

## THE ETHICAL PERSONALISM OF KAROL WOJTYŁA AND TADEUSZ STYCZEŃ

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It is a great joy and honor for me to deliver a lecture at a Conference in memory and on the first anniversary of the death of my dear friend and co-founder of the International Academy of Philosophy (in Texas – founded five years before that in the Principality of Liechtenstein),<sup>2</sup> and to speak on the ethical personalism of Tadeusz Styczeń and Karol Wojtyła,<sup>3</sup> ethical personalism that has borne fruit in many areas, but quite especially in philosophy and ethics of love and of sexuality and marriage.<sup>4</sup> Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeń, with Andrzej Szostek and some others, are no doubt “founders and heads” of this “Cracow-Lublin school” of personalist ethics (which I consider to be “new” in the best sense of the term), and likewise important mentors of the *LL-School (Lublin Liechtenstein-school)*, a concept developed by Fr. Józef Tarnówka and others.<sup>5</sup>

Certain authors have objected to the name and the newness of the Cracow-Lublin school, but Tadeusz Styczeń has given a vociferous defense of its existence and new elements - against the critique by George Kalinowski.<sup>6</sup> This school, in

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<sup>2</sup> Read at the Conference “Person and Morality According to FR. Tadeusz Styczeń,” October, 13-14, 2011.”

<sup>3</sup> I believe that both Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeń are great and original philosophers, whose personalist ethics entered such a unique unity and historically significant wedding with John Paul II’s teachings as a Pope that one may say that Karol Wojtyła’s and Tadeusz Styczeń’s philosophy, besides the great value they have in themselves, also inspired something like a new era in the history of Christian philosophy, an era which is, of course, nourished by many other thinkers and sources but has assumed a new and significant role in the center of the Church in consequence of one of these two philosophers having been elected Pope. From there, many elements of this new and personalist thought also radiated to various Evangelical and Protestant communities. Moreover, the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła did not stop when he became Pope but flourished further and reached a new climax in many Papal documents, such as *Familiaris Consortio*, *Salvifici Doloris*, *Centesimus Annus*, *Veritatis Spondor*, *Evangelium Vitae*, *Fides et Ratio*, and in his ground-breaking teaching on the moral aspects of marriage and sexuality which led to a profound and matchless “theology of the body”.

<sup>4</sup> See Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, trans. By H.T. Willetts (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993); and John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, transl., introduction, and index by Michael Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> See Józef Tarnówka’s doctoral dissertation “Eine phänomenologisch orientierte Metaphysik des Menschen als Grundlage der Philosophie am Beispiel der philosophischen Hauptwerke von Edith Stein und Karol Wojtyła” (*Internationale Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein*, 2002). See also Josef Seifert, “Diligere veritatem omnem et in omnibus”, in: *Ethos*, Nr. 28, 1994, S. 75-76.

<sup>6</sup> See Tadeusz Styczeń, “Reply to Kalinowski. By Way of an Addendum to the Addenda,” in: *Aletheia. An International Journal of Philosophy*, Peter Lang, Bern-Frankfurt-New York-Paris 1988, Vol. IV, pp. 217-225; the same author, “Karol Wojtyła — Philosoph der

my mind, contributed a great deal to the growth of *philosophia perennis*, understood as a “system” or better a “corpus of truth.”<sup>7</sup>

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Freiheit im Dienst der Liebe,” in: K. Wojtyła — Johannes Paul II, *Erziehung zur Liebe* (Augsburg, 1979), p. 156 ff. The newness of the personalistic thought of Karol Wojtyła and his close student Tadeusz Styczeń is in no way that of the isolated and suspicious originality of a thinker who says “entirely new things.” On the contrary, the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła has at the same time a close connection with other contemporary movements and thinkers, such as Hans Urs von Balthasar’s personalism, the phenomenological realism, and personalism of philosophers such as Dietrich von Hildebrand, or Edith Stein. Moreover, Karol Wojtyła’s philosophy has equally strong ties with medieval philosophy, Thomism, and in particular with Saint Thomas Aquinas’ own philosophy. It also combines organically Thomistic and Franciscan philosophical insights, for example, on the substantiality and spirituality of the person, or act and potency, with very modern reflections of phenomenological and existential philosophers. See Giovanni Paolo II (Pope John Paul II), *Uomo e donna lo creò* (Vatican City: Città Nuova Editrice/Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1987), a work largely written when Karol Wojtyła was still Professor at this University, as Michael Waldstein has shown in Introduction to John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them. A Theology of the Body*, transl., introduction, and index by Michael Waldstein, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), pp. 1-128.

<sup>7</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *ibid.*, p. 1. The notion of a system or corpus of truth was expressed magnificently by the realist phenomenologist and historian of philosophy Balduin Schwarz. He wrote what could be regarded as the most beautiful eulogy on Saint Thomas. Even though not all of the elements mentioned by Balduin Schwarz may rightly be attributed to Karol Wojtyła, Schwarz captures not only the innermost essence of the spirit of Thomas Aquinas but also described the pure aiming at the truth which seem to be primary characteristics of the personalist philosophy of Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeń:

Thomas possessed the intellectual “nerves” – if we are allowed to use this term – to distance himself from the safe grounds of Augustinianism. Instead of seeking, in order to save as much as possible, a compromise with the New (i.e., with the Arab and Latin Averroistic Aristotelianism), he loved simply the truth and was convinced of its unity, and thus began the gigantic process of the scrutiny of his opponent, the anti-Christian Aristotelianism, and the clarification, transformation, and new rethinking of Aristotle. Simultaneously he also began a keen examination of the Augustinian teaching in order to unite everything in the unity of the single great *Corpus Veritatis*. Reneging not the slightest part of the truth, never thinking in terms of schools or cliques, ready to learn from everybody, never forgetting the whole over the part, and seeing with incomparable intellectual strength everything in its connection, careful and generous, flexible for every nuance, but keeping his eye unwaveringly directed at the *Totum*, calm in the progression of thought, never in doubt and caught in details, this became the genius of the *Summa*, of a high point of human existence. ...

My own translation from the German: Balduin Schwarz, *Ewige Philosophie. Gesetz und Freiheit in der Geistesgeschichte* (Leipzig: Verlag J. Hegner, 1937; 2. Aufl. Siegburg: Schmitt, 2000), pp. 120-123.

See also the longer original text which in some respects “idealizes” Saint Thomas Aquinas, but precisely thereby captures the *ideal* of a truly philosophical attitude:

Unter diesem Licht schien die mit Aristoteles sich enthüllende Dimension der Wirklichkeit so geartet, daß sie die Gültigkeit des ganzen bisherigen Wirklichkeitsbildes entscheidend in Frage stellte. Die geistige Welt drohte auseinanderzubrechen, das Alte schien ehrwürdig, aber ohnmächtig, das Neue faszinierend, aber umstürzend. Es ist das unvergleichliche Verdienst des hl. Thomas, an die damalige geistige Situation mit keiner anderen Frage herangetreten zu sein als mit der Wahrheitsfrage. In der bloßen Verteidigung

einer Tradition, mit dem Hinweis auf ihre Größe, auf die Autoritäten, die hinter ihr stehen, ist ein so elementares Ereignis, wie es das Sichtbarwerden neuer Wirklichkeitsaspekte ist, nicht zu bannen. Thomas besaß die "intellektuellen Nerven" – wenn dieser Ausdruck erlaubt ist – um von dem sicheren Boden des Augustinismus sich zu entfernen. Nicht daß er, um zu retten, was zu retten sei, Ausgleich und Verbindung mit dem Neuen [dem arabischen und lateinischen averroistischen Aristotelismus] gesucht hätte, er liebte schlechthin die Wahrheit und war von ihrer Einheit überzeugt, und so begann er die gewaltige Durchmusterung seines Gegners, des widerchristlichen Aristotelismus, die Abklärung, Umformung, Neubildung des Aristoteles, zugleich aber auch eine eindringliche Sonderung im augustiniischen Lehrgut, um schließlich alles in die Einheit eines einzigen großen *Corpus veritatis* zu fügen. Nichts von der Wahrheit preisgebend, niemals in Parteien und Schulen denkend, bereit von jedem zu lernen, über dem Ganzen kein Einzelnes vergessend und mit unvergleichlicher Kraft alles zusammenschauend, sorgfältig und großzügig, schmiegsam für jede Nuance, aber den Blick unverwandt auf das *Totum* gerichtet, ruhig im Fortschreiten, niemals aber zögernd und im Teilhaften hängenbleibend, ist der Genius der *Summa* geworden, ein Gipfel menschlichen Daseins. Die positive Meisterung einer Krisis ist wohl niemals so rein, so schlechthin überzeugend, so umfassend und kraftvoll durchgeführt worden. Ohne die geistige Tat des hl. Thomas wäre das Abendland schon zwei Jahrhunderte früher geistig zerrissen, um die innere Einheit gebracht worden, weil ihr die Einheit des Seins nicht mehr gegenwärtig gewesen wäre. Nun aber war wieder ein umfassendes Bild gegeben, in dem alles bisher Erkannte an seinem richtigen Ort stand, sein Gewicht besaß, so wie es ihm zukommt, und in dem es in seiner Verbindung und seinem Anderssein gegenüber allem übrigen deutlich war.

Und zugleich war die Einheit des lebendigen geistigen Stromes durch die Jahrhunderte hin gewahrt. Die goldene Kette der Geschichte verband das Gegenwärtige mit dem Vergangenen.

Thomas darf als der klassische Typus des echten Befreiers aus einer geistigen Krisis gelten. Er repräsentiert in der Geistesgeschichte die guten, wahrhaft lebendigen Kräfte, die ein Mensch in sich erweckt, wenn er etwas hineinnimmt in sein Leben, was ihm zunächst als Bedrohendes oder Faszinierendes, auf jeden Fall aber Sprengendes entgegentritt, wenn er in lebensvoller, wacher, bereiter Kraft, Kühnheit und Ehrfurcht paarend, die Linie seines Lebens höher führt, nichts Kostbares abwirft, sondern es erstarken läßt, nichts Neues ängstlich fortdrängt, sondern sich ihm stellt, seinen Anprall besteht, seine Faszinationskraft bannt, sie in Wirkheitskraft verwandelt und es zu einem Teil seines Selbst und seiner Welt macht. Auf Thomas muß man blicken und auf die stille Kühnheit seiner geistigen Tat und nicht auf irgendeinen der überheblichen und verantwortungslosen Revolutionäre im Reiche des Geistes, um die bedeutungsvolle Wahrheit des berühmten Aphorismus Nietzsches zu ermessen: "Wieviel Wahrheit erträgt, wieviel Wahrheit wagt ein Geist? Das wurde für mich immer mehr der eigentliche Wertmesser. Irrtum ist nicht Blindheit, Irrtum ist Feigheit ... Jede Errungenschaft, jeder Schritt vorwärts in der Erkenntnis folgt aus dem Mut, aus der Härte gegen sich, aus der Sauberkeit gegen sich."

See also Balduin Schwarz, (Paula Premoli/Josef Seifert ed.), *Wahrheit, Irrtum und Verirrungen. Die sechs großen Krisen und sieben Ausfahrten der abendländischen Philosophie.* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1996).

Schwarz identifies six great crises in the history of philosophy in which the foundations of philosophy and of the objectivity of its knowledge as well as its most important contents were shaken. He contrasts these with the seven great "voyages" in which the ship of philosophy could leave the *Sandbank* of skepticism again and regain knowledge of its most central contents. Saint Thomas was the intellectual leader of what has been called by Schwarz "the fourth voyage," Karol Wojtyła came to play, both as a philosopher and as Pope, a very significant role of leadership in our present movement of

Therefore, much more important than any historical synthesis between old and new philosophical ideas is the exemplary character of Karol Wojtyła's and Tadeusz Styczeń's philosophical attitude. They never seek to synthesize but to know the truth of things themselves. Karol Wojtyła writes that the purpose of his *opus magnum*, *The Acting Person*,<sup>8</sup> is: "to face the major issues themselves concerning life, nature and existence of the human being directly as they present themselves to man."<sup>9</sup>

This leads me to the first and most central point in the thought of Tadeusz Styczeń and Karol Wojtyła,<sup>10</sup> which we might describe as their "ethical personalism" that exerted great influence on many other thinkers.<sup>11</sup> First, I shall deal very briefly with a most central aspect of Wojtyła's personalism that provides an answer to the question: Is the human person locked into herself, seeking to fulfill her own nature, satiate her physical and spiritual appetites, relating everything to herself as a center, or is she capable to transcend herself and affirm especially other persons not just for her own sake but for their sake?

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philosophical renewal, in what might be called the "seventh voyage" or new philosophical foundation in the history of philosophy.

<sup>8</sup> Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person* (Boston: Reidel, 1979); cf. also the corrected text, authorized by the author (unpublished), (official copy), Library of the *International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality Liechtenstein*, Schibbogg 7 B-C, Bendorf, Liechtenstein, and at the IAP-PUC (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile, Santiago).

<sup>9</sup> We might quote here a sentence of Saint Thomas written in the same spirit: "The study of philosophy does not serve the purpose of knowing the opinions of men but the truth of things." "Studium philosophiae non est ad hoc quod sciatur quod homines senserint, sed qualiter se habeat veritas rerum." Thomas Aquinas, *De Coelo et Mundo*, book I, 22, no 9.

<sup>10</sup> Besides their mentioned unconditional search for the truth.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, John F. Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), p. 4, where Crosby acknowledges his great indebtedness to Karol Wojtyła's work, and many other references to the book. On p. 82 ff. Crosby bases a whole chapter (3), on *Subjectivity* of his book *The Selfhood of the Human Person*, cit. on Wojtyła's work, especially on his paper "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being," in *Analecta Husserliana* VII (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1978), pp. 107-114. It has been retranslated by Theresa Sandock in Andrew N. Woznicki (Ed.), *Person and Community: Selected Essays. Catholic Thought from Lublin*, vol. 4, (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), pp. 209-217. Consider also the manifold influence of Karol Wojtyła on the personalist philosophy of man, of politics and culture, on Rocco Buttiglione, for example in his Rocco Buttiglione, *A Philosophy of Freedom: the Thought of Karol Wojtyła*, Introduction by Michael Novak, Trans. and Afterword by Paolo Guietti and Francesca Murphy (Prepublication photocopies in the Franciscan University Austrian Campus/Library, and the International Theological Institute Library/both Gaming, NÖ/Lower Austria). There are many other works that show the traces of Karol Wojtyła. See also the influence of Karol Wojtyła's work in my *Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica*. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989), ch. 9.

### I. Some Highpoints of Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Ethics and Philosophy of Love

Karol Wojtyła offers in *Love and Responsibility*<sup>12</sup> a cogent critique of a hedonistic-utilitarian view of love which may, of course, easily dominate a person's marriage or his sexual life. Wojtyła shows that - as already Aristotle noticed - the passing character of pleasure and its sources renders it likely that the same human being who gave me once pleasure ceases to do so in the future. Then - according to the utilitarian - my "love" ceases. For it is merely an external, factual bond that links my pleasure to that of another person. But how can such a feeling which ceases without any *essential* change in the beloved person deserve to be called love? At this point, we discover - and this is the second argument of Wojtyła against a hedonistic-utilitarian conception of love - an inner inconsistency in the utilitarian principle: "the greatest pleasure for the greatest number of people." If I only search for subjective pleasure, and if it so happens that the other person's destruction serves my pleasure better than what satisfies her, I will hurt or destroy and kill her. For as soon as even only the *pleasure of another* person truly counts for my motivation, I act already from a non-hedonistic point of view and begin to ask the question of what is *objectively* good or better in itself and for another person.<sup>13</sup> If I remain fully within the utilitarian-hedonistic principle, it becomes clear that this principle "breaks itself up" from within; its altruistic moment cannot be maintained on the basis of the mere pleasure-seeking attitude, and the latter leads to a "*homo homini lupus*." Thus, the inner inconsistency of the principle forces me to either abandon its altruistic moment or the pure hedonism it implies.

There is, however, an even deeper failure of the hedonistic-utilitarian conception of love. Even *at the time* when another human being gives me pleasure, he is not being taken seriously in his own being and value. He is just used for the sake of my pleasure. Thus, it is not by accident that the French word "*jouir de*" and the corresponding Polish word have both meanings: to find pleasure in; and to use. No real communion of persons is possible on this hedonistic basis. Each one remains locked into himself and incapable of transcending to the other. Instead of any sharing and co-experiencing (even of pleasure!), there is isolation and at best "a merely external arrangement of two egoisms," as Wojtyła puts it excellently.

Another attitude towards the other person is easily confused with love. We mean the attitude in which other human beings are not degraded to means for our pleasure, but still are regarded only under the point of view of *our happiness* or immanent strivings (appetites); the deep critique of this view as it appears in Styczeń we will discuss in-depth, but it is found first in Karol Wojtyła, who insists

<sup>12</sup> We quoted the English text before. See also the first translation into another language besides Polish of this work: Karol Wojtyła, *Amour et Responsabilité*, cit. p. 27 ff.

<sup>13</sup> For as soon as even only the *pleasure of another* person truly counts for my motivation, I act already from a non-hedonistic point of view and begin to ask the question of what is *objectively* good or better in itself and for another person.

that love and ethics are completely falsified in a notion that makes of other persons mere means to our fulfillment and happiness.

This attitude towards other persons is to some extent advocated by Diotima in Plato's Symposium and is, based on good as well as of wrong reasons, rejected by the Protestant thinker Nygren in his book *Agape and Eros*. This approach to the other person is still dominated by a desire to participate in the other *for myself*, in order to grow myself. The other is still subservient to my happiness. In a sense, the other is still regarded as a means to my own happiness; in any case, he motivates me only for the sake of my self-fulfillment and happiness. (This eudemonism does not necessarily presuppose that one *defines* the good by a relation of a being to an *appetitus*; it is also found in a position which recognizes the *bonum* as intrinsic goodness and preciousness of being but denies that anything but our happiness and self-fulfillment *motivates our love* of the good.)

Some decisive features of love, however, conflict profoundly with any eudemonistic conception of motivation, and I regard it as one of the most significant merits of the Wojtyła-school in Poland to have broken through a eudemonism which is very widespread in the Aristotelian tradition and also among many Thomist ethicists. Following Wojtyła's own philosophical path, it is especially T. Styczeń among Polish personalists who stresses as the main criticism of eudemonistic and teleological ethics, as we shall see. Self-fulfillment, as Styczeń puts it along the same line as Wojtyła, does not belong to the moral action *per se* but *per accidens*. (This does not mean that it is not important or not necessary that moral goodness will *lead* to happiness.)

Perhaps the most fundamental fact about love that every sort of eudemonism overlook, is what has been called the value-responding character of love. In loving another person, we respond to an objective value and preciousness possessed by the other himself, or better: to the person *as intrinsically precious*. It is precisely the other person *as possessing a preciousness which is prior to, and independent from, his relation to us* whom we love. We love her because she is good at herself.

There are several ways in which this claim could be brought to evidence, although the nature of objective value and the fact that a special value-dignity belongs to the person - like all ultimate data - can only be known by an immediate (intuitive) knowledge; the rationality of such immediate insight, however, is presupposed for any indirect deductive argument and reasoning, as already Aristotle clearly stated in the *Posterior Analytics* and elsewhere. A first way (argument) of bringing the discussed thesis to evidence is the contemplation of the characteristics which belong to the nature of man: of his rationality, his capacity to know the truth; his freedom; his creativity; his susceptibility to happiness or unhappiness, etc. One will then see that these essential characteristics which distinguish man as a person from a plant or animal, are not neutral but ground in a completely rational manner the great dignity which grows out of man's nature prior to any relation which his being has to an *appetitus* - be it his or another person's *appetitus*. This bonum-dignity of the person is not relational (only *ad aliud*) but fully belongs to the person *in se*.

A second route along which the intrinsic dignity of the person - in itself and as *motivating* us - can be brought to evidence is derived from an analysis of the happiness and joy which flows from our encounter with another person whom we

understand and love. This *kind* of happiness and joy would precisely be destroyed if the other person *were not* perceived as precious *prior* to our joy. Whereas the joy of the thirsty man over a drink of water does by no means collapse due to his awareness that the positive importance of the water depends on his *appetitus*, the joy over a beloved person would *clearly* be undermined and rendered impossible by an awareness that we do not perceive any value in him except one which is derived from his relation to our strivings and self-fulfillment.

Thirdly, one could analyze acts such as love, admiration, esteem, etc. and show that these acts are related to a being in such a way that their “essential meaning” would be wholly undermined and dissolved if the beings which are the objects of such acts were approached only under the point of view of our joy or self-fulfillment, as means towards *eudaimonia*. If someone who pretended to love us told us that he was only interested in us because of his deepest self-fulfillment and happiness which he finds through us - and that, would it not be for this, he would not care in the least whether our being was destroyed, non-existent or afflicted with suffering. We would immediately understand that he does not love us at all and that an ice-cold distance would be erected between him and us by his exclusive interest in his own happiness. In these and similar ways we could try to elucidate the central thesis of Wojtyła that we love another person because she is “good in herself.” Thus, the arch-principle of Wojtyła’s and Styczeń’s (and many other Polish thinkers’) personalistic ethics reads: *persona est affirmanda (affirmabilis) propter seipsam*.<sup>14</sup> In love, we say yes and embrace the other person *for her own sake!*

Love is also unique by affirming some value *in* the person and the other person as a whole, in what she *is*, not only in what she *has*, as precious and good. Love is a unique irreducible response to another person, affirming her, embracing her, saying “yes” to her whole being. Moreover, love is not content with giving something “of the person,” but - at least in its fullest sense - it implies a self-donation, of which free self-possession is precisely the condition and which involves both our heart and our will.

Only self-donation is the response that can give what is “due” to the other *person as a whole* in his or her preciousness; any other act would fail to fully and duly respond to a person. No giving of something “of us” and “in us” could “do justice to another person.” Only love can.<sup>15</sup> This is probably meant by the often-repeated formulation in Wojtyła’s philosophical anthropology (and in the work of A. Szostek and others): “The person possesses such a being that the authentic and

<sup>14</sup> See T. Styczeń, “Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik,” in: *Der Streit um den Menschen. Personaler Anspruch des Sittlichen* (Kewelae, 1979), p. 144.

<sup>15</sup> Self-donation does also not contradict what has been called above the value-responding character of love. Certainly, it is in some respect “more than value response” insofar as the total gift of the person, which involves his heart and all good which exists therein and which stems from many sources outside the beloved person, exceeds any response to what is *found* in the beloved person (this is most evident in the case of God’s love for us, where self-donation clearly exceeds anything “due to us,” but it is also evident in human love).

full relation to a person is love,” or more briefly: “The person deserves love.” Thus, self-donation also fulfills and completes value-response.<sup>16</sup>

Self-donation, while traces of it are found in each form of love, nevertheless belongs, properly speaking and in its full meaning, to the kind of love which Wojtyła terms “spousal love.” In this love, we find a full self-donation, not only and not primarily in the sexual sense, but in the sense of a giving of one is very being to the other person:

(Spousal) love ... consists in the gift of the person. ... Thus, the most complete love expresses itself precisely in the gift of oneself, in the fact of the gift of the (this) inalienable and incommunicable “I.” (Ibid., p. 88)

In its most real sense, self-donation occurs in the love of God, to whom alone our whole being can belong. Wojtyła dwells, however, on the human analogue of this archetype of love and investigates in a very phenomenological manner the datum of spousal love between man and woman.

Spousal love differs from all the other ... forms of love which we have analyzed. It consists of the gift of the person. Its essence is the gift of oneself, of one’s own “I.” We find here something which is at the same time different from, and more than, ... benevolence. All these other forms of coming out of oneself, in order to go toward another person, go less far than spousal love. “To give oneself” is more than being kindly disposed toward somebody and wishing him well, even in the case where, due to our willing of the other person’s good, another “I” becomes in some fashion “mine” (another self: alter ego) in the way in which this takes place in friendship ... (Yet) first the question poses itself whether one person can give himself to another one, since each person is by his very essence inalienable and *alteri incommunicabilis*. Hence the person can neither alienate himself from himself (leave himself) nor give himself away. The nature of the person opposes itself to the gift of oneself. ... The person as such cannot like a thing be owned by another one. Consequently, it is equally excluded that anyone be permitted to treat a person like a (mere) means for our pleasure. ... Nevertheless, on the order of love and in a moral sense (the gift of self) can take place. Here one person can give himself to another one - to man or God - and thanks to this gift a particular form of love comes into existence which we shall call spousal love. This fact proves the dynamism proper to the person and the peculiar laws which govern the existence and development of the person. Christ has expressed this in the following word, which can appear paradoxical: “Whosoever will find his life, will lose it, and who will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.” ... Thus the most complete love expresses itself precisely in the gift of oneself, in the fact of the gift of this inalienable “I.” The paradox here is twofold and goes in two directions: first (it consists in the fact) that one is capable to come out of and leave one’s own self, for in the order of nature man is ordained

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<sup>16</sup> Thus, self-donation also fulfills and completes value-response. See also Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*; Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Gesammelte Werke III* (Regensburg: J. Habbel, 1971), 2e Aufl., italienisch-deutsch (Milano: Pompiani, 2003), *The Nature of Love*, Preface by Kenneth Smith, Transl. and introd. By John Crosby with John Henry Crosby, (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2009); *Ch. viii; ix; xi.*



towards self-perfection; secondly, the paradox consists in the fact that, in so doing ( in leaving and giving one's self), one neither destroys nor devalues it, but on the contrary develops and enriches it. (*Amour et Responsabilité*, pp. 87 ff.).

These profound insights of Wojtyła into the nature of self-donation do in no way contradict his philosophy of freedom as involving self-possession and auto-determination. On the contrary, without the full actualization and free possession of the self, no self-donation could possibly occur either:

Spousal love can never be fragmentary or accidental in the interior life of the person. - It constitutes always a particular crystallization of the whole human "I" (self), who, thanks to this love, (freely) decides to dispose of himself in this manner. In the gift of oneself we find therefore a striking proof of self-possession .....

## II. The Personalism of Tadeusz Styczeń

Given the close unity of thought between Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeń, I wish to focus on some aspects of the latter's personalist ethics, also seeing Karol Wojtyła's personalism "in the mirror of Tadeusz Styczeń," to whose memory this conference is dedicated, without claiming that all elements of Tadeusz Styczeń's theory, especially those that define the "independence" of ethics, coincide perfectly with Karol Wojtyła's personalist ethics.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Without claiming that all elements of Tadeusz Styczeń's theory, especially those that define the "independence" of ethics, coincide perfectly with Karol Wojtyła's personalist ethics. Styczeń builds on Wojtyła's work but develops it and unfolds a number of more technical, ethical and epistemological issues in a highly original manner. I will interpret his possibly most important translated work, his long essay, based on a book, on "the independence of ethics."

In this article translated into German, "Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik," and other publications and investigations, the contents and further developments of which Styczeń himself summarizes on the homepage of *Ethos*. See Tadeusz Styczeń, "Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik," in: *Der Streit um den Menschen, Personaler Anspruch des Sittlichen*, pp.111-175. He has served as director and editor-in-chief of the quarterly *Ethos* published by the Institute until shortly before his death and describes his own ethical position, research, and publications in a brief self-presentation thus: "The problem which has attracted my attention since I started to be interested in ethics is the challenge expressed in Hume's thesis that any attempt to infer the theses of ethics as normative theorems (as statements of theorematic character) from affirmative theses of the philosophy of man or from the philosophy of being (metaphysics), which in their nature express non-normative states of affairs, involves a formal logical fallacy of the transition from an "is" to an "ought" (cf. the article *Spór o naukowość etyki - The Controversy About the Scientific Character of Ethics* 1966). This is the fallacy which since the times of G.E. Moore (*Principia Ethica*, 1903) has been called "naturalistic illusion". I have devoted two monographies to this problem: *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnie ważnej teorii moralności. Studium metaetyczne (The Problem of Ethics as an Empirically Justified and Universally Valid Theory of Morality. A Metaethical Study)*, Lublin 1972, as well as the book *Etyka niezależna? (Independent Ethics?)*, Lublin 1980, and also a number of articles written before 1980. A selection of them was published in the books *W drodze do etyki (On the Way to Ethics)*, Lublin 1984

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and *Wprowadzenie do etyki* (Introduction to Ethics), Lublin 1993.

The core of my ethical and metaethical interests is still a problem that is crucial for methodological justification of ethics as genuine knowledge and for showing its fundamental link with anthropology. Have I posed this problem already in the book *Etyka niezależna?* (*Independent Ethics?*). It can be summarized briefly by the following two questions: 1) How to understand the moral obligation which ethics is a theory of? - and: 2) Is ethics, as the theory of moral obligation understood in the above way (which I believe to be the only adequate one), epistemologically and also methodologically independent of other theories, (as T. Kotarbiński and T. Czeżowski, among others, believed treating the above interpretation of its methodological character as the only formulation free from Hume's and Moore's objection, as the only formulation which makes it possible to assert the cognitive value of ethical propositions against acognitivism dominating in contemporary metaethics)? Or: may ethics, and even does it have to, enter some necessary methodological relations with other theories, especially with a philosophical theory of man, and further on with a general theory of being - metaphysics (due to the nature of the questions which the moralist is provoked to ask because of the data inherent in a direct cognitive act, that is in sui generis experience)?

My interests are reflected in the works where I have been trying to demonstrate that each piece of auto-information (any judgment on anything) is simultaneously an auto-imperative. It is an act by which the cognizing subject binds himself by the power of the (f)act of the truth which he has cognized. He binds himself to recognize it as truth, that is, he orders himself to respect it - also by the acts of his own free choice of this truth (by testifying to it with his acts of freedom) on pain of the destruction of the identity of his self, that is on pain of breaking up his internal unity with acts of self-deception and self-constraint.

This outcome reveals a fundamental identity of the starting point of anthropology and ethics: *primum anthropologicum et primum ethicum convertuntur*. It also shows a radically experiential nature of ethics, and by that it helps to reveal the total unfoundedness of the so-called Hume's guillotine, that is, of the objection to ethics on the grounds of its relation to anthropology and metaphysics, as D. Hume raised it.

This outcome also confirms and helps to reinterpret St. Thomas's of Aquinas thesis about the close link between the "practical reason" and the "theoretical reason," which nevertheless remain two separate faculties. At the same time, this vision of ethics demonstrates that I. Kant's conviction of the necessity of treating the two faculties of reason as opposing each other is totally groundless. Once the subject has stated the ("theoretical") truth, he remains a witness obliged to absolute respect for it, which is shown by the acts of his free choice. He is thus confronted with a "practical necessity" to testify to the truth by the acts of freedom. As the witness, he is obliged to do it also in the name of his duty to respect (the truth about the identity of) the particular subject cognizing the truth, that is in the name of his duty to respect himself. This discovery helps to uncover the obligation to respect every other being endowed with an internal structure identical with the one presented above, and to see this being through the truth, which reveals and demonstrates his personal mode of existence. So, this respect becomes a necessary condition of self-affirmation, despite the fact that the regard for the actual affirmation of oneself turns out the only secondary in relation to the obligation which stands above it, namely in relation to the duty to affirm truth as truth, to affirm truth for its own sake, to affirm truth which constitutes the axiological primum for the cognizing subject, which is given to him directly in the act of his own cognition. This experience is simultaneously his act of entering direct relation with the truth of the object, which is transcendent both to his act and to himself. The communal dimension of moral self-cognition is revealed here.

The research results sketched above were first presented in the paper: *C'e notizia senza esperienza?* in: *Il Libro del Meeting '86*, Rimini 1986, pp.175-183, and then in the little book: *Wolność w prawdzie (Freedom in Truth)*, Rome 1987, Rome 1988, and in still a little different shape in the papers: *Moralność - wyróżnik człowieka (Morality - The Distinguishing Mark of Man)*, in: "Żeby nie ustala wiara" ("So That the Faith Did Not Stop", Lublin 1989, pp. 409-427, and *Dobro moralne a światopogląd (Moral Good and the Outlook upon the World)*, in: M. Rusecki (ed): *Z zagadnień światopoglądu chrześcijańskiego (Some Issues Concerning the Christian Outlook Upon the World)*, Lublin 1989, pp. 63-78, finally, in a more general context in the study: *Problem człowieka problemem miłości (The Problem of Man as the Problem of Love)*, in: *Tadeusz Styczeń (ed)*, "Człowiek w poszukiwaniu zagubionej tożsamości. Gdzie jesteś Adamie?" ("Man in the Search for His Lost Identity. Where Are You, Adam?") Lublin 1987, pp. 4-84.

The attempt to characterize the human person as "the subject who constitutes himself by his self-dependence, who in the act of his own cognition, freely makes himself dependent on the truth which does not depend on him" makes it possible to show further that the self-dependence which is a characteristic feature of the human person is given to him together with his contingent existence. This is why this self-dependence must be considered a gift. It also follows that in the dimension of the reality which we experience, this existence is necessarily a corporal one (*viventibus vivere est esse*). So, there appears a possibility of an effective discussion with the followers of the thesis, widely spread among moral theologians in the West, which claims that no general norms of moral conduct determined in their content or absolutely binding can be formulated. The above standpoint makes it not difficult to prove that the necessary condition of respecting every other human person for himself, because of the dignity belonging to him (due to his ability to bind himself with the cognized truth) is above all the respect for his life which is "good for the person," inseparably tied up with the good (value) of the very human person as a person.

The conclusions reached above may, as I believe, be used successfully in discussion with those contemporary moral theologians. They, on the one hand, declare personalism in ethics (by recognizing the absolute character of the principle: *Persona est affirmanda propter se ipsam*), while on the other one questioning the very possibility of any universally valid moral norms determined in their content. Their standpoint opens the way for ethical relativism and subjectivism and thus makes the conscience the only and ultimate truth and norm-creative instance as far as determining the contents of morally right conduct is concerned. (Cf. Point 3 of the so-called *Kölner Erklärung*). The international symposium "Human Person - Freedom - Conscience - Nature" organized by the International Academy of Philosophy of Liechtenstein together with the Institute of John Paul II in Lublin between the 9th-11th August 1991 was devoted to that problem. The conclusions which the symposium helped to reach were subsequently presented to the participants of the Theological Congress of Middle and Eastern Europe: "The Testimony of the Catholic Church in the Totalitarian System of Middle-Eastern Europe," which followed it (11th - 15th August 1991). (The materials were published in "Ethos" 4(1991), vol. 15/16 and in the German edition "Ethos" 1993, Sonderausgabe Nr. 1.).

The above conclusions make it also possible to show the impassable axiological borders of forming a democratic law-abiding state objectively, unless the state decides to reject arbitrarily (on the grounds of formally treated principle of majority rule) the principle of equality of all in front of the law, that is the principle of justice (*sum cuique*), and finally, unless it decides to question the basic conviction about the equality of all people and to stop considering this conviction the fundamental requirement of establishing any political order.

In this context, as an expert of the Constitutional Committee of the Senate of the Republic of Poland, I have posed the problem of the axiological foundations of the political

I will interpret his possibly most important translated work, his long essay, based on a book, on “the independence of ethics.”<sup>18</sup>

The question of whether there is an “independent ethics”<sup>19</sup> is central to Styczeń’s ethical writings.<sup>20</sup> I wish to distinguish a fourfold sense of “independence of ethics” as:

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system in the Republic of Poland (cf. Works of the Constitutional Committee of the Senate, Vol.3,5), and specifically the problem of the legal protection of the unborn (treated as a particular minority in a law-abiding state). The Institute of John Paul II brought the latter problem up for discussion with the representatives of the Senate of the Republic of Poland. The discussion, which was held in the Rector’s Suite at the Catholic University of Lublin on Feb. 2nd, 1991, was published in: Tadeusz Styczeń (ed): *Nienarodzony miarą demokracji (The Unborn Is the Measure of Democracy)*, Lublin 1991, “Biblioteka Ethosu” (“Ethos Library”), the Institute of John Paul II, the Catholic University of Lublin.

To sum up: both the research work of the Ethics Department (in particular, the Ph.D. seminar) and the projects carried out by the Institute of John Paul II in its research and didactic activity (the seminar in the thought of John Paul II, the yearly symposia), as well as in its editorial programme (collective works devoted to the comments on the main documents of John Paul II’s pontificate, and the monographically designed volumes of the quarterly “Ethos”) are meant to deepen and popularize the vision of the human person which has been sketched above, and which, as I believe, possesses a profound theoretical grounding, and by that constitutes the basis for such a creation of interpersonal communities of marriage, family and state which would be commensurable to the human dignity. This vision, as I believe, converges with the vision of the human person, which was expressly presented in Cardinal Karol Wojtyła’s work *The Acting Person*, and which has its theological grounding in the documents of the 2nd Vatican Council, and getting still deeper, in the Good News itself. This is the vision of the human person as the being who finds and confirms himself in communion with others. The essence of this communion is an individual and joint creation of such conditions for every other human person, and for the community in general, which would make it possible for anyone to find and choose the truth about man, and also, and above all, about himself, which has been cognized and checked in the dialogue with others.

<sup>18</sup> In this article translated into German, “Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik,” and other publications and investigations, the contents and further developments of which Styczeń himself summarizes on the homepage of *Ethos*. See Tadeusz Styczeń, “Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik,” in: *Der Streit um den Menschen, Personal Anspruch des Sittlichen*, pp.111-175.

<sup>19</sup> In the search for finding an answer to the question of what *ethics qua ethics* is, we are, of course, faced with a long series of difficult problems such as whether there is even one single “essence of ethics” which binds together all the different forms in which ethics has historically been presented; or the question whether any ethics which has recourse to presuppositions of metaphysics and philosophy of man which lie outside of ethics already implies a heteronomy of ethics. Only after having gained a sufficiently clear conception of ethics as a theory of moral ought (113) can the two mentioned questions be answered. Where not otherwise marked, the quotes refer to Tadeusz Styczeń, Andrzej Szostek, Karol Wojtyła, *Der Streit um den Menschen. Personal Anspruch des Sittlichen* (Kvelaer 1979).

<sup>20</sup> So are his debates with Kotarbiński. The work takes its starting point from the observation that the question of “autonomous” ethics as well as the question of whether there is such a thing as a “religious” or a “Christian” ethics has to turn first to the decisive

- (1) ethics independent from faith,
- (2) ethics independent from philosophy as a whole,
- (3) ethics independent from any metaphysical and anthropological presuppositions that lie themselves outside of ethics, and
- (4) ethics which does justice to the specific *proprium* of moral goodness and oughtness (and does not subordinate or reduce morality to a means to something else such as happiness).<sup>21</sup>

(1) Thomas Aquinas undoubtedly held the view that there is independent ethics in the sense of ethics that grasps the moral nature and principles of human acts without any reference to revelation. As we shall see, Tadeusz Styczeń firmly defends this position.<sup>22</sup> Regarding this point, we should carefully distinguish two claims: (a) that the knowledge of the principles and many virtues and other parts of ethics are independent of divine revelation, which is undoubtedly true and the teaching of Thomas Aquinas; and (b) that there is no *proprium* of virtues and of a love inspired by divine revelation, a thesis which is undoubtedly false and also not held in any way by Thomas Aquinas.<sup>23</sup> A second problem poses itself:

(2) Is ethics as a theory of morality independent not only from theology but also from philosophy? As far as this second sense of an “independent ethics” is concerned, i.e., an ethics that is independent of philosophy, it is clear that if the moral quality of acts is only derived from the ultimate end of human actions, no discipline besides philosophy (if we prescind here from theology) can investigate the sphere of morality.

However, also non-eudemonist and non-utilitarian ethicists cannot reasonably claim that ethics is independent of philosophy. Only empiricists or positivists can do so, but even they, doing so, contradict themselves.<sup>24</sup>

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problem of what exactly ethics itself is.

<sup>21</sup> This last sense of the independence of ethics emerges as the central problem of Styczeń’s theoretical ethical and meta-ethical work. See Tadeusz Styczeń, “Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik”, cit.

<sup>22</sup> Though he says (in his cited auto-presentation) about Karol Wojtyła that the latter’s ethics is founded on the Second Vatican Council (especially the document *Gaudium et Spes*): “This vision, as I believe, converges with the vision of the human person which was expressly presented in Cardinal Karol Wojtyła’s work *The Acting Person*, and which has its theological grounding in the documents of the 2nd Vatican Council, and getting still deeper, in the Good News itself.”

<sup>23</sup> This can be seen in his extensive treatises of the virtues of faith, hope, charity, and many others. On a profound analysis of the also philosophically accessible new quality of specifically Christian virtues, see Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics*. (New York: David McKay, 1953/Toronto: Musson, 1954/London: Thames & Hudson, 1954); Deutsch: *Christliche Ethik* (Düsseldorf: Patmos, 1959); 2. Auflage u. d. T.: *Ethik*, in: Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Gesammelte Werke* Band II (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973); see also the same author: *In Defense of Purity*, 7th ed. *Purity. The Mystery of Christian Sexuality* (Steubenville, Ohio: The Franciscan University Press, 1989), and *Transformation in Christ. On the Christian Attitude of Mind*, the last edition with a new sub-title: *Transformation in Christ. Our Path to Holiness*. Reprint of 1948 (New Hampshire: Sophia Institute Press, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> Mill, Schlick and many other modern ethicists have defended the thesis that ethics is an empirical science and should depend on psychology as one of its subdivisions. But also

3) Clearly distinct from this query is the question of whether ethics has presuppositions of metaphysical and anthropological nature that fall outside of ethics but still are philosophical in nature. The latter view is clearly the view of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. In connection with his critique of eudemonism, Styczeń seems to reject this view, despite of his insistence that the starting point of ethics converges, or can even be identified, with that of philosophical anthropology: *primum anthropologicum et primum ethicum convertuntur*, an aspect of Styczeń's ethics which seems precisely to acknowledge that moral obligations are rooted in the dignity of the person and thus have anthropological foundations. Despite the appearances to the contrary, Styczeń seems firm to hold this thesis which he has developed in a pearl among his articles on the theme "Gratias ago; ergo sum," which contains a profound metaphysics of the person and value as the foundation of the moral obligations regarding gratitude and love: *amatus sum; ergo sum* ("I am loved; therefore I am").<sup>25</sup>

I believe that we have to distinguish two questions here: (1) the question of whether morality is only the means for something else, such as attaining happiness, and (2) the question of whether the understanding of morality requires that one first knows something different from morality, such as the value and dignity of the person, in which moral oughts are founded. The latter seems to me to be clearly the case and clearly the position of Styczeń himself. Ethics thus depends on metaphysics and philosophical anthropology, yet in a way that does not destroy the *proprium* and the *irreducible* character of the ethical and moral, which to defend is Styczeń's chief intention. To this fourth sense of "independent ethics" we will now turn.

4) The fourth and no doubt most important sense of an "independent ethics" concerns the question of whether moral goodness has a *proprium* that can in no

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such empiricist views of morality often share with Aristotelian ethics the element of interpreting human actions teleologically; abandoning philosophical reflection on the ultimate end of man, they interpret moral acts in terms of their directedness towards pleasure or other "ends" for which the good behavior is an appropriate means, a thesis which we will discuss under the fourth sense of an "independent ethics."

<sup>25</sup> The central thesis of Styczeń is that the moral goodness of acts and the essence of moral oughtness can never be explained by simply saying that moral behavior is the means for something completely different, which has first to be known in order to know what morality is, and which alone would ultimately be important: especially *eudaimonia-happiness*. See Tadeusz Styczeń, "Gratias ago; ergo sum" online in Polish and English, in which also the "amatus sum; ergo sum" and "amo, ergo sum" are developed:

<http://www.ethos.lublin.pl/images/media/k.h/Styczen.T...Gratias.ago.ergo.sum...Zyc.to.dziekowac.pdf>.

See also the Italian version:

[http://www.academiavita.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=197&catid=52&Itemid=66&lang=it](http://www.academiavita.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=197&catid=52&Itemid=66&lang=it).

Nonetheless, there appears to be a certain lack of clarity regarding this point, at least in the early Styczeń to the extent to which I know it. For at least in some passages it seems as if Styczeń would also regard this meta-ethical theory of the dependence of ethics on metaphysics or philosophy of man as ending up in a denial of the most important sense of "independence" of ethics, namely in the denial that ethics has a subject-matter of its own

way be derived from, or reduced to, another thing or another good, such as happiness or the act of intellectual contemplative knowledge.<sup>26</sup>

The decisive question here remains whether the final end of man is that which man necessarily wills and cannot, even not will, namely happiness, as Thomas and Aristotle conceive of it, or whether the final end of man is linked to what he *ought to will* and *must not will*, but *is able not to will* (Styczeń, p. 121).

Do we have to do with a eudemonistic theory in which every “I ought to” is ultimately reduced to or derived from an “I will,” or do we have to do with a theory of the moral ought as categorical and as linked to a *moral proprium* that cannot be derived from factual desires and thus does not fall under the verdict of the “naturalistic fallacy” that forbids deriving an “ought” from a mere “is”?<sup>27</sup>

The assumption that morality can be explained teleologically by its reference to *eudaimonia*, both when it is understood as free and even more when it is interpreted as necessarily willed, fails to do justice to the essential character of morality, Styczeń shows. This essence of morality appears in a deed of mercy such as that of the good Samaritan but also in the moral act of Antigone in Sophocles' play of that name. The moral obligation to respect the dignity of the deceased brother called Antigone precisely to sacrifice her happiness. Should this be immoral, or is it not rather an evident example of high morality which can be grasped even when no reference to a final *post-mortem* happiness of Antigone is

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<sup>26</sup> As far as the essence of moral goodness is concerned, Styczeń notes, Thomas follows Aristotle in holding that the moral goodness of actions is determined by their relation to the final goal of man, *eudaimonia*, understood as that realization of the self which constitutes the essence of happiness. One could call this conception of ethics a teleological ethics, i.e. one which views the goodness of acts as dependent on an *extramoral* final end of all human acts and of the moral agent himself. While Thomas accepts this view from Aristotle, his approach to ethics differs perhaps in that he takes the final end of man's life, the *visio beatifica*, as a given and explains human actions in relation to it. Aristotle, however, penetrates first into the structure of human actions and believes he discovers in them their teleological directedness to the final end (*omnis agens agit propter finem*), lastly to the final end of *eudemonia* as the most perfect actualization of the most perfect faculty of man (contemplative knowledge) in relation to the most perfect object, as Styczeń states (pp. 120-121). Where not otherwise indicated, the page numbers of Styczeń's works refer to Tadeusz Styczeń, “Zur Frage einer unabhängigen Ethik.” (Styczeń's summary of Aristotle's view of happiness does not refer to other more “complete” notions of happiness in Aristotle, e.g. to the passages where he counts also certain goods of fortune among the elements and conditions of happiness.) In both the Aristotelian and Thomistic ethical systems *eudaimonia* remains the decisive point of reference; actions are morally good when they lead to happiness, morally evil when they frustrate happiness, morally not obligatory when they fail to promote *eudaimonia*.

<sup>27</sup> Styczeń suggests that Thomas is quite clearly convinced that the teleological Aristotelian theory of morality is adequate (p. 122). This conclusion opens the critical section of Styczeń's treatment of eudemonism (pp. 122 ff.). Cornelio Fabro argues in his work *Riflessioni sulla Libertà* that we find two ethical theories in Thomas Aquinas, one which corresponds to Aristotelian eudemonism as described by Styczeń here, in which the final end of all human acts is necessarily willed, which according to Fabro like according to Styczeń destroys ethics, and another one in which the final good is *not necessarily willed*, which allows for ethics. See Cornelio Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla Libertà* (Rimini: Maggioli, 1983), especially pp. i-xi;13-132.

made? As this (rhetorical) question is to be answered in the affirmative, it becomes clear, Styczeł argues, that the ethics of Aristotle or Thomas is perhaps not even really ethics as a theory of morality, but only a theory of happiness. The really and authentically *moral* ought does not even seem to be brought into sight in this philosophy of “morality as a way to happiness” (Styczeł, p. 122).

This theory eliminates the “selflessness” of the moral act and the character of “unconditionedness” which is the essence of the moral ought. (126) A moral obligation impels us to perform a certain action regardless of the ends of the moral subject, in dramatic cases even in renouncing our happiness.

Commitment, sacrifice, or the giving of one's life impel us to a profound admiration, which the teleological eudemonist, however, would immediately have to take back, so to speak, when it occurred to him that a person giving his life for his friends may not even think of his own happiness, and still less be motivated by it. Eudemonistic ethics of self-realization, which reduces the ultimate value of morally good acts to that of a means to happiness, fails to understand properly the *inner* and *inherent* goodness of moral acts which can never be reduced to that of a means but consists in *its adequacy to the truth, the truth about the good*. Self-fulfillment, as Styczeł puts it, does not belong to the moral action *per se* but *per accidens*, which does not mean that it is unimportant or lacks ultimate significance.<sup>28</sup> This applies even to the case of the moral obligation to respect one's own person (127). In such cases, the dignity of our own person or another person is really the ground of the moral ought. When this point is missed, both the moment of unconditionedness in the moral imperative and the moment of selflessness in the moral action are radically overlooked. (127-128).<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> This holds true even if the subject desires this end with all intensity and knows that he can attain it — happiness — only if he does what is morally good, and even if ultimate happiness, as I believe, is a *subordinated* motive of moral acts. See Josef Seifert, *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung?* (What is and what Motivates a Moral Action?), (Salzburg: Universitätsverlag A. Pustet, 1976); see also Juan-Miguel Palacios, “Cur honeste vivere? Los motivos de la acción moral en la ética de Josef Seifert,” in: Juan Miguel Palacios, *Bondad, moral e inteligencia ética: nueve ensayos de la ética de los valores*, (Madrid: Encuentro, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> This criticism of eudemonism, while developed originally and in a genuinely philosophical manner by Styczeł, clearly goes back to Wojtyła's own ethical work. That this is also Wojtyła's view cannot only be gathered from *Amour et Responsabilité* and other works of his; it has also been stated by Styczeł in his article, “Karol Wojtyła — Philosoph der Freiheit im Dienst der Liebe,” in: K. Wojtyła — Johannes Paul 11, *Erziehung zur Liebe* (Augsburg, 1979), p. 156 ff. Wojtyła objected to Aristotelian-Thomistic ethics: 1. that it contradicts moral experience by claiming that morally good acts are motivated by the ultimate end of happiness, 2. that it fails to recognize the unconditional character of the moral ought (an objection which also goes against M. Scheler who failed to see the moment of obligation, p. 158 ff.). 3 that it fails to recognize the selflessness of the moral act (156 f.) Happiness is the *consequence* and reward of moral goodness, not its “end” or (only and ultimate) motivating ground, as Aristotle and Thomas claimed. (157 ff.). The morally good act is an affirmation of being (a person) because of its value (163-165). This does not contradict the truth — often stressed in the Polish school — that moral goodness is the only way to true happiness and that there is an ultimate and necessary metaphysical link between morality and happiness. However, as Styczeł repeatedly emphasizes, this does not make



### III. Deontonomism and Independence of Ethics

#### A. STYCZEŃ'S CRITIQUE OF HETERONOMOUS DEONTOLOGISM

In order to overcome the two main weaknesses of teleological eudemonistic ethics, namely the failure to grasp the selflessness of the moral act and the unconditional character of moral obligations, many thinkers turned to some authority or law-giving subject espousing divine command ethics, legal positivism, or a theory of auto-legislation and self-command, etc. A deed would then be morally obligatory because it is commanded by an authority. Some held that the commanding authority lies outside of the subject, in God, society, state, custom, etc. Styczeń calls this view, which sees the ultimate origin of all moral obligations in authority outside of the person, "heteronomistic deontonomism." (129).

1) Against this view Styczeń argues first that it leaves unexplained how the external commandment — especially when it goes not only against the subject's wishes but also against his inner convictions<sup>30</sup> — can explain the interiority with which the moral obligation binds the subject from within and not only from without.

One could raise here the objection that this problem of how an imperative from an authority outside a person can bind the person within in her conscience does have to be solved by everyone who holds (as Styczeń himself would) that positive divine or human commandments issued by a legitimate authority impose moral obligations upon a person to keep them.

In addition, the deontonomist could answer that he is willing to make distinctions between the positive commandment or law as such and the pre-positive conditions of its binding force; and another distinction between the moral obligation *grounded in* the positive commandment, and this commandment itself, and a further one between the objective existence of an "ought" and its knowledge that gives rise to the inner experience of the obligation and to moral conscience.

Moreover, the defender of the position Styczeń criticizes could respond: no one who recognizes moral obligations that originate in some "natural law," or who recognizes morally relevant goods that exist objectively and are independent of

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happiness the motive and end and morality the means for it. In my book, *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung?* (Salzburg: A. Pustet, 1976),<sup>1</sup> argued in addition that happiness may even be a secondary and subordinate motive of the moral action, but never its primary motive. See especially Wojtyła's article referred to in note 22, where he expresses his concept of metaphysics in the sense of "phenomenological realism and metaphysics": "Das Wort 'metaphysisch' verstehen wir hier nicht als 'praeterphänomenal' sondern als 'transphänomenal'. d h, nicht 'neben' oder 'über' den Phänomenen, sondern in ihnen und durch die Erscheinungsformen hindurch, die uns in der Erfahrung den ganzen Menschen als seienden und handelnden aufweisen, müssen wir das Subjekt dieses Seins und Handelns erblicken" (19)

<sup>30</sup> Styczeń sees this as the central conflict described by Kierkegaard in *Fear and Trembling* in his analysis of Abraham's response to God's command to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac, which seems to be directed against the father's love and the fifth commandment "though shalt not kill."

the subject, as Styczeł clearly does, can per se account for the interiority with which they speak to us in our conscience, without referring to a process in which the obligation is understood and leads to the inner voice of conscience; but this same process can occur in relation to positive law or commands.

Perhaps Styczeł would reply that moral obligations can never exhaust themselves in flowing from positive commands and even less simply coincide with the positive commandment as such. Both of these retorts are undoubtedly true: a) in a world of nothing but positive commandments, moral obligations cannot be accounted for; an ethical cosmos in which *all* moral obligations issue from commands is impossible and contradictory; b) moral obligations may proceed from positive laws and commandments but can never coincide with them:

a) Where we ought to obey a positive commandment, the moral obligation cannot be reduced to the “fact that something is positively commanded by an authority” but requires many other elements such as the legitimacy of authority and the moral illicitness of the commanded content, none of which can be derived from the mere presence of positive law or order; hence the positive commandment as such is not enough to account for a moral obligation to obey it.

I cannot see how Styczeł’s first objection would hold water against this last version of heteronomous deontologism.

In light of this, we can recognize that two other arguments Styczeł advances against this position of heteronomous Deontologism are far stronger:

2) Any obligation derived from a positive commandment cannot be ultimate in the sense that it is always possible and necessary to ask for the ground of the given authority and the justification of the commandment. Moreover, in answer to this question, the mere fact that something is commanded can never be the sufficient and ultimate answer or basis for a moral obligation, for the justification of authority cannot again simply be a positive law or commandment.

3) While there are positive commandments which bind us simply because a legitimate authority issues them, this, together with the legitimacy of authority, cannot be the only source of our obligation to obey positive laws and commandments: for if there were no further grounds of moral obligations and moral “norms” in the nature of things, which are independent of, and have to be respected by, positive commandments, the authority would lose all meaning and justification and become brute power. Hence it is not too strong a statement to say with Styczeł that heteronomous deontologism (which underlies, for example, Hans Kelsen’s theory of law) wholly loses sight of what it intends to explain: morality (130).

## B. CRITIQUE OF AUTONOMISTIC DEONTOLOGISM

In order to escape the absurdities of heteronomous deontologism other thinkers developed the theory that the subject of action himself can give to himself commandments which oblige him morally. This view, so its proponent’s thought avoids any heteronomy of moral duty and does full justice to the interiority of the moral obligation. Such an autonomistic deontologism (of, e.g., Kant), however, must answer the question: what is the ground for the binding character of the commandment the subject gives to himself? (132) Only some form of ethical

intuition which grasps the “things themselves” can be the source of an answer to this question (133). Such an ethical intuition, however, does not bring to light any justification of autonomistic ethics. On the contrary, such an ethical intuition into the essence of moral oughtness brings to light the absurdity and falsity of this position.

Analyzing with equal rigor autonomous deontonomism, Styczeń reaches the following conclusions: The unconditional character of moral obligations can precisely *not* be the consequence of a moral commandment given by myself to myself. No contract I make with myself, no will to remain faithful to my own orders, no will never to contradict myself, no faithfulness towards my own lawgiving will, etc., can sufficiently explain the following evident facts:

1. I cannot freely cancel a moral obligation, but I ought to be able to do this, if the obligation was imposed upon myself by my will in the first place.

2. The subject faced with a moral obligation finds himself bound by it, subjected to it – prior to any will on his part; the obligation confronts him independently from any willing on his part. Even the most careful analysis does not bring to light a free commitment on my part to obey my own orders as the root of my finding myself obliged.<sup>31</sup> To postulate with Kant, a transcendental ego wholly withdrawn from experience, which gives self-commands and commits itself to obey them seems, first of all, a totally unfounded construction which has no basis in moral experience; it even contradicts moral experience which discloses the origins of moral obligation to us. The hypothesis of a non-experienced self-commanding ego is therefore not only unfounded, but it also runs counter to the given. Moreover, even if a transcendental ego were to exist, it would not explain the validity of a moral obligation any better than the empirical ego.<sup>32</sup>

3. Precisely the rightful “autonomy” of the moral subject who is only bound when the voice of his conscience speaks proves this point. For the voice of conscience appears as an approbation, deeply in the subject, of obligations that are pre-given to conscience and the subject; these are *found to be* the *ground* of conscience. Certainly, the subject must never disobey the ultimate inner subjective “norm” of morality: the voice of conscience. However, this voice is not self-grounding but goes back to the confrontation with a moral obligation that is independent of an act of will on his part, from any self-lawgiving will or any other act of free commitment he performs.

4. While it is true that only our own *judgment* of conscience binds us, it is also true that it does not bind us because it is *our* judgment but because it presents itself to us *as true* or actually *is true*. Hence the truth about the “things,” the truth which binds us to reality, obliges us morally (135). Precisely because the voice of

<sup>31</sup> (Also, when a free commitment on my part, e.g. a marriage vow, lies at the root of the moral obligation, the latter is grounded in the objective nature of e.g., the marriage vow and is by no means the result of a self-commanding will.) Nor will such an analysis succeed in showing that there is any act of self-command which I give to myself. On the contrary, I may wish to get rid of the obligations that result from my vow but still remain obliged to marital fidelity.

<sup>32</sup> Moreover, even if a transcendental ego were to exist, it would not explain the validity of a moral obligation any better than the empirical ego.

conscience can be built on error, the person is always obliged to control her ethical knowledge and to correct false ethical opinions she has formed that influence her conscience.<sup>33</sup> Autonomistic deontonomism fails to see that the absolute obligation to obey the command of our conscience as ultimate internal authority implies the other absolute moral obligation to further inquire into the objective nature of morality so as to inform our conscience by the ultimate objective norm of moral conduct, which lies in the truth about morally relevant reality.

5. “Blind irrational obedience” is not any more capable of rendering moral obligations intelligible when it is paid to my own commands than when we obey blindly commands issued by other persons. If the deontonomist resigns himself to the admission of having no further reason to offer for such an imperative and such an obeying, he is forced into utter irrationalism which identifies the moral sphere with the purely arbitrary. In spite of recognizing the fundamental significance of personal dignity for ethics in some of his texts on the categorical imperative, Kant is led, through his overall ethical formalism and epistemological subjectivism, to the tragic position of denying the subject the right to ask for a justification of the binding character of such a self-law-giving will and thereby destroys the autonomy he attempts to save, by undermining the very basis of such autonomy, the rationality of the person and her relation to the truth about the good (136).<sup>34</sup>

#### IV. Personalism and Independence of Ethics

In order to do justice to morality, this much is shown by the previous analysis; one has to recognize clearly four essential marks of morality: (1) its unconditionedness (the categorical character of the moral obligation), (2) its “selflessness” (*Uneigennützigkeit*), (3) its “interiority,” and (4) its “rationality.” In his attempt to do justice to all of these essential traits of morality, Styczeł develops the principles of personalistic ethics as they have been developed before by Wojtyła, not without some influence of Scheler's and possibly also of Hildebrand's ethics, to whose conception of love and ethics anyways Styczeł's positions are profoundly akin.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> On this compare also the excellent works of Andreas Laun, *Das Gewissen. Oberste Norm sittlichen Handelns – eine kritische Analyse* (Innsbruck: Tyrolia-Verlag, 1984); “Das Gewissen - sein Gesetz und seine Freiheit. Anmerkungen zur heutigen Diskussion”, in: Andreas Laun, *Aktuelle Probleme der Moralthologie* (Wien: Herder & Co., 1991), S. 31-64.

<sup>34</sup> Along similar lines, Styczeł criticizes Sartre's position, according to which the subject and freedom are “a nothing” and produce or create from themselves every moral ought, which Sartre tried to justify by the example of his student who asked him to stay with his ailing mother in Paris or defend France against the Nazis in a patriotic army. Taking advantage of the difficulty of offering a clear reason for one or the other choice, Sartre concluded that only the will could create such a moral obligation. However, already, the comparable moral weight of the two sides of this dilemma let alone cases in which a moral obligation addresses us without any dilemma prove the falsity of Sartre's claims. The result of all the preceding investigations is a criticism both of Aristotelian-Thomistic teleological ethics and of deontonomism in all forms (138-141).

<sup>35</sup> In his attempt to do justice to all of these essential traits of morality, Styczeł develops the principles of personalistic ethics as they have been developed before by Wojtyła in a quite

The moral obligation is understood by Styczeń as an unconditioned “ought” which binds someone (subject-person) to affirm someone else (the object-person, who can be identified with the subject-person in the case of obligations towards ourselves) in respect to the specific dignity (value) of the person (142).

The personal dignity, the value of the person, explains intelligibly 1) the ground of the unconditional obligation to affirm the person; 2) the proper content of the positive (loving) affirmation called for; 3) the selflessness of the moral act insofar as the subject conforms himself to a person because of that person's worth, for her own sake, in the sense of what Hildebrand and Wojtyła have called “value-response.” Thus, this selfless transcending gesture of the morally good act is no longer understood as a blind subordination to an ought, which originates in my own blind lawgiving will. Rather, the obedience is owed to an intelligibly founded obligation, and the surrender is the meaningful loving affirmation due to a good (the person); compared to this, the obedience to my own command is abstract, empty, no selfless donation but a proud self-affirmation.<sup>36</sup>

They correctly understood autonomy of the moral subject, too, finds a justification in this position and here alone, because the inner rational conviction that one is bound in conscience to affirm the other person is the only real ground which can convince the acting person “from within” and at the same time “reasonably” that she is obliged.

The arch-principle of personalistic ethics reads *persona est affirmanda* as distinct from Kant's categorical imperative as well as from the vague principle *bonum est faciendum*.<sup>37</sup>

Styczeń speaks of the irreducible character not only of the good or of value in general but of the value which can be described as the dignity of the person in which, as he claims, we encounter the ultimate root of all moral obligations (144).

The knowledge at stake when we grasp the moral obligation, *persona est affirmabilis propter seipsam*, is the knowledge of something irreducible. It is an

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original way, not without some influence of Scheler's and possibly also of Hildebrand's ethics, to whose conception of love and ethics anyway Styczeń's positions are profoundly akin. See Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe, The Nature of Love*, ch. viii; ix; xi., ch. 1-3; 6-9. The same author, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft. Untersuchungen über Wesen und Wert der Gemeinschaft*, 3., vom Verf. durchgesehene Aufl., the same author, *Gesammelte Werke IV* (Regensburg: J. Habel, 1975); Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Man and Woman*. (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1966).

<sup>36</sup> Not merely *some* rational justification for the absolute oughtness of moral obligations is provided by the dignity and value of the person. Rather, the surrender *due to* the person finds here an intelligible foundation which is wholly absent in the deontonomistic systems. An ought is then understood as a commandment issuing forth from the dignity of the person (143).

<sup>37</sup> *Persona ut affirmabilis propter seipsam* explains both the donation - character of the moral act and the irreducible and “original” nature of the moral obligation, which goes back to the irreducible nature of value and the specific value of persons (144). Again, Styczeń hints in the direction of a distinction which reminds of Hildebrand's important distinction between those values which make a being “*affirmandum propter seipsum*” in a moral sense and those which call for a response only in an extra-moral sense. (A beautiful picture ought to be admired, without the value of such a response — or, as Moore would put it in *Principia Ethica* — without that “organic unity” grounding any *moral value*.)

“immediate intellectual knowledge” that does not presuppose religion or *Weltanschauung* but goes back to a “seeing of what man (the person) is” and what is due to a person from another person without respect to anything outside of that person (146-148). Styczeł has appeal to an “*ecce homo*,” an immediate form of supremely rational intuitive knowledge in which the dignity of persons reveals itself to our minds.<sup>38</sup>

Therefore, a eudemonistic ethics of self-realization which reduces the ultimate value of morally good acts to that of a means to happiness fails to understand properly the *inner* and *inherent* goodness of moral acts which can never be reduced to that of a means but consists in *its adequacy to the truth, the truth about the good*.

The most fundamental dimension of the moral life to “think and to live according to the truth” is presupposed in any ethics and concept of moral obligation. Even the moral nihilist presupposes that “in truth everything is permitted to him,” so that Tadeusz Styczeł could speak of even the moral relativist being caught in the “fetters of truth.”

Also, Kant has seen the nature and ethical significance of the dignity of persons, though HE has obscured the light of his respective insights by grave errors of ethical formalism, from which his central insights are admirably freed by Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeł in what they call the “personalist principle” “*persona est affirmanda (amanda) propter seipsam*”, that is no doubt inspired by Kant’s personalist formulation of the categorical imperative.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Certainly and quite explicitly, the philosophical anthropology and ethics of Karol Wojtyła have many roots in Thomism. However, Karol Wojtyła and Tadeusz Styczeł, inspired as they are by Thomas Aquinas, develop extremely important criticisms of some of his ideas and add many positive insights, thereby initiating new personalist ethics. Thomas accepts, as one example, from Aristotle the conception of ethics which identifies happiness and self-realization as supreme goals of our moral life, but such ethics not only contradicts Saint Thomas’s own deepest insights but also fails to do justice to the objective nature of morality. It neither takes into account that which is *intrinsically good*, which is not *relational* to our appetites (as already Blessed Duns Scotus insisted sharply). See on this the great Thomist’s Cornelio Fabro’s excellent book: Cf. Cornelio Fabro, *Riflessioni sulla Libertà* (Rimini: Maggioli, 1983), pp. i-xi, 13- 132. See Alan Wolter, (transl.), Duns Scotus, *Philosophical Writings*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York, 1962); see also Josef Seifert, “A vontade como perfeição pura e a nova concepção não-eudemonística do amor segundo Duns Scotus,” traduzido do inglês por Roberto Hofmeister Pich, *Veritas* (Philosophische Fakultät, PUCRS, Porto Alegre, Brasilien: September 2005), pp. 51-84.

<sup>39</sup> See especially the fourth and seventh of the following eight versions of the “categorical imperative”:

1. “Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a moral law” (1. Form., Immanuel Kant, *Foundations of a Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 44; *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten*, II. Teil).
2. “Act as though the maxim of your action were by your will to become a universal law of nature” (2. Form., *ibid.*, p. 45)
3. Formulation “Handle so, daß die Maxime deines Willens Grundlage jederzeit zugleich als Prinzip einer allgemeinen Gesetzgebung gelten könne.” (Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, § 7.)

In the end, I would like to discuss three out of a number of objections one could raise against Styczeń's personalist ethics, defending the first one as requiring an important distinction and precision of the "personalist principle," but accepting Styczeń's reply to it as sufficient, when correctly interpreted, and answering the third one in terms of a need for an important addition:

1. The first one refers to the frequent identification of "person" with "human person," an identification that shows itself in the claim that "the *primum ethicum* is also the *primum anthropologicum*." I should like to say first that if the *primum anthropologicum* is the inherent and inalienable dignity of the person, it is the *object* of morally good acts and the source of obligations but not itself *morally good*. Every human person possesses this dignity, but to be morally good, the person has to be conscious and reach a degree of maturity beyond that of an embryo or baby. *Moral* value or the moral obligation to affirm the person in virtue of her dignity, as "primum ethicum" can therefore not be identified with the *primum anthropologicum*, by which the term Styczeń refers to personal dignity.<sup>40</sup> Secondly, the *primum ethicum* is not just related to the *primum anthropologicum* of human dignity, but also and primarily to the *primum metaphysicum* of divine personal perfection, which calls for an incomparably higher form of unconditional affirmation: adoring love. At this point, I wish to introduce a sharp distinction between the personalist principle *persona est amanda* and its occasional formulation in terms of "man ought to be loved for his own sake". For the concept of person means a pure perfection<sup>41</sup> that can never be reduced to the human world but applies first of all to the absolute person.<sup>42</sup> Thus the personalist

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4. Formulation: "Act so that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in another, always as an end and never as means only" (*Foundation*, cit., p. 54)

5. in the third formulation of the principle, i.e., Kant expresses the idea of "the will of every rational being as a will giving universal law" (*ibid.*, p. 57)

6. "The principle of every human will as giving universal laws in all its maxims" (*ibid.*, 57)

7. "Act with reference to every rational being (whether yourself or another) so that it is an end in itself in your maxim" (*ibid.*, p. 64)

8. "Act by a maxim which involves its own universal validity for every rational being" (*ibid.*, p. 64).

<sup>40</sup> I remind the reader of the crucial ethical distinction between moral and morally relevant goods and values, a distinction drawn by Dietrich von Hildebrand in his *Ethics*, 2nd edition (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1978), ch. 19; and in his *Moralia*. *Nachgelassenes Werk*. *Gesammelte Werke* Band 5, (Regensburg: Josef Habbel, 1980).

<sup>41</sup> That is transcendental in Anselm of Canterbury (Aosta)'s and Duns Scotus's sense of every characteristic and property that is (a) absolutely better to possess than not to possess (like all "mixed perfections" of plant-, animal or human nature, etc. and (b) admits of infinity (is not essentially limited). See Alan Wolter, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus* (St. Bonaventure, New York: Franciscan Institute Publications, 1946).

<sup>42</sup> See Josef Seifert, *Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica*. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989), ch. 5 and 9; and "Essere Persona Come Perfezione Pura. Il Beato Duns Scoto e una nuova metafisica personalistica," *De Homine, Dialogo di Filosofia* 11 (Rom: Herder/Università Lateranense, 1994), pp. 57-75; and the same autor, "Von der Gottesliebe", in: *FILOJEOS - Philotheos*.

principle requires in the deepest and primary sense the incomparably more unconditional and absolute affirmation, adoration, and “love of God for his own sake and above all else”; moreover, regarding finite persons, the personalist principle refers not only to human persons but also to angels. Therefore, the principle “man ought to be loved for his own sake” is only a very important part, but not *the* most important part, of the “personalist principle.” Thus, I do not think that it is correct to identify the *persona amanda propter seipsam* with *homo affirmandus est propter seipsum*. And I do not think that Styczeł’s retort to this objection that the *primum anthropologicum et primum ethicum convertuntur in pars pro toto* suffices. Rather, the rational basis for the first and highest commandment of the love of God ought to be reintroduced, and God is recognized as the first and foremost *amandus* such that the love of God can in no way be reduced to or replaced by the love of man.<sup>43</sup>

2. One might also object to Styczeł’s version of ethical personalism or ethical personalism in general that its principle is too limited by failing to take into account the true dimensions of animal ethics and ecological ethics, which demand that we also consider other living creatures and especially animals, not *solely* persons, as endowed with an intrinsic value. While correct ecological ethics and animal ethics recognize that the relation of nature and environment to persons constitutes the deepest reason for their ethical relevance, they do not reduce the

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*International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 7 (2007) 3-37; and *Erkenntnis des Vollkommenen. Wege der Vernunft zu Gott*, (Bonn: Lepanto Verlag, 2010).

<sup>43</sup> Which of course, was also Styczeł’s view but needs, in my opinion, a clearer theoretical distinction between the metaphysical and anthropological foundations of ethics, especially given the many moral theological attempts to reduce the love of God to the love of neighbor, while in reality extending the absolute and adoring love of God to our loving attitude of men would be blasphemous. Perhaps one root of the treatment of “*persona Amanda est propter seipsam*” and “*homo amandus est propter seipsum*” lies in the existentialist Thomistic school of Lublin, which regards personhood and all essential properties; as categories that cannot be predicated of God who is “pure existence.” See Mieczysław A. Krapiec, “The Theory of Analogy of Being”, in *Theory of Being* (Lublin: KUL, 1980), pp. 31-106, in particular, pp. 45-55; the same author, *I-Man: An Outline of Philosophical Anthropology*, (New Britain: Mariel Publications, 1983). For a critique of this position similar to that of Gilson, see Josef Seifert, “Esse, Essence, and Infinity: a Dialogue with Existentialist Thomism,” in *The New Scholasticism*, (Winter 1984), 84-98; see the same author, *Sein und Wesen. Philosophie und Realistische Phänomenologie/Philosophy and Realist Phenomenology. Studien der Internationalen Akademie für Philosophie im Fürstentum Liechtenstein/Studies of the International Academy of Philosophy in the Principality Liechtenstein*, (Hrsg./Ed.), Rocco Buttiglione and Josef Seifert, Band/Vol. 3 (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter, 1996), and *Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica*. (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 1989). See also Karol Wojtyła, *The Acting Person*; and Styczeł, “*Gratias ago: ergo sum.*” See also Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*; Dietrich von Hildebrand. *Gesammelte Werke* III (Regensburg: J. Habel, 1971), 2e Aufl., italienisch-deutsch (Milano: Pompiani, 2003), ch. 11. Robert Spaemann, “Die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Wortes ‚Gott‘”, in: *Communio* 1 (1972), S. 54-72, wiederabgedruckt in: R. Spaemann, *Einsprüche* (Einsiedeln: Johannes-Verlag, 1977), S. 13-35, as well as *Personen. Versuche über den Unterschied zwischen “etwas” und “jemand”* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1996).



reasons for ecological ethics to the relation between nature and man and recognize for example, that senseless cruelty and torture of animals are also wrong because of the inherent value of animal life and animal consciousness. One needs to point out that ecological and animal ethics are justified only if they make a radical distinction between nature and persons and respect the hierarchy of value and being. Therefore, the true elements of animal ethics are quite distinct from ecological, ethical ideologies, which put the values of impersonal nature above human dignity, promoting abortion, birth control etc., in order to spare trees in rain forests. These ecological, ethical ideologies constitute a horrendous ethical aberration. Besides animals and nature, the morally relevant values of truth itself, even when it does not refer to persons or certain dimensions of the arts or sciences, are not identifiable with persons but morally highly relevant. Styczeń answered this objection that I raised to him by insisting that, while the personalist principle is a “pars pro toto,” it is the most important part. This may well be a sufficient answer to this second (not to the first) objection. If it were not so, one could also object, for example, from the point of view of ecological ethics to Jesus’ saying that on the two greatest commandments of the love of God and love of neighbor, all other commandments depend, which does not exclude that also beings analogous to persons, such as animals, deserve some respect and can be understood to be implicitly contained in it.

3. The third objection refers to the epistemological theory of Styczeń expressed in his pointing at the immediate anthropological insight into the dignity of the human person in terms of an “ecce homo” in which also the truth of the ethical principle of personalism is given. While this ethical, epistemological insistence on the immediate givenness of personhood and dignity in our experience is very true where the characteristics of personhood are unfolded and self-given, it is not adequate in the innumerable cases (of embryos, fertilized eggs, unconscious persons, Alzheimer patients, etc.) in which the distinguishing marks of personhood are not immediately given in an “ecce homo” but where personal dignity needs to be known through different forms of what Wojtyła calls “trans-phenomenological” methods of anthropological and metaphysical knowledge. A large part of bioethics rests on such ways and methods of knowing the presence of human persons and their dignity, which shows again that ethics cannot be totally independent of philosophical anthropology and metaphysics and, in this sense, also not be a “first philosophy” as the later Styczeń often used to call it.

Insofar as ethics is based not only on philosophical anthropology but also on metaphysics, it does not lose its independence; rather, it remains in what is proper to *it* qua ethics, not erring away from its right path of investigating morality into ontological or anthropological spheres incapable of explaining moral values and obligations. To do so would lead to losing sight of the moral or to reduce it to something else. However, to go back to the very foundation of all moral obligations, the intrinsic, inherent dignity which each human person essentially and inalienably possesses as a person (152, 163) and which God possesses in an infinitely more perfect sense,<sup>44</sup> and to other dimensions of personal dignity that

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<sup>44</sup> See Josef Seifert, *Erkenntnis des Vollkommenen. Wege der Vernunft zu Gott*, (Bonn: Lepanto Verlag, 2010).

cannot be reduced to the inalienable ontological dignity,<sup>45</sup> is by no means a turning away from the moral but probing into its intelligible foundations which make us understand what “morality itself” is, thus recognizing that the third claim of “independence of ethics” is in no way necessary to ground the fourth and most important one, the grasp of the irreducible essence and magnificence of the world of moral values and the love of the divine and all other persons for their own sakes, each according to his or her rank in the hierarchy of persons and according to other principles of the *ordo amoris*.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> See my distinction between four dimensions or kinds of personal dignity, three of which cannot be reduced to the inalienable human dignity in Josef Seifert, *The Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure. Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine*. Vol. 1: Foundations. Philosophy and Medicine, vol. 82 (New York: Springer, 2004) – *Philosophical Diseases of Medicine and Their Cure. Philosophy and Ethics of Medicine*. Vol. 1: Foundations. Philosophy and Medicine, vol. 82, Kluwer online e-book, 2005, ch. 2; “Dimensionen und Quellen der Menschenwürde”, in: Walter Schweidler, Herbert A. Neumann, Eugen Brysch (Ed.), *Menschenleben – Menschenwürde. Interdisziplinäres Symposium zur Bioethik*, Hans-Jürgen Kaatsch and Hartmut Kreß (Ed.), *Ethik interdisziplinär*, Vol. 3, (Hamburg/München/London: LIT Verlag, 2003), pp. 51-92,

<sup>46</sup> Hildebrand makes a profound distinction between 4 sources of the *ordo amoris* in Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe*; Dietrich von Hildebrand. *Gesammelte Werke III* (Regensburg: J. Habel, 1971), 2e Aufl., italienisch-deutsch (Milano: Pompianti, 2003), ch. 14; *The Nature of Love*, Preface by Kenneth Smith, Transl. and Introd. By John Crosby with John Henry Crosby, (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine Press, 2009), ch. 14: besides the rank of the value of the beloved person (which gives to the love of God an absolute priority), also our understanding and affinity to human persons, their love for us, the category of love, and their being especially entrusted to us.