presented at CUA we shall designate as "version B." It was subsequently published in Polish as "Transcendencja osoby w czynie a autoteleologia człowieka," in *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000) and this is version A. It has been recently retranslated and published as K. Wojtyła, "The Transcendence of the Person in the Act and the Auto-teleology of Man," in *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik, (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Univ. of America Press, 2021), 555-566. Ignatik uses version B, from a Polish manuscript in the Kraków archives. No date is provided for the archival version

down audience attendance, host Jude Dougherty, Dean of the School of Philosophy, changed the title to “The Use and Abuse of Freedom.” The event was well attended as was a reception held prior to the talk. The faculty and graduate students were deeply impressed by his efforts to overcome the dualism of Kant and his use of “auto-teleology” to restore a sense of teleology to anthropology and ethics.⁶ Wojtyła first submitted a variation of this paper to the 6th International Philosophical Conference, June 1976 in France. And yet, sometime between May and July 1976, Wojtyła made a significant change to the ending of the paper. Curiously the first version was later published both in English and Polish. The revised, or we would suggest, the “enhanced” version, which is to the primary focus of this study, was not published until 2021 with a new translation by Grzegorz Ignatik.⁷ Thankfully Jude Dougherty, Dean of the School of Philosophy at CUA retained the manuscript of it, which he freely shared with faculty and graduate students.

We can appreciate that Karol Wojtyła crafted two versions of the talk. Again, as George H. Williams explains, Wojtyła was “an adroitly polemical man,”⁸ although we would prefer the term “rhetorical.” Thus, for a secular academic meeting of phenomenologists, he may see fit to downplay his references to God, perhaps as advised by Professor Tymieniecka. At the Catholic University of America, on the other hand, he could give his wholistic vision. We would argue that the neglected passages from this enhanced version of the talk by Karol Wojtyła hold the promise of providing us with a glimpse at his comprehensive philosophical account of human responsibility in the world, the tasks of personal growth, and the range of his philosophical inquiry. Here, and to this end, we will proceed as follows: first, we will lay out Wojtyła’s concept of auto-teleology; second, we shall examine Wojtyła’s uses for understanding the transcendence of the human person in auto-teleology; third, and finally, we shall examine the passages added to the original paper concerning things, people, and God.

B. Ignatik reports that version A was reworked by Wojtyła to derive version B. We could call version B the “enhanced version”; but there is also a reason to see version A as the cramped version leading the reader to suspect that version A is that result of self-limitation, excluding references to God, perhaps upon the advice of Professor Tymieniecka.

⁶ The author, a graduate student in philosophy at CUA, was present at the reception and talk on July 29, 1976.

⁷ As Ignatik reports, the translation in volume 1 of the English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła is based on the most recent edition of the article, the English translation of which was delivered by Wojtyła at the CUA in July 1976. The original typescripts (identified here by their archive cataloguing numbers): AKKW CII 11/119b – an earlier version of the article (which was published in the Lublin edition) with the author’s correction; AKKW CII 11/119c – the final version of the article (this version was used for the English translation, both mine and in CII 11/120); AKKW CII 11/120 – the English text of the article delivered by Wojtyła at the CUA, containing his own accent marks etc.

⁸ Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II*, 202.

On the idea of Auto-Teleology

Wojtyła's self-declared purpose for this presentation on "The transcendence of the Person in Act and Man's Auto-teleology" is that of deepening certain themes of *Person and Act* on the transcendence of the human person and making more explicit the concept of auto-teleology; he also wishes to provide a critique of the Kantian exclusion of teleology from ethics through a non-utilitarian account of teleology, which he calls "auto-teleology."

The concept of auto-teleology, the germ of which is found in *Person and Act*, took on an increasingly important stature in the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła. In his last work before becoming Pope, Wojtyła sketched a series of essays in the hope of making it a book. Entitled "Man in the Field of Responsibility" this book gives the clearest explanation of Wojtyła's project to overcome the Kantian proscription of teleology and the stale philosophic deadlock between deontology and utilitarianism.⁹ Kant assumed that teleology is simply a form of utilitarianism and entails always a motive of selfishness. The achievement of the moral good, to act by the personalistic norm for example, "corresponds to his autorealization [or self-realization] and serves the fulfillment of the person. In this case, morality does not clash with teleology; on the contrary – it as it were grows on its foundation."¹⁰ Wojtyła agrees with Kant that the moral norm has a certain primacy in the evaluation of human action; so he notes, that the "norm determines the end (and perhaps within the limits one must accept in ethics the position of Kant); however, the primacy of the norm grows at the same time on the basis of teleology, and above all the auto-teleology of man."¹¹ Wojtyła uses the term auto-teleology to indicate that within moral action there is a sense in which the agent both intends the rectitude of the action, but also the subjective dignity of the agent himself. In the subsequent paragraphs Wojtyła puts the idea simply and directly: "This dynamism of duty (deontic dynamism) draws its strength from the elementary axiology of the person's being. 'I want to be good—I do not want to be evil' – that is not only an ordinary intentional act of the will, but it is the very reason for the being of the person in the axiological order."¹² In commenting upon this

⁹ K. Wojtyła, *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, trans. K.W. Kemp, & Z. Maślanka Kieroń, (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2011).

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 44.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 45. See *Karol Wojtyła*, ed. G. Hołub et al., (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ignatianum, 2019), 96-100.

passage, Hořub explains that the “person’s auto-teleology is based on the teleology of nature, but the truth about the good introduces a new dynamism, which is the dynamism of moral obligation, personal duty, the duty of conscience, the dynamism of which is not found at the level of nature itself.”¹³ So, indeed, in the paper “The Transcendence of the Person in Act and Man’s Auto-teleology,” Wojtyła admits that he seeks to develop a teleological ethics continuing the work of Aristotle and Aquinas, but to do so in light of a validity of the Kantian critique of teleological ethics and using the new method of phenomenology to better and more deeply identify and articulate the “cognitive manifestation of man’s transcendence in the ethical dimension of his action and existence.”¹⁴ Wojtyła credits phenomenology more so than Kant for “perceiving anew and for expressing in philosophical categories the transcendence of the human person.” Wojtyła references, above all, the work of Scheler, and the influences of Husserl and Nietzsche. Of course, there are a variety of aspects to transcendence such as attraction to values, benevolence, creativity, and accountability to truth. Wojtyła explains that his talk is designed to bring to bear this new phenomenological methodology on “perennial topics” in anthropology and ethics. The notion of auto-teleology is precisely the notion he brings forward to renew and deepen our understanding of human freedom and transcendence.

We discover auto-teleology through an analysis of self-determination. Wojtyła claims that we need this new interpretation through the notion of auto-teleology in order to better understand human transcendence because, the “traditional interpretation” of human acts, though true, was insufficient. It only focused on the will as the power of striving for the end, a good or a value (“a spontaneous turning toward value”), without enough emphasis upon necessity of choice.¹⁵ Values are the “reason” or rationale of volitions. As such, values are the *ends* for which we choose and volition presupposes the prior cognition of values. However, freedom of will is actualized and accomplished by the need for “choosing among values and deciding.” Because values are various and diverse in content and quality there is a necessity to choose. This issue was neglected by Scheler, who, therefore, did not understand will.¹⁶ The will is not itself the intentionality of volitions: “The dynamic essence of the act is not constituted by volition alone [...] but by self-

¹³ Karol Wojtyła, 97.

¹⁴ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 556. Typescript 1976 translation is: “cognitive visualizing of man’s transcendence in the ethical dimension of his action and existence.”

¹⁵ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 558.

¹⁶ See K. Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Th. Sandok, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 3-23.

determination, connected with that turning [toward values] and engaging the personal subject in its own way.”¹⁷ Therefore, the “proper” *Voluntarium* (re: willing, an act of voluntary nature) is “not contained in the very experience of willing something but in the experience of determining one’s self.”¹⁸

In reference to this experience of self-determination Wojtyła develops the concept of auto-teleology:

The term “self-determination” indicates both that the personal subject, or the personal I is determining and acting, but also, that this personal ‘I’ is determining about himself as a subject. In this dynamic relation this ‘I’ becomes an object for itself, an object of will considered as the faculty of the determining subject. The nucleus as it were of man’s auto-teleology is contained in this relation.¹⁹

Wojtyła thus far has come upon an experiential datum – that a decision must be made about competing values and goods. Yet, through the point of decision not only does one understand the aspect of personal freedom in the act of decision – it is mine and no one else’s – the agent also decides in who one is or who one will come to be: the personal agent in the moral act “through willing any kind of values, through their definite choice, both determines himself and in some fashion wills and chooses himself.”²⁰ The agent becomes somebody, a responsible person with the immanent and persisting reality of his or her character. Every human action has both a transitive and intransitive dimension to it and it is the intransitive shaping of the agent that is the point of auto-teleology. For the action in a way does not cease, but persists in the character of the agent. As John Finnis wisely observes, in Wojtyła’s work a very distinctive theme is “the persistence of actions” as this theme is found in *Person and Act* as well as his encyclical on Work, *Laborem exercens*.²¹ Finnis cites this passage:

¹⁷ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 559. In the note to this claim, Wojtyła states that “My study *Person and Act* is built precisely upon this conviction,” note 9.

¹⁸ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 559.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ J. Finnis, “John Paul II and the Foundation of Ethics,” in *Thinking with St. John Paul II: JP2 Lectures 2020/2021*, ed. D. Karłowicz, (Rome-Warsaw: Angelicum University Press/Fundacja Świętego Mikołaja, 2021), 30.

In the inner dimension of the person, human action is at once both transitory and relatively long lasting [...] human actions do not vanish without a trace: they leave their moral value, which constitutes an objective reality intrinsically cohesive with the person, and this a reality profoundly subjective.²²

Finnis shows how this notion is brought forward into the notion of the “subjective dimension of work” in *Laborem exercens*.²³ The fundamental idea of auto-teleology highlights the reality of this interior perfection of the person achieved in both work and action. In each choice we choose ourselves as a certain somebody in accomplishment or aspiration. How to explain the way in which this self-perfection is a proper end of action without tipping into subjectivism or solipsism is a major burden of this essay. Auto-teleology presupposes teleology, for all personal choices turn on the values and goods chosen. In an important clarification Wojtyła explains that:

Man’s auto-teleology does not signify in the first place a closing up within himself, but a living contact with the whole reality and a dynamic exchange [...] with the world of values, hierarchized and differentiated within itself. The auto-teleology of man indicates only that this contact and this life-giving exchange are accomplished on the level and by the standards of the personal “I”; in him it finds its starting point and its goal; to a certain extent it begins with him and is ultimately founded in him; it is from him that it takes shape, and also shapes him.²⁴

The notion of auto-teleology does indeed posit the agent as an end, but we must understand this end as a “limit” constituting the shape of his life as whole. Wojtyła says: “The analysis of self-determination indicates that the voluntarium, as the interior dynamic structure of the person who constitutes the act, finds its proper ‘limit’ not in the values toward which the human willing is

²² Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, trans. A. Potocki, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979), 151.

²³ Finnis, “John Paul II and the Foundation of Ethics,” 23-35. See John Paul II, *Laborem exercens*, § 4, 6, 9.

²⁴ This passage is from the CUA typescript (1976), 7; it is similarly found in the version published in *The Teleologies in Husserlian Phenomenology* (1979), 206-207. Ignatik translates the last sentence as follows: “In it they find their point of departure and arrival. They in a sense, originate from it and are ultimately grounded in it, they draw their form from it and confer a form on it.” (Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 560). We chose this version because of the issue of the meaning and translation of end (“kres”) and the meaning and translation of shape (“kształt”) to which we will now turn.

tending intentionally, but in the subjective ‘I’ himself.”²⁵ The notion of end, properly understood as limit (*kres*), keeps open the horizon of personal transcendence and dispels any form of solipsistic interpretation of the notion of auto-teleology and the emphasis upon the subjective meaning of human work and the moral act. Wojtyła at the very outset seeks to clarify the meaning of “telos” in order to clarify in what way the self is an “end” in the phrase “auto-teleology.”

On the Teleology of the Limit (“Kres”)

At the outset of his lecture Wojtyła refers to Aristotle’s philosophy as the source of discussions of teleology in ethics and anthropology and makes an important distinction between the two aspects of teleology. The Greek word *τέλος* (end) as used by Aristotle is the root of the word “teleology” and the origin of its application to understanding human action. Here, in a parenthetical note, he says, “*nota bene*, *τέλος* means not only ‘end’ or ‘aim’ but also ‘terminus’”²⁶ Ignatik has rendered the Polish words *cel* as “end” and *kres* as “terminus.”²⁷ Although Wojtyła seems to think the meaning is obvious once the distinction has been pointed out, this is not altogether clear to the reader, at least in the English translation. Consider how “terminus” may refer to the end of the trajectory of a train, for example, while “end” can equally mean the endpoint of a movement—“end of the trip”. How, then, would they differ? To complicate the matter, in a prior publication of the same lecture, *cel* becomes “aim” and *kres* becomes “limit.” Now, here there is a clearer difference between the two words: an aim is something toward which one’s actions are directed (e.g., a target, a goal), whereas a limit imposes a boundary or restriction. We may call this the “aim/limit translation,” and the other the “end/terminus translation.”

Recall in the previous section we examined the critical text introducing auto-teleology in which Wojtyła returns to the distinction and makes the case that the limit/terminus is none other than man himself:

²⁵ CUA typescript, 7 and *The Teleologies in Husserlian Phenomenology*, 206. Ignatik translation: the voluntarium “finds its proper ‘terminus’ not in the values to which human volitions are intentionally turned, but in the subjective ‘I’ itself.” (Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 559)

²⁶ Such translation is used in version B, the CUA typescript, 1, and the version published in 1979, 203.

²⁷ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 555.

We have stated above that *τέλος* means not only ‘end’ or ‘aim’ but the ‘limit.’ The analysis of self-determination indicates that *voluntarium* as the interior dynamic structure of the person who constitutes the act, finds its proper ‘limit’ not in the values to which human willing is tending intentionally, but in the subjective ‘I’ himself, who through willing any kinds of values, through their definitive choice, both determines himself and in some fashion wills and chooses his own self.²⁸

The agent in choosing himself in the act in some way is the “limit” or the “terminus” of the action. But this needs clarification. Here Wojtyła invokes the two meanings of *τέλος* and claims that the person’s act of willing has its terminus, limit or conclusion in the person himself, rather than anything outside him which he wills. In the next paragraph, Wojtyła clarifies this idea insofar as the agent wills both the good and himself when he says that “man does not become the terminus/limit of self-determination [...] independently from all values to which these choices and volitions turn.” A few paragraphs later he writes, “Man is an end for himself inasmuch as [...] his acts [...] find in man himself their terminus/limit.”²⁹ Wojtyła seems clear, at least here: *man himself* is the terminus referred to in the auto-teleology of the terminus, but the agent’s relation to truth as an end is more like a limit, since it would be awkward to say that man is his own limit or restriction on himself.

A further doubt about the rendering of *telos* (“kres”) as terminus arises when Wojtyła begins to discuss man’s relation to truth. He says: “The relation to truth contains in some way the ‘terminus’ of the personal structure of self-determination,”³⁰ or alternately, “in the reference to truth there is to a certain extent the ‘limit’ of the personal structure of self-determination.”³¹ Similarly, in the paper’s conclusion he writes: “This terminus is the truth of human acts. Conscience constitutes the fundamental condition of self-fulfillment,”³² compared to “It is this limit which is the truth of human acts. Conscience is fundamental condition of the fulfillment of

²⁸ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 1979, 206; the Ignatik translation: “We said already that *τέλος* denotes not only ‘end’ but also ‘terminus.’ The analysis of self-determination indicates that *voluntarium* as the interior dynamic structure of the person, constituting the act, finds its proper ‘terminus’ not in the values to which human volitions are intentionally turned, but in the subjective ‘I’ itself, which both determines himself and in a certain way wills and chooses himself through the volition of any values, through the definite choice of them.” (Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 559-560)

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 562.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ Version published in 1979, 208.

³² Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 565.

self.”³³ From these statements, one might be led to conclude that Wojtyła considers the auto-teleology of the terminus to refer to the truth serving as a kind of limit or restriction on man’s actions. Such an interpretation would yield “limit” as the better translation. But as we shall see, limit, is a more specific aspect or meaning of “terminus.”³⁴

The Polish word *kres*, translated as “terminus” by Ignatik, can mean either a limit or a termination.³⁵ Polish usage seems to yield the same confusion already noted: either concept, limit or terminus, is a valid acceptance of *kres*. In some way, both dimensions are required; and yet Karol Petryszak advised me that “limit” is the best translation.³⁶ There is also the reason to adopt the first version of the translation as limit/aim rather terminus/end because this was after the translation that Cardinal Wojtyła took out on the road through the English speaking world and to which he agreed to for publication. We would propose that we think above all that this *limit* is not primarily a restriction as such but a culminating point of the agent’s moral endeavor: to fulfill the task of being a good person. Further, it is like “endurance” – it is a limit we may keep testing and expanding. Indeed, Wojtyła will often say in this text and others that “man surpasses himself” or “rises above himself” by which he means precisely the human person often surpasses what he or

³³ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 1979, 210-211.

³⁴ Blaise Ringor identifies the auto-teleology of the limit (“kres”) with a kind of limiting of human actions by conscience, in relation to moral truth. For Ringor, the auto-teleology of the end is man’s aiming to fulfill himself. Ringor bases his work on the prior translation, using the limit/aim distinction. Thus, as noted above, for the sake of consistency with one translation, when I say “end” here I mean what Ringor calls “aim” and “terminus” as what Ringor calls “limit”. See: B. Ringor, “The Necessity of Auto-Teleology in Achieving Moral Life according to Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy,” *Lectio* Vol. 1, No. 1 (August 2021): 88. On the other hand, Pollini, in keeping with Wojtyła’s earlier statements in the text, concludes that the terminus is the “personal-I’ himself,” although Pollini does refer later to a “boundary” which man reaches in relation to truth. Pollini, “The Communion Rhythm of Life: The Personalistic Meditation on Human Life According to Karol Wojtyła,” *Synesis* Vol. 6, No. 2 (2014): 127-128. This ambiguity in the text and in the scholarship, specifically about Wojtyła’s use of the word terminus (*kres*) in his twofold distinction of auto-teleology, necessitates not only an investigation of the text, but especially of Wojtyła’s philosophical foundations in order to establish more clearly what he means and so better understand his concepts of auto-teleology and self- fulfillment.

³⁵ “Kres” could mean either end or finish, like “koniec” or limit, like “granica.” See *Oxford-PWN Polish-English Dictionary*, chief editor J. Linde-Usiekiewicz, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 404.

³⁶ Here is Petryszak’s treatment of the key words in translation (paraphrased): The best translations of these key terms are as follows: *telos* = aim; *kres* = limit. I think this because “kres” has more literary than scientific or philosophical connotations. It is normal to use words for Wojtyła in his lectures in that way. But we have to remember that *telos* and auto-teleology (and “kres” in their context) have roots in the Aristotelian and Thomistic tradition, so (for me) “terminus” (which, on the other hand, has strong and quite different connotations because of its Latin etymology – which Wojtyła, we can be sure, knew) is quite strange and imprecise. Also, “kres” in its very first and fundamental meaning is – as, you pointed out – a culminating or defining end. But in other (very popular) uses like: *kres możliwości*, *kres sił*, *kres wytrzymałości*, its meaning emphasizes the depletion of some resources which can be recovered (like “kres siły” – I have no power anymore, but I will have new power). Also “kres” in this meaning does not determine one direction of action (i.e., “jestem u kresu wytrzymałości” – it does not mean you have to use all your “endurance”/“power”; you just fill where your limit is, but you can move back or just stop.

she may think is the “limit” especially in light of the action of divine grace.³⁷ There are allusions to Pascal in the *Person and Act*: Wojtyła speaks of the transcendence of the person in the action as a “transgressing of oneself in truth” or an “out growing” of oneself or a surpassing of oneself. There is here a distinct echo of the words of Pascal: “Man infinitely surpasses man.”³⁸ The translation of “kres” by limit better captures this dimension of surpassing a limit.

However, we should also explore Wojtyła’s specific references to Aristotle and not ignore the clear influence of Thomas Aquinas, the Aristotelian, on Wojtyła’s understanding of teleology. Wojtyła wrote his first doctoral thesis under the direction of the Thomist, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, and he references approvingly the thought of Thomas Aquinas in his main philosophical work *Person and Act*. He also stated that Aquinas’s is the only adequate ethics and, as Pope, he named Aquinas the “Doctor of Humanity.”³⁹ Accordingly, and returning to the text that is the focus of this study, Wojtyła does make a subtle but clear connection to Aquinas in the very next paragraph after the distinction of terminus/end: “It seems that it is impossible to question the rightness of the principle *omnis agens* (and not only *omne agens*), *agit propter finem*.”⁴⁰ Though he does not cite Aquinas here, he has repeated a basic scholastic axiom which is supported in various texts of Aquinas, especially at the very beginning of the *Prima secundae* wherein he discusses human acts and argues that every man acts for an end.⁴¹ On these grounds, it seems reasonable to consider that a proper understanding of Wojtyła’s distinction will come from reading him in the light of both Aristotle and Aquinas.

First, in reference to Aristotle, Wojtyła cites Aristotle’s *Physics* II and *Metaphysics* I and V in his footnote on the distinction between terminus and end.⁴² In each of the cited texts Aristotle explains the four kinds of causes: formal, efficient, material, and final. Wojtyła’s lecture refers to this last kind of cause, final or the end, which is “that for the sake of which a thing is done.”

³⁷ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 563, 565.

³⁸ Pascal, *Pensées*, ed. Chevalier, 438; ed. Brunschvicg 434. Rocco Buttiglione notes that Wojtyła account of human transcendence and contingency is similar to Pascal. R. Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, (Grand Rapids: Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997), 61, 74, 186.

³⁹ J. Hittinger, “Why John Paul II named St Thomas Aquinas the ‘Doctor Humanitatis,’” in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, ed. J.P. Hittinger & D.C. Wagner, (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), xiv-xx.

⁴⁰ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 555.

⁴¹ “Wherefore it is necessary that all human actions be for an end.” “Unde oportet quod omnes actiones humanae propter finem sint.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae I-II*, q. 1, a. 1, co. Aquinas also argues that all things (*omne*), not just human persons, act for an end: “omne agens agit propter finem, et intendit bonum quod est finis.” Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis* 2, d. 1, q. 1, a. 1, ad 2. Also Aquinas, *De principiis naturae*, especially chaps 3-5.

⁴² He cites: Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983a24–33; *Physics* 2.3.195a; *Metaphysics* 5.2.1013a–1014a. Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 555, footnote 3.

Unfortunately, Wojtyła's precise distinction of end and terminus cannot be found in any of these texts. However, reading Aquinas's commentary on these key Aristotelian texts will prove more fruitful. In his commentary on Book V of the *Metaphysics* Aquinas uses both Latin words *terminus* and *finis* to refer to the end: "For the efficient cause and the final cause [*finis*] correspond to each other, because the efficient cause is the principle of movement, while the end [*finis*] is the stopping point [*terminus*] of movement."⁴³ Here, Aquinas refers to the movement of something toward some goal: *finis* as the principle and *terminus* as the endpoint. Throughout this part of his commentary, Aquinas uses the Latin word *terminus* to refer to an endpoint of some movement or change, whether it be the starting or the stopping point of that movement.⁴⁴

Looking in Aquinas's commentary beyond his treatment of the section of the *Metaphysics* which Wojtyła cites, one finds Aquinas explaining how Aristotle defines a terminus: it is "the last of any thing, so that nothing of what was first limited lies outside the *terminus* and all that pertains to it is contained in it."⁴⁵ He then goes on to give four senses of a terminus in regard to the perfection of things. For our purposes, two will prove useful (the second and third):

- (a) one extreme of movement or action is called a terminus, namely **that toward which there is movement**, and not that from which: just as the terminus of generation is being, and not non-being;⁴⁶
- (b) that **for the sake of which** something comes to be; for this is the last of an intention, just as the terminus in the second way was said to be the last of movement or of operation.⁴⁷

⁴³ "Nam efficiens et finis sibi correspondent invicem, quia efficiens est principium motus, finis autem terminus." Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae* V, lectio 2, n. 13. It should be remembered that Aquinas is reading Aristotle in a Latin translation, and so questions of whether Aristotle uses *τέλος* or some other term are less relevant than which term Aquinas uses in his own commentary. What we mean to say is that when discussing Aristotle's teleology, Aquinas uses the words "terminus" (often translated as either end or terminus) and "finis" (often translated as end or goal).

⁴⁴ For example, in lectio 1, n. 2: "[...] just as the principle of movement is called the terminus from which." "[...] sicut principium motus dicitur terminus a quo." and later in n. 5: "a man does not always begin to move from the beginning of the road, but sometimes from the middle, or at whatever point from which it is opportune for him to begin." "non semper incipit homo moveri a principio viae, sed quandoque a medio, vel a quocumque termino, unde est ei opportunum primo moveri," *Ibid.*, lectio 1, n. 2 & n. 5.

⁴⁵ "Primo ponit rationem termini; dicens, quod terminus dicitur quod est ultimum cuiuslibet rei, ita quod nihil de primo terminato est extra ipsum terminum; et omnia quae sunt eius, continentur intra ipsum." *Ibid.*, lectio 19, n. 1. "[...] secundum quod unum extremum motus vel actionis dicitur terminus, hoc scilicet ad quod est motus, et non a quo: non a quo: sicut terminus generationis est esse, non autem non esse." *Ibid.*, n. 3.

⁴⁶ "[...] secundum quod unum extremum motus vel actionis dicitur terminus, hoc scilicet ad quod est motus, et non a quo: non a quo: sicut **terminus generationis est esse**, non autem non esse." *Ibid.*, n. 3.

⁴⁷ "[...] dicitur terminus, cuius causa fit aliquid; hoc enim est ultimum intentionis, sicut terminus secundo modo dictus est ultimum motus vel operationis." *Ibid.*, n. 4.

This account by Aquinas does very much seem to approach Wojtyła's twofold distinction. In defining terminus following Aristotle, Aquinas distinguishes "that toward which there is movement" from "that for the sake of which" the action is performed. On this reading, if man is his own τέλος, as auto-teleology asserts, then he is both (a) the terminus—that toward which he moves—and (b) the end—that for the sake of which he brings something into being.

A look into Aquinas's account of human action seems to strengthen this reading. At the very beginning of the *Prima secundae*, while arguing that human acts receive their species from their end, he writes:

[A]cts are called human insofar as they proceed from a deliberate will. But the object of the will is the good and the end. And thus it is manifest that the principle of human acts, insofar as they are human, **is the end**. And similarly **it is their terminus**, for that at which a human act terminates is that which the will intends as an end.⁴⁸

Here, like in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Aquinas distinguishes two "ends" of human acts: the end (*finis*) as that for the sake of which an act is done, and the terminus (*terminus*) as that at which the act terminates. Given that the end is the principle in human operations,²⁹ Aquinas has made the very distinction that Wojtyła seems to make: an end can be understood as either the *finis* or the *terminus* of a human act.³⁰ But behind both meanings is the deeper third meaning of *finis* according to William Wallace, OP.⁴⁹ The end is perfective, the realization of a higher degree of being. And this meaning gets us even closer to Wojtyła's account of the significance of auto-teleology and the transcendence of the human person. And we might add, it also returns us back to an understanding of end as "limit." The end and the terminus both build up the human agent as a good or a bad person. And action does so precisely because of the "moment of truth" and the nexus of personal conscience. But in a way, this meaning is already contained with the notion of end as terminative. Recall that Aquinas stated that end designates "the last of any thing, so that

⁴⁸ "[...] actus dicuntur humani, in quantum procedunt a voluntate deliberata. Obiectum autem voluntatis est bonum et finis. Et ideo manifestum est quod principium humanorum actuum, in quantum sunt humani, est finis. Et similiter est terminus eorumdem, nam id ad quod terminatur actus humanus, est id quod voluntas intendit tanquam finis." Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 1, a. 3, co.

⁴⁹ Wallace, however, notes not two but three meanings of end: both (1) terminative and (2) intentional as we have already noted in Aquinas, but also (3) perfective—as the realization of a higher degree of being. This third meaning of end assist our understanding of the fulfillment of the person in relation to objective truth. W. Wallace, *The Modeling of Nature: Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis*, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1996), 15-17.

nothing of what was first limited lies outside the *terminus* and all that pertains to it is contained in it.⁵⁰ What is generated or caused by human efficiency is “more being” if the act is morally good and a deficit of being if the act is bad. The limit therefore does not primarily indicate a restriction or an exclusion but rather a plenitude and a perfection. Limit is a stopping point or termination. In Aristotle, Thomas, and Wojtyła, it is clear that this means (i) the culmination stopping point of an act; (ii) the perfection of the act (and the being), as when the act is good and the functional completion of the agent in virtuous agency.

As we shall see Wojtyła will often use the term shape, as in the shape of transcendence. In some crucial passages of *Person and Act* Wojtyła uses the term “shape,” such as follows: “This shape (*kształt*), the shape of transcendence, is in concrete that of human existence: it is the shape of human life itself. Man as the person both lives and fulfills himself within the perspective of his transcendence. Is it not freedom, obligation, and responsibility which allows us to see that, not only truthfulness, but also the person’s surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting constitute the real and concrete fabric (*osnowa*) of the personal life of man?”⁵¹ This so-called “shape of transcendence” is the container or embodiment of human perfection; the limit is not simply a restrictive boundary but the space for fulfillment through the human realization of the truth of the good. This is moment of truth that comes through the exercise of the judgment of conscience and serves as a limit or end of action. In this case the translation of *kres* as limit makes more sense.

In this case, limit refers to the boundary of a shape indicating its embodiment, fullness and expansiveness. In his *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Aquinas states that the first meaning of *terminus* is that of a “surface being the limit of a body,” indicating its “shape.”⁵² There is an analogous application of terms of quantity to the soul and spiritual values. When Wojtyła says that

⁵⁰ Aristotle, in *Poetics*, speaks about “action as the limit of tragedy” in the sense that the drama terminates in the consideration of an action, but more importantly that the plot must have a reasonable length of time and action – and that is the limit within which a drama is written. Limit means an end as a container. See 1450b29 wherein end as limit is defined and the surrounding text.

⁵¹ Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, 181. Ignatik translation: “This form, the form of transcendence, is the concrete form of man’s existence, indeed it is the form of his life.” Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 2021, 284. In this case the previous translation seems more accurate – Polish “kształt” is translated as “shape” because it is less sharply defined and it suggests the filling of the shape in a variety of ways, whereas form is more structured and defined.

⁵² This interpretation is confirmed by Aquinas’s *Commentary on the Metaphysics* as he outlines the various meanings of *terminus* “The first of these applies to any kind of continuous quantity insofar as the *terminus* of a continuous quantity, or of a thing having continuous quantity, is called a limit; for example, a point is called the limit of a line, and a surface the limit of a body, or also of a stone, which has quantity.” *Commentary on the Metaphysics*, Book V, lectio 19. “*primus est secundum quod in qualibet specie magnitudinis, finis magnitudinis, vel habentis magnitudinem, dicitur terminus; sicut, punctus dicitur terminus lineae, et superficies corporis, vel etiam lapidist habentis quantitatem.*”

we must not seek to have more but to be more he has in mind this self-development of interior personal existence. Auto-teleology requires a continual self-education to develop the person as such.⁵³ Wojtyła has insisted that man's self-fulfillment comes about in direct relation to his conformity to the true and the good. Thus, we can see all the more why Wojtyła is emphatic that his notion auto-teleology is not a closed loop resulting in a kind of solipsistic account of the human person. Instead, there must be something real and outside the person to which he relates and from which his acts derive their ability to be perfective of him. In the "professional" version of the paper he mentions things and people as those areas of human concern. But as he sat down to consider his full philosophical account that he would present to the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America he significantly changed the ending of the paper substituting three newly written paragraphs. He added three times the statement that the human agent must develop appropriate attitudes and relations to "things, people and God."⁵⁴ And, as if to speak over his shoulder to the professional handlers of the conferences of philosophy, he adds, "it is known that this view is under fire by the modern criticism of religion. It seems however that we cannot seek the grounds for explaining it primarily in this criticism, but in religious experience, which is simply one of man's fundamental and essential experiences."⁵⁵

Things, People and God

As we discussed at the outset, the conclusion of this talk exhibits a very curious development in the typescripts and manuscripts. It appears to be the case that Wojtyła was cautioned to leave out references to God which he then "restored" in his preparation for his later presentation. The conference paper does contain one reference to God and that is in quotation marks, conscience as "the voice of God,"⁵⁶ which is only "a manner of speaking," perhaps acceptable to anyone in the age of Tillich wherein God maybe posited as "ultimate concern." In the new six paragraph conclusion the references to God flood back in nine times. Most striking of all, Wojtyła thrice uses the phrase containing the triad "things, persons, and God." This phrasing "things, people, and God"

⁵³ See D. Radziechowski, "'Culture of the Person' and 'Culture of Works' According to Karol Wojtyła," *Logos i ethos* Vol. 56, No. 1 (2021): 87-100.

⁵⁴ Wojtyła, "Transcendence," 2021, 564-566.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 565. See A.A. Bello, *The Divine in Husserl and Other Explorations*, *Analecta Husserliana* XCVIII, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).

⁵⁶ Wojtyła, "Transcendence," 1979, 209.

has the ring of completeness to it, as if they thereby constitute the world of human experience and frame the existential situation of the human person. Indeed, Wojtyła will repeat the term *world*⁵⁷ as well in the revised manuscript, beginning with his revision of the ending of the previous section. The following is absent from the earlier manuscript, save the notion of the two teleologies:

In this way the whole existence of man in the dimension of the “world” is constantly accompanied, in a sense, by the auto-teleology of the terminus (limit) which conditions the auto-teleology of the end (aim). Through this auto-teleology the man-person, in a sense, constantly inscribes himself in the structure of the “world,” permeates it, so as to surpass it at the same time.⁵⁸

In this added text, Wojtyła provides an incisive summary of his keys ideas of the two aspects of auto-teleology of limit and aim; but he also introduces the notion of the world which man transcends through his conscience and vertical transcendence of moral judgment. Wojtyła now returns to the theme he introduced previously, viz., that “auto-teleology” is not a proposal for “a solipsistic closing up, as if he were an intransgressible, closed up monad,” but to the contrary it signifies that the human person must open towards values and “potentially all of them.”⁵⁹ We must note that previously he said that the person must maintain “living contact with the whole reality” and a dynamic exchange with the “world of values, hierarchized and differentiated within itself.”⁶⁰ Clearly, Wojtyła for both philosophical and theological reasons⁶¹ would envision that the “all” or the “whole” of reality includes God as a things and persons.

⁵⁷ We recall that the document of most interest to Cardinal Wojtyła, *Gaudium et spes, on the Church in the Modern World*, explains the term world as follows: “Therefore, the council focuses its attention on the world of men, the *whole human family along with the sum of those realities in the midst of which it lives; that world which is the theater of man’s history, and the heir of his energies, his tragedies and his triumphs*; that world which the Christian sees as created and sustained by its Maker’s love, fallen indeed into the bondage of sin, yet emancipated now by Christ, Who was crucified and rose again to break the strangle hold of personified evil, so that the world might be fashioned anew according to God’s design and reach its fulfillment.” (*Gaudium et spes*, §2 – emphasis added).

⁵⁸ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 563. The CUA manuscript uses the term “penetrate” rather than “permeate.”

⁵⁹ CUA manuscript, 11; Ignatik translates as follows: it “does not mean a solipsistic closing in the likeness of an impassable monad.” Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 563.

⁶⁰ CUA manuscript, 7; Ignatik: a “vital contact with all of reality” and a dynamic exchange with “the world of values diversified and hierarchized in itself.” Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 560.

⁶¹ Wojtyła does indeed state that the relationship emerges both from an “organic reflection on the Word of God and the philosophy of religion.” Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 565. Modern criticism of religion seeks to exclude God from the world but this goes contrary to a “fundamental and essential” experience of human beings.

With the restoration of the full set of relationships – to things, people, and God, Wojtyła briefly discusses each in turn. We could also note that the Polish term for relationship, “stosunek,” could also designate the attitude developed and cultivated by the human person towards things, people, and God.⁶² We could say that a relationship derives from a prior attitude toward things, people and God. In other words, not only the rightness or justice of the relationship to each but also the interior ethos is also at stake. John Paul II spoke about the priority of ethos over techne, indicating the importance of the interior attitude towards the world. Wojtyła’s use of the trilogy things, people and God, with the corresponding emphasis upon ethos, suggests that he may have been influenced by Romano Guardini. Guardini made masterful use of the concept of “things, people, and God” to approach questions about the meaning of the kingdom of God, in contrast with the kingdom or rule of things and people. Of particular interest, because of its affinities to Wojtyła’s account of the loss of a sense of God in modern secular society, is Guardini’s explanation how things and people readily come to shut out the concern for God. Similarly in his account of the beatitudes, marriage, virginity, and poverty we discover a great emphasis upon the cultivation of ethos and heart.⁶³ Wojtyła introduces this set of relationships in order to better understand the aims of the human person and the “auto-teleology of the aim” (end) precisely as “conditioned” by the auto-teleology of the limit. How are we to understand this “condition” or influence of the “limit”? If the limit of auto-teleology is “relation to truth,” the “auto-teleology of the aim” pertains to fulfillment, or personal perfection, ultimately even “happiness.” Each human act is realizing the good in the world, but it is partial. The theme of the professional conference was “teleologies” (plural) or “telos’ as a pivotal factor of contextual phenomenology.” Wojtyła thus explains that the personal mode of “auto-teleology,” disclosed phenomenologically, must be “many sided” and include the person’s multifarious relationship to things, to persons, and to God.

Concerning the world of things, Wojtyła is very brief. As the world of work now is embedded in a technological environment, he recommends the notion of auto-teleology to remind us that the enormous growth work, economics and even culture must not neglect the person as person. There is the ever menacing threat of alienation in both work and social-political life. Just

⁶² Karol Petryszak points out that the phrasing “stosunek do rzeczy, do osób, do Boga” could typically indicate the translation “attitude” although “relation” is appropriate. See *Oxford PWN Polish English Dictionary*, 1069.

⁶³ R. Guardini, *The Lord*, (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 1954/1982), 45, 83, 312-313. *Der Herr* was published in Germany in 1937. Guardini says that the kingdom of people and the kingdom of things, as well as earthly kingdoms and “powers” “stifle God and crowd him out of our lives. Only in the pauses of our existence, or on its fringes, do they allow him to come into his own.”

three years after he delivered this paper/talk, Wojtyła would argue for the “priority of people over things,” the “priority of ethos over technology” and develop his notion of the subjective meaning of work and solidarity.⁶⁴

About the world and the experience of personal relationships, Wojtyła refers to “auto-teleology” as a threshold or a condition for a correct formation of any community. This pertains, we assume, to the fundamental dignity of the person as self-possessed and self-governing, as well as to the importance of fulfillment of the person in social life. As we come to know that “man fulfills himself ‘through others’ and realizes his own self by living ‘for others’” we find an additional reason to understand that auto-teleology is not solipsistic, but eminently “an opening of the subject” and another instance of “surpassing oneself” and “rising above oneself” in transcendence.⁶⁵ The self-realization of the person at the core of auto-teleology serves as check against excessive socialization and highlights the need for greater efforts at “personalization.” This building from within to grow personally and thereby surpass oneself is a theme for his many writings on culture and self-education.⁶⁶

Finally, we must briefly consider the new material introduced into this version concerning relationship or attitude towards God. He queries: “what should man’s mode of opening himself up to God be like, proper to personal auto-teleology of man?” He notes that both ancient and contemporary philosophy ask important questions about the human person. Both older and more recent theological teachings also seek answers to the questions about the human person. Not surprisingly, he cites those key passages from *Gaudium et Spes*: “Man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”⁶⁷ Wojtyła here briefly expounds upon the universal “law of the gift”: “we know from the

⁶⁴ *Redemptor Hominis* (“The Redeemer of Man”) (1979) and *Laborem Exercens* (“Engaging in Work”) (1981).

⁶⁵ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 564; Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 1979, 210. Here Wojtyła references his own work entitled “Participation or Alienation,” a talk he presented at Harvard University previously in the month.

⁶⁶ Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Construction of Culture Through Human Praxis,” in *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 266. See Radziechowski, “Culture of Person”; and Hittinger, “John Paul II’s Core Teaching on Culture,” *Communio* Vol. 48 (Summer 2021): 247-279.

⁶⁷ “God, Who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, Who ‘from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth’ (Acts 17:26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God Himself. For this reason, love for God and neighbor is the first and greatest commandment. Sacred Scripture, however, teaches us that the love of God cannot be separated from love of neighbor: “If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself [...]. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the Law” (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1 John 4:20). To men growing daily more dependent on one another, and to a world becoming more unified every day, this truth proves to be of paramount importance. Indeed, the Lord Jesus,

same source that this ‘gift of one’s self’ is offered by man not only to the world or to men in the world, but finally to God himself. That is what man has been called for and invited to, and that is the deepest substance of the revelation and the covenant.” Both reason and revelation indicate the central role of auto-teleology in human life in this law of the gift which is the “mature fruit” of the transcendence of the person. Not only therefore does the relationship to God complete the opening of the person to “all” or the “whole” of reality, it actually brings to the apex of love the human person “who in the fullest degree surpasses and outgrows himself in his personal relation to God.” Wojtyła suggests that there is confirmation for this assertion in religious experience and the discovery of the religious principle is open to inner experience and phenomenological analysis.⁶⁸

In the penultimate paragraph of the revised version Wojtyła provides a very useful summary and formula of his notion of auto-teleology of the limit/terminus and the aim/end. In fact, he claims that “the more the relation of man to things, persons and God the relation is mature, that is, the more it is based on truth about them, the more man fulfills himself.”⁶⁹ Further, through these aims of cultivating the best relationship to things, people, and God the more he becomes the good which he constantly “is” and constantly “should be.” Auto-teleology provides us with a new way to describe the root of human dignity, or “man as a value.”

We can still come a more profound grasp of Wojtyła’s philosophy in the argument on the person’s transcendence in auto-teleology. The personalist dimension is rooted very deeply in an account of human existence. He speaks of an important conclusion to draw from the previous analysis: the “auto-teleology of the limit” is existentially proper to man existing and acting in the world.⁷⁰ In order to unpack this statement he explains first of all that “truth of human existence is that limit.” In *Redeemer of man*, John Paul II says that truth serves as a requirement and as a warning for freedom of the person. As a requirement, it is essential to good human action and as a limit it contains the various possibilities for good human action. As a warning, it is a boundary for

when He prayed to the Father, “that all may be one [...] as we are one” (John 17:21-22) opened up vistas closed to human reason, for He implied a certain likeness between the union of the divine Persons, and the unity of God’s sons in truth and charity. This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.” *Gaudium et spes*, §24. Also §22.

⁶⁸ Augustine, John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Maximillian Kolbe come to mind as witnesses to the experience of God as love that would be of interest to Karol Wojtyła. In his interview with Frossard, *Be not Afraid!*, 95, Pope John Paul II aligns Augustine, Pascal, Kierkegaard, and John of the Cross as thinkers who draw upon inner experience and consciousness to explore the existential “breach” in human awareness of limit and the call to transcendence. He refers to a demonstration of God through historicity: man “must live through his own history” and discover a “sort of memory, reflection, and seed of eternity.” *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶⁹ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 565.

⁷⁰ Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 1979, 13; Wojtyła, “Transcendence,” 2021, 565.

what is authentically human and what is only an illusory and superficial human fulfillment. It is proper to man acting in the world because of the necessity of judgment concerning what is fitting for human life as a whole. Conscience is said to be a fundamental condition of self-fulfillment because the judgment of conscience lights up and opens the path to what good is to be done and what evil is to be avoided. Finally, the teleology of the limit, relation to truth and transcendentals, is proper to man existing in the world because of human contingency and the fundamental emptiness of our being. Truth and the transcendentals fill the paltriness of existence and provide a lure to our love. As Aquinas said, “human nature and soul are not full, but in potential to fulness [in potentia ad plenitudinem].”⁷¹ In this talk, and also in more detail in *Person and Act*, Wojtyła speaks briefly about the absoluteness of the “teleology of the limit” in contrast to human contingency. In some early speeches, such as one to Brazilian men and women of culture, John Paul II would state the law of a two-fold transcendence of the human person: the transcendence of the person over the world and the transcendence of the person under God (July 1, 1980).⁷²

Wojtyła refers to the dimension of the auto-teleology of the limit/terminus as “wonderful.” But to appreciate the existential situation of the human person he speaks of the teleology of the aim/end as another dimension “constantly revealed” in tandem with the teleology of the limit. The auto-teleology of the aim/end he associates with things, people, and God: “the more good and beauty he draws out – of course in the light of the truth from his relation to things, persons and God, the more he fulfills himself.” Human happiness is derived ultimately from this pattern of aims/ends towards things, persons and God. Wojtyła is suggesting that the existential situation of the person in act is like that of weaver who must constantly choose his aims and fashion his

⁷¹ Aquinas is commenting on the *kenosis* of Philippians 2:5-8, states: “Whereas divine nature is sufficiently full, because every perfection of goodness is there, human nature and soul are not full, but capable of fulness [in potentia ad plenitudinem]. Thus it is said that Christ emptied himself because he assumed a human nature.”

⁷² The speech may be found in John Paul II, “Man, Culture and the Apostolate to Culture,” in *Apostolate of Culture*, Vol. 28 of *The Laity Today*, Review of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, (Vatican City 1981), 8-14. See his speech given two weeks earlier to the Italian Ecclesial Movement of Cultural Commitment, on the two fold transcendence, especially with reference to his assertion that there is a need to recognize and live “God’s transcendency over man.” He references a speech commemorating Albert Einstein, given to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences on November 10, 1979: “This threefold superiority is maintained to the extent to which the sense of the transcendence of man over the world and of God over man, is preserved. Exercising her mission of guardian and advocate of both transcendences, the Church considers she is helping science to keep its ideal purity in the aspect of basic research, and to carry out its service of man in the aspect of its practical applications.” The three fold superiority is the priority of ethics over technology, persons over things, and spirit over matter. See *Redeemer of Man*, §16. See also, my comments on this three-fold superiority in “Ethos, Person and Spirit – Principles of Social and Cultural Renewal,” *Człowiek w Kulturze: Pismo Poświęcone Filozofii i Kulturze* Vol. 26 (2016): 161-72. “The Springs of Religious Freedom: Conscience and the Search for Truth,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* Vol. 29, No. 1/2 (2017): 4-24.

relationships in accord with conscience, that is, in light of the truth about the human good. We propose to glean a final insight about the two aspects of auto-teleology by using a passage from *Person and Act*, previously cited:

This shape, the shape of transcendence, is in concrete that of human existence: it is the shape of human life itself. Man as the person both lives and fulfills himself within the perspective of his transcendence. Is it not freedom, obligation, and responsibility which allows us to see that not only truthfulness but also the person's surrender to truth in judging as well as in acting constitute the real and concrete fabric of the personal life of man?⁷³

This passage gives us an idea of the existential whole in which Wojtyła understands moral decision making and moral character. He views the life and the fulfillment of the person “within the perspective of transcendence.” That requires a concern for the truth of the good and living life by the demands of conscience.⁷⁴ The term he uses for fabric is “osnowa,” which means more specifically, the warp of the fabric or the vertical more stable part of the weave and loom.⁷⁵ Thus, the existential situation of the human person requires, first of all, a stable shape constituted by the warp of the loom, which is the *telos* of limit. But the concrete existential life of the person also demands the constant weaving of the woof or weft through the loom, and this would be the relation to things, persons, and God along which constitutes the *telos* of the aim.

This shaping of human life through transcendence and constant growth and self-surpassing is essential to the historical fabric of human life. In his important interview with Andre Frossard, John Paul II spoke of the approach to God through the historicity of the human person. He describes history as the natural abode of the human person – historicity is not simply the limitation of time but the consciousness of the passage of time “which he must fill by fulfilling himself.”⁷⁶ While

⁷³ Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, 181; Wojtyła, “Person and Act,” 2021, 284.

⁷⁴ Wojtyła briefly mentioned the transcendentals truth, goodness, and beauty as points of reference within this perspective transcendence. He explains that traditional metaphysics and phenomenology of experience overlap: “For the transcendence of the person understood metaphysically is no abstract notion; the evidence of experience tells us that the spiritual life of man essentially refers to, and in its strivings vibrates with, the reverberations with the experientially innermost attempts to reach truth, goodness, and beauty. We may thus safely speak of the role of these absolute modes of values that accompany the experience of the personal transcendence.” Wojtyła, *Acting Person*, 155-156.

⁷⁵ *Oxford PWN Polish English Dictionary*, 688. The term could mean fabric or background but it is specifically the warp or vertical thread, which is immobile and more firm. The weft or woof is the thread that is woven horizontally to make the full fabric. *Osnowa* and *wątek* make the full fabric.

⁷⁶ Frossard, *Be not Afraid!*, 58.

enmeshed in impermanence, the human person creates history “through the element in him which resists and overcomes the fleeting character of his existence.” The “innermost, transcendent, final thread in the history of each man and humanity as a whole” is a reflection of eternity in our own soul. This is why, according to Wojtyła, we are prompted to “seek a Being who resists everything in him that resists transitoriness.” In other words, auto-teleology does not assume the existence of God, but rather becomes a reason for seeking the truth about God and the reason for faith itself in response to divine revelation. There are hints that Aquinas himself indicates that self-determination entails a type of “auto-teleology” in moral decision making. In his account of the moment of the child’s first efforts at moral reasoning the child must consider whether he will be ordered to himself alone or to God. Aquinas uses the phrase *deliberare de seipso*.⁷⁷ In this argument for auto-teleology Karol Wojtyła provided a fine example of Thomistic personalism, supplementing a Thomistic account of the human person through the phenomenological method he adapts from Scheler.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Aquinas *STh* I-II, q. 89, a. 6, & especially ad 3. Thomas points out that an unbaptized youth could be without mortal sin since, at the moment that the child begins to reason, the first thing he does is *deliberare de seipso*. In this moment he does not simply order other things to himself but has the opportunity to consider himself as something to be ordered to some *further* end beyond himself. If, in doing so, he immediately turns and orders himself to the proper end (i.e., God, or for Cajetan, the *bonum honestum*). See S. Jensen, *Sin: A Thomistic Psychology*, (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 2018), ch. 5. See also, J. Maritain, “The Immanent Dialectic of the First Act of Freedom,” in *Range of Reason*, (New York: Scribner’s, 1952), 66-85.

⁷⁸ “I wrote on the contribution which Scheler’s phenomenological type of ethical system can make to the development of moral theology. This research benefited me greatly. My previous Aristotelian-Thomistic foundation was enriched by the phenomenological method, and this made it possible for me to undertake a number of creative studies.” John Paul II, *Gift and Mystery*, (New York: Image, 1996), 93-94.

Bibliography

- Acosta, M., & Remiers, A.J., *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act*, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2016).
- Aristotle, *Metaphysics*.
- Aristotle, *Physics*.
- Bello, A.A., *The Divine in Husserl and Other Explorations*, *Analecta Husserliana* XCVIII (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009).
- Boniecki, A., *The making of the Pope of the Millennium: Kalendarium of life of Karol Wojtyła*, (Stockbridge, Mass.: Marian Press, 2000).
- Buttiglione, R., *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1997).
- Finnis, J. "John Paul II and the Foundation of Ethics," in *Thinking with St. John Paul II: JP2 Lectures 2020/2021*, ed. Dariusz Karłowicz, (Rome-Warsaw: Angelicum University Press, Fundacja Świętego Mikołaja, 2021).
- Frossard, A. & John Paul II, *"Be Not Afraid!" Pope John Paul II Speaks out on his life, his Beliefs, and his Inspiring Vision for Humanity*, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1984).
- Guardini, R., *The Lord*, (Regnery Publishing, Washington, DC, 1954/1982).
- Hanink, J.G., "Karol Wojtyła: Personalism, Intransivity, and Character," *Communio* Vol. 33 (Summer 1996): 244- 251.
- Hittinger, J., "Ethos, Person and Spirit – Principles of Social and Cultural Renewal," *Człowiek w Kulturze: Pismo Poświęcone Filozofii i Kulturze* Vol. 26 (2016): 161-72.
- Hittinger, J., "John Paul II's Core Teaching on Culture," *Communio* Vol. 48 (Summer 2021): 247-279.
- Hittinger, J., "The Springs of Religious Freedom: Conscience and the Search for Truth," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* Vol. 29, No. 1/2 (2017): 4-24.
- Hittinger, J., "Why John Paul II named St Thomas Aquinas the 'Doctor Humanitatis,'" in *Thomas Aquinas: Teacher of Humanity*, ed. J.P. Hittinger, D.C. Wagner, (London: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015).
- Jaroszyński, P., "Karol Wojtyła: A Thomist or a Phenomenologist?" *Studia Gilsoniana* Vol. 10, No. 1 (January–March 2021): 135–152.

- Jensen, S., *Sin: A Thomistic Psychology*, (Washington D.C.: CUA Press, 2018).
- John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, 1981.
- John Paul II, “Man, Culture and the Apostolate to Culture,” in *Apostolate of Culture*, Vol. 28 of The Laity Today, Review of the Pontifical Council for the Laity, (Vatican City 1981), 8-14
- John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*, 1979.
- Karol Wojtyła, ed. G. Hołub et al., (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ignatianum, 2019).
- Maritain, J., “The Immanent Dialectic of the First Act of Freedom,” in *Range of Reason*, (New York: Scribner’s, 1952).
- Oxford-PWN Polish-English Dictionary*, chief editor J. Linde-Usiekniewicz, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- Paul VI, *Gaudium et spes*, 1965.
- Pollini, M., “The Communion Rhythm of Life: The Personalistic Meditation on Human Life According to Karol Wojtyła,” *Synesis* Vol. 6, No. 2 (2014): 122-139.
- Ringor, B.D., “The Necessity of Auto-Teleology in Achieving Moral Life according to Karol Wojtyła’s Philosophy,” *Lectio* Vol. 1, No. 1 (August 2021): 72-91.
- Rumayor, M., “Subjetividad sin subjetivismo: ¿La antropología filosófica de Karol Wojtyła sin la metafísica de Tomás de Aquino?” *Tópicos (México)* Vol. 35 (2008): 57-91.
- Schmitz, K., *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1993).
- Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Metaphysics*.
- Thomas Aquinas, *De principiis naturae*.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Scriptum super Sententiis*.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*.
- Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*.
- Tygodnik Powszechny*, Vol. 45 (1976).
- Wallace, W., *The Modeling of Nature: Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Nature in Synthesis*, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 1996).
- Weigel, G., *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, (New York: Harper Collins, 1999).
- Williams, G.H., *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action*, (New York: Seabury Press, 1981).

- Wojtyła, K., *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, transl. M. Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2006).
- Wojtyła, K., *Man in the Field of Responsibility*, trans. K.W. Kemp, & Z. Maślanka Kieroń, (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2011).
- Wojtyła, K., *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2021).
- Wojtyła, K., *The Acting Person*, trans. A. Potocki, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1979).
- Wojtyła, K., "The Problem of the Construction of Culture Through Human Praxis," in Wojtyła, K., *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, trans. Th. Sandok, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).
- Wojtyła, K., "The Problem of the Will in the Analysis of the Ethical Act," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. Th. Sandok, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993).
- Wojtyła, K., "The Transcendence of the Person in Action and Man's Auto-teleology." Typescript distributed at the School of Philosophy, the Catholic University of America. Speech given at Catholic University of America, July 29, 1976 (14 pages of text and 7 pages of notes).
- Wojtyła, K., "The Transcendence of the Person in Action and Man's Self-teleology," in: *The Teleologies in Husserlian Phenomenology*, ed. A.-T. Tymieniecka, Vol. 9 of *Analecta Husserliana*, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Co., 1979), 203-212.
- Wojtyła, K., "The Transcendence of the Person in the Act and the Auto-teleology of Man" in *Person and Act and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik, (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2021).
- Wojtyła, K., "Transcendencja osoby w czynie a autoteleologia człowieka," in *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., (Lublin: TN KUL, 2000).