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## Thomistic Phenomenology in the Book *Person and Act*<sup>1</sup>\*

Antoni B. Stępień

translated by Sydney Sadowski<sup>2</sup>

The book *Person and Act* — as quoted here several times on page 22 — is an attempt to merge two philosophies: the philosophy of being and the philosophy of consciousness. It is a place of encounter, which is not accidental and not external, between Thomism and phenomenology. It is a book on the philosophy of man. Contrary to the opinion of Professor Kalinowski quoted here, I believe that this is indeed, a book on the philosophy of man. And the orientation presented in it can be characterized as, I would say, a Thomistic phenomenology. Why?

Because what we actually have here is a certain description of what is directly given; a description which, although it is presented somewhat theoretically, and in some places abstractly, in its basic form does not go beyond the meaning of what is directly given. Nevertheless, in certain formulations this description is supplemented by a theory taken from elsewhere; for example, on pages 40, 52, 62, there are formulations in which the phenomenological description is exceeded. It is exceeded by following a certain theory, which is a theory of Thomistic metaphysics. Yes, it is essentially phenomenology, although it is brought under a certain metaphysics, and what is more, in some formulations it uses, although this is not always *explicitly* stated, certain conceptual schemes taken from Thomistic metaphysics. For this reason, I would describe this book as a book on Thomistic phenomenology.

In this book we find outlined, in a way that revives and makes visible certain old intuitions, the structure of the person. I think that what is shown is shown with descriptive intent. Parts that

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<sup>1</sup> Note: This text was originally published as: “Feomenologia tomizująca w książce „Osoba i czyn,” *Analecta Cracoviensia* Vol. 5 (1973), 153-157. The original article can be found at:

<https://czasopisma.upjp2.edu.pl/analectacracoviensia/article/view/2673>. The text used by author was the 1969 Polish edition: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn* (Kraków: Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 1969). The translation used for this text were taken from Karol Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*. “The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II,” Vol. I, ed. Antonio Lopez, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021).

\* The text comes from a tape recording and therefore retains certain stylistic features of a verbal discussion.

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are particularly fruitful and particularly stimulating for the reader include the description of the encounter between the subjectivity and agency in man, and the merging of diverse elements and aspects into a unity within the internal structure. We read on page (95) 194 that: “‘man’ ... *is first of all the unity of life, and only secondarily and in a sense collaterally the unity of lived-experience.*” And this is somehow partially shown, this merging of potentiality, consciousness and objectivity, intentionality, cognition of will...

In connection with the statement of one of the previous speakers (Fr. Kłósak), I would like to draw attention to the fact that the act of experience is understood here, rightly in my opinion, as a sensory-intellectual activity, and therefore the division into sensory and intellectual activities in this concept has been questioned. Every act of human perception is a sensory-intellectual activity and the traditional (sharp) division between sensory and intellectual activities does not fit the act of human perception. And the sharp division between direct and indirect cognition does not correspond to the division into sensory and intellectual cognition (because it seems to me that here these two divisions are somehow connected). So, it is not necessarily that, what is sensory is direct and what is intellectual is indirect. I believe that intellectual cognition can be both direct and indirect. The act of perception, the human act of experience, is a sensory-intellectual activity and can be characterized as direct cognition, not indirect cognition.

Hence, the issue of indirect realism, direct realism, etc., would look completely different, but this is a digression in relation to Fr. Kłósak's comment. Indeed, here, I would not see a problem with the concept of experience in *Person and Act*. For me, there's another problem, a problem with the very concept of consciousness! I simply have certain questions, and I simply cannot answer these questions in relation to reading *Person and Act*, and this “prevents” me from establishing a certain epistemological basis for what I find. Because what I find and what I can briefly characterize is simply acceptable and developable, simply fruitful. However, certain issues related to Chapter I, which, it seems to me, are not integrally related to the others, raise certain questions for discussion. I am referring to the concept of consciousness and the relationship between cognition and knowledge.

Although the origin of these views will be clear to many of you, I will explain how I would like to understand this matter and why, in this regard, I have certain questions concerning *Person and Act*.

Undoubtedly, the term “consciousness” is ambiguous, so let us distinguish between the following: stream of consciousness, individual lived-experiences, conscious acts and states, and consciousness itself.

The term “consciousness” is an undefinable term; it is a foundational term whose meaning can be made clear by some examples and comparisons. However, it is possible to point to various forms of consciousness. I now would like to recall the basic phenomenological distinction, that is, the distinction between acting consciousness and non-acting consciousness, positional and non-positional consciousness, intentional and non-intentional, objectifying and non-objectifying consciousness.

The experience of the act is intentional, that means, it is always directed towards the object that transcends it, and at the same time it is being experienced. That means it is revealed in the stream of consciousness as occurring by the very fact of experiencing it. So, consciousness of the perceived object is accompanied by consciousness of the perception of the object, consciousness of the experience occurring as a way of perceiving the object. And here we must immediately distinguish between these two forms of consciousness (because that is all that interests us at the moment). Objectively directed consciousness, organized in an act, and consciousness consisting in experiencing, reveals the very occurrence of the state of consciousness.

Because there are these two basic forms of consciousness, there are also two basic forms of self-consciousness. This simple, elementary form of self-consciousness is experiencing: the fact that the act of consciousness, by its very occurrence, somehow marks itself in the stream of consciousness. And in addition, as we know, in certain acts of reflection (immanent perception, internal perception, or recollection) we can make our state or act of consciousness the object of self-consciousness, and then we are dealing with reflective self-consciousness. So, we distinguish between: the act of consciousness, non-act of consciousness (here we are interested only in the form of the non-act of consciousness which we call experiencing) and therefore a lived-experience as simple self-consciousness and, in addition, reflective self-consciousness in the form of internal, immanent perception or recollection. This is the model and typology of consciousness of known provenance that I accept, and the terminology used here accordingly.

I will only briefly mention the relationship of consciousness to cognition and knowledge. It is known that cognition and knowledge can be understood in various ways. However, I do not think that we can speak of unconscious cognition, of unconscious knowledge, so that we can

literally speak of unconscious knowledge or cognition. Unless we treat obtaining information (because cognition is primarily about obtaining information) about an object as a natural process, consisting in the appearance of a certain change or feature in the cognizing subject, the cognitive role of which as a factor in the subject's orientation in the environment is necessarily related to the awareness of this factor by the cognizing subject. Only with this concept of cognition, which is perhaps "alien" throughout the book *Person and Act*, could we say that cognition and consciousness are things that do not have to be in a certain, non-accidental relationship with each other. In any case, if we were to accept such concepts of cognition, including those based on extreme behaviorism, then from the point of view of the theory of cognition (this separation of cognition and consciousness) it would be a secondary, theoretical procedure, and not empirically given. Empirically, within the framework of phenomenological description, a necessary condition for cognition, is always the experiencing of the act of cognition. Only through some theoretical process does one arrive at a model of cognition that separates cognition from consciousness.

How, then, should consciousness be understood? It seems to me that consciousness can be understood either as experiencing, or as reflection, or as self-knowledge. Now, consciousness cannot be understood here as reflection, since it is sometimes said in the book that consciousness is something non-intentional, something that does not objectify. Most reflection returns to that upon which it is reflecting, it objectifies. So, if consciousness does not objectify, it is not intentional, and therefore it cannot be reflection; it can be an experience.

But if here experiencing were to come into play, it would have to occur together with that of which it is conscious. However, if it is said in the book, that sometimes consciousness does not have to occur together with that of which it is conscious, then it cannot be treated as experience, because there constitutional connection between experiencing and the experience, consciousness of the occurrence and the very fact of the occurrence.

It is also not self-knowledge. The book's relationship to self-knowledge is somewhat particular. It is said that consciousness is not self-knowledge, but at the same time it is said that self-knowledge is the limit of conscious reflection. How could we know that self-knowledge constitutes the limit of conscious reflection when consciousness does not co-constitute self-knowledge?

One final troubling point. It is stated that consciousness is intellectual in nature. Such a remark, without comment, raises the question: Does this mean that animal consciousness is rejected outright?

These are the questions related to the reading of *Person and Act* that are troubling in relation with the understanding of the concept of consciousness. Is consciousness treated as experiencing, as reflection, or as self-knowledge? Someone might say that my questions come from my model of consciousness, which I briefly presented earlier. Perhaps the author of *Person and Act* has a different model of consciousness. In that case, it should be noted that the reader may feel somewhat lost here and fail to grasp this concept of self-consciousness. I note this issue by emphasizing that all my reservations concerning consciousness and its relation to cognition are not essentially related to the remaining content in *Person and Act*. And perhaps some conclusion should be drawn from this. That is to say, that the conclusion is that the issue of consciousness is simply a separate matter from the assessment of the rest of the book's content, in which, as I said, certain issues, especially those related to the concept of conscience, duty and responsibility, are very intellectually intriguing and, it seems to me, very fruitful.

*Postscript:* During this discussion, I forgot to point out that in the text *Person and Act*, another concept of consciousness is strongly outlined, namely that of reflection. Consciousness as a reflection, a reflection of being, the object of consciousness. But even accepting this concept as fundamental does not eliminate the ambiguity in this respect in the text of *Person and Act*, and it also brings with it new difficulties. The concept of consciousness in the book requires revision.

## Originality of Karol Wojtyła's Method of Philosophy

Tadeusz Biesaga<sup>1</sup>

### Abstract

This article analyzes the originality and specificity of Karol Wojtyła's method of philosophizing, as developed primarily in *Person and Act*, situating it against the background of twentieth-century Thomism and phenomenology. It reconstructs the methodological debates that followed the publication of *Person and Act*, highlighting the difficulties philosophers encountered in classifying Wojtyła's approach within established philosophical disciplines. The study shows that Wojtyła deliberately positions himself between the philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of being, seeking neither a synthesis nor a compromise, but a methodological transcendence of both. By integrating subjective experience with metaphysical realism, Wojtyła develops a personalist method that discloses the human person simultaneously as a conscious subject and a real being. The article demonstrates how this method corrects and surpasses the limitations of phenomenological ethics—particularly Max Scheler's emotivism—as well as the shortcomings of certain Thomistic anthropological and ethical interpretations, notably in the domains of moral agency, conscience, sexuality, marriage, and personal action. Finally, the paper argues that Wojtyła's distinctive contribution lies in his insistence on the unity of metaphysical, anthropological, and ethical experience, articulated through a methodological “third way” that grounds philosophical analysis in the lived efficacy,<sup>2</sup> self-determination, and transcendence of the person. This approach remains a significant and underexplored resource for contemporary philosophical anthropology and personalist ethics.

### Key words

Karol Wojtyła, philosophical anthropology, Thomism, phenomenology, personalism, ethics, metaphysics

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<sup>2</sup> The English term ‘efficacy’ does not fully capture the meaning of the Polish term ‘sprawczość.’ ‘Sprawczość’ emphasizes the causal agency of the acting person—the fact that the agent is the one performing the action.

### Difficulties in understanding the manner of philosophizing in *Person and Act*

The direct discussion following the publication of *Person and Act* revealed the difficulties philosophers had in understanding the method of philosophizing employed by Wojtyła in that work.<sup>3</sup> Various Thomists, phenomenologists, existentialists, and scientific thinkers commented on this point. Most of them, speaking from the standpoint of the method of philosophizing they themselves used, expressed their dissatisfaction. Some formulated critical remarks from the point of view of methodology or theory of knowledge—disciplines which the Author did not directly develop.

Jerzy Kalinowski outright denied the study *Person and Act* the character of a philosophical work.<sup>4</sup> Similarly, Kazimierz Kłósak inclined to the view that we are dealing with an empirical phenomenology of the person, not with a philosophy of the person.

Mieczysław Gogacz treated the presented study as linguistic research—as analyses of language, as the etymology and hermeneutics of meanings, as a philosophy of language. He maintained that “This description, by virtue of joining together several aspects or points of departure of the analysis, and not fitting into any of the traditionally accepted philosophical disciplines, must constitute a separate methodological area which one could provisionally call, for example, a theory of the cognition of the person.”<sup>5</sup>

Alongside the extremely critical voices, statements also appeared in the discussion that, for various reasons, accepted the method of the philosophy of the person that had been applied. Among these are the remarks of Fr. Marian Jaworski, Andrzej Półtawski, Fr. Tadeusz Styczeń, and others.<sup>6</sup>

I am very grateful to Fr. Prof. Jaworski – Wojtyła states in summing up the discussion – who, on the ground of the doctrine of St. Thomas, basing himself on the fundamental assumptions of his philosophy, undertook to demonstrate that the study *Person and Act* has a philosophical character, while at the same time showing its entire philosophical specificity: “[...] the Author

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<sup>3</sup> “Analecta Cracoviensia” 5–6(1973–74).

<sup>4</sup> J. Kalinowski, *Metafizyka i fenomenologia osoby ludzkiej*, „Analecta Cracoviensia” 5–6(1973–74), 63–71.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in: K. Wojtyła, “Słowo końcowe po dyskusji nad *Osobą i czynem*,” in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, ed. T. Styczeń et al. (Lublin: TN KUL, 1994), 359.

<sup>6</sup> M. Jaworski, *Koncepcja antropologii filozoficznej w ujęciu Kard. Karola Wojtyły*, “Analecta Cracoviensia” 5–6(1973–74), 91-106.

situates his reflections on the human person within the perspective of the person's own human being; what he is concerned with are the categories proper to the human person.<sup>7</sup>

Likewise, Wojtyła recalls the remarks of Andrzej Póltawski, stating: “Docent Póltawski rendered a very fundamental service to the book *Person and Act*; namely, he showed how it stands at the point of encounter between modern post-Cartesian anthropology—seeking to overcome the subjectivism and idealism inherent in it—and the realistic tradition of classical philosophy.”<sup>8</sup>

One may say that the essential difficulties raised from the position of Thomistic philosophy concerned the distinct starting point, in the theory of the person, of the realistic and idealistic traditions, as well as the difference between the experience of being and the experience of the person. Jerzy Gałkowski clarified these differences in the discussion, noting that in Thomism the starting point—the basic concept—is the person understood as a substance, as the concrete rational nature of the human being, whereas in phenomenology the basic concept is the person as a certain center or the highest, deepest stratum of the human being. “Personally, I am of the view,” explains Wojtyła, “that in *Person and Act*, moving between the one and the other basic concept (which follows from the function of translation: the translator is always in the middle, between two languages), I endeavored—as far as possible—to disclose one of these concepts by means of the other, and not to obscure it, that is, not to exclude it.”<sup>9</sup>

The foregoing explanation well conveys Karol Wojtyła's manner of philosophizing. In the experience of man as a person, he unites both perspectives: inner and outer experience; subjective and objective experience; the experience that discloses the specificity of the human person with the metaphysical experience of the person as a being among other beings. It is known that the development of the philosophy of being as being treats anthropology as a special metaphysics. Within that perspective, the language of metaphysics predominates, employing objective terms concerning the person as a being among other beings. By contrast, in a subject-oriented approach the language of structural being proves insufficient; it does not express the richness of what happens within the person—in his experiences, in his choices, in his conduct.

In the face of partisans of either option, Wojtyła situates himself, as it were, in the middle; he strives to broaden or to transcend both the way phenomenologists philosophize and the way

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<sup>7</sup> K. Wojtyła, “Słowo końcowe po dyskusji nad *Osobą i czynem*,” 352.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 361

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 364

Thomists philosophize. Responding to Andrzej Póltawski's charge that the conception of consciousness in *Person and Act* is too realistic, and to Mieczysław Gogacz's opposite charge that the approach to the person through act is too idealistic, since it places the act before the existence of the personal being, Wojtyła answers: "It seems that the conception of the transcendence of the person in the act contained in *Person and Act*, together with the conception of integration which correlates with it, explains sufficiently the specificity of the efficacy of the person in its manifold richness—explains it, to be sure, in a different language, one closer to experience—and at the same time in this approach sufficiently safeguards the primacy of the subject of action, that is, the person, over its action, that is, the act. Simultaneously, on the basis of this primacy, one can see the foundation for the affirmation of the personal act of existence at the root of all the dynamisms of the person, and above all of the strictly personal dynamism which is precisely the act."<sup>10</sup>

Rocco Buttiglione described this new perspective of Wojtyła's philosophizing well, distinguishing it from the phenomenology of Hildebrand, Seifert, or Ingarden. He stated: "According to Wojtyła, the point is not to provide a phenomenological justification that man is a person, but with the help of phenomenology to see in what manner man is a person, how the metaphysical structures that characterize his personal existence are reflected in his conscious existence. Thus, Thomistic metaphysical anthropology is, as it were, constantly present here as a great fundamental hypothesis that is verified through phenomenological analysis and that—on the other hand—unceasingly pilots that analysis, allowing it to gain greater depth."<sup>11</sup>

### **The effects of the method under discussion with respect to phenomenology and Thomism**

The originality of Karol Wojtyła's method of philosophizing is best shown by way of what he obtained in his research relative to the achievements of the method employed by phenomenologists and by Thomists. The results of his analyses surpass the previous achievements of each of these currents of thought. They clearly surpass what phenomenologists, including those developing a realist phenomenology, attained in their descriptions and eidetic insights, and they also surpass what Thomists have presented thus far in anthropology and ethics.

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 363.

<sup>11</sup> R. Buttiglione, "Wstęp. Kilka uwag o sposobie czytania *Osoby i czynu*," in: Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, 15.

The stages of this correcting, surpassing, and supplementing of both these streams—both in ethics and in anthropology—can be traced in three main works of Karol Wojtyła: *An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing a Christian Ethics on the Assumptions of the System of Max Scheler*, published in 1959; *Love and Responsibility. A Study in Ethics*, from 1960; *Person and Act*, ed. M. Jaworski, first edition, from 1969.<sup>12</sup>

The first work, in the spirit of the method applied by Wojtyła, is an explicit correction of Max Scheler's phenomenological ethics, that is, a surpassing of it toward what in that phenomenology was not at all noticed, was omitted, and thereby distorted both ethics and anthropology.

The second work is a correction of Thomism in the grasp of human nature and of natural inclinations, and specifically a correction of the understanding of human sexuality, of the sexual sphere, and of marital and parental love.

The third work is a completing correction of both ways of philosophizing—both phenomenology and Thomism—in the grasp of man as a person.

In the first of the works mentioned—that is, in his habilitation—Karol Wojtyła revealed that in Max Scheler's fundamental work we are dealing with an overly narrow grasp of the ethical experience. In the emotivist conception of that experience, important and indispensable elements that occur in ethical conduct were omitted because they lay outside of the emotional, passive undergoing of values. In that constricted grasp, the ethical value is not something primary—recognized, intended, and perfective of the person. The mere emotional experiencing of various values does not constitute the ethical value. For the realization of the moral good the efficacy of the person is indispensable: an encounter with a real good; the experience of the command of conscience, of moral ought; the teleological self-determination of the will for the attainment of that good; and its realization, which perfects the person.

In Scheler's emotivist and essentialist ethics, the efficacy of the person as such, and within it the self-determination of the will, were omitted. "The person [in Scheler's ethics]," states Wojtyła, "is not the efficient cause of his acts; they only 'appear' in him. All the more, then, he

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<sup>12</sup> Later citation: K. Wojtyła, "Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera," in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, (Człowiek i Moralność, 2), ed. T. Styczeń et al. (Lublin: TN KUL, 1991), 7–128. Later citation: K. Wojtyła, "Miłość i odpowiedzialność," in: *Człowiek i moralność*, Vol. 1, ed. T. Styczeń, et al. (Lublin: Tn KUL, 1982). Later citation: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*.

cannot appear as the efficient cause of the moral good and evil of those acts.”<sup>13</sup> “Ethical conduct is not so much the intentional experiencing of the diverse contents of values as the realization in act of personal values, of ethical values. The person is conscious that it is he who performs a given act, that he is the agent of the given ethical value. He is conscious of his responsibility for his act.”<sup>14</sup>

“The moral good that is discerned, commanded by conscience, and owed,” states Wojtyła, “is not only a content of consciousness, but is at the same time the perfection of a conscious being—and indeed, above all, it is that last thing. The perfection of being can be grasped only by way of an analysis of being.”<sup>15</sup>

Within his perspective narrowed to emotional experiences, Scheler wrongly grasped, among other things, conscience. By cutting himself off from I. Kant’s categorical imperatives, he removed moral obligation and ethical commands from ethics and attributed a repressive function to conscience. He identified “willing the good” with “willing the feeling that one is good.” “Meanwhile, according to Wojtyła, ‘to “will to be good” means the tendency of the will toward the objective value itself, and by no means does it mean “to will the good” as the objective content of a subjective feeling’.”<sup>16</sup> Conscience directs us immediately and directly to the recognized good, not to the emotional experience of pleasure derived from its realization. Pleasure—or, better, satisfaction—can be experienced only after the realization of the good commanded by conscience. We undertake the realization of the good commanded by conscience for the sake of that good, not for the sake of the pleasure it may evoke in us. That good may resonate within us as satisfaction, but its objectivity consists above all in this: that it perfects the person. Thus, the mere emotional experiencing of various values described by Scheler is not a presentation of ethical conduct, nor of the dynamism of the human intellect which, through conscience, seeks the truth about man and his good, nor of the dynamism of the will striving for the realization of that good.

In sum, one can say that—inspired by a realistic Thomistic understanding of the good—Wojtyła revealed the powerlessness of Max Scheler’s phenomenological ethics to disclose the ethical experience fully, the efficacy of the person in act, the role of conscience, the moral norm, and man’s purposive action which perfects him as a person. An ethics of emotional feelings of

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<sup>13</sup> Wojtyła, “Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera,” 67.

<sup>14</sup> T. Biesaga, *Karola Wojtyły krytyka koncepcji osoby Maxa Schelera*, “Logos i Ethos” Vol 47, No. 1 (2018), 185.

<sup>15</sup> K. Wojtyła, “W poszukiwaniu podstaw perfekcjonizmu w etyce,” in: Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, 211.

<sup>16</sup> Wojtyła, “Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera,” 69.

values—making use of what is passive in the person—has no possibility of discovering the full ethical dynamism of the person, manifested both on the terrain of the receptive intellect and conscience and on the terrain of efficacy, that is, intention, the self-determination of the will, and the realization of the real good of the person. It is therefore no surprise that the final thesis of the habilitation, in which Wojtyła directly states, reads: “The ethical system constructed by Max Scheler is fundamentally unfit for a scientific interpretation of Christian ethics.”<sup>17</sup>

By contrast, in *Love and Responsibility* we are dealing with a correction of the Thomistic grasp of marriage and parenthood. In the preface to the first edition of that work, Wojtyła directly indicates the proper starting point for the description of the person’s sexed nature and sexuality. He writes: “The object of the analysis is therefore first of all the person in relation to the sexual drive, then the love that grows upon its basis between a woman and a man, next the virtue of chastity as an unavoidable coefficient of that love, and finally the issue of marriage and vocation.”<sup>18</sup>

He discerns in Thomism the danger of a biological, naturalistic reduction of man’s sexed nature; hence, in order to overcome this, he immediately transposes that analysis to the level of the person. “The personal order,” he states, “is the only plane proper for all considerations in the field of sexual ethics. Physiology or medicine may only supplement those considerations. Of themselves they do not create full grounds for understanding love and responsibility, yet it is precisely that which is at stake in the mutual relation of persons of different sex. Therefore, the entire body of considerations contained in this book has a personalist character.”<sup>19</sup>

This personalist point of departure changes much in the previous Thomistic grasp of human sexuality, marriage, and the family. This change is initiated by the first chapter of the book in question, titled “The Person and Instinct,” and is completed by the next chapter, “The Person and Love.” From those analyses there follows only then what marriage and parenthood are. It is the interpersonal relation of love—betrothal love, conjugal love, and parental love—that is the essential interpretation of the natural tendencies that define the man and the woman. Thomistic thinkers presented the three ends of marriage as *procreatio*, *mutuum adiutorium*, and *remedium concupiscentiae*. What was lacking in that grasp was a reference to interpersonal love. Without the interpretation of those ends in the language of the interpersonal bond of love, their understanding was susceptible to a narrow, overly naturalistic construal. *Procreatio* could also be understood

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>18</sup> K. Wojtyła, “Miłość i odpowiedzialność,” 14.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

naturalistically as the biological multiplication of the species; *remedium concupiscentiae* could be grasped in a libidinous and pansexualist way, as determination by the sexual instinct; and *mutuum adiutorium* could be understood utilitarianly as an economic and business contract.

It was precisely Karol Wojtyła together with Dietrich von Hildebrand who, in their publications prior to the Second Vatican Council, carried out a reinterpretation of the previous Christian grasp of marriage. They did so by appealing to the fundamental principle of interpersonal love and of the bond between spouses and parents: a love of mutual self-gift, unity, and openness to parental love. Wojtyła states: “Procreation as the primary end is something different from ‘love’; on the other hand, the tertiary end, *remedium concupiscentiae*, is also something different from ‘love’. Meanwhile, both procreation and *remedium concupiscentiae* as ends of marriage ought to flow from love as a virtue and thereby fall within the bounds of the personalist norm. *Mutuum adiutorium* as an end of marriage is likewise only an effect of love—of the virtue. There is no basis for translating the expression *mutuum adiutorium* as ‘love’.”<sup>20</sup> The disputes thus far conducted within Thomism over the ontically conceived ends of marriage—over which of these ends is the most important—are too narrow because they lack the proper reference to the fundamental principle of the interpersonal love of spouses or parents. One may therefore recognize Karol Wojtyła and, for example, Dietrich von Hildebrand as precursors of a new grasp of marriage and the family, accepted and developed by the Second Vatican Council and the subsequent documents of the popes.

Thus, the correction of Thomistic grasps in this matter followed from Wojtyła’s new method of philosophizing, in which the subjective, in relation to the objective, was explicated and thereby enriched the previous grasps of human sexuality and marriage.

The application of the new method in *Person and Act* surpassed what had previously been reported in Thomistic anthropology and in the anthropology of phenomenologists or existentialists. This can be traced by analyzing the manner of surpassing merely consciousness-based, subject-oriented grasps of man in the anthropology of phenomenologists, as well as object-oriented, substantialist grasps of man in the anthropology of Thomists.

The effects of this method are revealed, for instance, in the middle chapters of that work, in which the transcendence of the person is supplemented and linked with his integration. We are dealing here with a new way of linking the bodily dynamisms with the intellectual, volitional, and

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-66.

emotional dynamisms of man. This grasp is carried out differently than the Thomists did, who, on the basis of the metaphysical notion of the soul as substantial form, assigned unity to our bodily–spiritual being. Without negating that structure, Wojtyła discloses how that unity is realized in practice—in the encounter, within the act, of what happens in man with the fact that he himself acts in his intellectual, consciousness-related, and efficacious dynamisms. Such an appropriate inclusion of the different dynamisms of the person does not negate the existence of the soul, but, as it were, makes its operation present to view, revealing itself in inner experience objectified by reference to the truth about man, about oneself.

Accordingly, both the analysis of the transcendence of the person is open to integration, and the integration of the person is subordinated to transcendence. These are therefore not structures that combat one another in man, but rather a real human being with his nature, which manifests itself on these two levels—of the tendencies of nature and of the actions of the person.

In the direction of the cooperation of these two structures of the human being, Wojtyła finds appropriate terms that show the transcendence of the person. That which makes possible the real development of the person is self-mastery, self-possession, and self-determination. Horizontal transcendence demands vertical transcendence, that is, the unification of one’s complex subjectivity—the taking into one’s own hands of the dynamisms that occur in man, in his body and in his psyche, by means of self-mastery, which is not a repression of those tendencies, but their conscious, rational, purposive, axiological, and truth-oriented direction. In this way the subject possesses himself—that is, in practice he is the subject who has encompassed himself as a whole and can govern himself.

What takes place on the level of consciousness, self-knowledge, self-mastery, self-possession, self-determination, and autoteleology, as it were, phenomenologically manifests the wealth of the personal subject and supplements the previous Thomistic grasps of that subject. Wojtyła’s article “Subjectivity and the ‘Irreducible’ in Man” is the summit of the supplementation of Thomistic grasps by unveiling the individual unrepeatability of every human person.<sup>21</sup> “Wojtyła’s conception,” writes Rocco Buttiglione, “differs from some accounts of traditional Thomism because it is not concerned simply with the actualization of an individual substance of a rational nature, but with the living-through of oneself, with self-determination and the self-

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<sup>21</sup> K. Wojtyła, “Podmiotowość i ‘to co nieredukowalne’ w człowieku,” in: Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, 433-444.

realization of a single and unrepeatable person who lives through his own ‘objectification’ as reflected in consciousness.”<sup>22</sup>

A similar surpassing or correction of the grasps of man in *Person and Act* concerns the philosophy of consciousness, the philosophy of the subject, or phenomenology. The subject in that work is a real subject, not the content of acts of reflection. He is not a stream of consciousness, and the efficacy (agency) of the personal subject manifests itself not only in the intentional willing of values, but in the self-determination of himself and the fulfillment of himself. It is not only the value that becomes the end of action, but I myself become the terminus of my acts. In this dynamic reality, our “I” appears simultaneously not only as the subject of action, but as the object of that conduct, for in action ultimately it is about me. Transcendence on the horizontal level—that is, the going-beyond oneself in the willing and realization of various values—links with vertical transcendence, in which what is at stake is self-determination and the fulfillment of oneself; and in that fulfillment of oneself the autoteleology of the person unites within itself the teleology of his nature, referring his action to the truth about man—about who I am and where I am going.<sup>23</sup>

In summary, one can say that with respect to the Thomists, Wojtyła brought out more fully the subjective wealth of the person, and with respect to the phenomenologists he supplemented their subjective, consciousness-based grasp of the person with the objective fulfillment of the person in act. In this way, the Thomistic, realist presentation of the person as an individual substance of a rational nature was expressed in the language of the subjective expression of that being, and the phenomenological descriptions of the subject were broadened by the real foundations of that subjectivity.

We may ask whether, on the innovative path to the grasp of man that was undertaken, Wojtyła committed errors, shortcomings, or omissions. It seems that critical remarks from both of the currents named—Thomists and phenomenologists—may contribute to penetrating further research into his way of philosophizing, as well as to the methodological or epistemological refinement of precisely this path. Nevertheless, the elaborated grasp of man—in which someone of genius, contrary to the duopoly of the philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of being, broke through in showing the unity of the subjective–objective character of the human person—awaits similarly outstanding intellectual expeditions.

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<sup>22</sup> R. Buttiglione, *Myśl Karola Wojtyły*, trans. by J. Merecki (Lublin: TN KUL, 1996), 209.

<sup>23</sup> K. Wojtyła, “Transcendencja osoby, w czynie a autoteleologia osoby,” in: Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, 484-485.

## The Specific Character of This Method

The method employed by Karol Wojtyła has been described both as a descent downward from the phenomenon to the metaphysical foundation, and conversely as an ascent upward from the metaphysical foundation toward the enrichment of the indicated structural contents of the human person. The first path was indicated by philosophers of consciousness; the second, by philosophers of being. Hence the method was called a *phenomenology that Thomizes* or a *phenomenological Thomism*.

Tadeusz Styczeń and Andrzej Póltawski supported the first manner of developing the philosophy of man or the philosophy of morality. For the former, the aim was to begin, for example, from the experience of morality, and then to ground those specific data in the experience of man, and next to ground them in the philosophy of being. Anthropological and metaphysical justifications, as rendering ethical theses non-contradictory, cause ethical statements to become grounded, necessary, and universal for such a being as man is. In this case, we may begin from the data of the specificity of an object such as it is and justify why it is such as it is by reaching to the real foundations of its coming-to-be. This last operation reaches to the ultimate explanations of a contingent being by asking about the ultimate causes of that which is.

By contrast, the path from metaphysics to the grasp of the specificity of particular beings on the basis of the experience and description of either morality or the human person is recommended, for example, by Thomists—among them Andrzej Maryniarczyk<sup>24</sup> and Piotr Jaroszyński<sup>25</sup>. It is treated as a safe path since it enriches the metaphysical structures directly within the framework of special metaphysics by means of the direct data of the experience of man or morality.

An example may be the anthropology proposed by M. A. Krąpiec, titled *I — Man (Ja — człowiek)*, a title borrowed from the philosophy of the subject, in which the description of my acts is a metaphysical–phenomenological description. Therein, the interior of man is disclosed otherwise than by holistically composing him out of the various properties previously discovered in consciousness. In this perspective, man from the very beginning reveals himself as the same

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<sup>24</sup> A. Maryniarczyk, “Spór o rozumienie człowieka,” in: *Wokół antropologii Karola Wojtyły*, Zadania współczesnej metafizyki Vol. 18, ed. A. Maryniarczyk, P. Sulenta, T. Duma (Lublin: PTTA, 2016), 89-106.

<sup>25</sup> P. Jaroszyński, “Wojtyła, tomista czy fenomenolog?,” in: *Wokół antropologii Karola Wojtyły*, 73-88.

being in his acts; thus, he is not a composite constructed from a bundle of various attributes, but a concrete being endowed with specific properties.

One can also point out a way of constructing the philosophy of man different from the two methods just mentioned—a kind of third way of philosophizing proper to Karol Wojtyła. It proceeds from the conviction of the unity of experiences, that is, the unity of metaphysical experience, anthropological experience, and ethical experience. This approach is expressed by a formula that appeared in the school of Karol Wojtyła: *Primum metaphysicum, primum anthropologicum et primum ethicum conventuntur*. It proclaims the unity of the experiences mentioned. Our cognition begins in the unity of experiences, *uno actu*. “The separation of experiences from one another is the work of reflection, determined by meta-theoretical interest, that is, by the cognitive goal, but it is not an account of what is directly given. The description of what is given consists in distinguishing and differentiating the moments of experience. The separation is the work of reflection. (...) What is directly given is the co-experience of experiences in the unity of the act of one and the same subject.”<sup>26</sup>

The broadest, in this proposal, is metaphysical experience, which cannot be lost in its investigation. It is for methodological purposes that, within the primordial, spontaneous, and natural experience of that-which-is, we distinguish various aspects and assign to them the appropriate disciplines so as to describe them better therein. Yet in distinguishing the experience of man or the experience of morality, we need not detach it from the metaphysical experience which concerns the widest aspect—the existence of a concrete being, a concrete man, or a concrete real act of the human person.

If we accept Mieczysław Krąpiec’s thesis that the existence of a given being imposes itself upon us originally—without splitting into object and subject—in the affirmation that something is, and that essential judgments (what it is, what this is) are formulated secondarily to existential judgments and cannot be detached from that original affirmation, then in investigation we join both perspectives.<sup>27</sup> In this way, the unity of experience and of knowledge goes hand in hand with the realism of cognition.

It seems that this realistic perspective and conviction of the unity of experiences accompanied Karol Wojtyła in all his research. He did not agree with the splitting between the

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<sup>26</sup> K. Krajewski, *Etyka jako filozofia pierwsza. Doświadczenie normatywnej mocy prawdy jako źródło i podstawa etyki*, (Lublin: WN KUL, 2006), 133.

<sup>27</sup> M.A. Krąpiec, *Metafizyka. Zarys teorii bytu* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1978), 105f.

philosophy of consciousness and the philosophy of being, with the splitting between *a priori* and *a posteriori* in philosophy; he did not agree with anthropological dualism—with the division of man into *res cogitans* and *res extensa*. Among other things, in his *Lublin Lectures* he did not find the possibility of overcoming that division within the sphere of idealistic thought; hence, he sought it within the sphere of realistic thought.

He did this not so much by speculatively analyzing the previously known ontic structures of man, but rather by a kind of “rendering present to view,” by showing how the metaphysical structures of man reveal themselves in our experiences, in efficacy, in transcendence and integration—in the act as the act of the person. This “rendering present to view” introduced a new terminology, different from that of the Thomists or the phenomenologists, for the description of the subjectivity and objectivity of the human person. In those descriptions one can discover similarities to the language of the philosophy of the subject, but it is nonetheless a *trans-phenomenological* language, one that goes beyond phenomena by unveiling the ontic grounds of the realization of the person in self-possession and self-fulfillment—that is, in the fulfillment of the real human being, in whom the autoteleology of efficacy is bound up with the teleology of his nature, and the transcendence of “I act” is linked with the integration of “what happens” within the nature of the person, which develops a realistic grasp of man.

Despite this novelty in the content of the experience of man, these contents from the outset are correlated with the ontic experience of man, which continually accompanies the analyses being carried out. This perspective of developing the phenomenology of man while continually taking account of the philosophy of being is already visible in the first edition of *Person and Act*, where, in the very preface, Wojtyła emphasizes: “Remaining on the ground of the philosophy of being, we would like to make use of the enrichment which [the philosophy of consciousness] offers.”<sup>28</sup>

In the second edition of *Person and Act*, the editors adopted as fundamental the first manner of philosophizing—from phenomenon to foundation—and thereby, as it were, “modernized” that edition in the spirit of the philosophy of the subject by re-editing the preface to the work, by introducing, in the language of the philosophy of the subject, numerous sub-headings, by removing Thomistic terms or sentences, and by adding new terms and linguistic precisions.

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<sup>28</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, 1st edition (Kraków: PTT, 1969), 23.

This phenomenon was revealed in an article by Dr. Małgorzata Jałoch-Palicka<sup>29</sup> and was theoretically rejected as unjustified in her doctoral dissertation.<sup>30</sup>

In connection with the foregoing, the proper solution would be that in a critical edition of *Person and Act* within the *Collected Works of Karol Wojtyła*, one should return to the original, that is, to the first edition of that work, and append the second edition in the form of endnotes. In this way, those conducting further research would be able to reach back to the original and assess whether the later changes were justified. In this manner, one would also clarify which of the three methods of philosophizing mentioned was closest to Wojtyła's own thinking, and which were supported and propagated only by some of his followers.

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<sup>29</sup> M. Jałoch-Palicka, "Osoba i czyn, *The Acting Person* – ingerencje redakcyjne i problemy przekładu. Przyczynek do analizy," in: *Wokół antropologii Karola Wojtyły*, 155–188.

<sup>30</sup> M. Jałoch-Palicka, *Istota człowieka w świetle dociekań Karola Wojtyły*, doctoral thesis (Lublin, KUL, Faculty of Philosophy, 2022), 1–322.

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## **The Anatomy of Efficacy**

Teresa Grabińska<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

In Karol Wojtyła's anthropology, efficacy is an exclusively human property which is both the objective cause of every free act for an individually chosen purpose and, at the same time, the human experience of the act performed. By undertaking an act, the agent feels responsible for its consequences, which not only changes his environment but also himself. Every act enhances human action, but above all it morally perfects or destroys the agent. In Karol Wojtyła's work, human efficacy is compared with four types of agency, which are the cause of dynamisms: biological, psycho-emotive, skillful, and intellectual–mental. Efficacy is considered a derivative of self-determination and is related to freedom. The essence of complementing transcendence through the integration of all dynamisms in action is also analyzed.

### **Keywords**

human person, action, happening, will, subjectivity

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## Introduction: anatomy and physiology of the whole

The primary meaning of the word anatomy refers to a biological organism, more generally – to the whole of an acting structure. It consists of individual parts which are appropriately composed and cooperate with each other. The components of the biological organism die together with it. Only some of them remain, like the skeleton, which leaves a permanent trace of the existence of this organism.

Descriptive anatomy, also called classical anatomy, deals with the description of organs whose inherent feature is a specialized function. Since the whole organism is a dynamic functioning entity, it is necessary to consider the structure and function of organs in parallel, which is what functional anatomy deals with.

Man is a biological organism, but he possesses the unique ability to transcend his biological nature through his own act.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, this act is caused by and reveals the efficacy of the human person. Human existence leaves a lasting, extra-biological trace which is revealed in his cultural products.

In its most general sense, agency is “the power or force behind a certain phenomenon or effect,” while efficacy means “the power to produce a desired effect.”<sup>3</sup> A psychologically tinged definition of efficacy emphasizes that it also encompasses a belief in the effectiveness of action taken. This psychologically understood efficiency resembles Wojtyła’s understanding of efficacy, due to its ability to reveal a person’s identity within the natural environment. The term “efficacy” will be reserved for Wojtyła’s *P*-agency (*P* – from person), meaning “that which essentially determines the dynamism proper to the human act.”<sup>4</sup>

In Karol Wojtyła’s anthropology,<sup>5</sup> efficacy is a unique human feature that distinguishes man from all other organisms. On the one hand, it is the objective cause of every free conscious action

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<sup>2</sup> An act is a conscious human action, but in the phenomenological study of the person’s action, carried out by Karol Wojtyła, it is “*a particular moment of the vision – that is, the experience – of the person.*” The purpose of his study has been dictated by the fact that the act “*reveals the person*”; cf. K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, in: “*Person and Act*” and *Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 102-103.

<sup>3</sup> *The New Penguin English Dictionary*, ed. by R. Allen (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 24, 445.

<sup>4</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 114.

<sup>5</sup> In this text, elements of Wojtyła’s anthropology are reconstructed mainly on the basis of an analysis of Wojtyła’s *Person and Act*. Other essays by Wojtyła are included in the collection: Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and *other anthropological studies* are also helpful.

for an individually chosen purpose and on the other hand, it is the individual's lived-experience of that action. In the context of purpose, efficacy entails responsibility for the performance of the act. As a result of action, the agent changes not only the environment in which the act occurs, but himself as well, not only in strengthening his efficiency in performing acts of a given type of action, but above all by changing his moral constitution.

In a certain aspect Wojtyła contrasted efficacy that is structurally related to action, and human subjectivity that is structurally related to "what happens in man,"<sup>6</sup> i.e., with the act of happening (actuation). He linked efficacy with human objectivity: it "manifests the concrete 'I' as a self-conscious cause of action."<sup>7</sup> In action, the "I" is the cause of dynamism and becomes aware of itself as the object of its own experience through the act; one's own "I" is the object of self-knowledge, while when something happens the dynamism of the "I" takes place, somehow independent of human will, caused by a biological process.<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, consciousness allows a human to experience his own subjectivity,<sup>9</sup> that is, "*to experience these acts [i.e., our acts] as acts and as our own,*"<sup>10</sup> that is, to subjectivize what is objective.

Reflections on efficacy are situated in the analysis of human dynamism, and therefore thematically within functional anatomy, to drawing on analogies of biological terminology. Wojtyła thoroughly analyzed this "functional" nature of efficacy, both from the perspective of its connection with personality development and its experience "in the lived-experience of 'I act'."<sup>11</sup> This text addresses some of Wojtyła's research themes: efficacy as a factor conditioning action, as a manifestation of self-determination, as a derivative of freedom, and as the basis for the person's transcendence<sup>12</sup> in the act.

The characteristics of efficacy discussed in this text are intertwined in important and complex ways with other aspects of the dynamic structure of the human person. These are

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<sup>6</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 163.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 112-113, 137-139.

<sup>9</sup> According to Wojtyła, different understandings of human subjectivity depend on the type of becoming aware of one's own subjectivity by the human agent of an act (man as the agent of an act): either a human is "*being a subject,*" or is "*being known (objectivized) as a subject,*" or is "*experiencing oneself as the subject of one's actions and lived-experiences.*" In traditional ontology the human subject, understood as *suppositum*, is abstracted from his lived-experience of subjectivity; cf. *ibid.*, 143.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>12</sup> Transcendence is understood here as surpassing the acting subject (*a*-subject, *a* – from *agere*), i.e., the acting "I" of the dynamized subject (*p*-subject, *p* – from *pati*). *Ibid.*, 163, 180-181.

comprehensively and deeply analyzed in the Wojtyła's work *Person and Act* and are discussed in detail in his other essays.<sup>13</sup>

### Processes: happening in man *versus* human action

Human dynamism is expressed as, on the one hand, biological and, on the other, efficacious, expressing itself, respectively, as *pati* and *agere*.<sup>14</sup> The first, the happening in man ("something happens in man"), is not the result of efficacy; man is not its agent. The second, man's action ("man acts"), evokes in him the lived-experience of himself as the agent of this form of his own dynamized subject.<sup>15</sup> In the happening there exists a passive (vegetative and reactive) subjectivity of the agent's body (*p*-subjectivity, *p* – from *pati*). In action experienced as the efficacy of the act, and not only the lived-experience of himself in "I act," there exists a subjectivity of the man-agent<sup>16</sup> (*a*-subjectivity, *a* – from *agere*).<sup>17</sup> Although in the first case there is no involvement of the efficacious "I," there is an objective cause of this internal action, that is, the happening, which is primarily biological in nature, other than the cause of the act. Man experiences, however, his own *p*-subjectivity, his own "I" as a result of becoming aware of the processes of enactment (actuation).

The actuation (the moment of actuation), not the efficacy (the moment of action), is responsible for the emergence of biological processes in the human, which Wojtyła calls natural (originating from nature).<sup>18</sup> Nature is characterized by an innate, immanent dynamism, consistent with the species characteristics, but also with an individual specificity of the human. Nature endows the human with spontaneous activity, thus prepared in his *p*-subjective, dynamic structure. This *B*-agency (*B* – of biological origin) is not the efficacy (*P*-agency) that transcends this natural, active endowment.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> K. Wojtyła, "The Person and the Act" and Related Essays.

<sup>14</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 163.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 168, 174.

<sup>16</sup> The distinguished *a*-subject corresponds to some extent to the ontological subject of existence and action, i.e., the *suppositum*. It is, however, broader in meaning than the *suppositum humanum*, as it refers to the awareness of the "I" in the live-experience of one's own subjectivity; the *a*-subject "joins the moment of experienced subjectivity with ontic subjectivity." *Ibid.*, 143.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 163-164.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 178-180.

<sup>19</sup> The adoption of the term *B*-agency as a term for biological functions may seem controversial. It refers to the efficiency of the organism. To some extent, this term may be justified by the psychosomatic unity of the person who is the agent of the act, in Wojtyła's concept of the integration of the person in act. "Man experiences himself as the agent of his act, and consequently he is its subject. He also experiences himself as a subject, although the lived-

This division into the world of nature and the person is blurred. It therefore requires unification in the form of integration, which Wojtyła reconstructed in Chapter III of the *Person and Act*. If it were not present in human subjectivity, both person and nature would be linked solely with their sharply outlined dual mode of action, consistent with the oppositional relation between enactment and act, while “[t]he efficacious I’ and ‘the acting I’ form a dynamic synthesis and a dynamic unity every time in every act.”<sup>20</sup>

The acting subject, the dynamic subject (*a*-subject), the acting “I,” is, as if “superior,” that is, above this naturally dynamized subject (*p*-subject). “Nature is made manifest exclusively in actuations of the subject ‘man,’ whereas acts reveal this man as a person.”<sup>21</sup> The agent is “the cause conscious of his causation.”<sup>22</sup> Selected elements of the structure of the efficacious “I” will be the matter of this consideration. The decisive factor between “man acts” and “something acts in man” is the grasping of the lived-experience of “I am an agent.”<sup>23</sup>

The somatic-vegetative dynamism (reactivity of the human body and physical reaction, *B*-agency) and its physical response does not demonstrate a dependence on a person’s self-determination, and therefore does not manifest itself in the experience of “a person acts,” but in the experience of “(something) happens in a person.” It is responsible for the body’s own *B*-agency (biological dynamism), not for the efficacy of the person (as a result of self-determination). The difference between the *B*-agency and the efficacy testify to the complexity of human being, going beyond his psycho-physicality (psycho-somaticity).

A human is not the cause of the body’s reactivity and reactions, i.e., he has no influence on *B*-agency unless, following the example of Far Eastern practices, he is able to control them to some extent. The integrality of the person requires, however, the most perfect possible harmonization of *p*-subjectivity with *a*-subjectivity in the act, which is efficacious (in the sense of the efficacy) and transcendent.<sup>24</sup> The integration of the person in the act, as it were, unites (on its own level) the dynamisms of the somatic and the psyche (which “happen”).

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experience of subjectivity differs from the lived-experience of efficacy. Furthermore, man experiences himself as the subject of all that merely ‘happens’ in him. The lived-experience of subjectivity also contains a certain passivity, whereas the lived-experience of efficacy is active to its core and therefore determines the human act.” *Ibid.*, 297.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 180.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 168.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 168-169.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

*B*-agency is inscribed within the pool of general personal dynamism, resulting from the integration of the person in the act, and within it, from the integration of psycho-somatic dynamisms in all their complexity. It is the act that triggers their active participation in the agent's *a*-subjectivity, distinct from the enactment of the *p*-subject.<sup>25</sup> Efficacy, though not sensorially identifiable, is the object of human experience.<sup>26</sup>

### Other shades of agency

*B*-agency and efficacy distinguish the somatic-vegetative dynamism from the dynamism of the person, respectively. The relationship of psycho-emotive dynamism and these two dynamisms is more complex. To some extent, the psycho-emotive dynamism derives from the somatic-vegetative one, but differs from it in that the latter places the person in a position of a passivity resulting from the dynamism of nature itself. Psycho-emotive dynamism, on the other hand, is susceptible to the person's influence (though not with the same kind of effects as the efficacy). It actually becomes the material for the person's development, shaped by him.

The integration of human psycho-emotiveness is expressed in human action in a conscious response to values, which through its impact on the human "I," creates morality, which, according to Wojtyła, is "the strictest existential reality connected with the person as its proper subject."<sup>27</sup> Sensitivity to values defines the emotiveness. Psycho-emotiveness pertains not only to psyche, but also to sensuality.<sup>28</sup> Fundamentally a person is not the agent of psycho-emotive processes, but in this layer of the dynamism of happenings he experiences himself as a *p*-subject. He is then "the cause conscious of his causation," distinct from "the causation of nature" in the somatic-vegetative (biological) layer.<sup>29</sup>

The influence of psycho-emotive dynamism is expressed by the emotionalization of consciousness,<sup>30</sup> which in turn influences efficacy. This influence is therefore achieved through a specific, albeit spontaneous, psycho-emotive agency (*P-E*-agency, *P-E* – from psycho-emotive origin). This process is independent of the person's efficacy, which is a derivative of self-

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 288.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 202.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 336-337.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 168, 201.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 150-152.

governance.<sup>31</sup> Emotive facts occur in a person as happening (thus, they are therefore a derivative of *B*-agency) but their awareness allows for the “conscious” control over them. However, this control is limited due to the lack of self-knowledge<sup>32</sup> in objectifying the emotive situation. This process is different from mastering emotions (controlling one’s own emotions by oneself), which is achieved through the will. Therefore, its effectiveness depends on the will in its efficiency, for example, on Aristotle’s ethical virtue of moderation.

Despite the separation of happening from action, Wojtyła raised the issue of habits of action,<sup>33</sup> which, once formed, influence psycho-somatic dynamism in a manner similar to biological factors. They are the result of conscious, intellectually reinforced action aimed at increasing the body’s response to stimuli. This type of *H*-agency (*H* – from habit origin) is revealed in the acquisition of skills.<sup>34</sup> Learned skills have a reciprocal impact on the functioning of the entire organism, and thus on the processes of happening. In this way, the individual contributes to their regulation to some extent.

Due to the dynamic unity and identity of man, it is ultimately impossible to separate efficacy from *p*-subjectivity, respectively “structurally contained in action and in what happens in man... Action together with man’s efficacy, which constitutes it experimentally, and all that happens in man meet, so to speak, in one common root,”<sup>35</sup> i.e., in a dynamic subject (*a*-subject). Man is, after all, a *p*-subject, but also an *a*-subject, although in the act he is primarily the object of action.

The following considerations will concern efficacy. Personality will be understood not in the psychological sense, but as being a person, i.e., a conscious agent (perpetrator) of an act.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 190-191.

<sup>32</sup> Wojtyła defined self-knowledge as “understanding oneself... a kind of cognitive permeation of the object that I am for myself.” *Ibid.*, 133.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 322-323.

<sup>34</sup> Aristotle’s ethical virtues (prowesses) are situated semantically between the psychological understanding of skill (as a specific, flexible habit) and the personalistic understanding of efficacy (as a person’s ability to shape himself through his actions). Thus, Aristotle’s virtue “will be the state of character which makes a man good [the efficacy, morally perfecting a person – T.G.] and which makes him do his own work well [*H*-agency – T.G.]”; cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by W.D. Ross (eBooks@Adelaide), book II.6.

<sup>35</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 174.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 187.

## Self-determination and efficacy

The unity of *p*-subjectivity and the efficacy in the human subject of existence and action is ultimately a derivative of self-determination.

In relation to human subjectivity and objectivity, self-determination is the relationship between the *a*-subjectivity of a person and the objectivity that a person is for himself.<sup>37</sup> Wojtyła defined self-determination in the most general terms as an attitude in which “the person that is made manifest through will, and not merely the will through and in the person... in which the will is revealed as a property of the person; the person is revealed as the reality constituted properly by the will with respect to his dynamism”,<sup>38</sup> while the will appears “only secondarily as a power.”<sup>39</sup>

The essence of human freedom lies in the self-determination, whose conceptual scope is broader than that of the efficacy. A person who performs an act, in addition to changing his environment, also changes something within himself (constitutes himself), becomes an object for himself, is a creator of himself: “self-determination, and not only the very efficacy of the personal ‘I,’ explains the *realness and the personal character of moral values*; it explains the realness of the fact that through his acts, *man becomes ‘good’ or ‘evil’* – and since he became, he also is ‘good’ or ‘evil’ *precisely as man.*”<sup>40</sup>

Self-determination is a moment that clearly distinguishes a person’s action from what happens within him; it is an understanding of the efficacy of the personal “I,” closely related to the understanding of the person’s responsibility for the act, for its axiological and ethical content.<sup>41</sup>

In the analysis of will (“I want”), intentionality alone is not enough. It is self-determination that determines the act, the *actus humanum (voluntarium)*.<sup>42</sup> In the act of self-determination (thanks to the dynamics of efficacy), the “I” is revealed, but in each case it is also constituted (not only as self-awareness, but as two types of relationships, i.e., self-possession and self-governance),

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 217.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. K. Wojtyła, *The Personal Structure of Self-Determination*, in: Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and Related Essays, 462.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 458-461; K. Wojtyła, *The Person: Subject and Community*, in: Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and Related Essays, 479.

<sup>42</sup> Wojtyła, *The Personal Structure*, 458-461.

as a person.<sup>43</sup> Self-possession determines self-determination (the specific “I want,” the will to something), because one cannot decide about something one is not consciously aware of possessing. Similarly, one cannot decide about something (that one wants) that one does not consciously control, but not in the sense of the ability to control oneself (in the sense of self-mastery or *H*-agency). It is “mastery over oneself” in the sense that a person “himself is the one whom he governs.”<sup>44</sup> Of course, self-governance presupposes self-possession.

The person, being an object of self-determination conditioned by self-possession and self-governance, does not address his own “I” but rather the objectivity of the “I” determined at the moment of the act of will, through the relation of self-governance and self-possession. The realization of this objectivity “has a fundamental significance for morality. The entire realness of morality, of moral value, is rooted here.”<sup>45</sup> This objectification through self-determination (in the integral dynamics of will) corresponds to subjectification. This happens in conscious life-experience, when a person—“experiences the fact that he determines himself and that, as a result of self-determination, he becomes somebody... ultimately, he experiences the very fact that he is somebody.”<sup>46</sup>

Efficacy and self-determination are revealed in the transcendence of the person in action and they reveal dependence on the structure of self-possession and self-governance. “[E]very human act is fulfilled not only by the transcendence of self-determination and efficacy but also *through the dynamization of the subjective ‘I,’ the dynamization subordinated to self-determination and efficacy.*”<sup>47</sup>

### **Efficacy derived from the will**

Wojtyła attributed a double role to the will, visible in every act: the revelation of a person’s will (desire) and, above all, the constitution of a person in the process of dynamism through the will,

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<sup>43</sup> Wojtyła, *The Person: Subject and Community*, 482-483.

<sup>44</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 208.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 330.

that is, deciding about himself.<sup>48</sup> Self-determination is therefore the freedom of a person through the will, freedom which is an attribute of the will.<sup>49</sup>

Freedom in relation to efficacy is expressed in the alternative: “*I can but do not have to.*” This alternative is not only the content of consciousness but also “the manifestation and concretization of the dynamism proper to man” in the potentiality of the human subject, i.e., in the will. The will allows for the choice between “I can” and “I have to.” The will is “that which allows man to want.”<sup>50</sup> It makes a person the actual subject of his own dynamism (the efficacy). It, therefore, makes the person an agent, a dynamic subject (*a*-subject). The will clearly separates actions from enactments (actuations).

The experience of “man acts” reveals the efficacy stemming from freedom, that is, a specific drive of the dynamic reality of the person. The lived-experience of “I am the agent” means the dynamism of the person in the act, that is, it is marked by the moment of conscious efficacy of the personal “I,” liberated by freedom.<sup>51</sup>

The act is performed by a person (subject and agent), so the act is a result of the efficacy: internal (immanent,<sup>52</sup> permeating self-determination in the “I”) in relation to the person, and external to the person (consciously directed beyond the person). In relation to the person, it is simultaneously the result of the efficacy: transitive (because it passes over time) and intransitive (because it is objectified in man as a result of self-determination and efficacy). For will is both self-determination and intentionality. The former is basic to freedom, while the latter (secondary to self-determination) is an extension of the meaning of freedom.<sup>53</sup>

A witness to the above objectification is man in his morality: through a morally good or morally bad act, as a person, he “*becomes* morally good or morally bad.”<sup>54</sup> It is freedom that allows human action to transcend all dynamisms and gives the efficacy not only the function of

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<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>49</sup> In this identification, Wojtyła referred to Immanuel Kant’s practical imperative, which expresses the objective principle of the will to human actions; a personal subject is simultaneously an object for itself. *Ibid.*, 217. *So, act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means*, (cf. I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. by M. Gregor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 37.

<sup>50</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 203.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 295.

<sup>52</sup> Immanence here means the presence of the effect of an action within the person, within the “I.”

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 253.

transforming the agent's external reality, but also his internal – moral – reality, that is, becoming a good or bad person.<sup>55</sup>

Human action “is actually the only full experience of efficient causality.” This efficacy of causation of man is revealed in the act. To be a cause is to bring about something (*feri*, becoming something) and the existence of an effect (*esse*). The act is the effect of the person's efficacy, and therefore it is his property. Given the moral qualification of the act, it is the subject of his responsibility.<sup>56</sup> Freedom is the condition of the efficacy, which, because of its effect in action, entails responsibility, the form of which is expressed by the attribution and at the same time subordination of freedom to truth. And these relationships determine the transcendence of the person in their action.

### **Efficacy as a condition of transcendence**

Self-determination is a moment of freedom. It is so not only in the sense of person's self-dependence but also in the indication of the object of desire as an expression of will. Before will is concretized, a certain indeterminacy occurs with respect to its possible objects. The participation of motivation, or the influence of motives on the will, expressed through intentionality,<sup>57</sup> is necessary to determine the object of desire, for self-determination to occur. This individual process is always individually specific and is revealed as a result of self-governance and self-possession. It leads directly to the performance of an act. Then a person exceeds (transcends) his own *p*-subjectivity. Thus, self-determination, and therefore efficacy, influences the person's transcendence in the act.<sup>58</sup> Transcendence “is realized through self-determination and efficacy.”<sup>59</sup>

Self-determination is not merely about arousing desire. In this basis of efficacy, a person no longer treats his own “I” solely as an object (in the sense of internal objectivity), but his own subjectivity (already present in self-governance and self-possession) is, as it were, -actualized.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 202-203.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 169-170.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 231-232.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 242-243.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 336.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 211-213.

When an acting person exceeds his own *p*-subjectivity towards an object as a goal because of its value, i.e., shows intentionality,<sup>61</sup> then, in Wojtyła's understanding, this is horizontal transcendence. However, it does not come from self-determination, which conditions a person's transcendence in free action (if the person is free). Only then, by transcending himself (as if upwards, due to the superiority of the "I" over his own dynamism), does the person visualize and affirm himself as a person. Wojtyła called this process vertical transcendence.<sup>62</sup>

Vertical transcendence is possible only when the will to act (freedom) depends solely on truth, and not on the objects of the will in all their diverse representations. In this way, a person rises (not only through consciousness but through truthfulness) above his own dynamism, and the truth about good becomes the basis for the moral qualification of an act.<sup>63</sup>

The reference to truth (especially axiological truth) highlights yet another intuitive-mental feature<sup>64</sup> of human agency, as it were, internal (*I-M*-agency, *I-M* – from intuitive-mental origin), revealed in what Wojtyła called a cognitive transcendence. Truth is here the subject of intuitive and mental cognition thanks to *I-M*-agency. Cognition "happens" both within a person and a person acts cognitively (in order to cognize). In the latter case, he is an indirect agent of an act based on judgment about the goal. In the former case, a person is rather a *p*-subject, as he non-discursively arrives at the truth about the value of an object, although the result of this process may be preceded by attempts to achieve it through discourse. Vertical transcendence happens thanks to a specific intertwining of intuition and discourse in establishing the truth and subordinating to it. This dependence on the truth about the good "constitutes the person in his transcendence; the transcendence of freedom passes into the transcendence of morality,"<sup>65</sup> which remains in a constant connection with the transcendence of the person in the act.<sup>66</sup>

Wojtyła devoted separate considerations to cognitive transcendence, which concerns duty, and he identified it with "a particular degree of dynamization of the will through truth."<sup>67</sup> Through

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<sup>61</sup> This type of volition can be compared to the Hobbesian mechanism of appetites and aversions, cf. Th. Hobbes, *Leviathan or the Matter, Forme, & Power of Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civil* (1651) (Globe Grey, e-book, 2019), 36.

<sup>62</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 221, 226-227, 229-30, 281-282.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 241-242, 260-261.

<sup>64</sup> The mind is a property and power of man, expressed by the ability to think and understand, and to distinguish truth from falsehood. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 261.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 257.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 248-250, 256-258, 273-274.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

it, a person shows his structure of self-governance and self-possession. Wojtyła pointed out to duty as “a particular modification of self-determination and intentionality.”<sup>68</sup> (PaA, 270)

The person’s transcendence<sup>69</sup> is spiritual in nature,<sup>70</sup> but it is expressed in bodily activity, which can be translated into so-called visual actions that reveal a person’s efficacy (e.g., in assessing effectiveness). Transcendence alone, if only in its light the human act is to be considered, would not allow to discover the whole complexity of the human personality. It is an integration that, in its complementarity to transcendence, gives various psycho-somatic dynamisms a personal dimension and inscribes them within the efficacy that determines the person’s transcendence in the act.<sup>71</sup>

The integration of truthfulness must complement the integration of the so-called consciousness-based feelings, which give rise to the lived-experience of values along with transcendence, because the latter requires reference to truth. Only then is transcendence based on the “authentic freedom of self-determination.” The lived-experience of values must be grounded in the truth about the good.<sup>72</sup>

The total dynamism of the person actualized in action remains transcendent in relation to the somatic-vegetative (reactive) and psycho-emotive dynamisms.<sup>73</sup> Both originate in the bodily (biological) structure. To be integrated in action, they must share a common source with transcendence.<sup>74</sup> The self-disclosure of the person occurs not only through his transcendence but also through his “integration proper to the act,” and therefore also in relation to the subjective functioning of the psycho-somatic structure (*P-S* – agency).<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 270.

<sup>69</sup> In a broader sense, the transcendence of the person can be related to the transcendentals of being: truth, good and beauty. And not only in the abstract sense, but also based on the experience of transcendentals, “which goes hand in hand with the experience of personal transcendence.” *Ibid.*, 258.

<sup>70</sup> Wojtyła defined spirituality as a manifestation “in consciousness, thanks to which it forms in “lived-experience the experiential inwardness” of human existence and action. *Ibid.*, 147. The center of human spirituality (and also of a person’s transcendence in action) is the uniquely personal “self-dependence, which constitutes the fundamental structure of the freedom of the human will, and which contains and manifests an ability to submit man and his acts to truth.” *Ibid.*, 260. In lived-experience, one can discern the spiritual nature of subject-person. “The realm of truth is identified with the realm of spirit proper only to it. Truth constitutes the essential reason for the essence of human cognition and it is the basis of the transcendence of the person in action.” *Ibid.*, 248.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 267-273.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 344-345.

<sup>73</sup> Wojtyła studied “two distinct variants of dynamism and potentiality... as two structural layers” of human subjectivity: somatic-vegetative and psycho-emotive. “I experiences itself in them as subject and not merely as agent, the latter being the case in conscious actions, that is, in acts.” *Ibid.*, 190.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 371-373.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 416.

### Summary: efficacy and *p*-subjectivity

The earlier comparison between efficacy, resulting from self-determination, and spontaneous *P-E*-agency can be replaced by a comparison of volitional and, respectively, emotional factors that influence action. This translates into the relationship between efficacy and *p*-subjectivity, if psycho-emotive dynamics has been qualified as a type of happening. The first feature of this relationship is the function of its parts in action: the efficacy is its condition, while *p*-subjectivity does not participate in it. And this is the case when considering *p*-subjectivity of the somatic-vegetative processes. In the case of psycho-emotive processes, however, when a specific type of feeling is established in the psyche (in an emotional attitude,<sup>76</sup> and not just a fleeting state of feeling), it begins to shape the will, i.e., this type of happening influences the action. Then, “[e]fficacy and the transcendence of the personal ‘I’ connected with it are, in a sense, pulled into the subject.”<sup>77</sup> In such “subjectivized” human action, psychic immanence begins to dominate transcendence.

The emotionalization of consciousness causes action which “is performed in passion.” It is then characterized by reduced responsibility, but it does necessarily mean the disintegration or suspension of the capacity for conscious-action, that is, the efficacy. On the contrary, it can become a seed of creative integration<sup>78</sup> when it releases a special energy flowing from the lived-experience of values. “This factor directs *the person to fulfill himself in the act not by way of emotional spontaneity alone but by way of a transcendent relation to truth and to the duty and responsibility connected with it.*”<sup>79</sup> This integration is the result of the emerging tension between emotiveness and efficacy. It stems from the human need for the rational pursuit of truth, for the engagement of *I-M*-agency. In a normal state of rational decisions *versus* spontaneous emotional urges, these decisions focus on choosing the goal of action – the true good. This is not about negating values of

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<sup>76</sup> An emotional attitude is an internal attitude of a person, resulting from the consolidation of a certain state caused by a (psychic) feeling and constituting “a particularly important fruit of man’s emotive potentiality and dynamism... This attitude is typically ‘subjective’.” *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

<sup>78</sup> The efficacy, by arousing dynamism, causes the person to be the agent of the act (in the immanence of the person in action, consisting in the dynamism of the action) and at the same time the person-agent places himself above the act, i.e., transcends it in the experience of “I am the agent of the action.” However, due to the dynamism of his own “I”; this “efficacious I” passes into the “acting I.” Hence, “[m]an is not only the agent of his action but *also its creator*.” The task of evoking the coming to existence and the existence of the effect belongs to the essence of efficacy.” *Ibid.*, 171-172.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 361-362. See also: 357-358.

lived-experiencing, but about developing the ability to connect “*transcendence with integration in the sphere of emotions,*” which complement and mutually influence each other: they are complementary.<sup>80</sup>

Integration of a person into action based on the emotional nature of the human psyche is accomplished through skills (similar to the ethical virtues of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas.)<sup>81</sup> In the process of integration, the tension between emotionality and efficacy is resolved: in the realization of a personal structure of self-mastery and self-possession on the basis of psychic *p*-subjectivity. “[*T*]hanks to skills in various areas, the will can safely appropriate and make its own spontaneity proper to affections and, in general, to all of emotivity.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358, 361-362.

<sup>81</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, books II-III; St. Thomas Aquinas, Treatises: *On Habits* and *On Habits in Particular – Good Habits*, in: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (1-2, qu. 49-70), <https://www.ccel.org/aquinas/summa/> [access: 29.12.25].

<sup>82</sup> Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 365.

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**BOOK REVIEW: Francisco, Rolyn. *Karol Wojtyła's Acting Person: In Philippine Contexts*. Manila: Claretian Publication, 2025. 416 pp.**

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Fr. Rolyn Francisco is known for his commitments to both academic scholarship and pastoral ministry. With a master's degree in philosophy from Ateneo de Manila University and a Doctorate in Public Administration and Governance from UP-NCPAG, he has taught philosophy for many years while actively ministering in marginalized communities in Manila. This present work thus appears as a sort of synthesis of these two dimensions of his vocation, bringing Wojtyła's personalism into conversation with concrete Philippine contexts.

Such an endeavour is laudable, at least in principle. Contextualizing Wojtyła's philosophical anthropology is a timely task, especially in areas of the world where personalism has yet to be deeply integrated into the theological or philosophical discourse. Despite this promising claim, however, the present work regrettably falls short of contemporary scholarly standards for studies on the thought of Karol Wojtyła for several substantive reasons.

The first and most obvious concern is that the book relies heavily on an outdated English translation of Wojtyła's works. This is evident in the book's title, which indicates that it is based on the 1979 English version of *Osoba i czyn*, translated by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka. This work has received criticism from both scholars and Wojtyła himself for its numerous unauthorized editorial interventions and inconsistent translations, which weaken the metaphysical underpinnings of the entire work.<sup>2</sup> This is why, in 2021, the Catholic University of America Press published the *English Critical Edition of Person and Act*, edited by Carl A. Anderson, et al., and

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<sup>2</sup> G. Ignatik, preface to K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, vol. 1, *The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II*, trans. by G. Ignatik, eds. Carl A. Anderson, et al. (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), xxviii-xxx.

translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. This critical edition was the result of years of philological and philosophical labour intended to address the issues inherent in the earlier translation.

Thus, it is methodologically deficient that a new work should use the outdated and inaccurate translation without taking into consideration or even acknowledging the existence of the new translation, while continuing to perpetrate the same intellectual confusion that the critical edition attempted to eliminate. The same reasoning holds true for the continued use of the older 1981 edition of *Love and Responsibility*, translated by H.T. Willetts, not the updated 2013 translation, also by Grzegorz Ignatik.

The second problem concerns the originality and structure of this work. The content of the book is exactly the same as Fr. Francisco's previous two works: *Karol Wojtyła's (John Paul II) Theory of Participation Based on His Christian Personalism* (1995) and *Empowering the Poor with A Quadripartite Housing Approach: A Personal Odyssey* (2012). While re-addressing one's previous works is not wrong *per se*, a new work published over 30 years later is expected to include new scholarship, updated interpretation, and expanded engagement with recent studies. The complete replication of previous works without any development whatsoever sends a message of stagnation instead of progress in research.

In addition, the author's critical assessment of Wojtyła is misleading. In the "Critical Remarks" section, the author claims that Wojtyła fails to explain the origin of moral norms. This outrageous claim is untenable given how thoroughly Wojtyła treats the truth about the good as the normative basis for moral qualification in *Person and Act* and that states the ultimate source of the norms is God as seen in his other works.<sup>3</sup> Wojtyła consistently maintains that norms are not external or imposed on the person, but spring from the person's transcendence in truth and their intrinsic relationship with freedom and objective good. Thus, this assertion shows insufficient textual analysis, further exacerbated by the dependence on minimal sources, especially on the primary section.

Alongside these scholarly concerns, the "Application" section of the book contains no engagement with Wojtyła's texts at all. It contains pastoral reflections and experiences with parish ministry, but it lacks any meaningful connection to Wojtyła's framework or attempt to engage with it. Pastoral reflection is beneficial in and of itself, but it requires careful conceptual mediation for incorporation into a philosophical monograph. Without ongoing engagement with Wojtyła's

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<sup>3</sup> K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 241-241.

works, this section is more of a personal testimony than a proper application of the philosopher's text to concrete situations. As such, the second half of the book is a description of personal ministry and is not demonstrative of Wojtyła's philosophy in any shape or form.

Finally, there are numerous editorial and production deficiencies in this book, such as spelling errors, uneven printing, and inconsistent use of formatting, thus negatively affecting the scholarly presentation of the book. Though many of these deficits reflect poor publishing decisions rather than poor authorship, they nonetheless impact the reception of the work, whose credibility depends partly on the degree of precision and care reflected in the presentation.

It must be acknowledged that there is a positive, commendable pastoral/cultural effort on the part of the author to try to situate the thought of Karol Wojtyła in the cultural context of the Philippines. It is certainly worth showing how personalism is relevant to the life of the local community. However, this cannot contribute meaningfully to the advancement of scholarship unless contextualization is based on textual fidelity and engagement with recent scholarly works.

In conclusion, *Karol Wojtyła's Acting Person: In Philippine Contexts* could serve readers looking for an introduction/pastoral approach to themes developed by Wojtyła. However, from a scholarly perspective, it fails to add any meaningful contribution to the discussion on personalism or Karol Wojtyła's philosophy. Its dependence on outdated translations, lack of engagement with the *English Critical Edition* of *Person and Act*, absence of recent secondary scholarship, and structural drift from sustained textual analysis cause this particular work to fail to meet current academic standards.

Scholars who wish to engage with the thought of Karol Wojtyła should pay close attention to developments in current scholarship, such as new translations of primary texts. One hopes that future works in this area will expand on the state of existing research or refer to it critically. Only then can the original author's work be responsibly appropriated in specific contexts and contribute meaningfully to the philosophical discourse.

**Review of *Philosophical Works Volume 2: Contemporary Ethical Writing*,  
by Archbishop Karol Wojtyła**

Caroline Beshenich<sup>1</sup>

The recently published *Philosophical Works Volume 2: Contemporary Ethical Writing* (“*Philosophical Works*”), by Karol Wojtyła, is a continuation of the previous volume. The work is a Polish text, although this review is written in the English language. The book encourages the reader to delve deeper into Wojtyła’s writings, beyond Wojtyła’s more well-known books, such as *Person and Act*, *Theology of the Body*, and *Love and Responsibility*. *Philosophical Works* introduces the reader to Wojtyła the ethicist—beyond merely his theological and philosophical interests. Within the tome’s pages, Wojtyła’s multi-disciplinary approach to philosophy—which enabled him to see “the bigger picture” that is offered by philosophy, past Aristotle and Socrates—is in full view. *Philosophical Works Volume 2 Contemporary Ethical Writing* provides a window into the multi-disciplinary writing of Karol Wojtyła, allowing his writing as a philosopher and ethicist to come to light, and subsequently shining a light on this contemporary thinker’s extensive work, beyond what he is typically known for.

At 698 pages, *Philosophical Works* is hardly a concise text. It features an introduction by Fr. Jarosław Mereck, who efficiently introduces Wojtyła’s work to the reader. This introduction involves walking the reader through Wojtyła’s philosophical system and breaking down his philosophical thought process for them. The text itself is 520 pages. Each chapter is followed by a series of notes from the editor related to the preceding chapter, a description of the sources used in the chapter, and information regarding variations in the text. At the end of the work, a series of biographical notes is provided on the mentioned philosophers and other connected people. *Philosophical Works* will become an especially important part of any philosopher’s library as it draws on archived materials. Much of the book’s content has evolved from material that was originally handwritten by the late pontiff. This point is key to understanding the text, as it shows

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the manuscript was an active part of Wojtyła's thinking—it was being written as it emerged from his mind. A glossary defining foreign words is provided, which provides great assistance to the reader. The table of contents is featured somewhat unintuitively at the end of the text. Although helpful, it is a strange place to find such a guiding part of the book. While readers from all backgrounds would benefit from reading this book, it will most likely resonate with those who have a background in philosophy, as this book makes use of philosophical terminology that could be unfamiliar to the uninitiated reader.

If *Person and Act* can be considered Wojtyła's masterpiece, then the content contained in *Philosophical Works* is the groundwork that had to be laid for the final piece to rest on. Wojtyła was analytical. His mind saw not only how the pieces of a puzzle fit together, but also the best order to assemble the pieces in to facilitate the end stage. What is contained within this work, therefore, should not be regarded from the same perspective as the masterpiece, *Person and Act*. Rather, it is a series of stepping stones propelling the reader in that direction. Like an artist, Wojtyła colored his writing with the varying hues of other philosophers. Nonetheless, his writing is not swayed one way or another by a particular philosopher's thought. True to his style, Wojtyła maintains his central path. He interacts with other thinkers; he gazes at the overview of their philosophical offerings on the human experience, yet he does not deem any one writer as having "the answer." Rather, his writing serves to compel the reader to make their own conclusions, as philosophers and thinkers. This makes the volume unique and worthy of reading, as it encourages intellectual growth and maturation.

It is interesting here is to note that, in this book, Wojtyła builds on the concepts used by St. Thomas Aquinas and Max Scheler. Yet, as may also be noted in his later writings, he implements his own original thinking in his work. One can see how Aquinas and Scheler provided scaffolding for Wojtyła's efforts. In the beginning, he built around them; later, they would become the foundation on which he built his school of philosophical thought. This background makes his arguments of personhood more solid as they have a firm and steady underpinning to rest on. These discussions on personhood may be appreciated by Wojtyła's readers as—with the particular disregard for human life that can be noticed in the contemporary age—it is invaluable to have one's intellectual discourse reinforced by the thoughts of a writer so well versed and dedicated to the person's dignity.

If Wojtyła’s masterpiece can be considered *Person and Act*, and Wojtyła himself can be considered a Personalist, then it is important to place both of these points in context. Wojtyła’s work came from somewhere. It was not an isolated occurrence that just appeared. His particular ethical structure emerged from his concern for the person. The reality of this person became the focus of his work. To stay connected with this focus, Wojtyła had to truly engage in his study. Therefore, it remains a point of interest that *Philosophical Works* is not an isolated supposition on the Personalist topic, but rather a dialogue with philosophers who had already written on the person and discussed their reality. And through this dialogue between Wojtyła and his chosen philosophers, the reader is also invited to engage in their own dialogue with the historical line of philosophers—as well as with Wojtyła himself. In this way, they are able to form their own ideas. As a professor, Wojtyła does not force his views on his students. Rather, he presents his thesis and logical development of ideas to the reader and allows them to develop their own conclusions.

Preceding *Person and Act*, *Philosophical Works* gives the reader the tools they will need to adequately study Wojtyła’s further writings. Yet, taken on its own, this new book also acquaints the reader with St. Thomas Aquinas and his teachings on the person. Wojtyła then takes the reader “the rest of the way” as he enriches the foundations provided by classical metaphysics and allows readers to grow as philosophers as the text prepares them for modern problems relating to the person.

In contemporary times, students of all ages have experienced a teacher telling them what to think and how to come to this conclusion. Modern books often do the same—as their narration directs the reader to arrive at a pre-conceived conclusion. Amidst this scripted reality, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła’s book *Philosophical Works Volume 2: Contemporary Ethical Writing* is an intellectual treasure trove that invites the reader to *discover* its conclusions. It is a significant contribution to Wojtylian scholarship as it actively demonstrates to the reader how Wojtyła worked and how his thoughts were formed and took shape. Over the course of this discovery, the reader will encounter the person introduced to them by the personalist thinker, Archbishop Karol Wojtyła.