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Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's Book
A Monograph on the Person as the Subject of Morality[1]

Albert Mieczysław Krąpiec
translated by Sydney Sadowski[2]

The written work becomes a shared asset of the community, as the intended recipient, to whom one's own thoughts are communicated. Therefore, in the name of this common good, we may share our reflections, including critical remarks, which are not, after all, synonymous with a negative evaluation.

It seems to me that the general solution proposed by the author can be reduced to a fundamental assertion: It is through an analysis of the human act that the person is affirmed as the subject of that act. This type of assertion (of course, as read through the work) seems to me to be fully justified, both from an ethical standpoint and, perhaps to a lesser extent, from a metaphysical standpoint. For in fact, the subjectivity of the person – that is in the primary understanding, the being of man – most adequately and most fully can be affirmed in the act and through the act, for it is precisely here that a person appears as a being that brings about in itself and for itself those new beings, radiated forth from itself, which did not exist before. The subjectivity of the person, and through it, the subjectivity of man's existence and his being, is undoubtedly justified and guaranteed in the human act and its ultimate understanding.

However, by that alone, have we obtained a theory of man, a physical anthropology? If by philosophical anthropology we understand a theory of man, such as has been constructed through philosophical analysis which renders him non-contradictory in the context of his essential and fundamental human operations, then one must, it seems, arrive at a negative conclusion. The work of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła does not constitute this type of anthropology, since it lacks an analysis of human activity within the essential context of human life. It is, however, an aspectual

[1] Note: This text was originally published as: "Książka kardynała Karola Wojtyły monografią osoby jako podmiotu moralności," *Analecta Cravoviensia* Vol. 5 (1973), 57-61. The original article can be found at: https://czasopisma.upjp2.edu.pl/analectacracoviensia/article/view/2663/2545

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anthropology, an anthropology used by the ethicist and the moralist, and therefore an anthropology which allows for a deeper understanding of the person as a subject of morality.

Everything I say hereafter will now be a "variation" on the topic formulated precisely in this way.

The entire tradition of philosophical and theological literature has presented us with a concept of the person from the perspective of determined potentialities and determined sources of human action. Briefly stated, that through an analysis of *physis* – *nature,* attempts were made not only toward the determination of the structure of the being of man but also to discover the personal moment of man; as if the person appeared as some pinnacle moment in nature which, incidentally, is probably not true. This does not mean that the person is not the pinnacle moment of being, it merely means that the person does not lie along the line of the development of "nature," that is, of determinate structures of action. If then, we were to conceive of the person as a self-determining source of action, and not "determined," the opposition between nature and the person would become sharper. And it is precisely Cardinal Wojtyła's work that appears to be fundamentally devoted to the person of man's being; the person as a being in the primary sense, the being which is the subject in the act of subjectifying and therefore radiates forth from itself dependent instances of being, such as human acts. That moment is extremely valuable and has been little emphasized in the literature. But the accentuation placed on the subjective-personal aspect has been linked with the resignation, or the incomplete working out of the other aspect, more closely connected with an analysis of the very structure of being or even a theory of the human person. For emphasizing the existential moment places greater emphasis on the "I" as subject, while the content aspect remains underdeveloped. Thus, there is a lack of analysis, for example, of those characteristic features of personal being that are ordinarily enumerated in the classical current of philosophy (cognition, love, freedom, subjectivity of law, integrity, dignity). There is also no account of those characteristic structures of man's being about which so much has been written against the background of the classical interpretations of *De anima*. It is precisely these gaps, or the deliberate resignation of philosophical analysis, that make it difficult to accept the monograph as a work of philosophical anthropology. It is rather a study in the field of anthropology, specifically, a possible ethical anthropology constructed with a view to showing the personal subjectivity of man as the one who accomplishes the act and the personal being responsible for that act. Whereby the moment of "accomplishing" the act, and, through that act,

the "self-fulfillment" or "self-actualization" of the person, is elaborated to such an extent that the work constitutes a monograph on the person as a moral subject. And there probably is no comparable monograph in world literature in this regard.

I would see two reasons for such an outlined and broadly presented conception. The first is the profession of ethics and viewing the world and the human person from an ethical perspective. In this regard, the matter is both understandable and at the same time significant. But is that all? Or perhaps we have here a hidden postulate of the reducibility of the philosophy of consciousness to the philosophy of being? That is precisely how the matter was presented some years ago at the "Philosophical Week" by the author of the work under analysis. If this postulate were to be realized in some way, then I would again see two possibilities:

a) Limiting oneself to descriptions of states of consciousness and what occurs within consciousness, as a distinctive (intentional) reflection of reality. In this state of things, all the contents that are known and appearing in the consciousness are an aspectual rendering of reality. From the perspective of these contents, they are identical with reality, but this is only a one-sided identity. This means that the contents apprehended in cognition are identical, in the aspect of their apprehension, with reality, but this does not mean that reality itself is identical to the contents that are apprehended and appear in my consciousness. Reality is not only richer, and infinitely so, but it exists in and of itself as subject, whereas the contents apprehended in cognition (and appearing in consciousness) exist only by my existence, the existence of the knowing subject. In this state of things the data of consciousness cannot be reduced to reality, for they are only a formal sign of it, transparent, but aspectually and selectively representing that reality.

b) If however, from another point of view, no longer cognitive but ontic, we were to apprehend the acts themselves within the data of consciousness, as manifestations and emanations of the subjective being of the person, then, from the perspective of the reality of the cognitive act, which bears a specific content, we only seemingly analyzed acts of consciousness, for in essence we would be in the realm of ontology, since cognitive acts, as acts of a real subject are also a real (accidental) being. For the metaphysician, it is ultimately a matter of indifference whether material or spiritual (acts of cognition) entities are subjected to analysis. Both are real.

But it is precisely through the analysis of the spiritual acts, emanated by the knowing person that we meet with the only possible "manifestation" of the subject itself, given to us for analysis, which bears witness to the subject and points to the structure of the subject performing the act.

And in the analysis of this act, two sides can be distinguished: a) the side "from the subject," in so far as the act is precisely an emanation of the subject; b) from the second side "towards the object" insofar as through this act we attain the specific object. In a real act, much like a real stick with two ends, both sides always appear inseparably. However, in the analysis, one may pause at, or devote greater attention to, the first side, the act, to the extent it is viewed from the side of the subject, insofar as it emerges from the subject. However, the same act can be analyzed from the side of the object, to the extent it reaches the object and "apprehends" the object in a particular way.

Of course, in the act of cognition, or more broadly put, in human conscious life, there is an extraordinary richness of apprehended objects. And that is why it would not be a matter of objectivity as the objectivity of a cognitive or conscious act, but rather the subjective objectivity of that act. It is about the manner in which the object is apprehended through a cognitive or spiritual act. The manner in which the object is apprehended reveals something about the subject itself and indicates its characteristic features as a being. The analysis of various spiritual, conscious acts – mainly cognitive, (but not only!) – may become an instrument for constructing an anthropological philosophical theory.

In the work under discussion, it seems to me that there is a lack of analysis regarding human spiritual acts from the perspective of subjective objectivity, even though we constantly encounter subtle analyses of the first aspect of the act, namely, the act insofar as it emerges from the personal subject. This is because the analyses come from the pen of an ethicist interested in the connection between the act and the person. But one must not forget that the way an object is apprehended, the way the object is constructed, also reveals something about the person, and does so "objectively," by virtue of the objective nature of the act. It seems to me that, to a large extent, Thomas's intellectual legacy has not been fully utilized in this regard, not only in the field of anthropology, but precisely in the field of morality and especially in his *Summa Theologiciae* Books I-II, where, after all, we continually encounter an analysis of human act in terms of the characteristic domains of the object of that act; where analyses are conducted not only of various groups of acts performed by the personal subject but also, and this is of immense significance, of those acts that mutually condition and synthesize one another within the overarching function of cognition, volition, and choice; whether unperfected by habit or perfected through the influence of law, passion, and the sense of *debitum*. The material, long since conceived and articulated in a language, which may

differ from our own today, represents a body of work that must be taken into account in the field of anthropology, particularly ethical anthropology, for it has revealed a great many characteristics of the human being as the subject of moral action. And rethinking the old material in the context of contemporary philosophical currents would make it possible to bring out the many new potentialities contained in the texts of Thomas. And this is not just Thomas himself, but about the truth, which could be expressed more fully and clearly by taking into account the analyses of books I-II of his *Summa*.

The kind of knowledge analyzed by an ethicist or moralist is essentially just one type of human knowledge, phronetic knowledge, and therefore oriented toward and connected with action. Here it is enough to remember the history of the theory of phronetic cognition from the Greek tragedians, Heraclitus, Aristotle, and Thomas Aquinas. And yet man makes use principally of cognition of an informational type, and this in its many forms and under various conditions. In constructing a theory of man, one cannot fail to take into account this type of cognition and its fundamental, nodal forms, which bear witness to the human subject. In all of this, the matter of the human body and its role in shaping the spiritual profile of the person is also of considerable importance. Although the body is frequently discussed in the work under consideration, its role calls for a special investigation and treatment, for it is precisely the factor that conditions not only self-awareness but also a person's inner development, and above all, their moral development. The role of the body is considered against the background of specific activities that manifest the distinct nature of human existence.

In a word, in the outlined conception of philosophical anthropology, the understanding of man oscillates between emphasizing the role of the person as a self-existing "I" (that is a being-subject in the act of subjectification) of a rational nature. Nature and its role, its structure, and its modes of operation also demand consideration and analysis. The work, in accentuating the existential moment, the moment of the human person from the person's facticity (man as the subject performing the act!) seems to me to take insufficient account to the theory of the person (a theory manifesting itself in the analysis of the characteristic moments of personal life and its specific features), and also to give insufficient emphasis to the role of the "nature" of man. And yet, our understanding of man runs along the lines of the tension precisely between nature, that is, the determined (also from without!) sources of action, and the person as a free being, self-determining in bringing forth the act. However, since in the literature to date, the moments of nature and

structure have been fundamentally analyzed and are known to the reader familiar with philosophy, whereas the moments of personal life, as specifically personal, (particularly regarding the facticity of the human person were unknown) Cardinal Wojtyła's focus on precisely these moments appears immensely valuable and innovative, it enriches our vision of the human being in general and, above all, enables a deeper understanding of man as a being who creates and experiences moral order. However, philosophical anthropology still awaits a comprehensive treatment and, I hope, that my forthcoming work will, to some extent, complement the monograph discussed here.

Saint Thomas Aquinas and Karol Wojtyła on Experience as a Teacher

Justin Sean Luis Canaria[1]

Abstract

Human experience occupies a central place in philosophical anthropology. A famous dictum calls it as the best teacher. This paper wishes to assess whether that popular dictum is accurate. It does so by engaging the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas and Karol Wojtyła (Pope St. John Paul II). Although formed in different intellectual contexts, these thinkers offer complementary insights. Aquinas, drawing from the Aristotelian tradition, grounds experience in sensation, memory, and abstraction, showing its indispensable role in the acquisition of knowledge and in the regulation of the passions. Wojtyła, building upon this realist foundation, develops a phenomenological account of lived subjectivity, emphasising consciousness, self-determination, and moral responsibility. Together, they show that experience is not self-validating, although it already includes an initial understanding of what is experienced. Experience provides contact with reality and the material of human becoming (*fieri*), but its cognitive and moral significance must be critically clarified by reason and ordered toward the truth about the good. Thus, experience is indispensable but not sovereign: it teaches epistemically and morally only under the guidance of truth and virtue.

Keywords

experience, truth, subjectivity, morality, reason

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Introduction

A popular quote attributed to Julius Caesar's *De Bello Civili* reads *Ut est rerum omnium magister usus* ("as practice or experience is the teacher of all things").[2] It has been popularly rendered as *experience is the best teacher,* but it strays quite a bit from the original literal translation. *Usus* can denote use, practice, or experience, and the Latin contains no explicit superlative corresponding to "best." As such, it is best seen as a proverbial paraphrase rather than a literal translation.

In this article, we attempt to examine the reality behind this popular quotation by asking the question: *Can experience, by itself, reliably guide human knowledge and moral formation?* While experience has no doubt played an important part in shaping how humans learn and develop morally, it alone does not provide an adequate basis for developing knowledge or morality, as it does not interpret itself or validate itself. Thus, experience can only teach us well if it is approached critically, through the use of reason and focused on the attainment of objective truth. To develop this claim, the present study engages the philosophical anthropology of St. Thomas Aquinas and Karol Wojtyła, two thinkers who, despite belonging to different intellectual epochs, offer complementary insights into the structure and significance of human experience.

Even though they lived in different times and places, they are complementary to one another in terms of philosophy (the latter being influenced heavily by the former). They have both taken up a realist position in regards to the intelligibility of being as well as the moral vocation of the human person. Aquinas discusses experience as part of acquiring knowledge, which starts from sensory perception and ends with intellectual judgment. Wojtyła develops this relationship between experience and the individual by analysing the individual through subjective experience, leading to discussions of subjectivity, consciousness, and self-determination. Together, these perspectives form an integral account of experience—one that avoids both radical empiricism and subjectivism.

Human experience is frequently misunderstood and is thus prone to relativistic tendencies such as emotivism in ethics. Here, emotivism refers to a metaethical position associated with A.J. Ayer and C.L. Stevenson, according to which moral utterances primarily express attitudes

[2] Julius Caesar, *The Civil War* 2.8.3; Stuart Berg Flexner; *Wise Words and Wives' Tales: The Origins, Meanings and Time-honored Wisdom of Proverbs and Folk Sayings, Olde and New* (New York City: Avon Books, 1993), 2.

rather than function straightforwardly as descriptions of objective facts. I do not deny the importance of emotion in moral life.[3] Rather, I deny the idea that felt approval, disapproval, or conviction by itself establishes what is true or good. By highlighting the epistemic structure and moral value of experience in Aquinas and Wojtyła, this paper establishes that human experience alone is not a definitive source of truth. Instead, it is a person's conduit to reality that requires both rational apprehension and interiorization to discern the truth within their experiences. As such, the determination of whether human experience can be considered a reliable teacher or not is entirely contingent upon the relationship of the individual with truth.

The article has three parts. The first parts tackles the fundamentals of Aquinas and Wojtyła's discussion on human experience respectively. The second section enumerates some of the possible implications that could be drawn from Aquinas and Wojtyła's discussion human experience to determine whether and in what sense experience can be called a "teacher" of the human person.

1. Human Experience in St. Thomas Aquinas

To understand how St. Thomas Aquinas understood human experience, we first need to examine how he defines experience. Although Aquinas does not offer a systematic phenomenology of experience in the modern sense, Aquinas' epistemology rests upon an active, deliberate account of experiential cognition based on Aristotelian ἐμπειρία and thus is to be understood primarily through that lens.[4] As Therese Cory notes, Aquinas uses various terms throughout his works that can be translated as "experience." Among these is the Greek term *emperia* (ἐμπειρία), often translated in Latin as *experimentum* and sometimes *experiencia*. Put simply, this can be described as a "disposition in the imagination acquired through frequency of repetition."[5] This is to be distinguished from knowledge of the universals or *sciencia*, which, along with ἐμπειρία is among the three kinds of cognitive dispositions, the third being memory. In short, ἐμπειρία is the product

[3] A.J. Ayer, Language, *Truth and Logic* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1946), chap. 6; and C.L. Stevenson, *Ethics and Language* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1944), chap. 1.
[4] R. Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae 1a 75–89* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 168-172.
[5] T. Cory, "Aquinas on Experience and its Scope" (paper presentation, Translating Experience: Medieval Encounters with God, Self, and Nature, Durham University, Durham, June 5, 2015). See also *Metaphysics* 2 and *Posterior Analytics* II, 19.

of recognising patterns that set up expectations for how similar individuals are going to behave, or similar situations will pan out. Experience thus is a means of aiding the intellect in attaining familiarity with those things it can later abstract from, i.e., universal knowledge, thereby establishing the basis for Aquinas' characterisation of experience as an intermediary cognitive state which unites memory with scientific reasoning.[6] The distinction between ἐμπειρία and *sciencia* is that the latter "involves the familiarity with necessary truths concerning some unified kind of things"[7] leading to the abstraction of a universal.

The second way Aquinas understands the term experience is in the sense of having contact with what is real and present to the knower. "Experience proceeds from sense insofar as sense is cognitive of something present."[8] Here we can see that experience is rooted in sensation but is not reducible to it. What is most important is *presence* for only that which is actual and operative before the knower can impart its likeness to the intellect. Experience is therefore not mere repetition but an ontological encounter. As Wippel notes, Aquinas' epistemology presupposes a metaphysical realism in which being is genuinely present to the intellect through sensible mediation. This is crucial as it prevents experience from collapsing into subjectivism. The intelligibility of experience originates in the thing itself and not in consciousness. The intelligibility of experience is grounded in the thing itself rather than conferred upon it solely by consciousness. Nevertheless, Aquinas's account of cognition does not locate intentionality in the object's actuality alone. The sensible or intelligible form of the object is received in the knower according to the mode of the cognitive power, possessing an intentional presence rather than becoming the object's material constituent. The object's actuality grounds cognition, while the form's intentional presence in the knower explains how the object is known. Experience thus discloses being through the encounter between a genuinely intelligible object and the cognitive power that receives its form.[9]

[6] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 170-171. It should be worth noting, however, that this understanding of experience differs from modern empiricism. Experience for Aquinas is inadequate in validating itself through immediacy nor does it yield knowledge in itself. Instead, it disposes the intellect to apprehend the universal truth. Thus, experience is subordinated to intelligibility and not sovereign over it. It would be misleading then to call Aquinas a proto empiricist.
[7] *Ibid*.
[8] Aquinas, *De Malo*, Q. 16, Art 7, s.c.
[9] ST I, q. 85, a. 2; See also J.F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas: From Finite Being to Uncreated Being* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1984), 219-223.

In both cases, experience is always understood in relation to the attainment of knowledge. It is not an end in itself but the starting point of intellectual apprehension. Therefore, according to Aquinas, knowledge gained through natural cognition proceeds from the use of sensory information and the operation of the agent intellect (without the use of divine illumination), i.e., through natural acts of cognition.[10] Hence, to understand how experience works for Aquinas, one must examine his account of human knowledge.

1.1. Experience as the Starting Point of Human Knowledge

Rooted in Aristotelian thought, St. Thomas Aquinas' philosophy values the role of the agent intellect when it comes to the process of obtaining knowledge, as seen in the moment of *ideogenesis*.[11] As Sanguineti notes, while the root of the certainty of judgment is the light of God, it is also important to take one's own means into account, which is given by God, to know the truth.[12] Neglecting to recognize this fundamental functioning can result in falling into a state of *apriorism*, which Aquinas unequivocally refutes as he holds that the ability to know stems from knowing through experience that we which receive through our senses.[13] Therefore, the senses are the true point of departure of knowledge and are not a pure stimulus of a purely spiritual activity.[14] It is the agent intellect that performs the abstraction of the intelligible essence and is thus the key to the process of obtaining knowledge. Since the beginning of all knowledge is through sensation, it can be concluded that, for Aquinas, experience stands at the origin of intellectual cognition. As Robert Pasnau observes, Aquinas defends a robust empiricism within the limits of metaphysical

[10] ST I, q.79, a.3; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 187-190.

[11] The process of acquiring sensitive knowledge happens from the object, then, an act of perception (use of external sense) produces the percept that can be stored in the imagination etc. (use of internal sense). Intellective knowledge will be produced through the phantasm. It will be the process of abstraction. The active intellect will abstract the universal (commonalities). Afterwards, the passive intellect will receive the abstracted form to formulate an idea. The idea is expressed through language, which makes it a concept. A concept is a universal that contains essences. Note that this process is not like a step-by-step process for it happens simultaneously. Aristotle, *De Anima*, II, 7.

[12] J.J. Sanguineti, *Logic and Gnoseology* (Rome: Urbania University Press, 2011), 145.

[13] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 187-190. "Apriorism is the position that these first direct and obvious judgments have their source only in reason and not in experience. Empiricism, on the other hand, is the basis, i.e. the source and criterion of the objectivity of cognition, of experience." G. Hołub, et.al, *Karol Wojtyła* (Krakow: Ignatianum University Press, 2019), 30. Both are extreme positions that negatively affect one's way of thinking especially regarding the human person. See 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), 356.

[14] Sanguineti, *Logic and Gnoseology*, 146.

realism: the intellect depends upon phantasms for its operation, even though its act transcends the sensible order.[15]

The relationship between sensation and cognition must be analysed analogically, as opposed to reductively. Phenomenology later articulates experience in terms of intentional consciousness; Aquinas grounds intentionality in the real presence of being to the intellect. Aquinas grounds cognition in the actual existence of the object but explains its intentional character through the reception of the object's form in the cognitive power.[16] Experience is therefore neither a subjective construction nor a simple duplication of the object; it is the reception of intelligible form according to the mode of the knower.

As stated above, presence is important for something to be experienced. As Aquinas says, "every agent makes its patient like itself."[17] In other words, the object present to the senses causally contributes its likeness to the cognitive powers. The epistemic priority of presence indicates Aquinas' moderate realism. The intellect derives its information from the actual forms of existent objects, not just mentally projected concepts.[18] Thus, what is known intellectually is rooted in the ontological actuality of the thing encountered.

Concomitant to presence is the frequency of encounter. Repeated sensible contact generates *experimentum*, which stabilizes the imagination and prepares the ground for universal abstraction.[19] Thus, the process of experience here is cumulative and dispositional because it produces a structured record of how to acquire universal principles of knowledge. The richness of one's conceptual grasp, therefore, depends not merely on abstract reasoning but on the depth and breadth of experiential contact with the relevant objects.

If one has not experientially accessed x, the content of one's (vague) understanding of the concept is taken from their prior experiences of similar entities. In insisting that intellectual knowledge requires phantasms, Aquinas is asserting that without an adequate experiential foundation from which to build upon, concept definitions will be incomplete or will only serve as analogical extensions of the universal principle.[20] Hence, they will be unable to formulate a totally sufficient definition of the object.

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[15] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 168-172.
[16] G. Klima, *John Buridan* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2009), 92-97.
[17] ST I, q.4, a.3.
[18] Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 219-223.
[19] *Posterior Analytics* II.19; Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 170–171.
[20] ST I, q.84, a.7.

Thus, all knowledge comes from experience whether directly or from its effects. According to Aquinas, the intellect does not need a special divine illumination for its understanding of the natural order, since it has both a created part of the light of being and also ordinary cognitive intellect that processes different kinds of information through sensible data and uses that information to help it to reason and abstract from these sensible data.[21] Aquinas uses the well-known dictum, "nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses"[22] to describe this process of knowledge. However, Aquinas maintains that the intellect itself is not from the senses but is its own separate immaterial power.[23]

1.2. Self-Awareness

While subjectivity in the phenomenological understanding is not thematized by Aquinas in his works, he affirms the reflexive capacity of the soul. A growing portion of contemporary Thomistic scholarship sees that Aquinas's explanation of reflexivity offers a formal account of first-person conscious experience, although it is described within a metaphysical model instead of a phenomenological one.[24] As a result of its immaterial quality, the soul has the capacity to completely turn back upon itself, unlike matter, which is hindered by its extended parts.[25]

This reflexivity is not just a matter of perceiving that it thinks or perceiving some part of itself as distinct from the perceiving part. It is about the perceiving part perceiving itself as the perceiving part.[26] As Jeffrey Brower has demonstrated, Aquinas is able to differentiate between having direct knowledge or awareness of something and having reflexive knowledge or awareness of the act of knowing that something. This latter forms a foundation for intellectual self-awareness, without presupposing a second and separate epistemic faculty.[27] Therefore, reflexivity does not occur by dividing the observing and the observed ones, but it denotes the intellect being self-present (constituted within its own act). In this sense, the intellect is able to understand itself as 'I' as opposed to simply being an object amongst objects.

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[21] ST I, q.79, a.4; Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 238-242.
[22] ST I, q.84, a.6.
[23] Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, 185-187.
[24] E. Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 247–252; J. Haldane, "Aquinas on the Self and Self-Knowledge," in *Self and Self-Knowledge*, ed. by A. Coliva (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 43–49.
[25] ST I, q.14, a.2.
[26] T. Cory, "Self-Awareness and Reflexivity in Aquinas" (paper presentation, Northwest Philosophy Conference on "The Self," Willamette University, OR, October 1–2, 2010).
[27] J.E. Brower, *Aquinas's Ontology of the Material World: Change, Hylomorphism, and Material Objects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 134–138.

This is not to say that soul fully understands itself like the divine mind nor does it imply a form of interiorism.[28] Rather, its reflexive capacity enables the knower to recognize itself as the subject of its acts, though not to exhaustively grasp its own essence.[29] As Eleonore Stump notes, people gain self-knowledge through action rather than through an immediate, direct perception of their own essence; the intellect experiences itself through its actions.[30] As Aquinas writes:

> And truth is known by the intellect in view of the fact that the intellect reflects upon its own act—not merely as knowing its own act, but as knowing the proportion of its act to the thing. Now, this proportion cannot be known without knowing the nature of the act; and the nature of the act cannot be known without knowing the nature of the active principle, that is, the intellect itself, to whose nature it belongs to be confirmed to things. Consequently, it is because the intellect reflects upon itself that it knows truth.[31]

Thus, reflexivity establishes not only self-consciousness but also the condition for epistemic judgment. An intellect is able to relate its own act to the outside world because it is able to return to its own operations. Haldane states that an intellect's ability to form reflexive judgments attaches Aquinas to a tradition that accommodates first-person authority without reverting to Cartesian interiorism.[32]

Another way that self-consciousness emerges is through voluntary action. Where acts are committed voluntarily, they are committed knowingly. "By willing we perceive the will, and life in vital operations… in the work that Abraham accomplished, he was able to cognize experientially that he had fear of the Lord."[33] This means that man experiences, not only his internal capacity to act, but also that he is the efficacious cause of them and thus is responsible for them. Thus, as Cory puts it, "when cognizing something that exists in the soul by its very essence as habits or cognitive

[28] Aquinas in no way locates certainty in self-awareness. Thus, reflexivity is secondary and derivative upon the intellect's primary orientation toward being. Self-awareness arises within the act of knowing something other than oneself. In this way, Aquinas preserves first-person authority without detaching it from realism. Consciousness is anchored in the world before it becomes aware of itself.
[29] ST I, q.87, a.1.
[30] Stump, *Aquinas*, 252–255.
[31] Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputataede Veritate*, q. 1, a.9.
[32] J. Haldane, "Aquinas on the Self and Self-Knowledge," in: *Self and Self-Knowledge*, ed. by A. Coliva (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 47–48.
[33] ST Ia-IIae.112.5, ad 1.

and appetitive powers), we cognize it experientially as an 'inner principle' manifested in action."[34] These texts have led scholars to conclude that there is present in Aquinas an early account of what one may broadly speaking call subjectivity in the context of the first-person of agent, albeit underdeveloped.[35]

1.3. Passions of the Soul

The internal powers present in man are not limited to the intellectual dimension. There is also the affective dimension which must be considered as they are a vital aspect in what man experiences internally and projects externally as influencing factors to his actions. Contemporary scholarship has consistently shown that Aquinas views the emotional aspect of the moral life differently than is commonly believed. Emotional responses to something we experience as pleasant or unpleasant make up a portion of our overall sensibility.[36]

The passions, or emotions as they are known today, can be defined as "intense movement of the sensitive appetite."[37] They are the aspect of the psychical life of man distinct from intellectual knowledge and rational appetite though are not independent of cognition. As Robert Miner explains, the passions are a tangible representation of how we respond to our environment. The passions arise in response to sensible apprehension and may subsequently be evaluated and ordered by reason.[38] They indicate the state of, or provoke, either a tranquil or an intense reaction. Simply put, it is an embodied response to stimuli or sense cognition.

The passions have their origin in the sense appetite[39] that is divided into the concupiscible power and the irascible power. Both tend to cognize the good, but the former tends towards the

[34] T.S. Cory, *Aquinas on Human Self-Knowledge* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 106.
[35] *Ibid*, 114.
[36] R. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22–48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2009), 12–18; J. Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 85–92.
[37] P. Kreef, "Glossary," in: *Summa of the Summa* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1990), 24. See also ST 1a2ae 22, s.c. This is the common definition of the passions as understood in the scholastic tradition. Aquinas' definition in the Summa is truncated and not complete because he wishes readers to sift through the definitions of other great thinkers such as Aristotle and Augustine that they may arrive at a conception that includes elements of the integral tradition. R. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22–48* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 30-31.
[38] *Ibid*., 30-34.
[39] Appetite can be defined as, "in the widest sense, any inclination or tendency to some good or suitable object, or away from some bad or unsuitable object... most narrowly, in man, the will's desire for its proper good, happiness." Kreeft, "Glossary," 20. The appetites are divided into two. The first is the elicit appetite that belong to the psychic life of man They require an elicit act of consciousness and are attracted to something we are conscious of. The second type is the natural appetite, which exists only in the vegetative life of man. There is no need for consciousness'

good as it causes pleasure and or pain, generating movements such as love and hate, desire and aversion, joy and sorrow. The latter tends towards a difficult good, giving rise to hope and despair, confidence and fear, and anger. Thus, as Jean Porter points out, the division between the good(s) we pursue in terms of mode and the arduous goods introduces a separate affective structure to the good(s) in a way that reflects the intricacy of moral experience.[40]

As to their order Aquinas says that "the irascible passions both arise from and terminate in the passions of the concupiscible faculty."[41] This is because they introduce an additional layer of complexity related to the arduousness or difficulty in achieving or avoiding certain goods or evils. For example, in terms of execution, the irascible passions take precedence over certain concupiscible passions like how hope precedes joy and fear precedes sadness. Moreover, they add an element to the concupiscible passions. For example, encourages self-encouragement and mental cheerfulness during times when one must work hard for the good, while fear creates low morale when one has to avoid evil.[42] Thus, the movement of the irascible passions are in part motivated by and at the same time build upon the concupiscible passions as both originate and contribute to the workings of desire creating an organized web of interrelatedness within our souls.[43]

When looking at how passions affect our ability to make the right judgments, Aquinas draws a clear distinction between passions of antecedent order from those of the consequent.[44] The former interfere with reason and lessen the value of the actions we take for the purposes of behaving well or virtuously. Whereas the latter, regardless of whether they occur as a result of possessing a certain virtue or as a consequence of making good or virtuous choices, enhance the goodness of our actions in accordance with virtue.[45] This leads Diana Fritz Cates to conclude that our emotional responses are highly malleable and can be educated by reason. When properly

intervention because they proceed from the nature of the being. Finally, the elicit appetites are further divided into two tendencies. The sensitive tendencies, the subject to the object presented by the sensible knowledge. The interactive tendencies, also known as volitions, oriented, subject to the object presented by the intellective knowledge. ST 1a 80.

[40] Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 90–94

[41] ST 1a2ae 25, ad.

[42] *Ibid*.

[43] S. Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. by M.T. Noble (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 274–278.

[44] ST I–II, q.24, a.3

[45] ST 1a2ae 24, ad.

ordered, passions actively assist in the cultivation of virtue, even though unregulated, antecedent passions often hinder moral development.[46]

Therefore, for Aquinas, emotions are neither amoral nor intrinsically evil. Rather, passions contain dynamic emotional/physical energy which contributes to the development of someone's character morally. Therefore, an individual developing a moral character does not require that they suppress their passions. Rather, they need to incorporate their passions into rational decision-making through the habit of this incorporation as emphasized in contemporary Thomistic readings.

This ordering of the passions also prevents experience from being self-validating. Emotions play a vital role in the moral life but do not determine the morality of an experience. That is dependent upon its conformity to reason and truth (*adequation*). Experience must be integrated into rational judgment and form the basis of it.

Therefore, the passions help people to experience the world. It shows the difference between thinking about the world versus feeling the world. Experience goes far beyond just thoughts but also includes the way an individual experiences good and bad through the way things are perceived through their bodies as either attractive or unattractive. The passions are ordered toward perceived good or evil; when properly governed by reason, this perception aligns with truth, but when disordered, it may diverge from it.[47] In this way of understanding human experience, Thomas presents a complete example of the phenomenon: sensory experiences create cognitive experiences; cognitive experiences create the understanding of universality; and affective behaviours represent the total orientation of a person with respect to good. All of these aspects of experience demonstrate that experience is not separate from a complete physical reality.

2. Human Experience in Karol Wojtyła

Following the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, Karol Wojtyła offers a contemporary perspective on the value of human experience by integrating a realist metaphysics of the person with phenomenological attention to lived subjectivity. As a philosopher—and later as Pope John Paul

[46] D.F. Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009), 118-123.
[47] ST I-II, q.22, a.2.

II—Wojtyła treats experience not merely as a source of data but as the privileged site where the person is disclosed as subject and agent.

It is through experience that the person has contact with reality.[48] Through experience, one can objectivise the principles, thereby verifying abstract theories. For Wojtyła, therefore, any adequate anthropology must begin with the analysis of the human experience. By employing this methodology, Wojtyła seeks to avoid both extremes of pure apriorism and pure empiricism that characterised modern philosophy and have caused severe damage to the human person in general, especially concerning the field of morality.

For Wojtyła, experience "has a broader scope than that determined by the empiricists; it covers not only the relationship of our moral experiences with what psychology or sociology describes but also with what is presented by anthropology, providing a more integral knowledge about the human person and who he becomes by his moral actions."[49] Moreover, "in every human experience, there is also a certain measure of understanding of what is experienced."[50] Experience is therefore not merely a passive collection of impressions: it already possesses a cognitive dimension, although its initial understanding may remain incomplete and require further critical clarification.

Wojtyła argues that human experience is uniquely complex because it includes not only awareness of objects but reflexive awareness of oneself as subject. The person becomes manifest in and through action; by performing free and responsible acts, he does not acquire personhood but expresses and concretizes it. Since it is through the act that one is given a proper understanding of the human person's nature, Wojtyła concludes that the human person is a person because he performs actions proper to him, that is, moral acts.[51] Therefore, for Wojtyła, experience is structurally linked to *fieri*: through lived action, the person not only performs deeds but becomes a certain kind of moral subject. Hence, experience is neither a stream of impressions nor epistemically authoritative in itself. It is the locus where the person forms himself through morally

[48] Wojtyła, introduction to *Person and Act*, 95.
[49] G. Hołub, et.al, *Karol Wojtyła* (Krakow: Ignatianum University Press, 2019), 35. Modern philosophers such as Renè Descartes tend to emphasise subjectivity over objectivity. In doing so, they either split the nature of the human person, emphasising the spiritual while degrading the material, or reject the spiritual altogether, as in the case of materialism. In some cases, the human person is viewed as a mere amalgamation of various experiences. But because he is a *suppositum*, a metaphysical subject, the person cannot be cognised or reduced, only manifested and revealed through experience. Thus, experience does not generate truth but discloses the person in act within the horizon of truth. Wojtyła's method is thus realist and constructivist.
[50] Wojtyła, introduction to *Person and Act,* 95.
[51] Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 104.

qualified acts and must be interpreted through the structure of the act. Without the moral value of the act, experience risks fragmentation.

Each experience is unique for every human being, meaning it is non-transferrable hence the description of the human person as *alter incommuniabilis*. Nevertheless, experience is not sealed within the self. While the content of experience is metaphysically incommunicable, shared or communal experience is possible through mutual disclosure of persons through acting together with others, that Wojtyła calls participation.

2.1. Consciousness and Efficacy

With the variety of experiences, a factor must unite them into one integrated experience of the human person. This integrating factor is consciousness, which Wojtyła treats not as a separate entity but as a dimension of the acting subject**.** Consciousness does not have its own intentional character or mode of existence apart from the conscious subject. Instead, consciousness is a property of the subject that "takes its content entirely from the person's reality, their various undertakings, and the surrounding reality."[52] Through consciousness, the human person's experience of reality is brought to light and, at the same time, interiorised. It is this capacity to interiorise that Wojtyła labels as the primary function of consciousness because it shapes our lived experiences. It is consciousness that "allows us not only to view our acts interiorly (introspection), including their dynamic dependence on one's own 'I,' but also to experience these acts as acts and as our own."[53]

Therefore, consciousness not only mirrors human experience but also forms it by turning inwardly towards the subject and manifests the human person's life as lived experience. This is known as its reflexive function, one of the two functions of consciousness, whereby the human person is experienced as the subject of his actions and can simultaneously be the object toward whom his acts are directed, like when he exercises self-control. Consciousness does not constitute the person but makes the person experientially present to himself.[54] Ultimately, consciousness

[52] G. Hołub, *Understanding the Person Essays on the Personalism of Karol Wojtyła*, (Bern: Peter Lang, 2021), 99.
[53] Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 141.
[54] To constitute the person in consciousness would collapse experience into self-enclosed subjectivity. For this reason, Wojtyła maintains the primacy of the *suppositum*; the person exists prior to and independently of his lived self-awareness. Consciousness manifests the person already grounded metaphysically in being.

gives the subject access to his spirituality. It enables him to understand himself better and realise that he is the author of his actions, as revealed in the moment of efficacy.

Because man experiences himself through action it follows that efficacy is accompanied by consciousness. The moment of efficacy is defined as the lived experience that one is the agent of his actions.[55] This indicates that not every dynamicity present within the human person is an action proper to the human person. Thus, Wojtyła distinguishes between *man acts* and *something happens in man*. The former refers to conscious and willed actions, meaning the author of the action is aware and decreed that they are to be executed towards a particular motive that he had in mind. The latter is spontaneous and not a result of the willing of the subject who experiences these happenings automatically. This distinction is essential as it is in man acts where the moral sphere is identified.

Only when man acts are the actions proper to the human person because they are actualised in the light of human nature as a rational being with the capacity to choose. What happens is subjective and often beyond the human person's control. His efficacy is engaged because he brings something about. He can feel hungry, but he can act to alleviate this feeling by making an omelette and eating it. Nevertheless, both dimensions belong to the human person as *agere* and *pati*. In both, the person exteriorizes and objectifies himself, while also undergoing interiorization through lived consciousness. This duality prevents a reductive picture of the person as either pure will or pure mechanism.

2.2. Experience of Subjectivity

Among the many experiences that consciousness brings to light to the human person is the experience of subjectivity. This is best seen in the reflexive function of consciousness, which denotes a turning towards the subject. In the experience of subjectivity, the human person experiences himself as a subject of both acting and existing, not as an abstract "self," but as the concrete "I" that acts, chooses, and bears responsibility. Subjectivity denotes the person's interiority, yet it is not a private solipsism: it is precisely the mode in which the objective person becomes personally present to himself.

From this interiority, the human person can understand that the action he performed voluntarily and hence consciously belongs to him as the subject of his action. At the same time, he

[55] *Ibid*., 168.

can direct his actions towards himself, like when he reflects or consumes beverages to quench his thirst. The integration of objectivity and subjectivity is encapsulated in the concept of *suppositum* or metaphysical subjectivity: the person is an objectively existing being who is simultaneously experienced from within as "I."

2.3. Freedom

Some accounts of liberty emphasize freedom from external interference; a classic formulation of this understanding appears in Isaiah Berlin's distinction between negative and positive liberty.[56]

Contrary to this, Wojtyła explains that the experience of freedom is found in the lived experience of "I can, but I do not have to." This indicates not only spontaneity but self-determination: the person experiences himself as capable of choosing among alternatives. Freedom is not just a property of the will or a power of a human person. It is "a feature of the person itself, which can be defined as the centre of freedom. Only a free being can be called a person."[57]

If the human person were not free, he would not be reckoned with *feiri* because forces would determine all his actions within or external to him or over which he has no control. But the moment of efficacy shows that the human person experiences himself as the author of his actions; therefore, freedom belongs to the structure of action. Alongside this, freedom introduces morality of actions, i.e., how this freedom is exercised in conformity with the moral norms. Thus, freedom is not to be understood in the absolute sense but in the freedom that enables a person to subordinate himself to the moral norm so he may become morally good through his actions. "Only in the area in which 'I act' am I responsible for my actions, so the moral moment is included… The connection of freedom with truth is often perceived as a restriction of freedom, as it introduces normative dimensions very reluctantly treated by people of the age of late modernity."[58] Yet, for Wojtyła it is the condition of genuine personal freedom, since truth does not depend on the subject's preference.

Thus, against the modernist resistance to absolutize freedom in the name of empowerment, Wojtyła emphasises the need to subordinate one's freedom to the moral norm for it to be exercised

[56] I. Berlin, "Two Concepts of Liberty," in: *Four Essays on Liberty* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 118-172. This position should not, however, be equated with the claim that freedom simply means doing whatever one pleases, nor should it be treated as representative of liberalism as a whole. Wojtyła's concern is that freedom cannot be reduced to the absence of external restraint: freedom also involves self-determination in relation to truth and the good.

[57] Hołub, et.al., *Karol Wojtyła*, 55.

[58] K. Stachewicz, "Karol Wojtyła's philosophy of freedom," *Teologia i Moralność* 15, no. 1 (2020), 154, 157.

rightly. John Paul II calls this higher norm *the truth about the good*, which grounds moral evaluation and protects the person from reducing good to mere utility or pleasure.[59] By selecting truth, the human person makes a moral choice and conditions his freedom in dependence on the truth. This is not heteronomy but the structure of self-governance: the person governs himself by truth rather than by impulse. Wojtyła thereby resists modern conceptions of autonomy understood as self-legislation dethatched from objective order. To do so would compromise the objective moral structure of the act. But because freedom is linked to truth, lived experience remains accountable to an objective moral order.

2.4. Self-Determination and Transcendence

In his willing, both the human person and his will are free. For the will to be free, it must be open to the good;[60] hence knowledge guides the will, for nothing is desired unless it is earlier known (*nihil volitum nisi precognitum*). The freedom to determine one's personal "I" through free acts of the will is what Wojtyła calls self-determination.[61] This highlights the deep link between the person and his acts: by choosing, the person not only brings about an external effect but also forms himself.[62]

Self-determination is strictly connected to the *feiri* of the person. In self-determination, the person decides for himself, aided by self-knowledge, what direction his actions will take; thus, he transitions from *I can* to *I will*. Nobody else can perform his actions for him; hence the human person is known as a *sui iuris alteri incommunicabilis*. Self-determination presupposes self-governance and self-possession: the person is not merely driven but can rule himself.

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[59] J.F. Crosby, *The Personalism of John Paul II* (Steubenville, Ohio: Hildebrand Press, 2019), 40. The origin of the moral norms is ultimately on the moral lawgiver, God, as explained in Christian paideia. At the same time, they immediately originate from both human nature and reason. Human reason is what enables the human person to know the truth; ergo, creating norms has its basis on this in the Thomistic sense of truth being conformity between the truth and the intellect. And since human nature is by nature aimed towards the good, it follows that the good corresponds to human nature. The call is for the human person to realise and follow his *bonum honestum* through the powers given to him. See K. Wojtyła, *Ethics Primer– Elementarz Etyczny*, trans. by H. McDonald (Lublin-Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu & Societa Internationale Tommaso d'Aquino, 2017), 45, 47, 57.

[60] K. Wojtyła, *Considerations on the Essence of Man – Rozważania o istocie człowieka*, trans. by J. Grondelski (Lublin-Roma: Polskie Towarzystwo Tomasza z Akwinu – Società Internazionale Tommaso D'Aquino, 2016), 107, 109.

[61] G. Ignatik, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love* (Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2021), 39.

[62] J.J.S. Aguas, *Person, Action and Love: The Philosophical Thoughts of Karol Wojtyła (John Paul II)* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2014), 84.

From here Wojtyła articulates transcendence in action: the subject going beyond the threshold toward an object. This occurs in various ways in so-called intentional acts like acts of cognition and volition —horizontal transcendence—where the person attains a kind of superiority over the object through truth-directed knowledge and purposive choice.[63]

Complementary to this is the second type, known as *vertical transcendence* identified with efficacy, freedom, and self-determination. Vertical transcendence is the person's return to himself through truth: the person can evaluate his motives, question his values, and integrate them under a higher standard of goodness. Thus, vertical transcendence leads the person to moral self-governance: he is not merely attracted but can judge, choose, and take responsibility. Ignatik summarises this point beautifully by stating, "the heart of transcendence, whether vertical or horizontal, is the relation to truth and good that grounds moral norms."[64] The end of transcendence can be summarized as "going beyond oneself in truth."[65]

Transcendence is complemented by the integration of the person in action. In Part 3 of *Person and Act*, Wojtyła examines how the person's somatic and psychic dynamisms—including bodily reactions and affective responses—are integrated into the unity of personal action. These dynamisms are not identical with free action: some are things that "happen in man," whereas action proper is attributable to the person as agent. Integration brings bodily and psychic life into the person's conscious, self-determining response to values without erasing the distinction between undergoing and acting.[66] This account complements Aquinas's analysis of the passions. Whereas Aquinas examines how the passions can assist or impede reason and virtue, Wojtyła explains how somatic and psychic dynamisms are integrated into the acting person. Both approaches recognize affectivity as an integral dimension of human life without treating it as sufficient, by itself, to determine the moral value of an action.

2.5. Intersubjectivity

Going beyond himself, the human person finds himself as one being among many others, among whom are other persons (or people) who act and exist like him Because they are like him, they have the same irreducibility, dignity, and nature as the self. As another *I*, a *Thou*, who lives and

[63] Ignatik, *Person and Value*, 35.
[64] Ignatik, *Person and Value*, 36.
[65] *Ibid*.
[66] Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays,* 295–374.

exists together with the *I*, the *Thou* is to be respected and ultimately loved lest there be a danger of objectification.

While participation does not add a new metaphysical constituent to personhood, it is existentially decisive for the person's self-realization. Far from being individualistic, Wojtyła emphasises throughout his work the polarity of the human person as a being united through and called to share his interiority.[67]

Thus, the human person is made to relate with others. Living and co-existing with others implies that actions are always performed together with others, and therefore have personalistic and moral value.[68] This is captured in the concept of participation, defined as "that which corresponds to the transcendence of the person in the act when this act is performed 'together with others,' in various social or inter-human relations."[69] This shows that the human person's social nature is rooted in action: persons form community not merely by being together but by acting together toward a common good in ways that preserve personal dignity.

In participation, the human person realises that his actions affect not only himself but also others and their actions. Nothing metaphysically is added or communicated by the person participating. What changes in him lie in his subjectivity; as Kosche puts it, he experiences transcendence in a special way.[70] What conditions participation is the personalistic and moral value of the action: it discloses the person as its agent and is morally evaluated by the act. Hence, man is not an island; he "is an open and inter-subjective being that cannot self-realise itself without the action of other men."[71]

Through the *Thou*, the *I* is: the *Thou* is not merely an external object but a personal partner who discloses the self more deeply.[72] The *I* experiences his own subjectivity in relation, even while

[67] Crosby, *The Personalism of John Paul II*, 52.
[68] Aguas, *Person, Action, and Love*, 160.
[69] Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, 385.
[70] M. Kosche, "The Person as a Being called to Triple Transcendence in the Light of the Personalism by Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II," *Seminare Poszukiwania naukowe* 40, no. 4 (2019): 61, accessed February 10, 2024, http://doi.org/10.21852/sem.2019.4.04. This guards against collectivism and individualism. The person remains metaphysically the same but existentially fulfilled in co-determined action. Experience of community therefore deepens subjectivity without absorbing it.
[71] Acosta, "Participation," in: *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy*, 227.
[72] "... we must accept that the 'thou' helps me in a normal state of things to acknowledge my own 'I' more fully and even to confirm it, to auto-affirm it. In its fundamental form, the 'I-thou' relation does not lead me out of my subjectivity; indeed, in a sense, it embeds me more firmly in that subjectivity." Wojtyła, "The Person: Subject and Community," in: *Person and Act and Related Essays*, 495.

remaining *alteri incommunicabilis*.[73] In this way, Wojtyła grounds community in the dignity of persons rather than in utility or collective absorption.

One can also note that this structure is compatible with a theological development in Wojtyła / John Paul II, though that lies beyond the strict philosophical scope of the present section. Beginning from the self, the human person, as a being capable of and directed towards transcendence, goes beyond himself to the other persons entering a relationship and from there finds the person of God in the image of every person. And with God being a communion of persons, as revealed in Christian theology. the person's vocation is to live in communion.

3. Human Experience as a Teacher according to Wojtyła and Aquinas

Wojtyla and Aquinas both believe that experience is important for human beings, but neither see experience as automatically self-validating. Whereas an organized curriculum presents knowledge clearly and with specific conclusions, experience will present people with many different types of events, stimuli, emotions, and actions that have yet to be evaluated. Experience does not, by itself, guarantee the correctness of a judgment about truth or goodness. In this sense, experience is not a self-sufficient teacher: although it already involves an initial comprehension of what is encountered, the person must further reflect on that experience, assess it in light of truth, and integrate it into life through responsible action. It is up to the person to reflect on what was presented to him, to evaluate it according to truth, and to incorporate it into his life through responsible action. This conclusion challenges positions that treat immediate experience or affective conviction as sufficient to settle questions of truth or moral rightness. The point is not to reject phenomenology or emotion as such, but to deny that experience, considered apart from critical judgment, guarantees the truth of its interpretation.

However, this does not lessen the value of experience or its importance. Experience is where the person meets the real world. If there is no experience, there is nothing to interpret, no relationship with the real, and no potential to develop as a person. Therefore, even though experience is not sufficient to stand on its own, it forms the basis for everything that will occur. The raw material for *fieri* comes from experience; it is through reason, virtue, and the use of reason and virtue that one determines the degree to which the raw material will assist in integration.

[73] *Ibid.*, 78.

Therefore, experience should not be considered as something that is infallible in itself or a neutral, independent source of data. Rather, it is a dynamic medium through which our humanity is formed. Only when we have collected and analyzed our experiences creatively and meaningfully can they begin to form us. This means that there is a real possibility of an experience helping us learn something about our life through action when we evaluate our experiences critically by reason in light of the *truth about the good*. By evaluating our experiences critically through reason, they become intelligible to us and present the possibility of meaning. In short, our experiences do not immediately give us factual statements or conclusions; they provide us with existential and moral meaning through actions. Through our experience we are presented with an opportunity to evaluate and take action toward what we perceive as real and meaningful.

Aquinas describes the development of our cognitive faculties through our interactions with the world. In Aquinas' model, the senses experience the world through physical stimuli that are retained in memory. Recurrent experiences over time yield *experientia*, and, as a result, humans become familiar with examples in a way that enables them to identify patterns, have practical expectations about how things should work, and predict the future based on those expectations. The intellect then abstracts the intelligibility of all experiences and gains knowledge. Thus, experience is a means of intellectual knowledge that arises from repeated encounters with the real world. Thus, it initiates the movement from particular to universal knowledge. This movement is gradual, requiring intellectual discipline. Should the intellect abstract incorrectly, experience may then reinforce prejudice rather than yielding knowledge. Thus, even in the epistemic level, experience is educative only under the guidance of right reason.

Wojtyła further develops this thought by stating that experience discloses both the objects of experience and the acing subject. Through consciousness, a person interiorizes what he encounters and sees himself as the one who acted; therefore, instead of saying, "I saw," the decisive pedagogical statement will be, "I acted," and through the act of action, the person will discover efficacy, responsibility, and self-determination. As a result, experience shapes persons by contributing to their *fieri*. Still, this formative power can go both ways. The same lived-experience that deepens moral consciousness can also habituate distortion if interpreted through disordered desire. Experience, therefore, does not merely inform the person; it configures him. Its pedagogical force is inseparable from the moral orientation of the subject.

This synthesis shows that experience can teach *epistemically* and *morally*. Epistemically, experience is the locus for obtaining and sustaining knowledge by providing contact with reality that the intellect processes. When the person interiorizes these experiences in consciousness and engages in reflection, he appropriates actions based on these experiences judging them with respect to the good. He becomes morally good or bad depending how he takes these experiences. Neither pleasant nor painful experience is intrinsically a better teacher; what determines their formative value is the manner in which they are interpreted and integrated in truth. Thus, experience needs interpretation. Without it, experience is a fleeting occurrence.

For this reason, the primacy of truth must be upheld. The intellect evaluates what is experienced and the will decides in light of what is truly good. As Aquinas teaches, the passions influence judgment. At times they clarify perception while at other times they distort it. Exercising freedom, as Wojtyła discusses, can only become personal maturity when self-determination is governed by truth about the good rather than by impulse or social pressure. Because of this, truth is inseparable from experience for it is what allows experience to be educational rather than manipulative and or misleading. The truth that measures experience does not arise from the subject but is discovered by him.

Because human beings are affective as well as rational, the passions will always play a role in experience. It is important then that they are integrated well with reason. Both Aquinas and Wojtyla teach that repeated choices condition the person leading to dispositions that can either integrate or fracture the self. To ensure experience is always judged in reference to the truth about the good, virtues are necessary to develop. By instilling virtue, experience will be able to "teach" effectively as virtue enables the agent capable to receiving experience truthfully, judging it rightly, and acting consistently toward the good. Conversely, vice makes experience a bad teacher by choosing what conforms to the appetite, rationalizing distortion, and habituates the person to self-deception.

In the end, the answer to the question is no, experience is not the best teacher by itself. It requires the cooperation of reason and the formation of virtue to order it toward the truth about the good. Experience is indispensable, but it is not sovereign. To put experience over truth dissolves wisdom into immediacy. When experience is subordinated to truth, as freedom must be, it becomes formative. It is only when guided by reason and virtue that experience goes from impression to personal maturation.

Conclusion

Although Aquinas did not discuss *experience* like in phenomenology, he gave an epistemological and metaphysical foundation for understanding how experience plays a role in human knowledge and action. Aquinas' analysis of sensation, abstraction, reflexivity and passion show that experience is always structured by intelligibility and that it is aimed toward the realization of truth. Wojtyła, building on this Thomistic model, working in the context of subjectivity, says that experience discloses the person as a conscious agent, capable of self-determination and transcendence. Together, they demonstrate that experience is neither self-determining nor self-explanatory. While experience can serve as a teacher, it can only do so when rationality appropriates it and orders it within the context of truth about the good. There will never be "pure experience" that automatically teaches. Instead, experience will provide the framework for an individual's development which is then ordered by reason in the context of truth and, thus, allow the experience to assist in his *fieri*.

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Experience as a Source of Knowledge. Analysis of Karol Wojtyła's *Introductions* to *Love and Responsibility*[1]

Rafał Wilkołek[2]

Abstract

The article argues that the "Introductions" Karol Wojtyła authored for the first (1960) and second (1962) Polish editions of *Love and Responsibility* function as a methodological key to his ethics of sexuality and his broader anthropology. Focusing on the opening argumentative sections of both "Introductions," it reconstructs a triple framework – historical, ecclesial, and philosophical – in order to explain Wojtyła's response to the claim that only those with marital experience can speak credibly about sexual ethics. Situating Wojtyła within the ecclesiastical scientific milieu of the mid-twentieth century, the study shows that his central move consists in expanding the notion of experience beyond empiricist immediacy in accordance with the fundamental insights of the phenomenological tradition (Husserl, Heidegger, Scheler). Read in this light and within the broader coherence of Wojtyła's corpus (his studies on Scheler and *Person and Act*), pastoral experience emerges as a distinct epistemic modality capable of yielding morally significant knowledge.

Keywords

Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, experience, phenomenology, pastoral experience, moral knowledge, sexual ethics, personalism.

[1] This article is based on a lecture given by the author at the *Love and Responsibility* reading seminar in December 2025 at the Institute of Comparative Philosophy in Paris.

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Introduction

The two "Introductions" written by Karol Wojtyła for the first (1960) and second (1962) Polish editions of *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (*Love and Responsibility*) – brief yet conceptually dense texts – serve not only as preliminary remarks to the work, but also as a genuine hermeneutical key for understanding the evolution of the author's thought. Far from functioning as merely editorial forewords, they articulate methodological premises that illuminate Wojtyła's approach to the human person, sexuality and moral agency. In particular, they reveal the philosopher-pastor's distinctive attempt to integrate phenomenological description with the Thomistic tradition, thereby grounding ethical reflection in lived human experience.

In this article, attention will be directed exclusively to the first paragraph of the 1960 "Introduction" ("Intro I") and to its counterpart in the 1962 text ("Intro II"). Our aim is to situate these passages within a triple framework. First, we will consider their historical context, marked by the intellectual climate of socialist Poland, the emerging debates on sexuality, and the delicate position of the Catholic Church in public life. Second, we will analyze their ecclesial context, referring to the scientific and pastoral environment in which Wojtyła spoke and wrote, and that shaped both his language and his concerns. Finally, we will examine the philosophical context of the "Introductions," focusing on the fundamental question of whether and how *experience* can be considered a source of knowledge – an issue that is central to phenomenology and, consequently, to Wojtyła's entire anthropological project.

By re-examining these introductory fragments through the prism of context, this study seeks to show that the appeal to experience in *Love and Responsibility* is neither incidental nor merely rhetorical. Rather, it constitutes a methodological threshold through which the reader may grasp the dynamics of Wojtyła's thought and, in other ways, the role of experience in moral cognition.

I. Contemporary Criticism of Clergy Activity in the Field of Sexual Ethics

A close reading of the two "Introductions" reveals that Wojtyła begins his work by engaging directly with a specific challenge of his time: the charge that priests and consecrated persons lack credibility in speaking about love, marriage, and sexuality. Before developing his anthropological

and ethical analysis, he confronts a widespread opinion that undermined ecclesial discourse on sexual ethics at the turn of the 1960s. As the original Polish editions of *Love and Responsibility* demonstrate, the question was not merely theoretical; it emerged within a cultural climate in which the clergy's authority in matters of affectivity and conjugal life was openly contested. The public expectation that moral reflection on sexuality should derive from lived, personal experience became a central argumentative obstacle – one that Wojtyła evidently felt compelled to address at the outset of his work.

To illustrate this context, let us consider two parallel fragments from the 1960 "Introduction" ("Intro I") and the 1962 "Introduction" ("Intro II"), where Wojtyła formulates the criticism explicitly. These passages set the stage for a deeper inquiry into the nature of experience as a foundation for moral knowledge and reveal how Wojtyła situates his ethical project in dialogue with contemporary criticisms of ecclesial teaching on sexuality. In the "Introduction" to the first edition, he writes:

> There exists a view that only married people may speak about marriage, and that only persons who experience [*przeżywają*] love between a man and a woman may speak about such love. This view demands personal and direct experience [*doświadczenia*] as the basis for speaking in a given field. Thus, priests, the religious, and celibate persons cannot have anything to say on matters of love and marriage (*Intro I*, 1).[3]

In the "Introduction" to the second edition, Wojtyła writes:

> Yet priests, as well as the religious, are often denied the competency to speak on sexual matters, precisely on the grounds that they do not personally encounter them the way that lay married people do, that they do not possess personal experience [*doświadczenia*] in that field (*Intro II*, 2).[4]

Both excerpts occupy a strategic position in the "Introductions," functioning as a programmatic statement of the objection Wojtyła intends to confront. In the first edition, he presents the claim

[3] K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Boston: Pauline Books&Media, 2013), xxi.
[4] *Ibid.*, xxv-xxvi.

almost verbatim – "only married people may speak about marriage" – as a succinct formulation of the reductive logic that equates moral competence with personal participation. The second edition reiterates the same idea with only a slight variation, suggesting that the issue not only persisted but perhaps intensified: priests and religious "are often denied the competency to speak on sexual matters" because they do not "personally encounter" marriage or conjugal love. Read together, the two passages reveal a shared nucleus: the notion that a celibate cleric should not, indeed cannot, engage authoritatively with the theme of sexuality.

This line of reasoning hinges on a presumed inseparability between direct experience and epistemic authority. To speak about love, one must have "lived" love; to teach about marriage, one must have "experienced" marriage. Celibacy thus appears as a structural disqualification, not merely a disciplinary difference. Such criticism, however, did not arise in a vacuum. It reflects the intellectual atmosphere of mid-twentieth-century Poland, where shifts in cultural attitudes, emerging discussions on sexuality, and suspicion toward ecclesial authority shaped the reception of moral teaching. Appreciating the force of the objection requires situating Wojtyła's response within this sociocultural and ecclesial landscape.

A. The People's Republic of Poland: Communist Propaganda and Its Influence

Under communist rule, public morality in the People's Republic of Poland (PRL) was marked by a complex paradox. On the one hand, sexual matters were taboo: state propaganda avoided open discussion of intimacy, marriage, or sexual ethics, preferring instead a façade of ideological propriety[5]. On the other hand, sexuality was simultaneously monitored and regulated, as ideological structures sought to control not only public behavior but also discourse itself[6]. Direct testimonies from the period are scarce, yet available evidence suggests that sexual themes did not belong to the space of legitimate public debate[7]. As one contemporary journalist observed in 1956, there prevailed a veritable "conspiracy of silence" (*zmowa milczenia*) regarding education for marriage and family life, reflecting the state's earlier ideological reluctance to recognize the family as an autonomous sphere of personal formation, since the primary locus for shaping the "new man"

[5] Cf. B. Klich-Kluczewska, *Rodzina, tabu i komunizm w Polsce 1956-1989* (Kraków: Libron, 2015), 19.
[6] Cf. K. Budrowska, "Cenzura, tabu i wstyd. Cenzura obyczajowa PRL-u (1948-1958)," *Napis* Vol. 18 (2012), 238-243.
[7] In fact, during the communist era, the introduction to *Love and Responsibility* was one of the very few officially available texts that openly addressed an issue which had not previously been discussed in public.

was understood within communist ideology to be the collective[8], to which the individual was expected to be subordinated as a part to the whole. Ubiquitous in private life, questions concerning sexuality nevertheless remained unspoken, veiled within a double moral code that sharply separated public rhetoric from lived reality.

This dynamic contributed to the formation of a latent social tension which became markedly more explicit after the fall of communism. With the political transformation of 1989 and particularly throughout the 1990s, long-suppressed criticism of the Church's position on sexual ethics surfaced with unexpected intensity. What had remained unarticulated in the PRL now emerged openly: for many, clerical involvement in questions of sexuality was interpreted less as pastoral concern and more as disproportionate fixation. The argument cited by Wojtyła in the early 1960s – questioning the legitimacy of priestly discourse on love and marriage – thus prefigures a critique that would later become widespread and explicit.

A revealing testimony comes from Czesław Miłosz, Nobel laureate, who addressed this issue in *Kultura* (1991), a major émigré journal. Miłosz observed that the "obsession of the clergy with matters of sexual morality"[9] could not be freely discussed in communist Poland. He further noted that, following the reforms of Vatican II, some Western Catholic circles attempted to adapt to modern liberal sensibilities, at times even surpassing them in displays of tolerance. Miłosz's evaluation – severe, but influential – captures well the intellectual atmosphere in which the suspicion described by Wojtyła took shape. It reflects a broader cultural perception that ecclesiastical teaching on sexuality was overly moralistic, insufficiently grounded in human experience, and therefore vulnerable to contestation.

Given this historical landscape, the objection formulated in "Intro I" and "Intro II" appears not as an isolated remark, but as a response to a broader socio-political mood. The next step is to examine whether and how this climate intersected with the ecclesial context, shaping both the reception of Wojtyła's work and his methodological appeal to experience as a basis for moral reflection.

[8] Cf. B. Klich-Kluczewska, *Przez dziurkę od klucza. Życie prywatne w Krakowie (1945-1989)* (Warszawa: Trio, 2005), 100.
[9] Cz. Miłosz, "Państwo wyznaniowe?" *Kultura* Vol. 7-8 (1991), 7.

B. The Pre-Conciliar Church: the Persistent "Ecclesial-celibate" Identification

In the pre-conciliar Church, the figure of the priest was almost naturally equated with the celibate state. Celibacy functioned as a recognizable mark of clerical identity, a symbolic separation from the lay experience of marriage and family life[10]. Wojtyła himself recalls this traditional vision when he describes priestly celibacy as a phenomenon situated "on the border line"[11] between service-motivated continence and virginal dedication grounded in spousal love for God. In this conception, the priest's life is directed toward the community and toward God, not toward conjugal partnership. Such an understanding, deeply rooted in centuries of ecclesiastical practice shaped also by earlier Jewish and Greco-Roman traditions of continence,[12] inevitably reinforced the perception that priests stood at a place removed from the domain of sexual experience – thus nourishing, for some, the accusation that they lacked competence in matters of conjugal ethics.

Yet Wojtyła is careful to nuance this view. In the same passage, he notes that "the sacrament of Holy Orders can be imparted to people who previously lived in marriage."[13] This reminder appears not in his treatise on marriage,[14] but in the section devoted to vocation,[15] which underscores its theological significance. Celibacy, he implicitly suggests, is not inherent to priesthood in a sacramental sense, but rather belongs to the sphere of ecclesial discipline – a historically shaped practice rather than a dogmatic necessity. Such a clarification does not weaken the value of celibacy, but it reframes its meaning: it is a choice emerging from a specific spiritual logic, not a biological or existential precondition for ministry.

This distinction proves important for understanding the tension underlying the criticism Wojtyła addresses. If priestly celibacy is not synonymous with priesthood itself, then the authority of clergy to speak on sexual matters cannot rest merely on a presupposed superiority of the celibate state. Wojtyła will therefore search for another foundation – one located not in personal conjugal

[10] Cf. J. Baniak, *Powołanie do kapłaństwa i do życia zakonnego w Polsce w latach 1900-2010. Studium socjologiczne* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wydziału Nauk Społecznych UAM, 2012), 52.
[11] Cf. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 238.
[12] Cf. S. Heid, *Celibacy in the Early Church. The Beginnings of a Discipline of Obligatory Continence for Clerics in East and West*, trans. by M.J. Miller (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000), 349: "The rule of continence was connected with the practice of cultic continence, which was taken for granted in Judaism and the pagan world. It was for the entire Greco-Roman culture of antiquity an eminent expression of religious reverence for God. In this respect Christians could—indeed, they had to—adopt it and even intensify the discipline."
[13] Cf. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 238.
[14] Cf. *Ibid.*, 195-230.
[15] Cf. *Ibid.*, 231-247.

participation but in a different mode of experience and knowledge, accessible within the clerical vocation and its pastoral engagement with the lives of others.

Having examined the social and ecclesial dimensions of the problem, we may now better appreciate the background against which Wojtyła formulates his argument. This diagnosis is a necessary step toward understanding the rest of the introductory paragraph, namely Wojtyła's first response, which increasingly moves the discussion from mere sociological observation to the level of a Church's activity in presenting the norms of sexual ethics. To grasp how this move becomes possible, it is essential to consider the intellectual milieu in which Wojtyła wrote.

II. The Ecclesiastical Scientific Milieu of the Period

Having analyzed the criticism of the clergy's competence to speak about love and sexuality in the first part, we must now turn to another essential element of the same introductory paragraph: Wojtyła's observation that priests do in fact frequently speak and write on these matters despite such objections. This shift in emphasis signals a move from external critique to internal ecclesial practice, prompting an examination of how theological reflection on sexuality was generated, transmitted and justified within the Church's intellectual landscape.

Wojtyła introduces this point immediately after citing the prevailing view that celibacy disqualifies one from addressing marital love. The juxtaposition of two successive passages reveals a tension characteristic of the period: despite claims of incompetence, the ecclesial environment continued to generate academic and pastoral discourse on sexual ethics, and Wojtyła placed himself – deliberately and self-consciously – within this tradition. In the "Introduction" to the first edition, he writes:

> Nevertheless, they often speak and write on those topics.... in pastoral work... (*Intro I*, 1).[16]

In the "Introduction" to the second edition, Wojtyła writes:

[16] *Ibid.*, xxi.

> The book titled *Love and Responsibility*, which was first printed in 1960 due to the efforts of Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, is hereby published the second time by Znak publishing house.... one must consider the fact that the author of the book is a priest (*Intro II*, 1-2).[17]

By situating himself within a community of priests who engage with sexual ethics, Wojtyła implicitly facilitates a broader examination of the intellectual and pastoral framework within which such discourse is produced. These concise observations function therefore as more than mere introductory clarifications: they point toward three dimensions that shape the underlying, closer context of *Love and Responsibility*. Firstly, they direct attention to the dominant theological culture of the period, which was structured around moral handbooks and casuistic approaches to sexuality. Secondly, they anticipate Wojtyła's own critical engagement with that model, marked by his desire to rethink moral theology through personal experience and philosophical anthropology. Thirdly, they allude to the pastoral and academic setting in which his thought was formed, where lived encounters and university discourse intersected.

In light of this, the present section will commence with an examination of the Catholic moral manuals that constituted the principal reference for sexual ethics in mid-twentieth-century ecclesial scholarship.

A. The Moral-Manual Tradition of the Era

As the primary reference for moral theology in mid-twentieth-century seminary education, particularly in matters of sexual ethics, Catholic moral manuals exercised a twofold authority: practical and doctrinal. They exerted their influence by shaping the consciences of future confessors, defining pastoral norms, and establishing the conceptual categories through which questions of human sexuality were addressed.

Among the manuals most widely used in the 1950s, the *Katholische Moraltheologie* by Heribert Jone, OFM Cap., held a privileged place. Since its publication in Paderborn in 1930, the book has been reissued dozens of times in various languages. Arguably, it was the most frequently consulted handbook. Found in nearly every Western seminary library, it was valued for its accessibility. Confessors frequently utilized it as a pragmatic casuistic guide, regarded less as a theoretical treatise and more as a compendium of concrete cases, distinctions, and moral

[17] *Ibid.*, xxv.

qualifications. The book's influence was considerable, particularly because it provided clear answers to practical questions, a feature that was especially significant in an era that demanded pastoral efficiency. Although the Polish translation has not been finalized, the work enjoyed a high reputation among Polish lecturers educated in Germany, France, Italy or Switzerland.[18]

A secondary yet pivotal reference was Dominic Prümmer OP's *Manuale theologiae moralis secundum principia Sancti Thomae Aquinatis*. Published in 1915 in Latin, the text was written across several volumes. While it was customary within Dominican scholarly circles, it also circulated extensively among diocesan seminaries. In comparison to Jone's text, it is more intricate and methodical in its Thomistic exposition, thus serving as a sophisticated instrument for students specializing in confession and particular moral concerns. It was particularly well suited to courses on penitential practices. Where subtle distinctions regarding guilt and sin were of paramount importance, the manual offered "a method of presentation that always emphasizes the principles to be applied rather than their applications."[19]

A similar degree of influence was observed in certain regions with regard to the *Summa Theologiae Moralis* by Jerôme Noldin, S.J., which was frequently utilized in Jesuit seminaries and in institutions where faculty members had undergone Jesuit intellectual formation. This manual was regarded for its meticulous classification of sins against the sixth commandment and its sophisticated internal organization. In a manner consistent with its counterparts, it furnished systematic responses to moral inquiries by means of a taxonomy of acts and their moral species. The manual was "appreciated for its clarity and precision."[20] First published by Noldin in 1902, it received its thirty-third edition the year before the Second Vatican Council thanks to Gottfried Heinzel's work.

Of the three items mentioned, Noldin's textbook is the most noteworthy in terms of analyzing Wojtyła's scholarly background. The Cardinal Karol Wojtyła Library (BKKW) – preserved in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków – contained four volumes of this *Summa theologiae moralis*, published in 1955-56. The chronology of Wojtyła's acquisition of the items in question remains to be ascertained. However, the collection did include a volume entitled

[18] Cf. A. Derdziuk, "Podręcznik kapucyńskiego moralisty z Münster," *Roczniki teologiczne* Vol. 46, No. 3 (1999), 149.
[19] Cf. P. Harmignie, "Dominicus-M. Prümmer, O.P., prof. Un. Fribourg (Suisse), Manuale Theologiae Moralis secundum principia S. Thomae Aquinatis [compte-rendu]," *Revue Philosophique de Louvain* Vol. 1 (1924), 122.
[20] Cf. E. Vansteenberghe, "Chronique de théologie morale et spirituelle [note critique]," *Revue des sciences religieuses* Vol. 12, No. 2 (1932), 260.

Complementum: De castitate, published in 1955, which explicitly deals with the norms of Catholic sexual ethics, and today bears the number BKKW 111.

Despite the presence of discrepancies in terms of style and intellectual lineage, the above-mentioned manuals exhibited several characteristics that were foundational to their nature. The emphasis on casuistry involved the frequent presentation of moral evaluation through the analysis of specific cases and gradations of culpability. The prevailing paradigm characterized sexual acts as inherently sinful, evaluated through the lens of objective moral standards rather than considering interpersonal dynamics or the intricacies of love. Consequently, their treatment of sexuality concentrated on specific acts – contraception, masturbation, withdrawal, extramarital relations – rather than on personal subjectivity, relational maturity, or the value of experience. This approach yielded clarity in moral discernment; however, it also risked reducing ethical questions to juridical classifications, leaving limited space for a positive anthropology of love.

It is within this intellectual environment that Wojtyła would introduce his own approach, one that neither rejected the manual tradition outright nor accepted its categories without critique. However, prior to embarking on a methodological response, it is imperative to undertake a more thorough examination of the second dimension of the ecclesial milieu: his advancing reflection that transcends the moral-manual paradigm.

B. Wojtyła's 1965 Article: Critique of Naturalism and the Move beyond Manualism

A definitive indication of Wojtyła's intellectual distance from the prevailing moral-manual paradigm is evident in his article *Issues in Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Demands* (1965).[21] Here, the author presents an explicit critique of the naturalistic and teleological tendencies that are evident in contemporary moral theology.[22] While acknowledging the presence of elements in the manuals that have the potential to evolve into a personalist approach, it is argued that the absence of conceptual elaboration results in an implicit reduction of sexuality to its biological dimension.[23] When moral analysis is grounded exclusively in sexology or in natural teleology, it

[21] K. Wojtyła, "Zagadnienia katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulaty," *Roczniki filozoficzne* Vol. 13, No. 2 (1965), 5-25.
[22] Cf. *Ibid.*, 5, 9-11.
[23] Wojtyła writes: "By 'naturalism' here... we mean a one-sided 'purely' naturalistic interpretation of sexual facts in man and in human relations – an interpretation which does not take into account the basic fact that man is a person, and that human relations based on the factor of sex or related to sexual desire should be drawn to the requirements of the personalistic norm. We encounter such a purely naturalistic interpretation of sexual facts in biological or medical sexology." *Ibid.*, 15-16.

engenders a constrained perspective in which sexuality is predominantly evaluated in terms of its procreative function and objective norms that govern the sexual act. In this sense, the manuals do not so much deny the personal dimension as leave it unarticulated, thereby reinforcing a naturalistic reading by default.[24]

In the light of these considerations, Wojtyła proposes a methodological turn, asserting that the focus of sexual ethics should shift from the act of sexual intercourse itself to the relationship between individuals of different sexes.[25] This formulation indicates a discernible departure from the manualist approach. In contrast to the approach of Jone, Prümmer and Noldin, who take the individual act as the fundamental unit of analysis, Wojtyła places the interpersonal relation at the core of ethical reflection. As Richard H. Bulzacchelli has observed, this shift reflects Wojtyła's refusal to reduce the human person to "a mere part within a whole"[26] or to a merely natural function, thereby making the person, rather than the biological act, the primary locus of moral evaluation. Consequently, Wojtyła introduced a principle that is predominantly absent from manual literature: The personalist norm stipulates that an individual's inherent dignity and value are intrinsically tied to their identity, thus making every person worthy of love and never merely of use.[27] In this context, the criterion for moral evaluation encompasses not only natural finality but also the dignity of the person, understood as both subject and partner, not merely as participant in the biological process. The personalist perspective ultimately grounds true human dignity in the person's fundamental relation to Christ, who is the Truth. As Wojtyła writes in his recently discovered commentary on St Paul's sermon at the Areopagus, this dignity is constituted by "the disposition to listen to the Truth (that is, obedience), and the readiness to act in the Truth."[28]

Wojtyła elucidates this transformation through a specific and theologically acute case study: the use of contraception. The author's argument progresses through three distinct levels. Firstly, at the natural level, he corroborates the manuals' assertions regarding the necessity of respecting the

[24] Wojtyła notes: "As for the works or textbooks I am familiar with in the field of Catholic sexual ethics (e.g., tractatus de sexto), I believe that they implicitly contain elements of a personalistic approach, but because of their lack of explication, they can sometimes arouse naturalistic associations or suspicions." *Ibid.*, 9.
[25] Wojtyła writes: "... the following question arises: whether the material object of sexual ethics is only acts related to the sexual relationship itself (sexual intercourse) – taking into account everything that leads to it and results from it – or whether the object is simply the relationship between persons of different sexes with particular reference to the sexual relationship itself." *Ibid.*, 8.
[26] R.H. Bulzacchelli, "lrreducibility and the Personalistic Norm as a Departure from Thomism: A Critique from the Thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," *Wojtyła Studies* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Aug. 2025), 84.
[27] Cf. Wojtyła, "Zagadnienia katolickiej etyki seksualnej", 14.
[28] K. Wojtyła, *Teachings for an Unbelieving World. Newly Discovered Reflections on Paul's Sermon at the Areopagus* (Notre Dame, IN: Ave Maria Press, 2020), 36.

procreative orientation of sexuality. Secondly, he incorporates the concept of conscience, arguing that periodic continence respects the moral role of the individual as conscious guardian of natural order. Conversely, he contends that contraception compromises the agent in this task. This argument diverges from manualist reasoning. Thirdly, at the personalist level, he contends that contraception risks reducing the other to an object of use rather than a partner in love. In this passage, the novelty of his approach becomes evident. The criterion for moral judgment is no longer merely physiological teleology, but rather the integrity of interpersonal communion.[29]

The article *Issues in Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Demands* thus reveals the emerging contours of a moral theology grounded in personalism rather than casuistry – a development that illuminates the methodological gesture already implicit in the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility*.

C. Academic Pastoral Ministry: a Laboratory of Relational Ethics

From the early 1950s onward, Wojtyła recognized a crucial pedagogical limitation: abstract norms, even those rigorously formulated in authoritative manuals, were insufficient for forming the moral conscience of young adults entrusted to his care in the academic pastoral ministry (*duszpasterstwo akademickie*) in Kraków. The students he collaborated with were navigating a rapidly changing cultural landscape. They were skeptical of prohibitions that lacked convincing justification and eager to ask fundamental questions about life and love. These questions stemmed from what Wojtyła referred to as "critical faith"[30] at the time.

The inquiries posed by the aforementioned individuals were of an anthropological and existential nature. The fundamental question of human nature is at the core of this inquiry. The question of how to genuinely love is a profound and enduring one. These questions resonate in Wojtyła's 1960 drama, "The Jeweler's Shop." Such inquiries necessitated not merely clear articulation of doctrine but also a pedagogy firmly grounded in experiential learning, discernment, and the nurturing of interior freedom. For Wojtyła, the formation of individuals could no longer be predicated upon a catalogue of prohibitions; rather, it was to be informed by the reality of persons and their lived relationships.

[29] Cf. *Ibid.*, 18-19.
[30] K. Wojtyła, *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał* (Kraków: Znak, 1979), 445.

In this context, Jerzy Ciesielski (1929-1970) played a pivotal role. A prominent figure within Kraków's academic milieu – first as a student, later as a professor of engineering – Ciesielski embodied the integration of intellectual rigor, moral integrity, and family life. The scope of his collaboration with Wojtyła extended beyond formal meetings, encompassing shared excursions, hiking trips, and kayaking journeys. These activities facilitated philosophical and ethical reflection, allowing for the integration of these discourses into the fabric of lived experience. In his professional capacity, Ciesielski was a distinguished scientist specializing in reinforced concrete structures. Notably, he served as a visiting professor in Sudan. He was characterized by his exacting nature, profound thoughtfulness, and unwavering humanitarianism.[31] Jerzy Ciesielski's demise in the Nile in 1970 had a profound impact on Wojtyła, who, in *Memoir on Jerzy Ciesielski*, stated that their dialogues served as a wellspring of inspiration for his work *Love and Responsibility*, which he claimed to have written "on the margins of these conversations."[32]

The *Memoir* is of crucial significance. This suggests that *Love and Responsibility* is not merely a theological treatise conceived in isolation, but rather the result of a sustained dialogue with real families and young adults seeking to unite love, truth, and moral responsibility in everyday life. Consequently, the thought of Wojtyła is not solely derived from doctrinal reflection but is also shaped by direct pastoral engagement, which is influenced by encounters, inquiries, and experiences that assess and refine ethical theory. It is this lived dimension that gives his approach both personalist depth and concrete realism.

In conclusion, the analyses of the second part provide a clearer understanding of Wojtyła's position outlined in the "Introductions." He is able to respond to the criticisms outlined in the first section precisely because he stands within a vigorous intellectual and pastoral environment. Firstly, the subject's theological foundation is firmly embedded in an active theological milieu that is shaped by the moral-manual tradition yet is receptive to renewal. Secondly, he adopts a critical stance toward the naturalistic limitations of that tradition, proposing an alternative ethics grounded in the individual and interpersonal relationships. Thirdly, the author's reflections are enriched by his unique pastoral experience, particularly within the academic community of Kraków, where ethical theory was evaluated through the lens of concrete situations, authentic inquiries, and practical relationships. The threefold context – intellectual, critical, and experiential – establishes

[31] Cf. J. Machniak, *Sługa Boży Jerzy Ciesielski* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo św. Stanisława, 2007).
[32] Wojtyła, *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*, 102. Originally published in: *Tygodnik Powszechny* Vol. 51-52 (1970), 2.

the foundation for the central claim that follows in Wojtyła's introductory paragraph: the nature and value of pastoral experience as a genuine source of moral knowledge.

III. The Nature and Value of Pastoral Experience as a Source of Knowledge

Having reconstructed the historical pressures and the ecclesial-scientific milieu in which *Love and Responsibility* was conceived, the argument of Wojtyła reaches its philosophical core. The initial objection, namely, that a priest is incapable of offering a credible perspective on love and sexuality without having the personal experience of marriage, as well as invoking systemic facts that completely escape the alleged social demands, required of Wojtyła a precise clarification of what experience he means and how it serves as a legitimate source of knowledge. The issue under discussion has thus transitioned from the sociological and institutional to the epistemological.

Wojtyła's response is not characterized by defensiveness or mere apology. Instead, he reframes the question by expanding the concept of experience itself. Without denying the significance of conjugal experience, Wojtyła introduces a broader and more differentiated understanding. In doing so, he implicitly challenges the reduction of experience to first-hand personal experience, understood exclusively as biological or autobiographical immediacy, arguing that indirect experience acquired through pastoral encounter also possesses genuine epistemic value. Firstly, however, Wojtyła puts forward a particular philosophical concept that reveals his methodological preferences. In the continuation of the introductory paragraphs, he writes with particular lucidity:

> A lack of their own personal experience [*doświadczenia*] does not hinder them since they possess a very rich indirect experience [*doświadczenia*] proceeding from pastoral work. For in pastoral work, they encounter precisely these problems so often and in such a variety of ways and situations that another experience [*doświadczenie*] is created, experience that is undoubtedly more indirect and "alien," but at the same time much more extensive (*Intro I*, 1).[33]

In the "Introduction" to the second edition, Wojtyła writes:

[33] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, xxi.

> ... that it is precisely experience [*doświadczenie*] – the indirect experience [*doświadczenie*] provided by pastoral work – that is one of the two sources of this book. This work so often places the priest or the religious face to face with sexual problems, in so many diverse moments or situations, that quite a specific experience [*doświadczenie*] ensues as a result. It is granted that this experience [*doświadczenie*] is not personal but "alien" instead, although at the same time it is more extensive than any exclusively personal experience [*doświadczenie*] (*Intro II*, 2).[34]

At this juncture, it is possible to identify the conceptual crux of Wojtyła's "Introductions," namely, the notion of *experience*. The issue at hand is no longer whether the clergy are socially or institutionally authorized to speak about love and sexuality, but rather, and in what sense, experience itself constitutes a legitimate source of moral knowledge. This prompts a refinement of the initial objection that has been a constant companion to the analysis: in what manner can a priest adequately engage with questions concerning love and sexual ethics if he has not had first-hand experience of marriage?

Wojtyła's response is articulated with notable clarity. He maintains that the absence of direct, personal experience does not disqualify priests from moral reflection in this domain, insofar as they possess an indirect experience acquired through pastoral practice. This experience is not merely compensatory, but qualitatively distinct and, in many respects, more comprehensive than purely individual experience. The experience of priests is characterized as indirect, yet "at the same time (much) more extensive." This particular formulation is reiterated in both of the "Introductions," thus serving to emphasize its methodological importance to Wojtyła.

Consequently, pastoral experience is not presented as a substitute for conjugal life, nor as a secondary or deficient form of knowledge. Instead, it can be argued that it constitutes a different mode of experiential access to moral reality. The scope of the priest's role is derived from his structural position within the religious hierarchy, which often places him in situations where he is confronted with a wide array of human experiences, particularly during moments of existential crisis. Within the uncompromising context of the confessional, the priest is entrusted with the duty to listen to narratives of love, failure, responsibility, and suffering that extend beyond the confines

[34] *Ibid.*, xxvi.

of any individual personal biography. In this sense, the epistemic weight of pastoral experience is contingent on the conceptualization of experience itself.

In order to clarify this notion, it is necessary to turn to the philosophical context of Wojtyła's thought. Accordingly, the following analysis will proceed along two complementary lines. Firstly, it adopts a historical-critical approach, attentive to the diachronic development of the concepts of experience within the closest history of philosophy. Secondly, it employs a canonical reading, treating Wojtyła's corpus as a coherent whole in which his later writings progressively interpret and develop his earlier thought.

A. In the Current of Philosophy: Experience as a Source of Knowledge

The philosophical debate concerning the role of experience as a source of knowledge profoundly shaped twentieth-century philosophy. It developed in opposition to a narrow empiricist conception of experience that dominated the modern sciences. Its central ambition was to rethink experience from a phenomenological perspective in order to restore the full intelligibility of being as it is given in lived experience.[35] The following analysis therefore provides a concise overview of this methodological debate as an indispensable framework for understanding Wojtyła's own approach, particularly his notions of "indirect experience" and "a more extensive experience."

a. Empiricism and the Narrow Concept of Experience

The dominant conception of experience within the scientific and philosophical culture of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was empiricism, whose epistemological assumptions decisively shaped the modern understanding of knowledge. A concise diagnosis of this tradition is offered by Edmund Husserl in *The Crisis of European Sciences,* where he summarizes the internal logic of modern empiricism:

> Locke's naïvetés and inconsistencies lead to a rapid further development of his empiricism, which pushes toward a paradoxical idealism and finally ends in a consummated absurdity.

[35] Claude Romano remarks: "From the perspective of the history of the phenomenological movement, the most significant event seems to have been Husserl's rediscovery of this polysemic expression 'experience' in one of its meanings considered paradigmatic. *Erfahrung*, experience in its broadest sense, is understood by Husserl as *Erlebnis*, lived consciousness. However, while all lived experience appears to be an experience, it is by no means certain that all experiences are of the order of lived experience." C. Romano, *Au cœur de la raison, la phénoménologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2010), 469.

> The foundation continues to be sensationalism and what appears to be obvious, i.e., that the sole indubitable ground of all knowledge is self-experience and its realm of immanent data. Starting from here, Berkeley reduces the bodily things which appear in natural experience to the complexes of sense-data themselves through which they appear. No inference is thinkable, [according to Berkeley,] through which conclusions could be drawn from these sense-data about anything but other such data. It could only be inductive inference, i.e., inference growing out of the association of ideas.[36]

This passage encapsulates the fundamental tenet of empiricism. Derived from the Greek ἐμπειρία (*empeiría*) – "that which one has personally tried" – the concept of experience came to denote, in modern scientific usage, what can be directly observed by the senses and subsequently generalized through induction. According to this perspective, knowledge is defined as the accumulation, comparison, and generalization of sensory data, whether external (seeing, hearing, touching) or internal (feeling, sensing). The acquisition of knowledge is contingent upon the presence of sensory input, which serves as a gateway to the domain of valid knowledge.[37]

Husserl demonstrates how this epistemological starting point instigates a progression that appears to be inevitable. Locke's conception of the mind as a tabula rasa already implies that the subject has access only to its own impressions. Berkeley radicalizes this logic by concluding that the so-called bodily objects are nothing but bundles of sensations: the table, the tree, or the chair possess no being beyond the complexes of sense-data through which they appear. As Husserl emphasizes, such a framework permits no inference beyond the data themselves; reasoning becomes a mere association of impressions, and knowledge collapses into a closed circuit of subjective contents. Paradoxically, an epistemology that sought to ground knowledge in sensory realism culminates in a form of idealism in which reality is reduced to mental construction.

A similar diagnosis was previously formulated by Husserl at a conference in Vienna on May 7, 1935, which subsequently provided material for the work on the *Krisis*, completed in 1937. At the conference, Husserl provides the necessary contours of classical empiricism as governed by what he calls a "sensualism, or more precisely, a psychologism of *data*."[38] In this model,

[36] E. Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. by D. Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), 86-87.
[37] Cf. F.M.A. Hossain, "A Critical Analysis of Empiricism," *Open Journal of Philosophy* Vol. 4 (2014), 226-227.
[38] E. Husserl, *La crise de la humanité européenne et la philosophie*, trans. by N. Depraz (Paris: Hatier, 1992), 76.

consciousness is conceptualized as a passive receptacle, gradually filled with raw, pre-analytic impressions. Meanings, values and intentions are regarded as secondary psychological derivatives, rather than as original dimensions of experience. Husserl contends that a pivotal schism occurs with Franz Brentano, who reconceptualizes psychology as the science of intentional acts – that is, of experiences that are inherently concerned with something. According to this account, consciousness is not merely a container of sensations, but rather a relational structure oriented towards meaning. Husserl's concluding assertion is that, while Brentano does not fully avoid the naturalism characteristic of his era, he does initiate a critical rupture within the empiricist paradigm by proposing the possibility that experience transcends the mere accumulation of sensory data.[39]

The anti-empiricist orientation of phenomenology found further expression in the work of Max Scheler. According to Scheler, one of the "two hidebound philosophical prejudices" obscuring philosophical inquiry consisted precisely in reducing what is originally given to what rests upon experience understood in an excessively narrow – indeed, merely sensory – sense. Against such a reduction, he writes:

> The first [prejudice] is that only what rests on experience (if at all possible, on sensual experience) may be regarded as "given" or, to be precise, as originally given, i.e. primary data. However, it can be no less true to say that to every kind of primary data there must correspond a manner of experiencing which is such that data of the kind in question can be given through it. Let us concede that everything which "is" owes an account of itself to experience. But conversely everything that is experienced has a claim to be posited as in some way existent. In this context nothing could be more disastrous for epistemology than to set up at the beginning of one's methodical procedure too narrowly exclusive a concept of "experience" — to equate the whole of experience with one particular kind of experience (sanctioning only that mental attitude which is conducive to it) and then refuse to recognize as primary data anything which cannot be reduced to this one variety.[40]

This philosophical moment is of crucial importance in order to understand Wojtyła's position. If experience is defined strictly in empiricist terms – that is to say, as direct, personal, sensory

[39] Cf. *Ibid.*, 76.
[40] M. Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, trans. by B. Noble (London-New York: Routledge-Taylor&Francis, 2017), 255-256.

acquaintance – then the objection he cites in the "Introductions" appears irrefutable: a priest is lacking in immediate experiential access to marriage and therefore in any valid knowledge of sexual ethics. The argument proposed by Wojtyła can only be rendered comprehensible once this restricted conception of experience is relinquished. By drawing – implicitly but decisively – on a broader understanding of experience, he is able to affirm that human experience encompasses not only sensations but also values, conscience, interpersonal relations, and the experience of others. It is precisely within this expanded horizon that pastoral experience acquires its cognitive significance, enabling Wojtyła to situate his notion of "indirect experience" as a genuine source of moral knowledge.

b. Phenomenology and the Expanded Notion of Experience

The analysis of the manner in which empiricism reduces experience to a mere collection of sensory data provides the necessary point of departure for comprehending the fundamental alternative that is introduced by phenomenology as such and its broader conception of being. It is precisely this alternative that could also be seen as enabling Wojtyła to argue for the cognitive value of pastoral experience without succumbing to subjectivism or mere sociological observation. Both considerations ultimately converge upon a single overarching reason. At the core of phenomenological methodology lies the principle that appearance is not opposed to being but rather constitutes its privileged mode of access. This principle is most explicitly formulated in the writings of Edmund Husserl, and in a closely related yet ontologically reinterpreted form, in the work of Martin Heidegger. The complete articulation of this insight can be found in the following passages, respectively from Husserl's *Cartesian Meditations* and Heidegger's *Being and Time*. Husserl writes:

> The participation in apodicticity appears in the *formal law* (which is itself apodictic): So much illusion, so much being — which is only covered up and falsified thereby, and which therefore can be asked about, sought, and (by following a predelineated way) found, even if only with approximation to its fully determined content. This fully determined content

> itself, with the sense of something firmly identifiable again and again, in respect of all its parts and moments, is an "idea," valid a priori.[41]

Heidegger, likewise, states:

> There are various ways in which phenomena can be covered up.... This covering-up can become complete; or rather — and as a rule — what has been discovered earlier may still be visible, though only as a semblance. Yet so much semblance, so much "Being." This covering-up as a "disguising" is both the most frequent and the most dangerous, for here the possibilities of deceiving and misleading are especially stubborn. Within a "system," perhaps, those structures of Being — and their concepts — which are still available but veiled in their indigenous character, may claim their rights. For when they have been bound together constructively in a system, they present themselves as something "clear," requiring no further justification, and thus can serve as the point of departure for a process of deduction.[42]

The analysis of the so-called "first principle" described in the aforementioned texts by the foremost representatives of phenomenology must undergo several stages. At the very beginning of its influence, the first phenomenological principle "establishes an irrevocable interdependence between appearing and being... [between] phenomenological and ontological determinations."[43] Subsequently, being and appearing are inextricably linked, forming a symbiotic relationship in which one is in constant relation to the other.[44] The following phenomenological moment of the principle's realization consists in imposing on being the "measure" and "reason" that appearing brings with it.[45] Since the phenomenality of appearing is a decisive factor for and about the

[41] E. Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations. An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. by D. Cairns (The Hague-Boston-London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1982), 103 [§46, Hua. I, 133].
[42] M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. by J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson (Oxford-Cambridge: Blackwell, 1962), 60 [§7, 36].
[43] M. Henry, "Quatre principes de la phénoménologie: À propos de *Réduction et donation* de Jean-Luc Marion," *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* Vol. 96, No. 1 (1991), 11.
[44] Characterizing the domains of appearance and being, Henry uses the metaphor of competing yet overlapping realms: "it is because appearance unfolds its reign that being also unfolds its own, because they have one and the same reign...." *Ibid.*, 4.
[45] Henry speaks here, respectively, of the functioning of being "to the extent" (*dans la mesure*) and "for the reason" (*pour cette raison*) that appearance functions. Henry also uses the phrase: "the foundation of the second [being] by the first [appearance]." *Ibid.*, 4.

manifestation of being, this imposition of measure and reason is evident in the fact that appearing is given "primacy"[46] over being, and phenomenality primacy over manifestation. In essence, despite its originally perceived "status of mere appearance,"[47] appearing, under the influence of the first principle, acquires a "ontological dignity"[48] superior to being, finding itself at least one step higher on the ladder of existence.

The primacy of phenomenality, i.e., one in which appearing – the fundamental phenomenological category – is the point of reference ("so much appearing, so much being"), is not, however, the only feature of the first principle, nor is its consideration the only and most correct way of interpreting it. An additional dimension, of greater significance for understanding the first principle, emerges when, in its context, the question of being ("how much being? – as much as appearing") is articulated as a point of reference and analysis.

Given the potential to reverse the aforementioned orders and expand the scope for formulating the first principle, Jean-Luc Marion describes this as a "typically metaphysical situation"[49] or a "thoroughly metaphysical climate."[50] He argues that such an event would result in categorizing the ensuing issues as "strictly metaphysical."[51] Although in a directly polemical manner, Denis Fisette ultimately clarifies Marion's point of view on phenomenology as a philosophical method, stating that "apart from the ontological status that is restored to the modes of donation, there is nothing metaphysical in this principle."[52] Accordingly, with its metaphysical ramifications, appearing, as articulated by the first principle of phenomenology, "gives access to beings that are not only material things in the world, but also essences and categories."[53] Understood in this way, the first phenomenological principle postulates an enlarged metaphysical concept of experience. Both the term "enlarged" [fr. *large*] and its phenomenologically correct

[46] J.-L. Marion, *Being Given. Toward a Phenomenology of Givenness*, trans. by J.L. Kosky (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), 11.
[47] *Ibid.*, 11.
[48] M. Henry, "Quatre principes," 4. It seems that Marion would prefer the phrase "ontic dignity" here, considering the goal that, in his opinion, guides the formulation of the first principle, namely: "to reestablish the ontic dignity of appearing." Marion, *Being Given*, 11.
[49] *Ibid.*, 11.
[50] J.-L. Marion, *La Rigueur des choses. Entretiens avec Dan Arbib* (Paris: Flammarion, 2012), 128.
[51] Marion states: "These are strictly metaphysical questions... [even if] Husserl had to gradually step outside himself and his starting point... [and] this effort was continued... by Heidegger and his followers." *Ibid.*, 128-129.
[52] D. Fisette, "Phénoménologie et métaphysique: remarques à propos d'un débat récent," in: *La Métaphysique: Son Histoire, Sa Critique, Ses Enjeux*, ed. J.-M. Narbonne, L. Langlois (Paris-Québec: Vrin-PUL, 1999), 97-98.
[53] P. Huneman, E. Kulich, *Introduction à la phénoménologie* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1997), 16.

understanding, i.e., one that does not equate phenomenon with being, can be found in the following passage by Marion, which refers to Husserl's *Ideas I*:

> If one still wants to insinuate that "phenomenology seems to harbor in itself all ontologies," because "the roots of all ontologies are their basic concepts and axioms," that restoration can remain legitimate only inasmuch as one well sees that "everything that the sciences of beings, the rational sciences and empirical sciences, offer us (in the enlarged sense they can all be called 'ontologies,' insofar as it becomes apparent that they are concerned with unities of the 'constitution') 'resolves itself into something phenomenological,' ['lost sich in Phänomenologische auf'] – a figurative expression that must not be misunderstood and whose more precise sense is still to be established."[54]

As the results of this analysis demonstrate in a new way how Wojtyła's system integrates phenomenology – the study of experience – with metaphysics – the study of being – it is worth examining the specific reasons why the first principle of phenomenology, as formulated in the foundational texts of this philosophical school, corresponds to his expanded concept of experience.

For Husserl, experience cannot be reduced to the passive reception of sensory data; rather, it consists in allowing things to appear as they give themselves to consciousness. This insight is crystallized in what he calls the formal law of phenomenology – "So much illusion, so much being" (*Cartesian Meditations*, §46). Appearing, on this view, is not a deficient shadow of being, but its privileged path of access. When something manifests itself to consciousness – whether an object, a value, an intention, or another person – this manifestation is not an illusion to be overcome but an opening onto the very structure of what is.

Heidegger articulates an analogous insight in a more explicitly ontological register. In *Being and Time* (§7), he insists that phenomena may be concealed, distorted, or covered up, yet even such

[54] J.-L. Marion, *Reduction and Givenness. Investigations of Husserl, Heidegger, and Phenomenology*, trans. by T.A. Carlson (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1998), 43. The footnote appended by Marion provides the following information: "Respectively, *Ideen III*, § 14, *Hua*, V,77 (our emphasis), 78 [Eng. trans., 66-67]. See *Cartesianische Meditationen*, § 64: "Wieder dasselbe besagt, die systematisch voll entwickelte transzendentale Phänomenologie wäre *eo ipso* die wahre und echte universale Ontologie; aber nicht bloss eine leer formale, sondern zugleich eine solche, die alle regionalen Seinsmöglichkeiten in sich schlösse, und nach allen zu ihnen gehörigen Korrelationen" (181); and also *Ideen I*, § 62, *Hua*, III, 147-49; likewise *Erste Philosophie*, II, *Beilage* 30, Hua, VIII, 482. Good clarification by E. Fink in *Studien zur Phänomenologie*, French trans. *De la phénoménologie*, trans. by D. Franck (Paris, 1974), 233-34." *Ibid.*, 215.

modes of concealment remain modes of appearing and therefore disclose something essential about being. The way in which something shows itself – or fails to show itself – belongs intrinsically to its mode of being. Appearing is thus constitutive of being, rather than accidental to it, and phenomenological analysis already touches the ontological structure of what manifests itself.

The ultimate implications of the first phenomenological principle were articulated by Edmund Husserl in what he famously called the "principle of all principles," according to which "*every primordial dator Intuition is* a *source of authority (Rechtsquelle) for knowledge*, that *whatever presents itself in 'intuition' in primordial form* (as it were in its bodily reality), *is simply to be accepted*."[55] In this form, the fundamental element of phenomenology – as what Paul Ricœur later described as a "method capable of multiple incarnations"[56] – were further developed by Max Scheler. In *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values*, he writes:

> We designate as "*a priori*" all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of an *immediate intuitive* content in the absence of any kind of positing [*Setzung*] of subjects that think them and of the real nature of those subjects, and in the absence of any kind of positing of objects to which such units of meaning are applicable. The point, therefore, is to leave aside all kinds of *positing*, including the positing of "real" or "non-real," "illusion" or "real," etc.... If we call the content of such an "intuition" a "*phenomenon*," such a "phenomenon" therefore has nothing at all to do with "appearance" (of something real) or "illusion." Intuition of this kind, however, is "*essential intuiting*" [Wesensschau], or, as we may call it, "*phenomenological intuition*" or "*phenomenological experience*."[57]

Just as Husserl's and Heidegger's works became, for Jean-Luc Marion, objects of historical-philosophical commentary and, at the same time, sources of phenomenological inspiration,[58] so Max Scheler's work assumed a comparable role in relation to Karol Wojtyła. On the one hand, the

[55] E. Husserl, *Ideas. General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by W.R.B. Gibson (London-New York: Routledge, 2012), 43.
[56] P. Ricoeur, *À l'école de la phénoménologie* (Paris: Vrin, 1987), 8.
[57] M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. by M.S. Frings and R.L. Funk (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 48.
[58] Jean-Luc Marion recalls that he had been "doing phenomenology, like Monsieur Jourdain speaking prose, without knowing it, for many years, essentially through the practice of Heidegger." Marion, *La rigueur des choses*, 119.

reception of the above passage from *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values* – taken from the second of the book's six chapters – is documented by the reading notes Wojtyła prepared during his study of the work,[59] as well as by the marginal annotations he entered in his personal copy.[60] The latter demonstrate that, from the outset, Wojtyła accurately identified what he regarded as the central methodological problem of phenomenology, writing the word "problem" ("point") in the margin next to the sentence: "We designate as '*a priori*' all those ideal units of meaning and those propositions that are self-given by way of an *immediate intuitive* content in the absence of any kind of positing [*Setzung*] of subjects that think them and of the real nature of those subjects, and in the absence of any kind of positing of objects to which such units of meaning are applicable." Likewise, alongside the passage – partly marked by a vertical line – stating: "If we call the content of such an 'intuition' a '*phenomenon*,' such a 'phenomenon' therefore has nothing at all to do with 'appearance' (of something real) or 'illusion.'" Wojtyła writes: "por. [cf.] Werte sind klare Phänomene." In doing so, he referred back to Scheler's earlier statement in the first chapter of the work that: "Values are *clearly feelable phenomena*."[61] Significantly, however, he omitted the reference to the affective accessibility of values (*fühlbare*), while deliberately emphasizing their phenomenological self-givenness (*klare Phänomene*).

On the other hand, whereas the reading notes and marginalia testify to Wojtyła's reception of Scheler's text, its *Wirkungsgeschichte* – that is, the way in which it continued to shape his own philosophical reflection – is visible in the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility*. Scheler's methodological shift provides an important key to understanding Wojtyła's conception of

[59] Karol Wojtyła summarized the passage in his reading notes on Max Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* as follows: "Jako *a priori* oznaczamy te jednostki (pojęcia) znaczeniowe (*Bedeutungseinheiten*) i zdania, których treść sama się nam narzuca w drodze bezpośrednio-oglądowej. Wyklucza się tedy przy tym wszelkiego rodzaju *Setzung* tj. ukształtowanie (czy raczej postawienie, wywołanie) tych treści ze strony podmiotu myślącego za pośrednictwem jego przyrodzonej czynności. Wyklucza się również *Setzung eines Gegenstandes, auf den sie anwendbar wären*. W ogóle jakichkolwiek *Setzung*. Treść takiego oglądu (*Anschauung*) nazwijmy 'fenomenem.' Nie ma on jednakże nic wspólnego ani ze 'zjawiskiem' (rzeczy realnej), ani z pozorem (*Schein*). Jest to po prostu *Wessenschau* – ogląd istoty czyli ogląd fenomenolog[iczny] wzgl[ędnie] fenomenolog[iczne] doświadczenie." K. Wojtyła, "Notatki i tłumaczenie *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* Maxa Schelera," in: K. Wojtyła, *Dzieła filozoficzne*, Vol. 1, ed. J. Merecki (Kraków: IDMJP2-UPJP2, 2024), 352-352. Karol Wojtyła's reading notes on Max Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* are preserved in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków (AKKW CII 24/232; the present text is taken from card 50).

[60] Karol Wojtyła's personal copy of Max Scheler's *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, containing his handwritten marginal notes, is preserved in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Kraków under the shelfmark BKKW 84.

[61] Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 16. In the original: "Werte sind klare fühlbare Phänomene." M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* (Halle a. d. Saale: Verlag von Max Niemeyer, 1921), 11.

experience developed there. Once phenomenology expands the meaning of experience and recognizes multiple modes of being, it becomes possible for Wojtyła to accommodate a wide range of ontological domains within experience itself. For him, phenomenology is concerned primarily with how things give themselves, regardless of whether they are material, psychic, spiritual, relational, or axiological (such as values), and regardless of whether they are affectively accessible. Consequently, the experience of emotions, the experience of moral conscience, the experience of values, the experience of a life story entrusted in the confessional, or the experience of another person's interior drama all qualify as genuine experiences – phenomena that give themselves to consciousness and are capable of conveying authentic knowledge.

Seen in this light, "indirect experience" is not a deficient or secondary form of experience. It is simply a different mode of access to truth. This is precisely why Wojtyła can maintain that pastoral experience, though "indirect" and in a certain sense "foreign," is broader than strictly personal experience: it encompasses a wide diversity of phenomena belonging to moral human life.

B. The Works of Wojtyła: the Coherence of an Experiential Philosophy

Wojtyła's conscious participation in the broader philosophical debate concerning empiricism and the concept of experience is evident from his explicit reflections in the article *The Problem of Experience in Ethics* (1969). There he writes:

> Because of the latter ["empiricists"], it is not enough to say that we seek the basis of valuable knowledge in experience [*doświadczeniu*], but we must also specify more precisely what kind of experience [*doświadczenie*] we are talking about. As we can see, the very concept of experience [*doświadczenia*] is not strictly unambiguous, and therefore the scientific orientation that we call empiricism is not uniform either. As will become apparent later, it is precisely this lack of uniformity that creates opportunities to develop a coherent and integral concept of experience [*doświadczenia*], which is also operative in the field of ethics, something that seems impossible with a radical "empiricist" approach.[62]

This passage demonstrates, with particular clarity, that Wojtyła does not merely presuppose a notion of experience but thematizes it explicitly, situating ethical inquiry within a critical

[62] Wojtyła, "Problem doświadczenia w etyce," 6.

engagement with empiricist epistemology. However, the specific articulation of this concept in a focused, methodological form finds its systematic development across a broader arc of his philosophical work. In order to comprehend the affirmations made by Wojtyła in the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility* with regard to pastoral experience, which is described as "indirect," "foreign," and yet broader, it is necessary to situate that claim within the longer trajectory of his thought.

Two major works serve as decisive reference points in this regard. The first of these, written prior to *Love and Responsibility*, is *An Assessment of the Possibility for Building Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler's System* (1953). The second, published after it, is *Person and Act* (1969). The first, a postdoctoral dissertation, signalled the commencement of an independent academic career; the second – referred to in academic circles at the time as a "professorial book" – represented its most mature product. When considered collectively, these texts demonstrate that the appeal to a broadened concept of experience in the "Introductions" is not an *ad hoc* justification devised in response to external criticism. Instead, it is an expression of a constant, deeply reflected, and structurally coherent element of Wojtyła's philosophy.

a. Before *Love and Responsibility*: Wojtyła as a Critical Reader of Max Scheler

Long prior to the publication of *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła engaged in a sustained and methodologically precise reflection on the nature of moral experience in his studies devoted to Max Scheler. In his early work, *An Assessment of the Possibility for Building Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler's System* (1953), he already addresses, in a systematic way, the epistemological status of ethical experience and the appropriate method for its analysis. For the purposes of this study, it is particularly significant to note that Wojtyła situates ethical inquiry explicitly within the domain of experience, while simultaneously rejecting any reduction of that experience to psychological introspection or sensory observation. The position is articulated with notable clarity in the following passage, which forms part of the conclusion of his postdoctoral thesis:

> … we must take the experiential [*doświadczalnym*] position. We aim to examine ethical facts in an experiential [*doświadczalny*] way, for we observe that, as a particular kind of human lived-experiences [*przyżyć*], they constitute the object of internal experience

> [*doświadczenia*].… Scheler states that the proper means for experiential [*doświadczalnego*] examination of human ethical lived-experiences [*przeżyć*] is not introspection, that is, the internal experience [*doświadczenie*] in the form employed by psychology, but phenomenological experience [*doświadczenie*], which grasps the human person's given lived-experience [*przeżycie*] with its complete content. Thus, in Scheler's opinion, with the help of phenomenological experience [*doświadczenia*], we grasp the ethical fact as the lived-experience [*przeżycie*] of value, that is, the lived-experience [*przeżycie*] that is intentionally directed to value as to its objective content. To posit the matter in this way is correct. If we want to directly grasp ethical lived-experience [*przeżycie*] as a certain experiential [*doświadczalną*] whole, then we grasp it precisely as a lived-experience [*przeżycie*] of value. Value is the element that shapes that lived-experience [*przeżycie*] from within, for moral good or evil is doubtless such a value.… We [in turn] phenomenologically observe the normative character of ethical values in the analysis of the act of conscience, which, as lived-experience [*przeżycie*], still belongs to the range of phenomenological experience [*doświadczenia*].[63]

This text is of fundamental importance for understanding the later development of Wojtyła's thought. Firstly, he asserts – well before *Love and Responsibility* – that ethical experience is a genuine form of human experience: internal, lived, and intentional, rather than derived merely from external observation or empirical generalization. Secondly, he explicitly distinguishes between phenomenological experience and psychological introspection, insisting that the former alone is capable of grasping the moral experience in its integrity. The ethical experience, as outlined in this account, is not merely defined by the description of physical acts; rather, it is structured from within by value and intentionally oriented towards the good or the evil as meaningful realities.

Wojtyła's position aligns with Scheler's on a pivotal issue: the ethical experience is to be understood as an experience of value. The moral life is not confined to behavior but rather encompasses intentional engagement with values. This engagement could involve the recognition,

[63] K. Wojtyła, "An Assessment of the Possibility for Building Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler's System," in: K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler,* (The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II,) Vol. 2, ed. by A. Lopez, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press), 2023, 495-496. The Polish terms come from the latest Polish critical edition: Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera*, 173-175.

affirmation, or betrayal of values. Simultaneously, Wojtyła advances beyond Scheler's contributions by underscoring the normative essence of values as they are elucidated in the act of conscience. This concept is methodically embedded within the domain of phenomenological experience. Conscience itself becomes a lived experience through which the obligatory force of value is disclosed.

This early analysis, conducted within the framework of the history of philosophy's inquiry, foreshadows the subsequent discourse by Wojtyła, who will thereafter elaborate on these themes in a more existential and pastoral context. In the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility*, the author will discuss the manner in which priests encounter moral experience through contact with the consciences of others. However, this will not be a novel concept. Instead, he will be extending a well-established phenomenological insight that he himself previously conceived: access to moral truth is gained through encounter with lived experiences of value. In this sense, pastoral practice becomes a privileged locus of ethical knowledge, precisely because it offers sustained contact with how values are actually lived, affirmed, and contested in concrete human lives.

b. After *Love and Responsibility*: *Person and Act* and the Experience of Others

A few years after *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła proffered a systematic elaboration of his understanding of experience in *Person and Act* (1969). Whereas *Love and Responsibility* may be described as a work of "material phenomenology," focused on concrete moral contents such as love, sexuality, and responsibility, *Person and Act* develops what can be called a formal phenomenology of the person. In this passage, Wojtyła offers a thorough exposition on the structure of experience itself and on its role in the knowledge of the human being. It is therefore particularly illuminating for interpreting his earlier assertions concerning pastoral experience. In the "Introduction" to *Person and Act*, he puts forward a conception of experience that decisively exceeds the limits of purely individual or autobiographical immediacy, and which can be considered almost programmatic in nature:

> … other people outside me are also the object of experience [*doświadczenia*]. The experience [*doświadczenie*] of man consists of the experience [*doświadczenie*] of oneself and of all other people who remain for the subject in the position of the object of experience [*doświadczenia*], that is, in direct cognitive contact. Of course, no individual

> man's experience [*doświadczenie*] reaches all people, not even all his contemporaries; it is instead necessarily limited to a smaller or greater number of them. The quantitative aspect plays a certain role in this experience [*doświadczeniu*]. The greater number of people that enter the sphere of someone's experience [*doświadczenia*], the greater the experience [*doświadczenie*]. Interrupting the course of these reflections on experience [*doświadczeniu*], the course that is important not for its own sake but on account of the whole problem of the knowledge of man, we must at once say that various people communicate to one another the results of their experiences [*doświadczeń*] concerning man even without direct contact. These results already constitute a certain knowledge and contribute to the increase not of the experience [*doświadczenia*] but of the knowledge of man – either scientific knowledge of various scopes and directions or pre-scientific knowledge. However, experience [*doświadczenie*] always stands at the basis of this knowledge, and therefore the knowledge of man communicated reciprocally by people can in a sense coincide with everybody's own experiences [*doświadczeń*].… In light of what we said about the connection between experience [*doświadczeniem*] and understanding… we ought to state that knowledge [which grows out of experience [*doświadczenia*] is a means of multiplying and supplementing experiences [*doświadczeń*].[64]

This passage clarifies several pivotal elements that are imperative for understanding Wojtyła's mature position. Firstly, he explicitly states that human experience is not limited to self-experience: it necessarily includes the experience of others, insofar as they are encountered in direct cognitive contact. Experience is thus relational by structure. Secondly, Wojtyła introduces a quantitative dimension: no individual can experience all the experiences of others, yet the greater the number of persons who enter the horizon of one's experience, the broader and richer that experience becomes. Consequently, human experience evolves not only in scope but also in depth.

Thirdly, and this point is particularly significant, Wojtyła emphasizes the communicability of experience. Human beings pass on the results of their experiences to one another, and this

[64] K. Wojtyła, "Person and Act," in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, (The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II,) Vol. 1, ed. by A. Lopez, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 96-97. The Polish terms come from the Polish edition: K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn," in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, "Człowiek i moralność," Vol. 4, ed. by T. Styczeń, W. Chudy, J.W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek (Lublin: TN KUL, 2020), 52-53.

communication constitutes a form of knowledge in itself. While the knowledge does not replace experience itself, it is firmly rooted in experience and, in turn, expands and supplements individual experiences. In this sense, the experience of another person is never transmitted as detached or purely propositional information. What is communicated as knowledge is received by the subject within the horizon of their own experience,[65] while remaining inseparably marked by the experiential depth of the other.[66] In Wojtyła's terminology,[67] this means that lived experiences (*przeżycia*) communicated by others do not remain on the level of mere *Erlebnis* but are integrated by the subject into experience (*doświadczenie*) properly so called – that is, into a cognitively structured and reflective grasp of moral reality. The mediation of knowledge thus preserves an experiential structure: it is knowledge of experience and through experience, rather than knowledge opposed to it or abstracted from it.

Read alongside *Love and Responsibility*, this analysis provides a precise philosophical foundation for Wojtyła's concept of pastoral experience. By entering into cognitive and personal contact with a large number of individuals and receiving communicated experiences – often in situations of moral seriousness and interior truth – the priest finds himself within a field of experience that is broader, and thus deeper, than that which could be attained through personal biography alone. In this sense, pastoral experience is not an experience marked by lack or deficiency. On the contrary, it is an experience of excess:[68] an expanded experiential horizon made possible by encounter, communication and shared knowledge of the human person.

When Wojtyła affirms in the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility*, that pastoral experience may extend beyond the confines of strictly personal experience, this assertion is not made with the intention of compensating for a presumed absence. This affirmation should instead

[65] This fundamental thesis of Wojtyła is confirmed in the fourth sentence of *Person and Act*, which states: "Man never experiences anything outside of himself without in some way experiencing himself in this experience." Wojtyła, "Person and Act," 95.

[66] According to Wojtyła, knowledge is a modus of experience, because its communicability– and the subsequent "interference of experiences" between one's personal experience and the experience of another person who is "in the field of [one's] experience" – always takes place as a "'specific' stabilization of the object" resulting from "mental differentiations and classifications." Cf. *Ibid.*, 97-98.

[67] As well as those of Husserl – cf. Note 28.

[68] The term "excess" is employed here not in its Aristotelian sense but in the phenomenological sense introduced by Jean-Luc Marion. More specifically, it is understood in the broader sense recently proposed to designate those forms of the "theological turn in phenomenology" that extend beyond the French-speaking phenomenological tradition and which, in the author's judgment, include Wojtyła's philosophical project. Cf. C. Gschwandtner, "Turn to Excess: The Development of Phenomenology in Late Twentieth Century French Thought," in: *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Phenomenology*, ed. by D. Zahavi (New York: OUN, 2012), 445-466.

be regarded as the concise expression of a profound and internally coherent line of thought that runs through his major philosophical works. Two fundamental insights converge here. Firstly, in dialogue with Scheler, Wojtyła conceives moral experience as an intentional lived experience – an experience of value – rather than as a mere accumulation of sensory or psychological data. The notion of moral knowledge is predicated on the process through which values are encountered, recognized, and responded to within the context of lived experience. Secondly, as articulated in *Person and Act*, Wojtyła demonstrates that human experience is inherently relational: the human subject experiences not only themselves, but also other persons, and this experience is broadened through the communication of lived experiences, particularly in concrete interpersonal encounters.

Ultimately, the significance of the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility* cannot be grasped solely in terms of the historical objections to which they respond. Their deeper coherence becomes apparent only when read in light of the methodological assumptions that govern the work as a whole. For Wojtyła, moral truth is disclosed within experience, and human experience necessarily includes the experience of others (where "of others" fulfills the function of complement of object as well as complement of subject). It is for this reason that pastoral experience, even when described as "indirect," can legitimately be understood as a particularly significant and epistemically fertile context for gaining insight into the human person.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to analyze two short textual units – the first paragraph of the 1960 "Introduction" to *Love and Responsibility* and its counterpart in the 1962 "Introduction" – as a hermeneutical key to Wojtyła's broader project. The fundamental question guiding the study was of a philosophical nature: namely, the capacity of experience to serve as a source of knowledge in the context of moral reflection. By situating these passages within a triple framework (historical, ecclesial, and philosophical), the analysis demonstrated that Wojtyła's opening move is far more than a contextual remark about clerical credibility. This methodological declaration concerns the scope of experience and the conditions of moral cognition.

Historically, the objection he cites – namely, that priests lack experience of marriage – was not merely a private sentiment, but rather a critique that was socially formed, shaped by the discursive constraints and moral ambiguities of communist Poland. From an ecclesiastical

perspective, the critique was further fuelled by the preconciliar association of priesthood with celibacy, as well as by the preeminence of manualist moral theology, a discipline that tended to conceptualize sexual ethics primarily through act-centred non personalistic casuistry. However, Wojtyła was able to respond to this objection on the basis of three factors. Firstly, he belonged to a particular scholarly and pastoral milieu. Secondly, he advanced a perspicacious critique of naturalistic reductionism. Thirdly, our author matured his ethical vision through exceptional proximity to concrete human lives.

The most significant elucidation, however, relates to the philosophical plane. In addressing the sociological critique, Wojtyła employs philosophical arguments, asserting that experience is broader than sensory immediacy or autobiographical participation. Phenomenology facilitates comprehension of this expansion by conceptualizing "appearing" as a genuine access to being and by acknowledging the irreducibility of value, conscience, and interpersonal meaning to mere "data." When analyzed through a canon perspective, Wojtyła's "Introductions" demonstrate continuity with his earlier engagement with Scheler, wherein moral experience is conceived as an intentional experience of value, and with *Person and Act*, where the human experience encompasses the experience of others and is expanded through communicated experience and shared understanding. When considered from this perspective, the "indirect" nature of pastoral experience does not represent a deficiency that should be overlooked, but rather a distinct form of experiential access – often more extensive in scope due to its formation at the nexus of numerous lives, intricate moral dramas, and acts of conscience that are revealed through a sense of trust.

The main contribution of this study was to demonstrate that the opening paragraphs of the "Introductions" to *Love and Responsibility* were not merely apologetic or autobiographical remarks but a concise philosophical manifesto. Faced with a sociological objection concerning the alleged limitations of priestly experience, Wojtyła did not respond sociologically but redefined the very concept of experience. By extending experience beyond autobiographical immediacy toward phenomenological givenness, he established the epistemological foundations upon which his entire personalist ethics of love and sexuality would subsequently be built. In doing so, he formulated a methodological declaration that anticipated both his mature philosophical anthropology and the later account of experience in *Person and Act*. The decisive question, then, was not whether a priest can experience marriage, but how the phenomenological notion of experience opened access to

forms of human experience disclosed through pastoral encounter, thereby establishing pastoral experience itself as a legitimate source of knowledge.

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Wojtyła's Critical Engagement with Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler in the *Lublin Lectures* and *Love and Responsibility*

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Abstract

My paper analyzes Karol Wojtyła's critical engagement with Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler in the *Lublin Lectures* and *Love and Responsibility* through a systematic comparison that distinguishes three levels of connection: explicit textual appropriation, strong conceptual continuity and interpretive resonance. Wojtyła accepts Kant's prohibition of treating persons merely as means, but questions whether Kant's approach sufficiently grounds ethical normativity in the good and being of the acting agent. Scheler provides resources to consider objective values as well as their lived disclosure. However, Wojtyła challenges the adequacy of Scheler's account of efficacious moral agency. The foregoing comparison tracks the continuity between the *Lublin Lectures'* treatment of rational norming, duty and efficacy and *Love and Responsibility's* account of love, responsibility and the person. It also acknowledges the inclusion of positive obligations toward others in Kant's ethics, and the foundational role Wojtyła's metaphysical commitments play in his engagement with both these thinkers. Spousal self-gift is a distinctive realization of the positive personalistic norm, which identifies love as the adequate attitude toward the person. Wojtyła's distinct contribution emerges in his personalistic articulation of these issues in engagement with Kant and Scheler within a realist account of the good and agency.

Keywords

Karol Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, *Love and Responsibility*, Kant, Scheler, personalistic norm, moral agency

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Introduction

Karol Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility* (LR) is widely and rightly understood to be a philosophical discourse on conjugal ethics. It may also be examined alongside his *Lublin Lectures* (LL), a philosophical project that engages Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler, and analyzes the acting person as an efficacious moral agent. LR, in the context of use, pleasure, love, responsibility and marriage, develops an account of interpersonal human action. My paper argues that Wojtyła, through metaphysical realism already permeating his work, creatively and critically retrieves Kant's and Scheler's insights in articulating his personalistic norm. My thesis neither assumes that the lectures directly informed the composition of LR nor identifies the personalistic norm with spousal self-gift as such. It concerns conceptual relationships a close reading may reasonably establish.

First, I clarify the comparison's chronology, method and scholarly context. Next, I analyze Wojtyła's assessment of Kant's and Scheler's treatment of normativity, value and efficacy. Finally, I examine how LR appropriates Kant and incorporates relevant issues into its account of the person, the personalistic norm, responsibility and marriage. I adopt this approach to distinguish what Wojtyła evidently borrows from what my comparison proposes to be points of systematic continuity.

Chronology and Method

"LL" refers specifically to the three lecture cycles Wojtyła delivered at the Catholic University of Lublin: "Ethical Act and Lived-Experience" in 1954-1955, "Good and Value" in 1955-1956, and "The Problem of the Norm and Happiness" in 1956-1957. These occupy pages 3-272 of the 2023 critical edition, which also contains the habilitation on Scheler from 1953 and related writings from different dates. "The Intentional Act and Actus Humanus," in particular, is from 1974, and therefore cannot document the genesis of LR.[2]

[2] G. Ignatik, preface to *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, by K. Wojtyła, trans. G. Ignatik (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2023), vii-viii. For the habilitation's presentation in 1953, see 383. For the date of "The Intentional Act and Actus Humanus, That Is, the Act and Lived-Experience," see 594, editorial note xxxviii; the essay appears at 357-366.

The Willetts translation's editorial introduction points out that LR first took shape during the 1958-1959 lectures. This is understood as an editorial statement about the author rather than an identification of LR with the earlier lecture cycles. Kupczak dates a course titled "*Love and Responsibility*" to 1957-1958. These differences do not admit a silent and speedy resolution. In any case, both date the relevant teaching later than the three cycles (LL). Therefore, it is fitting that the works be placed in a related intellectual setting without asserting textual identity or genetic dependence.[3]

Three levels of connection govern my comparison: a) direct textual appropriation where Wojtyła identifies an interlocutor and adopts, alters or critiques a traceable argument or formulation; b) strong conceptual continuity where the works demonstrate sustained correspondence, even without explicit cross-reference, in addressing an issue, employing a distinction or presenting an argument; and c) interpretive resonance where similarity is suggested without sufficient evidence of appropriation or sustained conceptual continuity. Thus, 'mediation' designates a demonstrable conceptual contribution without necessarily implying a documented path of transmission, and 'development' designates a more determinate articulation of an issue in the comparison.

My inquiry's principal object is Wojtyła's interpretation and appropriation of Kant and Scheler, but direct references to Kant and Scheler serve to clarify the scope of Wojtyła's critiques. The LR quotes generally follow Willetts. But where terminology may matter, there are comparisons to Ignatik's 2013 translation. Moreover, 'efficacy' refers to one's causal agency in acting (rather than successful performance or efficiency). 'Objectivization' is the practical recognition of the true order of values, particularly the value of the person (rather than reducing a person to an instrument).[4]

[3] "Introduction to the Present Edition," in: K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. H.T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 9. Compare "Editors' Introduction to the Polish Edition (1979)," in: K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. G. Ignatik (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013). Jarosław Kupczak gives 1957-1958 in: *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 44. The difference between these dates is not resolved here; neither source identifies the LR course with the three 1954-1957 cycles.

[4] For the terminology of agency, see Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 17-18. Compare Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 25-33, 41-42, 96-100, 197-198, with *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The first meaning of the verb 'to use,'" "The second meaning of the verb 'to use,'" and "The commandment to love and the personalistic norm"; chap. II, pt. 1, "Spousal love"; and chap. III, pt. 3, "Self-mastery and objectivization." Subsequent LR references identify the translator.

The Context of Scholarship

The relationship between Wojtyła's early ethical writings and LR has a significant interpretive history. Kupczak analyzes the habilitation and the Lublin lectures. This includes Wojtyła's critiques of Scheler's treatment of conscience and account of causal efficacy. Kupczak characterizes LR as an anthropological application of the method developed during the habilitation and the lectures, and links its analysis of love to an Aristotelian-Thomistic account of the person. My inquiry, hence, seeks, not to purportedly discover a hitherto unrecognized relationship, but to specify the character and evidentiary strength of distinct links, particularly between explicit Kantian formulations and the positive personalistic norm.[5]

Crosby's complementary philosophical perspective in *The Selfhood of the Human Person* explains how one may selectively appropriate Kant's insights while preserving the perennial philosophical account of the person's substantial and objective being. His later discussion of Wojtyła relates self-possession to the possibility of self-donation, and distinguishes spousal self-surrender from other kinds of love. Likewise, Acosta's methodological survey in his volume with Reimers distinguishes Thomistic, phenomenological and personalist interpretations without substituting philosophical classification for understanding the person.[6]

Buttiglione interprets LR as integrating phenomenological analysis with an ontological account of the person, and locates Wojtyła's engagement with Kant and Scheler within Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics, while considering the return to Aquinas as creative instead of merely repetitive. This reading of the personalistic norm identifies distinguishable roles for Thomistic categories, Schelerian apprehension of personal values, and the Kantian categorical imperative,

[5] Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty*, 15-21, 30-38, 63-65.
[6] J.F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 2-5; Crosby, *Personalist Papers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 245-247, 254-255; M. Acosta and A.J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person and Act* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016), 33-38. The methodological survey in Acosta's chapter "Wojtyła's Method" draws on Guerra López's taxonomy and Reimers's account of Wojtyła's philosophical aims.

thereby establishing a substantial precedent for my present comparison. My paper's contribution thus lies in distinguishing evident textual appropriations from broader conceptual continuities.[7]

Ignatik systematically connects value with anthropology, ethics and love. Phenomenological disclosure and metaphysical explanation bear a mutual relevance. This reading of the personalistic norm deepens natural-law reasoning by clarifying the distinctive worth, responsibility and freedom of the person. Such a reading constitutes a clear alternative to interpreting Wojtyła's personalism as a modern ethical project that subsequently incorporates Thomistic foundations. Instead of tracing the historical evolution of these texts from different periods, Ignatik combines them to illuminate Wojtyła's mature approach. Thus, Ignatik strengthens this paper's systematic comparison without claiming a genetic dependence of LR on the three lecture cycles.[8]

Schmitz's treatment of Wojtyła's early works is also germane to this project's scholarly context. Sayre's review specifically identifies his discussion of LL and Wojtyła's responses to Kant and Scheler. While this establishes that the relationship was observed in the book's reception, it does not authorize a comprehensive judgment concerning the monograph's thesis or omissions.[9]

Waldstein provides an important alternative to a Kantian-foundation thesis. While acknowledging a genuine appropriation of Scheler, he locates Wojtyła's foundational orientation within Christian and Thomistic thought. Since his interpretation chiefly concerns the later theology of the body, an application to earlier works needs independent textual support. Bulzacchelli, however, underscores the rectifying force of personal irreducibility against reductive interpretations of human nature, while still acknowledging Wojtyła's continued use of Aristotelian-Thomistic resources. While my comparison can test the connection of those resources to the

[7] R. Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. P. Guietti and F. Murphy (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997), chap. 3, "Scheler and St. Thomas," concluding paragraphs; chap. 4, "The Method," opening paragraph and paragraphs beginning "It is evident how much this approach owes to St. Thomas" and "The same personalistic norm."

[8] G. Ignatik, *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality, and Love* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2021), x-xii, 95-97.

[9] P. Sayre, "Review of *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*, by Kenneth L. Schmitz," *Faith and Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (1997), 121-122.

personalistic norm, it cannot, on its own, settle the stronger claims of doctrinal discontinuity which Bulzacchelli's thesis develops.[10]

More recent scholarship sharpens the methodological inquiry. For instance, Petryszak's analysis of habilitation material characterizes Wojtyła's early engagement with phenomenology as both Thomistically oriented and critical, while still permitting subsequent anthropological development. Biesaga describes an original method wherein experience and metaphysical realism illuminate each other. The foregoing studies challenge a linear narrative wherein a Kantian initiation encounters a Schelerian enrichment and, lastly, the addition of metaphysical foundations. On the contrary, they inspire inquiry into the function of distinct modern insights within Wojtyła's realist framework, as well as the extent of such appropriation based on textual examination.[11]

Kant and Scheler in the *Lublin Lectures*

A query running through these three distinct but interrelated lecture cycles is how to understand the adequate philosophical object of ethics. LL's opening describes ethics as a distinctly philosophical understanding of lived experience. Wojtyła understands this ethical experience as constituting the experiential foundation of a study of human action rather than a simple datum of psychology. He seeks "to demonstrate that this experiential whole of ethical lived-experience does in fact have the structure of an act."[12] The fundamental query is whether moral experience can be understood as the act of a person efficaciously realizing either good or evil. This concerns more than whether the moral subject acknowledges laws or feels values. Already, even here, Wojtyła sees in Aquinas a resource for understanding the whole that he finds inadequately explained in both Kant and Scheler.

Wojtyła's initial inquiry establishes mutual opposition between Kant and Scheler. Scheler proposes value as decisive for "the very essence of ethics and ethical life." However, Kant proposes

[10] M. Waldstein, "Three Kinds of Personalism: Kant, Scheler and John Paul II," *Forum Teologiczne* 10 (2009), 166-170; R.H. Bulzacchelli, "Irreducibility and the Personalistic Norm as a Departure from Thomism: A Critique from the Thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II," *Wojtyła Studies* Vol. 2, no. 2 (2025), 86-90; for the stronger theological argument, see 109-111.

[11] K. Petryszak, "The Origins of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophical Anthropology as Recorded in Coll.[atio] and Corr.[igenda] Included in the Notes for his Habilitation Thesis," *Wojtyła Studies* Vol. 1, no. 1 (2024), 111-112, 120-122; T. Biesaga, "Originality of Karol Wojtyła's Method of Philosophy," *Wojtyła Studies* Vol. 3, no. 1 (2026), 11-14, 17-19.

[12] Wojtyła, "The Lublin Lectures," in: *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 3-4. Subsequent citations to *Lublin Lectures* refer only to the three cycles on pages 3-272, not to every work collected in the volume.

"duty as determining this character."[13] Wojtyła's reconstruction acknowledges that Kant's emphasis on practical reason and law and Scheler's emphasis on intentional feeling and value each recognize a partial reality. He points out, however, that neither adequately accounts for the whole ethical act. This does not mean that Kant does not account for experience or Scheler for acts or norms. Wojtyła critiques the sufficiency of these accounts of the relation between the person's efficacious action and moral value.

The methodological criterion governing Wojtyła's project is whether a philosophical account can maintain contact with lived experience while grasping the content of its ethical dimensions. He critiques Kant's formalism and apriorism but preserves Kant's concern for normativity and duty. He critiques what he considers to be the limitations of Scheler's emotionalism but preserves his phenomenological appreciation of value. Wojtyła's already realist inquiry into action illuminates the intelligibility of these engagements. The claim is not that two partial systems are mechanically merged into a third but that their insights are appropriated and evaluated through the unity of being, agency and ethical experience.[14]

Kant's Anti-utilitarianism and the Ground of the Norm

Wojtyła, in "The Problem of the Norm and Happiness," understands Kant's principal endeavor as a defense of the moral norm against reduction to pleasure. Kant's position "defends the will as the proper subject of the moral good against the unavoidable slide toward 'feeling,' one introduced by Humean utilitarianism."[15] Wojtyła understands this strategy as a refusal to view pleasure or the satisfaction of desire as the determining ground of moral obligation. The term "anti-utilitarianism" will refer principally to this argument within Wojtyła's discussion. A comparable rejection of pleasure as the measure of interpersonal action is explicit in LR.[16]

Wojtyła agrees with this resistance to hedonism, but still judges that Kant's "norming" bears "no connection with being."[17] Conversely, in Wojtyła's account of Aquinas, "the ultimate foundation of any norm is located in the being, in its nature."[18] The criticism concerns the moral

[13] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 3-8, 32-34.
[14] *Ibid*., 3-4, 32-34, 252-254.
[15] *Ibid*., 236.
[16] *Ibid.*, 233-236; compare *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 36-38.
[17] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 235.
[18] *Ibid.*, 237.

measure's ground in the acting person's reality and good. It bears clarifying that this is Wojtyła's philosophical objection to Kant rather than a neutral claim that Kant provides no such grounding at all. Kant does appeal to autonomy and rational nature as an end in itself. However, Wojtyła finds the Kantian account inadequate for a realist account of agency and perfection.[19]

The Formula of Humanity and the Limits of Wojtyła's Critique

The Formula of Humanity demands that humanity be treated "always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means."[20] The qualification "merely" is decisive. Cooperation can allow another person's activity to serve my purposes while respecting that person's own ends; what is forbidden, therefore, is the reduction of humanity to an instrument. Furthermore, a negative prohibition cannot exhaust Kant's principle. Kant, in the *Groundwork*, calls for the positive furtherance of others' ends. Moreover, his subsequent account of practical love links benevolence with beneficence.[21] Hence, LR's positive personalistic norm cannot be distinguished from Kant merely by claiming that Kant identifies only non-use, whereas Wojtyła introduces the affirmative concern for the good of the other.

Wojtyła further argues that Kant's criticism of utilitarian eudaimonism does not sufficiently engage the Aristotelian-Thomistic account of happiness as the perfection of human nature. However, this argument does not suggest that Kant commands the repression of happiness. Kant clearly distinguishes making happiness the determining ground of duty from pursuing it under moral law. Wojtyła is concerned with how fulfillment and normativity both belong together in the acting person's good. This concern remains relevant to LR's account of love as personal fulfillment. However, it does not identify every ilk of fulfillment with spousal self-gift.[22]

The distinction between pathological inclination and moral motivation matters as well. Kant tries to safeguard freedom from empirical determination. He distinguishes between sensible and intelligible standpoints within the same agent; this does not involve the purported existence of

[19] *Ibid.*, 235-239; I. Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, in: *Practical Philosophy*, trans. and ed. by M.J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 79-80 (Ak 4:428-429); Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, in: *Practical Philosophy*, 210 (Ak 5:87). "Ak" refers to the volume and page of the Akademie edition; ordinary page numbers refer to Gregor's 1996 volume.
[20] Kant, *Groundwork*, 80-81 (Ak 4:429-430).
[21] Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, in: *Practical Philosophy*, 569-570 (Ak 6:449-451).
[22] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 233, 239-240; Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 214-215 (Ak 5:93-94).

two independent wills. Wojtyła objects that this Kantian account does not adequately capture the experienced efficacy of willing. This is a serious philosophical dispute over the interpretation of agency, not a claim that Kant denies that humans act or experience their actions.[23]

The Kantian account also distinguishes between feeling proposed as an antecedent ground of moral determination and feeling produced by the law in a sensibly affected rational being. Kant is not, here, accidentally reintroducing respect as an empirical foundation after having excluded it. Wojtyła, however, inquires whether this account integrates law, affectivity and agency adequately within the concrete ethical act. Thereby, Wojtyła critiques the sufficiency of this integration, not the inconsistency of permitting feeling a place in ethics.[24]

The highest good unveils another difference in the order of grounding. Kant distinguishes virtue as the supreme good from the complete highest good that includes happiness proportionate to virtue. He postulates God as the condition of the possibility of this correspondence; God is not simply identical with the projected combination of virtue and happiness. Wojtyła's criticism may be more precisely understood as a preference for grounding moral normativity in the order of being and the objective good rather than approaching the ultimate condition of the highest good through practical reason's requirements. This limited contrast is relevant to LR's discussion of justice toward the Creator.[25]

Scheler's Contribution and Limits

Scheler's role may be more precisely specified than a generalized appeal to phenomenological richness. Wojtyła, in LL, points out that Scheler retains Kant's anti-utilitarianism while resisting Kant's formalism. On this account, objective value provides ethical content without, however, making morality dependent on pleasure. Scheler's distinction between values and their contingent bearers and his ordering of values afford argumentative resources for this position. This

[23] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 23-25, 35-37; Kant, *Groundwork*, 98-101 (Ak 4:451-455).
[24] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 24-30, 35-37; Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 198-201 (Ak 5:72-76).
[25] Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, 228-230 (Ak 5:110-113), 239-241 (Ak 5:124-126); compare Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 130-133, 239-240.

documented conceptual mediation in Wojtyła's engagement with Kant and Scheler, however, does not prove that every corresponding analysis in LR derives from Scheler.[26]

Scheler's distinctions between intentional value-feeling and mere feeling-states, between preferring and choosing, and between love as a spontaneous disclosure of value and merely reactive affect militate against the reduction of his account to passive feelings or subjective pleasures. The foregoing distinctions provide a more precise basis for comparison with LR's treatment of attraction, affectivity, and the integration of sexual values into personal value. However, where LR does not explicitly mention Scheler, the connection remains a conceptual comparison whose explanatory power needs to be tested against Wojtyła's argument.[27]

Wojtyła's criticism concerns whether Scheler accounts for the efficacious willing whereby a person becomes morally good or evil. Scheler describes the person as a concrete unity of acts and repudiates any reduction of the person to a mere network of experiences; however, he still rejects a substance-causal explanation of personal acts. The disagreement should, thus, be located in the adequacy of such an account of personal being and moral efficacy, not a supposed claim that Scheler recognizes neither person nor activity at all. Wojtyła, for his part, seeks an account wherein the acting person is the efficient cause of acts and, thereby, of acquired moral qualification.[28]

The dispute over duty demands caution as well. Scheler distinguishes between ideal oughtness and imperative duty, and grounds oughtness in value, without simply abolishing norms as such. Wojtyła's precise objection is that the whole ethical experience cannot be reconstructed by permitting duty to become secondary to a value-experience whose relation to efficacious action remains insufficiently explained. In LL, both value and duty are necessary elements of the ethical act. The question is how the good is to be realized by the agent, not whether experience is governed by an external pressure unrelated to its content.[29]

Wojtyła's habilitation strongly suggests a selective reception. Its concluding theses argue that Scheler's system is an inadequate interpretation of Christian ethics while still acknowledging the usefulness of the phenomenological method in examining the axiological content of lived

[26] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 240-242; M. Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism*, trans. M.S. Frings and R.L. Funk (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 9-15, 86-89.
[27] Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 86-89, 253-261; compare Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 75-78, 122-124.
[28] Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 382-386; Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 7-8, 17-20.
[29] Scheler, *Formalism in Ethics*, 203-212; Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 32-34, 242-244.

experience. The experiential advantages of that method do not dispense with philosophical substantiation of moral goodness and evil. This distinction between valuable method and an inadequate system provides a more accurate and precise grammar to clarify Wojtyła's critical appropriation of phenomenology.[30]

Efficacy and Conscience

To restore efficacy as an experiential fact, instead of a mere metaphysical postulate, Wojtyła analyzes the phenomenology and psychology of the will. In LL, he argues that a person can experience willing as the cause of action. The acting person does not merely feel value, but causes action, thereby becoming morally qualified: "The person is the efficient cause of his acts, and, through these acts, the efficient cause of his ethical value, positive or negative."[31] This ethical value must be distinguished from the person's inherent worth. The claim is that acts make acting agents morally better or worse, not that such agents earn the dignity that forbids instrumentalization.

Conscience belongs to this account of agency. LL considers antecedent, concomitant and consequent experience. It situates conscience within practical reason's cognition of the good. Its concluding synthesis states that this rational norming culminates "in a command, in conscience, in the act of the virtue of prudence."[32] The lectures do not provide a comprehensive treatment of conscience. However, an early essay associated with the habilitation calls conscience "the direct subjective norm of the morality of human acts,"[33] linking its normative role to the person's efficacious acts. This is a complementary text clarifying Wojtyła's early project, not a text within the lecture cycles.

Duty and value are now connected via the act of a person who knows and wills the good. In the habilitation, Wojtyła argues that Christian ethics must consider how love shapes the actions for which a person is morally responsible. This statement belongs to Christian ethics and should

[30] K. Wojtyła, "An Assessment of the Possibility for Building a Christian Ethics Based on the Presuppositions of Max Scheler's System," in: *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 491-497. This work is referred to below as the habilitation, rather than as one of the Lublin lecture cycles.
[31] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 17-18, especially the Polish editors' note 20 at 18, on pre-ethical personal value and ethical perfection.
[32] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 20, 184, 252-254, quotation at 253.
[33] Wojtyła, "Max Scheler's Ethical System as a Means of Developing Christian Ethics," in: *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, 507. For its original publication in 1953-1954, see 596-597.

not be used to import undeveloped theological premises into LR's philosophical argument. Its relevance is the early association of love with personal action instead of a merely affective occurrence. Ignatik's reconstruction sharpens this connection: love can be commanded insofar as its moral character involves the person's efficacious realization of values, joining experienced value with duty rather than reducing love to either alone. LR may then be compared with LL as a sustained analysis of how persons affirm or misuse one another in acting. LL already has a personal agent; LR makes the interpersonal object and context of such agency especially explicit.[34]

The Person and the Meanings of Use in *Love and Responsibility*

Wojtyła commences LR by discussing realism and objectivism. While the world comprises subjects and objects, "every subject also exists as an object, an objective 'something' or 'somebody.'"[35] Being an object of knowledge or action is not by itself a degradation. The person is a real being capable of acting and being acted upon, and possessing an interior life ordered toward truth and goodness. The term "person" expresses "a particular richness and perfection in the manner of his being"[36] that cannot be exhausted by identifying an individual member of a species. This account constitutes the anthropological setting for the norm governing interpersonal action.

LR's discussion of "use" distinguishes two senses. The first concerns employing something as a means to an end. In interpersonal cooperation the relevant prohibition concerns treating the other solely as an instrument, without regard for his or her capacity to deliberate, choose, and pursue personal ends. The second sense concerns the experience of pleasure; this is about whether pleasure is subordinated to the person's good or turns the person into an instrument for enjoyment. This distinction plays a significant role in LR's critique of the utilitarian position.[37]

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[34] Wojtyła, habilitation, 492-493; compare *Lublin Lectures*, 32-34, and *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 119-123, 130. For the systematic reconstruction of duty, value, and efficacious love, see Ignatik, *Person and Value*, 86-87, 128-30.
[35] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 21.
[36] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 21-24, quotation at 22.
[37] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 25-33; compare *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The first meaning of the verb 'to use'" and "The second meaning of the verb 'to use.'" The editorial clarification in Willetts, 291 n. 6(ii), also distinguishes a means-role from merely instrumental treatment.

Wojtyła mentions Kant and reformulates the imperative in terms of the other's ends: "whenever a person is the object of your activity, remember that you may not treat that person as only the means to an end, as an instrument, but must allow for the fact that he or she, too, has, or at least should have, distinct personal ends."[38] This is direct textual appropriation. Wojtyła does not introduce ends, freedom or personhood into an otherwise personless Kantian law; Kant, for his part, already connects rational nature with self-legislation and ends.[39] LR's distinct context is the real person whose inwardness and freedom require an adequate interpersonal response.

The Personalistic Norm and the Common Good

Wojtyła's critique of utilitarianism in LR, too, explicitly invokes Kant. If pleasure is viewed as the sole or highest good, interpersonal relations risk becoming merely means to it. Wojtyła then directs attention "beyond any purely subjective good, i.e. beyond pleasure,"[40] toward an objective good wherein persons can participate together. This "objective common good is the foundation of love,"[41] understood here as a unification of persons. This gives a specific interpersonal articulation to LL's concern with objective good. This is a strong conceptual continuity supported by both works' explicit engagement with Kant. However, this does not mean that the later passage was composed from the former one.[42]

The personalistic norm has both negative and positive formulations. Negatively, the person must not be reduced to an object of use. Positively, "the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love."[43] Ignatik renders the latter relation as one for which only love is "proper and fully-mature."[44] The difference in wording draws attention to the relation to the person, but neither translation defines the norm as spousal self-gift. LR also distinguishes the norm, which identifies the good and the adequate response, from the commandment to love that it justifies. Their intimate connection does not erase that distinction. On Ignatik's reading, this

[38] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 27-28, quotation at 28; compare *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The first meaning of the verb 'to use.'"
[39] For Kant's own formulation and grounding, see *Groundwork*, 79-81 (Ak 4:428-430).
[40] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 38.
[41] *Ibid.*, 38.
[42] *Ibid.*, 36-38; compare *Lublin Lectures*, 233-237.
[43] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 41.
[44] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The commandment to love and the personalistic norm."

personalistic justification deepens the natural-law reasoning by making the person's distinctive value, freedom and responsibility explicit.[45]

This personalistic norm governs Wojtyła's assessment of desire, attraction, affectivity and sentiment. Love includes these dimensions but remains irreducible to them. Therefore, love as desire remains directed toward the person and must not become a utilitarian attitude. Wojtyła's account of goodwill is especially important: "I long for your good."[46] Here, he explicitly draws upon the Thomistic distinction of benevolent love, rather than presenting concern for the other's good as a discovery arising exclusively from Kant. Love is an activity whereby the person realizes capacities for the good. The personalistic norm links such action with the worth of the person loved.

LR's distinctive contribution, therefore, is not the initial recognition that others' ends merit affirmative support—an obligation Kant already identifies—but the integration of this demand with an account of the person as an objective good, the lived dimensions of sexual attraction and the common good of interpersonal love. The prohibition of merely instrumental treatment, while indispensable, does not exhaust the positive norm or the moral conclusions of marital ethics. Their justification is to be sought in the broader anthropology and account of love LR develops.[47]

Spousal Love: A Distinctive Realization of the Norm

Translating *miłość oblubieńcza*, Willetts calls this distinctive realization of love "betrothed love" and Ignatik calls it "spousal love";[48] it consists in a personal gift of self. Willetts states: "The essence of betrothed love is self-giving, the surrender of one's 'I'."[49] Ignatik similarly speaks of giving oneself as giving one's "I."[50] The person who cannot be possessed as a thing in the physical order of ownership can freely give himself or herself in the moral order of love.

[45] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 40-42; *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The commandment to love and the personalistic norm." For the relation to natural law and the distinction from the commandment, see Ignatik, *Person and Value*, 95-97.
[46] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 81-84, especially 83 on goodwill and *amor benevolentiae*.
[47] Kant, *Groundwork*, 81 (Ak 4:430); Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 28-30, 38-42, 82-84.
[48] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 96-97; *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. II, pt. 1, "Spousal love."
[49] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 96.
[50] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. II, pt. 1, "Spousal love."

The distinction between the person's natural incommunicability and moral self-giving is, hence, intrinsic to the account; it is not a contradiction Kantian respect alone must resolve.

The foregoing concerns the marital realization of spousal love wherein reciprocal self-giving orders the shared life of the spouses. LR also recognizes self-giving to God; thus, 'spousal' is not an exclusively civil or marital designation.[51] More generally, relations of goodwill, friendship and other personal love may satisfy the positive norm without taking the form of spousal surrender. The hierarchy of claims is therefore clear: the person is a good; love is the adequate attitude; spousal self-gift is a distinctive and radical way of realizing love. Crosby's distinction between spousal and other forms of self-donation helps articulate this specificity.[52] Ignatik likewise treats spousal love as a distinctive giving of the person,[53] while Buttiglione distinguishes love's general applicability from the reciprocal belonging of spousal love.[54]

Responsibility and the Integration of Value

Wojtyła argues: "it is a man's duty to choose the true good."[55] Love understood psychologically is subordinate to love in the ethical sense, lest love collapse into "vulgar psychologism."[56] There is "no possibility of psychological completeness in love unless ethical completeness is attained."[57] These claims can be read alongside LL's insistence that value and duty belong to the act of an efficacious person. The relation is conceptual rather than an explicit local appeal to Kant: the passages in LR develop their own account of love as a virtue and of the truth of the good.[58]

The objective good at stake is the person, not merely the sexual value that a person may bear for another. Hence, "in every situation in which we experience the 'sexual' value of a person, love demands integration." Love is "an affirmation of the person or else it is not love at all."[59] Integration does not suppress every sensual or affective response. It orders those responses within

[51] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 96-100.
[52] Crosby, *Personalist Papers*, 254-255.
[53] Ignatik, *Person and Value*, 133134, 148 n. 93.
[54] Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła*, chap. 4, "The Method," paragraph beginning "How is it therefore possible," and "The Person and Love," paragraph beginning "Spousal love is properly the gift of oneself."
[55] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 119.
[56] *Ibid.*, 120.
[57] *Ibid.*
[58] *Ibid.*, 119-120; compare *Lublin Lectures*, 32-34.
[59] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 122-124, both quotations at 123.

an adequate relation to the whole person. The correspondence with LL lies in the refusal to isolate one element of experience and treat it as the whole ethical reality.

Responsibility affords this affirmation its practical gravity. In LR, this concerns the moral demands of sharing one's life with another person: "Responsibility for love clearly comes down to responsibility for the person, originates in it and returns to it."[60] The acting person must answer for the character of that relationship and for the good entrusted to his or her action. Here LL's account of efficacy illuminates a condition of responsibility: one can be responsible for how one loves because one acts, chooses, and forms oneself through action. Yet efficacy and responsibility are not synonyms. The former concerns causal agency; the latter concerns what that agency owes to a person and to the good.[61]

LR's statement that "Freedom exists for the sake of love"[62] similarly gives freedom a positive orientation toward the good. The person's self-determination makes possible responsible affirmation and self-giving. This is contrastable with the account of autonomy Wojtyła critiques. But this does not mean a rejection of Kantian concern for freedom as such; Kant's autonomy remains distinguishable from arbitrary preference.[63] The germane continuity within Wojtyła's works is the connection between free agency and a good that the agent recognizes rather than invents.

Scheler, Chastity, and Objectivization

LR provides an evident instance of Schelerian appropriation in "Chastity and Resentment." Wojtyła expressly borrows the rehabilitative heading from Scheler's "On the Rehabilitation of Virtue"[64] and then attributes to Scheler an analysis of resentment: one may devalue a demanding good rather than acknowledge the requisite exertion to realize it. Wojtyła applies this diagnosis to the rejection of chastity. Direct comparison with the named essay makes the extent of the borrowing more precise. Scheler challenges the reduction of virtue to proficiency or burdensome

[60] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 130.
[61] Compare Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 17-20. The later editorial discussion of efficacy should be distinguished from the authorial text: see the editors' note 6(i) in *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 290-291, and the corresponding editorial note in *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. I, pt. 1, "The first meaning of the verb 'to use'."
[62] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 134-135, quotation at 135.
[63] Kant, *Groundwork*, 89 (Ak 4:440-441).
[64] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 143-145; *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. III, pt. 1, "Chastity and resentment."

conformity to rules and presents it as a joyful personal capacity for the good. This supplies an identifiable rehabilitative project, which LR gives a specific application in sexual ethics. It does not establish that every element of LR's account of resentment occurs in that essay.[65]

The reception is selective. Scheler resists the explanation of virtue through duty-bound willing; it is the lack of virtue that invites the moral law and duty to play a substitute role. LR, conversely, joins its rehabilitation of chastity to the effort of will, integration and self-mastery necessary to affirm the person. Read alongside LL's account of efficacy, this difference shows why appropriating Scheler's positive defense of virtue need not entail accepting his account of its relation to willing and obligation. The comparison identifies a shared problem while preserving the distinct explanations offered by the two thinkers.[66]

Wojtyła points out that chastity "can only be thought of in association with the virtue of love" and that its function is "to free love from the utilitarian attitude."[67] Chastity integrates sexual value into the value of the person rather than annihilating it. It is not "one long 'no,'" but "above all the 'yes' of which certain 'no's' are the consequence."[68] Its point is the readiness to affirm the person amid desire and emotion. This is a practical realization of the positive and negative dimensions of the personalistic norm, without requiring the claim that chastity is uniquely derived from a Kantian premise.

Objectivization plays a precise role in this formation by practically recognizing the true order of values, particularly the value of the person in relation to sexual values, so that this truth shapes desire and action. Willetts's "Self Control and Objectivization"[69] and Ignatik's "Self-mastery and objectivization"[70] both connect correct valuation with actual self-command. This differs from objectification which reduces a person to a usable thing. "Objectification" here is an explanatory term for that reduction, not a technical antonym the translations themselves establish. Recognizing someone objectively as a person makes possible affirmation without depriving that person of subjectivity.

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[65] Compare M. Scheler, "On the Rehabilitation of Virtue," trans. E. Kelly, *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (2005), 21-23. LR supplies the explicit attribution of the resentment analysis and its application to chastity; Scheler's essay supplies the directly compared account of virtue's rehabilitation.

[66] Scheler, "On the Rehabilitation of Virtue," 22-23; compare Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 143-145, 169-171, 194-199, and *Lublin Lectures*, 17-20, 32-34. The contrast is systematic, not a claim that each passage in LR is a direct response to the named essay.

[67] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 169.

[68] *Ibid.*, 169-171, final quotations at 170.

[69] *Ibid.*, 194-199, especially 197-198; section heading at 194.

[70] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. III, pt. 3, "Self-mastery and objectivization."

This fuller account has implications for marriage. LR connects monogamy and indissolubility with the personalistic norm and the enduring relation wherein a man and a woman can become co-subjects of love. The argument invokes reciprocal commitment and the good of the persons and their shared life. These conclusions should not be presented as following from Kant's prohibition of merely instrumental treatment alone. Their justification belongs to LR's mature account of love, self-giving, and marriage, which the negative prohibition constrains but does not exhaust.[71]

Justice toward the Creator and the Ground of Personal Obligation

Justice toward the Creator clarifies the metaphysical limit of Wojtyła's reception of Kant. LR expresses the person's rational participation in the created order as becoming *particeps Creatoris*; conscience must conform to the objective good and natural law.[72] Wojtyła's criticism of "autonomism" concerns the source of moral order, not a denial that persons act freely. Kantian autonomy is rational and universal lawgiving, not an arbitrary and individualistic invention of obligations.[73] Thus, the relevant contrast concerns their accounts of ultimate grounding. LR explicitly clarifies the connection to interpersonal ethics: "Man can only be just to God the Creator if he loves his fellows."[74] The section thus returns to the personalistic norm rather than adding an unrelated natural theology.

Conclusion

LL asks whether ethical lived experience is understandable as the act of a person whose agency and moral formation are grounded in being. Wojtyła recognizes Kant's defense of normativity and Scheler's attention to objective values, while judging that each isolates an element that must be understood within the whole ethical act. LR's anthropology and account of love can be read in

[71] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 211.
[72] *Ibid.*, 245-247; compare *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Ignatik, chap. IV, pt. 2, "The concept of justice with respect to the Creator."
[73] For Kantian autonomy, see Kant, *Groundwork*, 89 (Ak 4:440-441).
[74] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. Willetts, 247.

strong conceptual continuity with that project. They neither simply add persons to an impersonal ethic nor demonstrate that the three lecture cycles somehow birthed LR.[75]

The strongest instances of appropriation are explicit: LR names Kant when reformulating the prohibition of merely instrumental treatment and it borrows Scheler's rehabilitative heading while invoking his analysis of resentment in its account of chastity. Other relations, including the connections among efficacy, conscience, responsibility, and integration, are best defended as conceptual continuities. Still other similarities need the more modest language of interpretive resonance. The foregoing differentiation, rather than enfeebling comparison, identifies precisely what each type of evidence countenances as an argumentative claim.

The personalistic norm holds love to be the adequate attitude toward the person. Spousal self-gift is a distinctive realization of this demand, not its exhaustive definition. Kantian non-instrumentalization remains an acknowledged constraint, but Kant's positive obligations merit recognition as well. Neither Kant's formula nor Scheler's value-ethics alone supplies LR's anthropology. Wojtyła's contribution is a sustained account of how objective personal worth, lived experience, efficacious action and shared good belong together. This affords a distinctive personalistic development within Thomistic and Christian commitments without reducing that development to merely a verbal restatement of the tradition or a personalism principally derived from Kant and Scheler.

[75] Wojtyła, *Lublin Lectures*, 32-34.

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Revisiting the Natural Institution of Marriage in the Culture of Basotho through the Lens of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy

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Abstract

The institution of marriage is the basis of every society, as through marriage, a man and a woman make a contract for life with the intention of having children and thus forming a family. In Lesotho, there are civil and customary marriages. Both regimes have their positive traits as well as their problems. I critique the regimes and irregular unions based on the foundational principles of Karol Wojtyła. I argue that divorce, as permissible in civil marriage, is wrong according to the personalistic norm of Karol Wojtyła. Moreover, by permitting polygamy, customary marriage needs to be improved to accommodate only monogamous marriage, as it allows a spouse to fully donate himself to the other. I totally disagree with irregular unions, which include, *inter alia*, abduction, elopement, cohabitation, and unions arising out of the infidelity of married persons, such as concubinage. I make it clear that irregular unions are not legal in Lesotho, but they are practices that have to be abhorred, for they reduce a person to a status of an object.

Keywords:

Marriage, family, personalistic norm, love, and human person.

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Introduction: Marriage in Lesotho

At the center of every society, there is the institution of marriage between a man and a woman for the procreation and upbringing of children. Marriage is one of the oldest institutions, which is as old as man. Through marriage, a man is complemented by a woman. The need for partnership, arising from social nature, becomes manifest. The human person needs company and a helper in life. Out of love, a man goes out of himself in order to find the love of a woman. That spousal love and the sexual act that they engage in within the matrimonial state are some of the components of marriage. The fruits of marriage are children.

In the society of the Basotho people, there are two types of marriages, namely customary and civil. Manyeli defines customary marriage as:

> 'deemed' to be completed when there is agreement between the parties to the marriage coupled with parental agreement both as to the marriage and as to the amount of the *bohali*, and when part, at least, of the *bohali* has actually been paid" (Poulter, 1981, p. 61). Initially, customary marriage was a formal agreement between the two families without the consent of the bride and bridegroom. Later, with the influence of the church, the parties had to consent to the marriage. This agreement between the two families was sealed with the family of the bridegroom paying the *bohali* either in the form of cattle or money.[2]

This means that customary marriage requires three things to exist namely consent of the spouses, consent of both families and *bohali* which means lobola.

On the other hand, civil marriage is similar to ecclesiastical marriage. Here, a man and a woman agree to enter into a lifetime partnership. They make their permanent contract before the church or civil official. In this regime, marriage is valid when the parties are adults and have attained the age of eighteen. Only the consent of the spouses is required and there is no need for the consent of the parents and payment of dowry. In the church marriage, there is no divorce while the civil one allows divorce and the husband is permitted to marry the second wife while the first is still alive only if the civil court has granted a divorce.

[2] L. Manyeli, "Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage," *Humanities and Social Science Research* 2(2) 2019, 10.

There are also unions which are not falling under the above classification of marriages. The unions emanate from *chobelo* elopement and *chobeliso* abduction and are called irregular. There is a distinction between "*chobelo*" and "*chobeliso*;" "Elopement" and "abduction" are not the same - "*chobelo*" is "elopement" while "*chobeliso*" is "abduction."[3] The former is a milder form of abduction.[4] It is a process whereby a boy and a girl agree to elope together because they both love each other but the parents do not like their union. As a result they plan pregnancy to force parents to accept the girl in the boy's home. This happens in a case where the parents of a man do not like the fiancée (a girlfriend) of their son. During the darkness of the night, the boy goes to his home with his girlfriend. This is done non-violently.[5] The latter is a process whereby a man forcefully marries a woman without any agreement or consent. According to Mokhethi, a girl is abducted without any prior consultation.[6] This is done violently in a way that can be sexual, moral, physical or emotional. It dehumanizes the girl and is grossly unjust to her.[7] Both elopement and abduction show lack of freedom and self-determination since a girl is violently forced and in another scenario they act under pressure due to the lack of parental consent.

Although, Manyeli heavily criticized customary marriage in as far as agreement of the parents and dowry are required, he did not challenge the irregular unions. There are some problems that still remain. The focus should be on their welfare and their freedom in that union. Since the Catholic Church has influenced the culture of Basotho, there is a need to clarify some of the foundational principles for those who envisage to build a partnership of a whole life in a comprehensive manner.

On the basis of the foregoing, the most suitable Christian philosopher Karol Wojtyła since gave a compelling account of the foundational principles of marriage in the philosophical arena.[8] The problem which he identified exists in Basotho culture today. According to him, the central question of "the world outlook (*Weltanschaung)*" is "the subjectivity of the person" … "in relation

[3] P. Mokhethi, *Lesotho's Challenge: The Irregular Unions* (Maseru: Mazenod Institute, 1988), 11.
[4] *Ibid*., 12, citing H. Ashton, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), 65-66.
[5] *Ibid.*
[6] *Ibid.*
[7] *Ibid.*
[8] Cf., M. Acosta, A.J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy, Understanding Person and Act* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press 2016), 15-16.

with the human community."[9] This is observed within the spectrum of morality and culture.[10] Confronted with the problem of personalism, philosophy has the peculiar task to clarify the nature of man and his place in the universe.[11] Philosophical anthropology and ethics must assert their rightful place in the world outlook in order to solve contemporary issues.[12] He forged the perennial philosophy "with contemporary currents and thus brought a new method."[13] He gave "an account of human action that begins from an ethics based on Scholastic metaphysics and realist phenomenology. This union gives rise to his own style of personalism."[14] This anthropological and ethical outlook shall be more relevant to enrich and even to shun the incompatible elements that pose a problem to a matrimonial life in Lesotho.

In applying the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła in the natural institution of marriage in Lesotho, I first discuss the foundational principles of marriage as stipulated in Wojtyła's moral philosophy and ethics. Then I critically discuss customary marriage and lastly make a critique of irregular unions. Then I conclude that irregular unions are not part of customary marriage in Lesotho although they are practices that are inimical to the foundational principles of proper marriage.

The Foundational Principles of Marriage in Wojtyła's Moral Philosophy and Ethics

The marriage regimes that were mentioned earlier have some constitutive factors such as agreement of persons, monogamy and commitment for life. Wojtyła has a comprehensive account of how persons, who need to commit themselves to each other, must act. In his essays in moral philosophy and ethics, *Love and Responsibility* as well as *Osoba I czyn* (*Person and Act*), he

[9] K. Wojtyła, "The Human Person: The Task of Christian Philosophy Today," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association* 53, 1979, 3-4. This was written by Karol Wojtyła in 1976 as the introduction to his article "The Person: Subject and Community," *Review of Metaphysics* 33 (1979/1980), 273-308, but was omitted by the Review. (Ed.).
[10] Wojtyła, "The Human Person," 3-4.
[11] Acosta and Reimers provide the historical background using the material of Burgos in this manner: "Personalism is a philosophy that is fundamentally characterized by locating the person at the center of its reflection and its conceptual structure. It flows from several sources, but took precise form in France in the 1930s and later acquired notable importance throughout all Europe, influencing such relevant events as the UN's Declaration on human rights or those texts of the Vatican Council II which refer to the human being or to religious freedom."
The citation comes from: Acosta, Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy*, 3-4 citing J. M. Burgos, *El Personalismo* [Personalism], trans. by A. Reimers (Madrid: Palabra, 2000).
[12] Cf., Acosta, Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy*, 3-4.
[13] *Ibid.*
[14] *Ibid.*, 15-16.

"reflects on intersubjectivity-subjectivity, sociability, fatherhood, and the personal subject, among others."[15] This reflection puts love as the basis of marriage. The Polish philosopher makes it clear that spousal love is "realized most deeply in the self-giving of the loving person to the beloved person."[16] He further explains what it means to master oneself: "By nature, that is due to what being he is, the person is a master of himself (*sui uiris*), and cannot be imparted to the other or substituted by the other (*alteri incommunicabilis*) when the participation of his own will and the commitment of his personal freedom are required."[17] Self-mastery presupposes that man is able to govern himself. Self-mastery in sexuality demands a person "to master the concupiscence of flesh."[18] A human person must act in conformity with reason and not merely out of desire for another person. By being incommunicable, man is unrepeatable and irreplaceable yet through love, a person can donate himself to the other person. In this giving of oneself, a person does not cease to be but is expanded and enriched.[19]

The whole "I" in the moral philosophy of Wojtyła must be committed to the other. It is reciprocal in the sense that each participates in the giving of oneself. It is not only about a sexual drive which tantamount to "use." As "someone," a human being cannot be reduced to a thing. He points out that the designation "person" was coined in order to emphasize that man cannot be relegated completely to the category of "specimen of the species," "but has in himself something more, some particular fullness and perfection of being."[20] The idea of using the other in order to satisfy one's sexual needs is abhorred in Wojtyła's moral philosophy. He further talks about "the personalistic norm" which is the principle of loving the person that is, treating the person in a way corresponding to the being he is. Wojtyłian's philosophical anthropology shuns whatever degrades the human person. Every concrete person has a dignity that has to be respected. In human relationships, every person should be recognized as a person and not an object. He must not be used as a thing, a person is someone. Wojtyła applies the Kantian philosophy which is couched in the categorical imperative: "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."[21]

[15] *Ibid*., 18.
[16] K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013).
[17] *Ibid.*
[18] *Ibid.*
[19] *Ibid*., 107-108.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] I. Kant, *Grounding of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Indianapolis, Ind.: Hackett Publishing, 1993), 429.

By giving himself to the other, the person becomes a gift of love to the other, not an object to be used as the variation of the Kantian's second imperative.[22] The concept of communion according to Wojtyła circumscribes the dignity of the human person: "Only one who possesses himself can give himself away—and give it selflessly. And only one who is in control of himself can also make himself the gift—and this is again the gift of selflessness."[23] In this way, a person gives himself freely to the other without being used as a means like a thing that has not given itself to the other.

The intersubjective relationships are made freely. They flow from consciousness and determination of individuals. No one should be used as a means rather everyone is a person who participates. Wojtyła talks about fair love. There should be love between persons where each donates himself or herself willingly to the other. Through this principle spouses can treat each other as persons in a monogamous marriage which is also indissoluble. It must be a communion of persons for their entire life.

Wojtyła clearly emphasizes the justification of sexual acts within marriage. "The fruit of the union is the person's reciprocal belonging, whose expression is (among others) full sexual intercourse – we call it conjugal relations or intercourse since … it finds its proper place only in marriage."[24] The sexual act is justified within marriage because of its consequences. The result of intercourse between a man and woman is progeny. A child as a new member of the society must be then accepted and registered. In this way, the birth of the child born as a result of intercourse between the spouses makes them a family. There are other challenges to marriage such as adultery, concubinage and polygamy that are incompatible with these foundational principles of marriage. Manyeli has already discussed and made a stunning assessment of some problems of customary marriage in Lesotho. The major critique will be on irregular unions which include *inter alia*, abduction, elopement, unions arising from infidelity of married persons and cohabitations that are inimical to the principles of proper marriage.

[22] *Ibid.*
[23] K. Wojtyła, "The Personal Structure of Self Determination," in: *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, trans. by Th. Sandok (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 187-195. K. Wojtyła, "Osobowa struktura samostanowienia," in: K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne* (series: Człowiek i moralność, vol. 4), ed. by T. Styczeń, W. Chudy, J.W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński and A. Szostek (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 2000), 421-432.
[24] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 109.

Customary Marriage

The salient feature of Basotho marriages nowadays is monogamy and indissolubility as a result of the influence of the Catholic Church which arrived in 1862 around forty-two years after the founding of the Basotho nation by Moshoeshoe in 1820. Another commendable aspect of customary and ecclesiastical marriage is that there is no divorce, that is, the spouses take a contract for life until one of them dies. Marriage in Lesotho is between a man and a woman. There are very few polygamous marriages while most of the marriages are monogamous. Even the King of Basotho who is the symbol of unity, is not subscribing to polygamous marriage since he is monogamous although it is permissible in customary marriage. In both cases of monogamy or polygamy, Basotho's culture upholds sexual intercourse as permissible within marriage:

> The Basotho recommended and regarded sexual intercourse as being moral only in marriage either monogamous marriage or polygamous marriage. Cheating in as far as monogamous or polygamous marriages and pre-marital sex were concerned were always castigated as being immoral. Clearly, it is inconceivable that the Basotho could be amoral in sexuality while being so strict on behavior in sexual intercourse.[25]

However, customary marriage is not without problems. Such problems include permissiveness towards polygamy, consent of the families for the marriage to be valid. Apart from these problems Manyeli also points out that dowry is also one of the problems and that polygamy degrades women since man is not fully committed to one person. Manyeli further considers:

> [P]olygamy as being morally condemnable because it regards women as objects of men. First, marrying a woman primarily to form a tie with neighboring clans clearly demonstrates that she is merely being used as an object for maintaining peace with other tribes. Second, to marry a woman in view of having more hands at one's disposal is also using her as a mere tool. According to me, as used in these two senses the woman's dignity as a person is violated. To use Kantian terminology the woman in polygamy is not used as an end-in-itself

[25] Manyeli, *Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage*, 14.

> as it should be the case, but rather she is being used as a means to an end. Evidently, a woman should not be used as a mere tool since this amounts to dehumanizing her.[26]

In this cited passage, Manyeli applies the moral philosophy of Kant which is akin to Wojtyła's personalistic norm to fight against polygamy. He also argues that since the parties to marriage are adults, they should make their own decision, the consent of the families is not relevant. His arguments and conclusions are indeed compelling yet in relation to lobola he also finds it as a problem which must be discarded. Moreover, Manyeli heavily criticizes dowry as the third constitutive element of a valid marriage:

> I have ruled out the third condition of the *bohali*. Firstly, I have shown that this element of the *bohali* is to a great extent a contributing factor to the long-standing and persisting male domination and suppression of women in Sesotho customary marriage. Secondly, I have attempted to demonstrate that the *bohali* does injustice to the family of the bridegroom that has equally contributed to the expensive upbringing of their son. I have therefore suggested that the *bohali* be replaced by the two families contributing to finance the newly formed family to kick start.[27]

I beg to differ as far as dowry is concerned. Dowry is given by the family of a man to the family of a woman as a token of appreciation. It can be in the monetary or animal form.

> At its heart, lobola is a negotiated token of appreciation from the prospective husband (and his family) to the prospective wife's family. Historically expressed in cattle, it is today commonly paid in a mix of cash, livestock, and agreed gifts. The point is not to "buy" a spouse. Rather, lobola formally acknowledges the new relationship, builds ties between families, and affirms respect for the woman, her parents, and her lineage.[28]

[26] *Ibid*., 15.
[27] *Ibid*.
[28] A. Banks, *The Law on Lobola in South Africa in Marital Law* (10 September 2025) – https://gslaw.co.za/the-law-on-lobola-in-south-africa/ (accessed on 23 October 2026).

It is a "token of appreciation" because as Basotho are from a patriarchal society. This means when a woman is married, she inherits the surname of her husband and is incorporated into the family of her husband. In this way, the family of the man through dowry acknowledges the work done by the family of a woman by begetting and upbringing. Viewed in this manner, dowry is a sign of gratitude and should be upheld. Concerning his suggestion, that both families should contribute there is what is called *ho phahleloa* which means giving of presents to the new family by their families so as to kick start their new matrimonial life.

Critique of Irregular Unions in Lesotho

At the center of the family is the institution of marriage. The irregular unions accruing from elopement, adduction and infidelity. In this part, divorce and cohabitation form part of the discussion.

Abduction

Marriage as a natural institution between a man and a woman should be formed by consent between the parties who love each other. However, in abduction, force and fear are involved, since a girl is abducted. Moreover, there is no communication between the parties. According to Mokhethi, "In *Chobeliso*, for instance, force and corporal punishment are inflicted unjustly too, upon the person of the abducted girl, whose love and consent are not asked for." This victim is compelled to marry a man she does not love and even know.

There is no encounter between a man and a girl that establishes a relationship. In this situation, a man imposes and does not propose to a woman. This attitude accrues from the superiority complex of men over women. In the philosophical arena, whether one is a male or a female, they are equal. According to Wojtyła:

> The human sexual instinct is not an exclusive foundation of marriage, and it cannot be conceived only emotionally nor subjectively. The abuses in the sphere of sexuality are almost irreversible. Marriage is a bond between two persons which leads to personal union

> strengthened by a covenant. In the personal marital life there is no place for a subordination of women; in this instance there can only be total equality…[29]

Everyone is an end and should not be used as a means.[30] For the institution of marriage to exist, each partner has to participate or share without being totally absorbed or conditioned. Wojtyła talks about efficacy, a girl or a boy must realize his or her own personalistic value of action in the act of marriage. But in abduction, the personalistic value of action is one-sided. It is not a shared product that integrates each partner. Rather it is the individualism of the man that forced conformism on the woman.

Furthermore, there is no dialogue. No marriage can exist without communication since human beings express themselves through language and signs. To establish a family, dialogue between a woman and a man is necessary. On this note, abduction is a human degradation and is repugnant to reason.

Elopement

Whereas abduction lacks consent of the woman, in elopement both the man and the woman agree to marry yet the parents oppose. A boy impregnates a girl and as a result goes to the family of the boy in the night. Although there is no violence and disagreement between the parties to marriage. They act under pressure and their freedom is curtailed by the lack of parental consent. In extended families, where not only parents and children are considered but more so grandparents and others, it becomes a problem. Since marriage is not considered to be a private affair between a man and a woman but also requires the entire families of both the girl and the boy to be involved. According to Manyeli,

[29] A.N. Woznicki, *The Christian Humanism and Adequate Personalism: Karol Wojtyła's Existential Personalism* (New Britain: Mariel Publications, 1980), 39, citing K. Wojtyła classes in ethics, University of Lublin in the academic year 1956-1957.

[30] Cf., M.S. Fahmy, "Never Merely as a Means: Rethinking the Role and Relevance of Consent," *Kantian Review* (2023), 28, 41-62. This citation from Fahmy clarifies the concept of human dignity in Kantian/ Wojtyłian terms: "But a human being regarded as a person, that is, as the subject of a morally practical reason, is exalted above any price; for as a person (*homo noumenon*) he is not to be valued merely as a means to the ends of others or even to his own ends, but as an end in itself, that is, he possesses a dignity (an absolute inner worth) by which he extracts respect for himself from all other rational beings in the world. He can measure himself with every other being of this kind and value himself on a footing of equality with them." (MS, 6: 434-435).

> The inclusion of parental agreement is frequently perplexing when the families object to the decision of the parties to enter into a marriage. Parents in customary marriage interfere with the choice made by the parties to the extent that one of the parties at times marries a partner chosen by the parents.[31]

The problem here lies where a family of a boy or a girl chooses a partner to marry. For instance, the family of a boy can say, "X, marry Y because Y comes from a rich family. We, as your family, want to associate with rich families." If the boy refuses, the family will refuse to support the family of X, should he marry another girl than the one the family proposed. Since marriage is an institution of mature adults, their freedom to choose for themselves is required. Wojtyła abhors individualism and totalism which negate the freedom of individuals in the community.[32]

Another challenge is that a boy and girl have sexual intercourse with the intention of pregnancy so as to mobilize their parents to tolerate their union. Sexual intercourse is an act that ought to be done in a matrimonial setting. In this case it is done before marriage because the parents do not want the union. Wojtyła emphasized the sacrosanctity of sexual intercourse. He did authoritatively say that sexual intercourse is proper only when done by married persons within their marriage. To impregnate a girl is also dangerous since the family can refuse to support the new family arising from this act and this can ruin the future of the girl. This puts her in danger since she can be discriminated against and hated in the family where she is married.

The consent of the parties to marriage should be an essential constitutive element for a marriage to be valid. The role of the parents is to support what their children who have attained ages of maturity need and not to choose for them. Here the principle of efficacy must be evoked. The agents are men and women who act out of free-will and not through the will of their parents. The community should not suppress the freedom of the parties to marriage.

Unions Arising from the Infidelity of Married Persons

In interpersonal relationships of love, loyalty is the hallmark. Without fidelity to each other, the relationship becomes a purgatory full of lack of trust and even slowness of the partners. As a result,

[31] Manyeli, *Ambushing Basotho Customary Marriage*, 15.
[32] K. Wojtyła, Person and Act *and Related Essays*, trans. by G. Ignatik (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2021), 389.

some resort to violence because of infidelity. Most of the fathers who do this are miners who are working in the Republic of South Africa. Since they take a lot of time at work, sometimes some fall to the temptation of having extramarital affairs. This infidelity becomes a great blow since the wife at home is left with children and the father supports his concubine. Sometimes the wife at home has ten children.

Extramarital affairs are not only bad for the family but for the concubine as well. When one has given himself fully to the other there is no turning back. He must be responsible and is obliged by conscience to fulfil the needs of marriage. An act of choosing the other as a wife, presupposes ownership and possession. One possesses and owns the act of marriage. He does this willingly and consciously as an act that he performs out of his free-will. He is bound by duty to fulfil what is required of him in marriage. Marriage itself means in joys and sorrows, in riches and poverty the parties are obliged to support each other. The sense of responsibility cannot be compromised even under economic constraints. By committing oneself to the other, one is bound to the other.

How does a concubine get affected? Due to the fact that the married person uses a concubine for sexual satisfaction not in view of marrying her, a concubine is treated as a sexual object. She is dehumanized. She becomes merely a means and not an end. A married man does not commit himself but uses this one as long as his real wife is not around. The exploiting man has no sense of responsibility. If a child can be born as a result of this concubinage, only the concubine has a duty towards her child born out of wedlock.

Divorce

Although civil marriage has values such as allowing only the consent of parties to marriage, it allows divorce where there is a malicious desertion or adultery. The situation of marriage is deplorable since the divorce rate is dramatically escalating nowadays. Many families are torn apart due to this draconian death of marriage called “divorce.” Most of the divorces result from infidelity of spouses and malicious desertion. Due to economic constraints some men as well as women end up deserting their families and end up staying away from them. It seems as if divorce subscribes to the ideology of utilitarianism. John Stuart Mill taught that whatever is useful should be adopted;

whatever is no longer useful, one has to drop.[33] The idea of using the other is clearly seen when one is no longer satisfied with the other to the point of divorcing.

Wojtyła expounds the law of gift in the context of self-determination in a way that sheds more light on giving oneself totally and permanently: "Only those who can represent themselves … may also become a gift to others."[34] Lack of self-control where a man and a woman fail to master their own actions and as a result they do not trust each other. Even if there are differences, love must unite the two till death.

The phrase "ought to belong to each other" is imperative and imposes obligation on the spouses to strive for unity in their matrimonial state. Even though one can be tempted, due to challenges of life to divorce, one has to remember that uniting them as spouses is more important than what separates them.

Cohabitation

Irregular unions are also perceived in the form of cohabitation known as "stay together." People who avoid marriage because of permanent commitment prefer to cohabitate. This is a temporary irregularity and can end any time when they wish to break up. The couple sees themselves as "sex partners." The crux of the problem here is also ontological. Although they use each to satisfy their sexual desires, they also run away from responsibility and obligations arising from marriage. They become objects of their desires instead of living as rational beings who are controlled by reason and not desire.

To build a strong relationship, persons should be responsible and feel that they are obligated by their commitment. Where there is no obligation, people are no longer free since freedom is to do well and avoid evil. The moral obligation arises in interpersonal relationships. The failure to run away from such obligations means that one is not yet ready because of fear of responsibility. Wojtyła makes it clear that conjugal love reaches its summit in parenthood:

> Conjugal love is fulfilled by parenthood… Parenthood is a gift that comes to people, to man and woman, together with love, that creates a perspective of love in the dimension of a reciprocal life-long self-giving, and that is the condition of a gradual realization of that

[33] Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility,* criticizes Utilitarianism in Chapter 1.
[34] Wojtyła, "Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 153.

> perspective through life and action… And this is precisely the dimension and sense of the responsibility that essentially corresponds to this gift.[35]

It is manifest from the above citation that romantic love finds its perfection in parenthood. Self-donation or self-giving is necessary in romantic love so that partners can grow together in their matrimonial life. Although man lives in space and time as a temporal being he has something eternal, that is, love. The fact that there is something eternal in man indicates that man cannot be regarded as a mere animal. He is a being ordained to love and not to be used as a means.

Conclusion

It is worth noting that since Lesotho was influenced by the Catholic Church, there are many positive values for marriage in general. Although things like polygamy, irregular unions and divorce are seen to exist, the institution of marriage exists in Lesotho and many people live happily in their monogamous marriages. The problems will always be there, but they cannot defeat or destroy the institution of marriage. I began by showing that marriage is either civil or customary in Lesotho. The civil one also encapsulates the ecclesiastical even though in the Church divorce is impermissible while in pure civil marriage divorce is permissible.

Pertaining to civil marriage, divorce must be rejected because marriage must be regarded as a contract for life. Even the progeny and upbringing of children requires both parents, namely father and mother.

In customary marriage, I highlighted the values such as absence of divorce, the sexual act is only considered valid within marriage, and the consent of the parties is required. However, there is still a minor problem of polygamy since a few cases still exist today. Polygamy itself does not allow one to give himself fully to the other. The personalistic norm of Wojtyła abhors polygamy.

The irregular unions such as elopement and abduction, unions arising from infidelity and cohabitation also exist. I made it clear that they do not form part of legal marriages in Lesotho. They should be rejected because they do not uphold the dignity of the human person rather a person is reduced to a tool.

[35] K. Wojtyła, *Fruitful and Responsible Love* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), 23.

The future depends on stable marriages and families. It depends on fair love. What the Polish philosopher taught on anthropology and ethics in the community is a foundation worth telling so as to fix challenges that face the institution of marriage today. As human beings, "male and female are equal", "and no one should be used as a means" since both are ends in themselves. True freedom is manifested when they love each other and are faithful to each other:

> Only the truth about oneself can bring about a real engagement of one's freedom in one's relations with another person. It is the giving of oneself, which means limiting one's own freedom because of another person. Freedom is for love. Unused by love it becomes something negative, leaving man with emptiness and a lack of fulfillment. Love engages freedom, fulfilling it with that which nature itself desires; it fills it with goodness … man needs love more than he needs freedom, since freedom is only a means, whereas love is a purpose.[36]

Without love, life for a human person can be meaningless. Wojtyła says that love is a purpose. In Greek a purpose or a goal means *telos*. This means that love is teleological. By being teleological, love is found in the dimension of God. That is why he talks about *humanum* and *divinum*.[37] Man is not merely natural but has something divine in him. This is expressed by love. Love gives meaning to spouses.

[36] K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* (Kraków: Znak, 1962), 124.
[37] K. Wojtyła, "Humianizm a cel człowieka," in: *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał* (Kraków: Znak, 1979), 149: "The heart of the matter is in this case the problematics of the purpose. Is God the goal of man, and, if so, in what sense? … Creatures are the act of God's will. Will is always directed toward a goal and the goal of the will is always some good. Since the good contained in an objective (that is, a created being) cannot perfect God, it can, therefore, only reveal God."

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Book Review: Grzegorz Ignatik, *Communicating Life: Karol Wojtyła & Humanae vitae*

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Grzegorz Ignatik's *Communicating Life* faithfully presents Karol Wojtyła's extensive contribution to and interpretation of Paul VI's encyclical, *Humanae vitae.* As one of the leading scholars of the thought of Wojtyła / St. John Paul II, Ignatik both demonstrates the breadth of his philosophical and theological understanding and illustrates the critical, albeit less well-known, impact of the great Polish prelate on the Second Vatican Council, as well as his formative influence on the final text of *Humanae vitae*.

The formal object of the book focuses the theme of "the value of the human person in the mystery of life and its transmission" by exploring *Humanae vitae* through the Polish prelate's personalistic thought (p. 2). The book thus provides critical pedagogical instruction as to why and how *Humanae vitae* speaks to the most pressing issues of the human heart. Ignatik notes however that the ultimate goal of the text, drawing from the thought of Wojtyła / St. John Paul II, allows the reader to discover the true image of God within himself — in all his dimensions, "functional, relational, sacramental" (p. 4).

The scope and sources of *Communicating Life* include texts prior to works written before 1978, namely Wojtyła's interventions and memoranda related to Vatican II (particularly the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et spes*), the Papal Commission for the Study of Population, Family and Births, *Humanae vitae*, as well as Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility, Person and Act, The Lublin Lectures, Sources of Renewal,* and St. John Paul II's *Man and Woman He Created Them* (also called *The Theology of the Body*) (p. 5).

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Chapter One

To ascertain the theme of the human person in the mystery of life and its transmission within the thought of Karol Wojtyła (p. 10), Ignatik begins by unfolding the necessary links between three recent historical events (pp. 8,10): Vatican II (which includes both Wojtyła's documents which preceded the Conciliar event as well the Polish bishops' interventions during the Council); the final conciliar documents particularly *Gaudium et spes*; and post-conciliar correspondence by the Polish episcopate under the leadership of Cardinal Wojtyła; the Papal Commission for the Study of Population, Family and Births; and finally the encyclical *Humanae vitae*.

Wojtyła's significant role in shaping the Second Vatican Council is evident through his twenty-five direct interventions during the course of the Council (p. 13), which were focused entirely on the context of Christian personalism, a theme central to the Polish prelate both prior to the convening of the Council as well as afterwards. Christian personalism, as Ignatik explains, centers around the context of man's unique creaturely status: man, as *imago Dei*, is made in the image and likeness of God, but as *capax Dei,* he alone in the visible world is capable of "responding to [God's] self-communication" (p. 14). This theological-anthropological identity of the human person shares a particular resonance with the term "gift," a unique feature of both conciliar personalism (*GS* 22 and 24) and eventually the personalism distinctive to Wojtyła / St. John Paul II (p. 14).

Of the aforesaid twenty-five conciliar interventions, Ignatik assesses two in some detail, which pertained exclusively to marriage and the family (p. 15). The first occurred in the third session of the council during which Wojtyła suggested "making a closer link between the natural and supernatural dimensions of marriage and the family," within the context of "the Christian family as an image and participation in the covenant of Christ with the Church" (p. 15). Ignatik shares that the final version of *Gaudium et spes* adopted these suggestions and was reformulated in light of the Pauline teachings of Ephesians 5:32 (p. 16), a text which eventually became the keystone to the Pope's *The Theology of the Body*.

Exploring in more detail the second of the two interventions which occurred during the council's fourth session (p. 15), Ignatik specifies that certain aspects of this text greatly resembled several themes from Wojtyła's 1960 ethical study *Love and Responsibility:* In his intervention,

Wojtyła "expresses a dissatisfaction with the suggested chapter [of *Gaudium et spes*]" and encourages genuine dialogue with married couples that would substantiate the reasons for the Church's teachings on sexual ethics (p. 16). Likewise, the Cardinal criticizes opinions "that sought artificial solutions to the problems of personhood and nature in conjugal relations" and instead stresses the "integral proclamation of marriage" which underscores the importance of incorporating sacramental grace in marital daily life (p. 17). Ignatik comments that "to some degree, all three postulates" (p. 18) found their way into the final text of *Gaudium et spes* (p. 18).

Later in the chapter, Ignatik turns to Wojtyła's assessment of the final published Conciliar texts, particularly in Polish prelate's *Sources of Renewal*, which prepares the reader to see a forthcoming link between *Humanae vitae* and "general context of Vatican II" (p. 18). Ignatik treats the thematic conciliar vision of the mystery of redemption as outlined in two interconnected directions, *ad intra* and *ad extra,* both of which "correspond to the mystery of the Church and her mission, respectively" (p. 19). Wojtyła's explanation of the council's pastoral character accordingly highlights these two aspects; he explains, "[t]he work of Jesus Christ … is continually being effected in the Church, and through the Church, in mankind and the world" (p. 19).

Under the section "Man's Free Action and Autonomy of Creation" (p. 23), Ignatik sketches out a recurring principle discussed in Vatican II, namely freedom, which is intimately linked to human life and its transmission; reaffirming the divine origin of human freedom, the Council urges that "the authentic signs of God's presence and purpose are to be discerned … in the happenings, needs, and desires of the modern age" (p. 23). Here, Ignatik explicates God's mandate for man "to subdue the earth" (Gen. 1:26) which necessarily concerns the issue of technological progress, an issue "extremely important for understanding the teaching of *Humanae vitae*" (p. 27). Ignatik shares Wojtyła's word of warning directed to married couples and the potential use of artificial contraception, "'Man may not exercise power over his own body by means of intentions or techniques that, at the same time, compromise his authentic governance over himself and that even, in a certain way, annihilate this governance … *man is himself, namely, a person, through self-governance, and this self-governance enters into the integral definition of his freedom*'" (pp. 29-30)

After unfolding the three aspects of Wojtyła's interpretation of *Gaudium et spes,* Ignatik includes an in-depth review of the divided Papal Commission for the Study of Population, Family, and Births (pp. 35, 51-55). Ignatik summarizes that while the minority report faithfully adhered to

the Church's long-held moral teaching that bans artificial contraception, the majority report advocated for the use of contraceptives to secure the "supra-psychological good of the human person;" yet he demonstrates a certain "'instrumentalization'" of the person in both approaches, which seems to presuppose and foster a dichotomy between nature and the person (pp. 52-54). The chief issue with the minority report, Ignatik argues, which Wojtyła will correct subsequently, concerns its purely authoritative approach which "surrenders the personalistic considerations to the generative power of the conjugal act and its finality" (p. 54). In contrast, the majority report's principal error lies in its faulty use of "the personalistic terms of Vatican II" which "remain 'technological,'" without a proper "discernment of the signs of the times in unfolding the work of creation" (p. 54).

The final sections of chapter one deal with *Humanae vitae* and its reception (pp. 55-63). Unfolding the structure of the encyclical and summarizing its key points, Ignatik underscores the Magisterium's competency to interpret divine law but also natural law, noting Pope Paul VI's proposal that the transmission of life must considered "in light of the integral vision of man … natural and earthly aspects but also supernatural, eternal ones" (p. 57). Summarizing the Italian Pontiff's vision of conjugal love and responsible parenthood, Ignatik reiterates the central parenetic point of the encyclical, namely that "the unitive and procreative aspects" of the conjugal act are inseparable; "[this] connection, established by God, … man on his own initiative may not break" (p. 57). Ignatik concludes by drawing attention to the last sections of the encyclical which highlight that the Church as "the guardian and interpreter" of the law, stands in service to "man and human civilization" as a whole (pp. 58-59).

Chapter Two

After summarizing the relevant background in chapter one, Ignatik outlines Wojtyła's direct approach to the teaching of *Humanae vitae* by exploring three related memoranda, dated in 1966, 1968 and 1971, respectively (p. 78). Ignatik states that these documents are again guided by the same theme, that of *accommodata renovatio,* the theme of reconciling the Christian tradition with the essence of personalism (p. 79).

Concerning the 1966 Memorandum, which Ignatik notes was sent directly to Pope Paul VI since Wojtyła was prevented by the communist government of Poland from attending the papal

commission, the document unfolds both conjugal sexual morality and pastoral care related to the methods of regulating conceptions in Poland (pp. 39, 81-82). Ignatik underscores that the memorial provides evidence of the continuity between Wojtyła's Christian personalistic approach to sexual morality and the Church's traditional teaching on the ends of marriage (as expressed through the pontificates of Pius XI and Pius XII) (pp. 79-80); in other words, Wojtyła's recognition of only a "shift in emphasis" (p. 79) (as opposed to a radical break with Tradition) helps provide a critical explanatory bridge between the "council's stress on love (the commandment to love) and the traditional stress on the natural law and the ends of marriage" (p. 83). Ignatik further adds that Wojtyła's emphasis on renewal focuses on developments on "the teaching of the human body, its sexual properties, and its positive role of culture and human relationships" (pp. 84-85).

Ignatik likewise articulates aspects of part two of the 1966 memorandum which details Wojtyła's extensive pastoral engagement with the lived experiences of the Polish people. The thoroughness of Wojtyła's evaluation can be seen in his inclusion of issues ranging from the problem of regulating conceptions and births in Poland to collecting medical research which verifies the salutary influence of natural family planning methods (pp. 86-87).

1968 Memorandum of the "Cracow Commission," prepared "by a group of Polish theologians [and ethicists and physicians]" was convoked by Cardinal Wojtyła and worked under his active guidance (p. 88). The purpose of the Cracow Commission with its continued personalistic focus was to defend the moral teaching of the Church concerning conjugal morality and to proclaim divine law using "rational arguments that would convince experts from various disciplines" particularly those who undermined the traditional teaching of the Church on parenthood and natural methods of regulating conceptions (p. 90). It is worthwhile to note that Ignatik's inclusion that the 1968 memorandum was both drafted by primary editors, Frs. Smoleński, Turowicz, and Meissner, and conveyed some divergence from Wojtyła's own ethical approach to sexual ethics (pp. 91-92), shows an evident intellectual and spiritual agility of the Polish prelate as well as a degree of collaborative openness.

Ignatik openly acknowledges that any extent of Pope Paul VI's reception of these 1966 and 1968 memoranda "cannot be demonstrated with certainty" (p. 113). Yet, he finds several points of convergence, particularly regarding the 1966 memorandum (pp. 112, 114).

Regarding the 1971 memorandum, Wojtyła explores the pastoral implementation of encyclical *Humanae vitae* (pp. 116-128); the Cardinal expresses gratitude for the encyclical and

the Church's adherence to traditional ethical principles concerning the transmission of life but commends Paul VI's intention to pastorally apply them "in today's day and age" (p. 117). Depicting the reception of the encyclical in the Christian world, both favorably and unfavorably, (p. 117) Wojtyła also includes an in-depth proposal for pastoral instruction which includes the necessary reminder that the encyclical "meets the condition that determines the infallible character of ordinary teaching" (p. 120).

Ignatik concludes chapter two by emphasizing Wojtyła's conviction that "the encyclical possesses tremendous pastoral potential, which should be realized in the Church" (p. 128). The Polish prelate's measures to achieve this realization within his own Kraków archdiocese is worth commending, especially as the instruction continues to offer timely suggestions for pastoral implementation (pp. 128-129).

Chapter Three

Chapter three delves deeper into the "logic and framework of Wojtyła's ethical teaching pertaining to *Humanae vitae,*" beginning first with relevant presuppositions to Wojtyła's personalistic ethics followed by the fundamentals of his teaching, namely, "values, duties, and moral norms of responsible parenthood" (p. 130). Much of the anthropological presuppositions outlined in this chapter were previously covered in Ignatik's book, *Person and Value: Karol Wojtyła's Personalistic and Normative Theory of Man, Morality and Love,* but are now set in dialogue with *Humanae vitae* and a discussion on the transmission of life.

Returning to the concept of freedom, Ignatik explores from Wojtyła's pre-papal works its deeper anthropological roots. For the Polish prelate, a correct understanding of freedom necessitates a pedagogical reintroduction concerning man's contingent nature; metaphysically (and known by experience) man understands that he is "dependent on others" and above all on God, "the only necessary, absolute being … and real foundation and source of the world;" and ethically, man is "destined to actualize himself through action… to become good [or evil]" since he is not absolutely 'good' (p. 137). Freedom, properly understood within the conditions of man's contingency, allows "the human person to choose and strive for the goods that are proper to his actualization … and true fulfillment" (pp. 137, 139).

Relatedly, Ignatik emphasizes the link between freedom, efficacy, morality, and personhood (pp. 133-135); genuine freedom demands conscious efficacy (man must constitute his own "I" and be dependent on this "I" for fulfillment) (p. 138) but "*true fulfillment is accomplished … [only] through the moral goodness of [the] act*" (p. 139). Wojtyła's teaching on efficacy and morality expresses the profound unity between freedom and truth – a unity, which Ignatik comments, is "a trademark of Wojtyła's philosophical and theological thought that radically separates him from many contemporary views on freedom" (p. 138).

Moreover, for the Polish prelate, intertwined with freedom is responsibility. In an oral intervention at Vatican II dated September 22, 1965, the Polish prelate offered a necessary correction, "each and every man … should be able to say not only 'I am free in this matter,' but also 'I am responsible'" (p. 137). Applying this concept of responsible freedom to man's daily life, it is incumbent upon man to discern how his "freedom is grounded in reality and truth," and then responsibly apply it in his own unique circumstances (p. 139).

Specifically relating human freedom to conjugal morality, Ignatik instructs that "Wojtyła's theory of conscious human action" corrects a twofold error concerning the marital sexual act and the use of contraception: First, the prelate's theory amends a false interpretation that the prohibition of contraception is strictly rooted in a rigid biologism, such that the fullness "of the human person [is] degraded by being subordinated to 'laws and rhythms' of his body with its natural functions and ends," (pp. 140-141). Second, the Cardinal's action theory corrects a pernicious overreach of a counterfeit "law of love" which permits man to shun "submission to the biological functions in favor of the 'higher level,' the level of the personal covenant uniting the conjugal and parental vocation" (p. 141). Instead, Wojtyła's personalistic vision of sexual ethics preserves the inherent anthropological unity of the person, namely the body's integral relationship to the spirit: the sexual drive therefore does not take "on a deterministic character, which is treated independently of the human will" (p. 143) but must be practiced with "the existence of virtue" in which self-determination and fulfillment seek to be "governed by the truth about the good in conformity with the hierarchy of values" (p. 144). Ignatik further asserts that Wojtyła's complete vision does not place either "person and nature or love and natural law" in opposition (p. 142).

Personalistic Perspective of Humanae Vitae— Values

Ignatik further delves into Wojtyła's Christian personalism, commenting that the Polish thinker had presented a personalistic vision of sexual ethics in his pre-papal texts "Instynkt, miłość, małżeństwo" (1952) and "Religijne przeżywanie czystości" (1953) and *Love and Responsibility* (1960), all of which "champion the understanding of human nature and sexuality in light of the love of persons" (p. 144). Applying this to *Humanae vitae,* Ignatik acknowledges that while the encyclical letter uses the word 'person' only sparingly, the Polish prelate, with the aforesaid 'expertise' in Christian personalism, verifies the encyclical as deeply personalistic (p. 144).

Ignatik confirms Paul VI's personalistic approach by citing texts from the encyclical, which begin "not with abstract concepts or definitions, but with the concrete historical human person taken within his integral vocation" (p. 144). Accordingly, the biological, psychological, demographic, and social factors of human life, referenced in the letter, must be considered in light of man's whole mission, to which is he is called in its natural and supernatural, earthly and eternal dimensions (HV 7) (p. 145). Ignatik underscores that any danger of the aforesaid "naturalism and biologism is averted" because the ethical norm proposed in *Humanae vitae* is "formulated within the perspective of man's integral anthropology and vocation" (p. 145). Furthermore, he adds, referring the encyclical text, "[m]arriage is described as an interpersonal communion that perfects the persons who belong to it; the gift of self [is] the means by which man and woman constitute this communion of persons" (p. 145). (What is striking here is the resemblance between these themes and the aforementioned pre-papal texts of Wojtyła.)

To further ascertain the personalism within the encyclical and its connectivity to the thought of the Polish prelate, Ignatik devotes an extensive study on the theme of value (which was unfolded more at length in his *Person and Value*)*,* an essential element within the thought of Karol Wojtyła. Here we focus only on Wojtyła's treatment of the term 'value' as it pertains to human life, *Humanae vitae*, and marital love, under the aspect of the human body and sexuality.

Human Person — Ignatik confirms Wojtyła's definition of "the 'dignity' of man as a person" as above all a fundamental quality of the person (p. 163). Referencing Wojtyła's reliance on *Gaudium et spes* 24, Ignatik will explicate more deeply the theological roots of the dignity of the human person in chapter four, but in chapter three he explores the term's metaphysical roots.

As previously unfolded, the personalistic norm states that "a person can never be treated as a mere object of use by anyone (not even by God)" (p. 163). The metaphysical foundation for the personalistic norm relates to the terms "*sui iuris et alteri incommunicabilis"* which secures "that [man] exists for himself and that his existence and identity are not exchangeable with or replaceable by another being" (p. 165). The anthropological structures of "self-possession and self-governance" undergird this ontological incommunicability, yet they also provide the foundation for an "openness to reality and a disposition to voluntarily entrust [oneself] to another" (p. 165); the person thus possesses an "intrinsic orientation to another," but finds the greatest fulfillment in self-transcendence and in the giving of himself to another (p. 165-166).

Body — Exploring the value of the human body, Ignatik, following Wojtyła, demonstrates that the body, is not "merely that which limits or burdens man but [serves] as an asset that is *sine qua non* for human creativity and communication" (p. 167). Specific to the sexual distinctiveness of the human body, Ignatik writes that this value is "a particular good" which helps "the human person to become conscious of his identity as a person, his purpose for living in the world, and his difference with respect to other beings" (p. 167). Moreover, the human body in its sexual differentiation is "capable of expressing the whole truth in his transcendence and freedom" (p. 167). Within the context of marriage, "the body allows the spouses to 'experience the meaning of their oneness'" (p. 168, referencing *GS* 48).

Marriage — Applying this understanding of person and value to the "Ends and Ontology of Marriage" as outlined in Vatican II, Ignatik first acknowledges that Wojtyła maintains that the council "adopted a more personalistic viewpoint concerning marriage and conjugal morality" in an effort to engage "the people of today" who typically view "marriage in light of its own worth rather than in any functional light," which Ignatik notes, relates more to "the ends that marriage is ordained to achieve" (p. 151). Pertinent to the discussion on value, Ignatik however demonstrates that this trend should not be interpreted exclusively as subjectivistic turn to self, but instead exposes an inherent positive aspect, namely the aforesaid "recognition of human values" and especially "man's dignity" which "prevents an instrumentalization of persons" (p. 151). In this regard an excessively personalistic interpretation of marriage (versus a strict "end-oriented vision" which views that "only procreation justifies marriage") attempts in a way, albeit insufficiently, to avoid any instrumentalization of marriage which undermines the value of the persons who constitute it (pp. 152, 157-168).

Thus, while neither the Council nor the encyclical *Humanae vitae* alter the traditional teaching on the ends of marriage and their hierarchy, a more personalistic perspective, which emphasizes the value of love and a communion of persons, will only manifest more "the intrinsic unity between teleology and ontology" (p. 153). Relating Wojtyła's teaching in *Love and Responsibility* on the personalistic norm to matrimony, Ignatik states "only in and through love can man attain the three ends of marriage in a manner worthy of persons" (p. 154).

Conjugal Act — Specific to the context of the "community of marriage," the conjugal act is of unparalleled value, a point which will be further clarified in the final chapter of the book. Here, Ignatik draws from "Wojtyła's approach to sexual relations in conjugal life," and states that "[a]s long as this act is performed in a properly human way" (which includes the natural finality of the act) and "realized through self-determination in transcendence and integration… it retains its personalistic value" and is an "expression of true love" (p. 181).

Chapter Four

Chapter four presents the Christological and Sacramental dimension of Wojtyła's interpretation of human life, drawing from his theological works, especially his commentary on Sacred Scripture in *The Theology of the Body,* which was authored prior to his papal election, but disseminated during his pontificate; hence Ignatik's occasional reference to the Polish prelate's papal name, St. John Paul II (p. 9). In this chapter, Ignatik will demonstrate Wojtyła's personalism as a distinct Christian personalism since the Polish Pontiff's "interpretation of the person, his life, and his action" are "permeated and guided by divine revelation" (p. 237).

To more thoroughly understand St. John Paul II's personalistic vision, which seeks to ground and deepen the norms specified in *Humanae Vitae,* Ignatik underscores the Polish Pope's twofold understanding of the mystery of life as it pertains to the sacramental character of creation and redemption; beginning with creation, Ignatik returns to Wojtyła's unique understanding which lies in the principle called the "'hermeneutics of the gift,'" which, as mentioned earlier, became the "central hermeneutical prism" of the Pope's thought (p. 251).

Ignatik notes that Wojtyła's interpretation of the hermeneutics of the gift can be applied in every setting of man's life, be it anthropology and ethics (as well as governance, economy or culture)," however, it is most fully applied within the context to the spousal gift of self (pp. 253,

255). Drawing from John Paul II's theological anthropology in *The Theology of the Body,* Ignatik summarizes both the foundation and fruit of the law of the gift within the context of the Pope's spousal meaning of the body; "created in God's image, man discovers the law of the gift in his being as a unique and personal mark of the Creator in him. First and foremost, he discovers himself as received, thus participating in the generosity of God himself" (p. 255). Moreover, since the law of the gift is written on the human heart (p. 256) it "permeates the entire human person, including his body and sexual distinctiveness, this means that the gift of self to another can be truly total" (p. 256). Thus, applied within the setting of the transmission of life, "the body is [and becomes] the very instrument and sign of this gift and communion in the visible world" (pp. 258, 260). Ignatik underscores that the "self-giving of spouses in marriage does not undermine their relationship to God" but "confirms and fulfills" it, adding, "[t]his is because God himself is a *communio personarum,* and he is the source of the law of gift in man" (p. 255).

Concerning the sacrament of redemption, Ignatik explores the great Pope's reliance on Ephesians 5:21-33, which links sacramental marriage with the union of Christ and the Church. He comments that the historical realization of the divine mystery which began in creation through marriage "receives its definitive form in Jesus Christ and his union with the Church" (p. 264). Linking marriage with the sacrament of redemption in Christ, the Pope thus teaches that "marriage as a sacrament remains a living and life-giving part of man's journey to salvation," and continues to "efficaciously transmit … God's divine life in the visible world" (pp. 260, 265). Bringing together chapters three and four, Ignatik thus explicates that while truly giving of oneself is not possible on the ontological level, the gift of self is possible in the moral order and becomes an unparalleled "participat[ion] in the self-giving of God in creation and redemption" (p. 255).

And so, Christian spouses are called to participate in and reveal this mystery of love precisely by their openness to human life and its transmission. Returning to *Humanae vitae,* "the moral norms in [the encyclical] simply ensure and guide man's participation in the divine life… and open the space for God in the world, the human body and soul, and the interpersonal relations of marriage and the family" (p. 239). Consequently, any immoral acts in the sphere of conjugal life, especially concerning the transmission of life will "not only damage human love and prevent personal fulfillment but also will close the acting person to the mystery of love … and the divine blessings that come with it" (p. 239). In sum, the human body is tasked to be "an expression of the divine mystery," uniquely of the life-giving love of Christ for the Church, but its "speech,"

particularly in conjugal intimacy, must be in accordance with the true "language of the body" because "God the Creator is the author of this speech" (pp. 266-269).

Conclusion

Ignatik achieves his goal of exploring the extensive nature of transmission of human life within Wojtyła's thought; the author faithfully includes an abundance of historical information, including official and behind the scenes historical developments and social cultural trends that help parse the great Polish prelate's involvement and extensive contribution to Vatican II and the development of *Humanae vitae.* To effectively accomplish the book's objective, the author likewise includes in the Appendix section his own critical translations of relevant texts of the Polish cardinal.

Two critiques appear as an inevitable consequence of the magnitude of this project:

First, the sheer volume of material included in the book and the multi-disciplinary nature of investigation may, at first glance, have the unintended effect of obscuring the role that Wojtyła played in both the conciliar event and the promulgation of *Humanae vitae*. However, a penetrating, ongoing study of *Communicating Life* demonstrates the contrary. It is deeply enriching and should be used as a required textbook in any course on Karol Wojtyła, St. John Paul II, *Humanae vitae* or the Second Vatican Council, especially as it serves as an invaluable instructional manual between the Pope's *Theology of the Body* and *Humanae vitae.*

Second, the endeavor to verify Wojtyła's role in the development of both Vatican II and *Humanae vitae*, may seem circular, in that the evidence both overlaps and is mutually referential. However, a proper analysis of the text makes evident that the similarity of themes and presentation among Vatican II, Wojtyła's texts, and *Humanae vitae*, are due in part, because the Polish cardinal was a faithful "authentic interpreter" of the Council and Tradition (p. 11), and also because he served as a consummate teacher in the understanding of marriage and the transmission of life (p. 12). Ignatik's methodical work makes clear that the great Polish prelate emerged as a leading actor of the 20th century, indeed arguably one of the most prophetic voices in Church history.