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## Fragile subjectivity, or the controversy grounded on the Lévinasian and Ricœurian philosophies of man, and some of its implications for understanding mental health

The following study aims to juxtapose two concepts of fragile subjectivity: one authored by Emmanuel Lévinas and the other developed by Paul Ricœur. This juxtaposition is not, however, an end in itself. Of course, the first thing to do is to indicate points of convergence and divergence between the two approaches to the human subject, whose identity is open and labile. This step is taken to enhance discussion points that as a result of tension generated by incongruities provoke thought and search for mediations. In order to illustrate the prolificacy of this controversy, it will be transferred to the sphere of philosophy of psychiatry, where attempts are made at applying both the anthropological positions in the philosophical interpretation of the nature of the phenomenon of schizophrenia. Thus outlined, the interpretation of the pathogenesis of the selected phenomenon

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in turn enables formulation of cautious conclusions with regard to the controversy itself between Lévinas and Ricœur over the question of ethical subjectivity.

### Two approaches to fragile subjectivity

Both the thinkers, whose views are the subject of this discussion, are treated here as representatives of philosophy of man.<sup>1</sup> Their juxtaposition can in large measure be justified with the real dialogue which they pursued in the spirit of profound mutual respect, while maintaining a polemical twist.<sup>2</sup> In their works, they both developed concepts of subjectivity marked by existential fragility. As regards Lévinas, the most succinct way to go about his concept is to view it as subjectivity of separated hospitality and of substitution for the other. As regards Ricœur, it would be right to speak about subjectivity of unclosed dialectic.<sup>3</sup>

From the perspective of the philosopher's two major works,<sup>4</sup> the Lévinasian subject is characterised by the dynamic of progressive radicalisation with regard to peculiar "dispossession," which affects the subjectivity-constitutive moment of being at home with oneself, familiarity. While such notions as separation, inwardness, psyche, relishing or economy still point to familiarisation and assimilation of alterity by the same, to monadicity with "windows slammed shut"<sup>5</sup> (Tischner), desire signals hospitality towards Transcendence, and even responsibility preceding and justifying the subject's freedom. As Lévinas writes: "The interlocutor is not a Thou, he is a You; he reveals himself in his lordship. Thus,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. D. Rogóż, *Anty-Odyseja. Antropologia Emmanuela Lévinasa*, Kraków 2012, pp. 18, 24–31; P. Ricœur, *Żyć aż do śmierci oraz fragmenty*, trans. A. Turczyn, Kraków 2008, pp. 109–110.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. Dosse, *Paul Ricœur. Les sens d'une vie (1913–2005)*, Paris 2008, pp. 637–641.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. M. Kowalska, *Wstęp. Dialektyka bycia sobą*, in: P. Ricœur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, trans. B. Chelstowski, Warszawa 2018, p. XXXVII; A. Warmbier, *Tożsamość, narracja i hermeneutyka siebie. Paula Ricœura filozofia człowieka*, Kraków 2018, pp. 36–52, 65–67.

<sup>4</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity. An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. A. Lingis, The Hague–Boston–London 1979, E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. A. Lingis, Dordrecht 1991.

<sup>5</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, Kraków 2011, pp. 282–284.

exteriority coincides with a mastery. My freedom is thus challenged by a Master who can invest it.”<sup>6</sup> But total dispossession is not the case here, quite the opposite - hospitality presupposes separation in “its absolute truth and radicalness.” “[...] the transcendence of the face is not enacted outside of the world, as though the economy by which separation is produced remained beneath a sort of beatific contemplation of the Other. [...] Recollection in a home open to the Other - hospitality - is the concrete and initial fact of human recollection and separation; it coincides with the Desire for the Other absolutely transcendent.”<sup>7</sup> It is only in *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* that the description undergoes a significant change, bringing such terms as sensitivity, proximity, vulnerability and substitution: “The subjectivity as the other in the same, as an inspiration, is the putting into question of all affirmation for-oneself, all egoism [...] is responsibility of being-in-question in the form of the total exposure to offence in the cheek offered to the smiter.”<sup>8</sup> A little further on Lévinas puts it even more bluntly: “The ipseity, in the passivity without arche characteristic of identity, is a hostage. [...] Recurrence becomes identity in breaking up the limits of identity, breaking up the principle of being in me, the intolerable rest in itself characteristic of definition. The self is on the hither side of rest; it is the impossibility to come back from all things and concern oneself only with oneself. It is to hold on to oneself while gnawing away at oneself. [...] the other in the same is my substitution for the other through responsibility, for which, I am summoned as someone irreplaceable.”<sup>9</sup> And so what happens in this sketchily reconstructed movement - from separation, to hospitality and to substitution for others - is radical “dispossession,” alienation of subjectivity in the traumatising experience of responsibility for the other.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 172.

<sup>8</sup> E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>9</sup> E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. D. Rogóż, *Anty-Odyseja*, op. cit., pp. 36–46.

A monad “with windows shut” turns into “a monad that is all openness to «the other»,”<sup>11</sup> is “but one big open window.”<sup>12</sup>

In Ricœur, human subjectivity acquires all its manifold determination first and foremost in the dynamic of multidimensional dialectic, which at the existential level is not surmounted by any definitive synthesis. In the volitive sphere, this dialectic encompasses interaction between determinants conditional upon will (deciding, action along with setting the body in motion, consent to experienced necessity in the form of the character of the unconscious, and life as an indivisible unit of organisation and growth, in its temporal span from birth to death) and involuntary factors (corporeality and the above-mentioned expressions of necessity experienced by the subject<sup>13</sup>). This dialectic of voluntariness and involuntariness, as described in the essence examination, on the empirical plane is inscribed within another dialectical relation, which is present in each one of the three dimensions of human finiteness and infinity: theoretical, practical and emotional. In the theoretical field, the narrowing of the cognitive perspective is overcome thanks to speech and significance; in the practical area, the individuality of character, i.e. the limited practical and motivational opening of the subject to the world gets infinitely widened along with the pursuit of happiness; and as for the affective sphere, isolated vital feelings open up to the comprehensive, happiness-genic horizon of spiritual feelings. This existential dialectic lays the foundations for the so-called ontology of disproportion, which can be encapsulated in man's inherent incommensurateness given as a lived experience, which makes him a being fragile with respect to his feeling, and in consequence fallible and imperfect.<sup>14</sup> This fragility translates into the unstable charac-

<sup>11</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 285.

<sup>12</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 303.

<sup>13</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté*, vol. 1: *Le volontaire et l'involontaire*, Paris 2009, passim; A. Warmbier, *Tożsamość, narracja i hermeneutyka siebie*, op. cit., pp. 95–118; R. Grzywacz, *Wybrane aspekty rozumienia natury ludzkiej w ujęciu Paula Ricœur'a*, in: *Oblicza natury ludzkiej. Studia i rozprawy*, ed. P. Duchliński, G. Hołub, Kraków 2010, pp. 201–208.

<sup>14</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté*, vol. 2: *Finitude et culpabilité*, livre 1: *L'Homme failible*, Paris 2009, pp. 35–193; J. Jakubowski, *Skorczoność egzystencjalna. Studium nad filozofią Paula Ricœur'a*, Bydgoszcz 2017, pp. 260–326; E. A. Mukoid, *Filozofia zła: Nabert, Marcel, Ricœur*, Kraków

ter of the human identity – the identity of a narrative type that combines more chronicle-like elements with highly interpretative, creative ones.<sup>15</sup> But at the same time this dialectical unsteadiness, or oscillation of the narrative identity is affected by its own formation as a mediating link between polarised components: the more objective one (character as the entirety of relatively permanent dispositions, acquired identifications characterising a given person) and the more subjective one (permanence of the self in keeping one's word, in faithfulness).<sup>16</sup> What is more, the fragility of the human subjectivity is enhanced by its inseparable – and again dialectical – relation with otherness: its own body, a relational opening to another man, and conscience.<sup>17</sup> This relation thus sets in motion dialectics on subsequent levels: self-sustenance and self-detachment, memory and oblivion, acting and experiencing, capacity and incapacity, autonomy and vulnerability.<sup>18</sup> It is precisely the irremovable character of these dialectical relations that causes the Ricœurian subjectivity to be continually open and in a state of “fragile balance.”<sup>19</sup>

1993, pp. 53–54; R. Grzywacz, *Wybrane aspekty rozumienia natury ludzkiej...*, op. cit., pp. 208–215; R. Grzywacz, *Afektywność i język. Tożsamość człowieka w fenomenologii życia M. Henry oraz w fenomenologii hermeneutycznej P. Ricœura*, in: *W trosce o człowieka. Paradygmaty stare i nowe*, ed. M. Szmyczyk, R. Grzywacz, Kraków 2016, pp. 186–188.

<sup>15</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Czas i opowieść*, vol. 3: *Czas opowiadany*, trans. U. Zbrzeźniak, Kraków 2008, p. 356.

<sup>16</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey, Chicago 1992, pp. 118–124.

<sup>17</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, op. cit., pp. 341–356.

<sup>18</sup> See P. Ricœur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, op. cit., pp. 278–279; P. Ricœur, *Pamięć, historia, zapomnienie*, trans. J. Margański, Kraków 2007, pp. 554–585, 663–667; P. Ricœur, *Cierpienie nie jest bólem*, in: P. Ricœur, *Filozofia osoby*, trans. M. Frankiewicz, Kraków 1992, pp. 55–61; P. Ricœur, *Le Juste*, vol. 2, Paris 2001, pp. 85–105.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. A. Wierciński, *Celebrating the Confusion of Voices and the Fusion of Hermeneutic Horizons*, in: *Between Suspicion and Sympathy. Paul Ricœur's Unstable Equilibrium*, ed. A. Wierciński, Toronto 2003, p. XI.

## Similarities and differences between the juxtaposed concepts of subjectivity

Both Lévinas and Ricœur pursue antisystemic philosophies and agree as to the “human uniqueness of the pronoun I, irreducible to fusion, generality of one kind.”<sup>20</sup> Both find subjectivity to be open, hospitable, in inevitable confrontation with otherness, which is understood to be as radically external as internalised, so much as to break up the very structure of subjectivity, which is so hospitable. Thus, both the thinkers become protagonists of the “fragile” subjectivity, taking into account and appreciating its dimension of passivity, which is, however, differently comprehended and emphasised.

In Lévinas’ opinion, fragility is about the naked face of the Other, another man,<sup>21</sup> which gives rise to ethical resistance, and on the part of the Same, who enters into a relationship with absolute Exteriority, Transcendence – about the ambivalence of separation and economy of interiority,<sup>22</sup> about sensitivity, original passivity, vulnerability, in short: about extreme exposition – to haunting, possession, persecution, trauma, a hostage status<sup>23</sup> on account of the responsibility for the Other – and about the dynamic of insatiable desire, which even if to some extent fulfilled in fecundity, does not disappear completely.<sup>24</sup>

According to Ricœur, fragility lies in man’s unsoothable “heart,” which is incapable of realising some ultimate emotional synthesis. Man must forever mediate between potentially unlimited participation in reasonableness, and the limited perspective of access to its resources; between the unlimited desire for happiness and fullness, and the limitation of his own character and motivational orientation; last but not least, between vital feelings focused on temporary pleasure, and more intellectual and

<sup>20</sup> E. Lévinas, P. Ricœur, *L’unicité humaine du pronom Je*, in: *Éthique et responsabilité*. Paul Ricœur, ed. J.-Ch. Aeschlimann, Boudry-Neuchâtel 1994, p. 37.

<sup>21</sup> See E. Lévinas, *Totality and Infinity*, op. cit., p. 74–76, 213.

<sup>22</sup> See E. Lévinas, *Całość i nieskończoność*, op. cit., pp. 128–130, 302, 360–362.

<sup>23</sup> See E. Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być...*, op. cit., pp. 30–32, 85–88, 108–147, 208–210, 216–217.

<sup>24</sup> See E. Lévinas, *Całość i nieskończoność*, op. cit., pp. 326, 367.

comprehensive desire for happiness.<sup>25</sup> Fragility is also about the irremovable unsteadiness of the human narrative identity, which is stretched between the relatively permanent pole of characterological dispositions and the incessant self-sustenance in keeping one's word and the promises made.<sup>26</sup> However, its instability does not only lie in its dialectical position, but is also related to the aspect of individual uniqueness, irreplaceable individual perspective, which concerns, for instance, the original incommunicability of memories.<sup>27</sup> To put it more generally, human fragility has its origins in the lack of permanent epistemological and ontological foundation, which would provide a support for constantly suspicious and critique-prone convictions embraced by the subject, and serve as a guarantor of the transcendability of the limitations that hamper his inherent capabilities.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the instability in question also follows from a variety of inabilities that counterbalance human abilities, through which subjectivity is defined (self-identification, speaking, acting, talking/about oneself, remembering, promising, sanity and responsibility), and as a result the sense of autonomy undergoes considerable transformation, thereby taking, in a more pronounced manner, into account the dimension of suffering and pathology.<sup>29</sup>

Apart from some similarities, outlined only very briefly, there are essential disparities between the thinkers under discussion. First and foremost, a major difference lies already at the level of internal dynamic of the development of the thought by the authors in question. In Lévinas' project, the leitmotif is particularly the progressive alienation of the Same in the Other, proceeding as far as to take the form of haunting, persecution, possession of the Same by the Other, being the latter's hostage, substituting for him.<sup>30</sup> The radicalism of this alienation is so

<sup>25</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Philosophie de la volonté*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 175–183.

<sup>26</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>27</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Le Juste*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 94–95.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. C. Sautereau, *Subjectivité et vulnérabilité chez Ricœur et Lévinas*, "Études Ricœuriennes/Ricœur Studies" 4 (2013) no 2, pp. 9–15.

<sup>29</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Le Juste*, vol. 2, op. cit., pp. 85–105, 215–226.

<sup>30</sup> See E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being...*, op. cit., p. 114.

far-reaching that subjectivity is no longer able to return to the selfish being-at-home-with-oneself, the care-free economy of its own interiority. Ricœur's thought develops dialectically, consistently avoiding definitive syntheses.<sup>31</sup> According to the heritage of reflective philosophy, it follows a "detour" from non-critical understanding, through methodical elucidation, to critical understanding. Thus, the-one-who-is-himself alienates himself in the clash with otherness (mainly with the objectivisations of culture, various configurations of textual worlds), succumbs to dispossession, disorientation, which nevertheless leads him in the end to the moment of assimilation, new orientation in his own world, which has been transformed by the encounter. In this way, he returns to himself, even though he finds himself different than himself before the circular movement of self-understanding, and in this sense he does not thwart through absorption the otherness encountered within his identity.<sup>32</sup>

The outlined difference in the dynamics of the development of thought itself in both the authors appears to have a further effect, at least in part, on other significant points of divergence between their concepts of the subject. Let us mention some of these. Lévinas considers that he is essentially different from Ricœur in his focus on relations devoid of reciprocity, always asymmetrical, completely voluntary and disinterested, even at the cost of injustice done to oneself, acceptance of the condition of being a hostage, in short: concentration on relationships of love or holiness.<sup>33</sup> Ricœur discerns in Lévinas a systematic use of argumentative hyperbole: first in defining the Same by separation, and then – and consistently so – in recognising the Other as absolute Exteriority, Transcendence, Height releasing itself from the relationship and appearing in the epiphany of the Face, which in fact is a voice. The concluding note of this hyperbole is subjectivity substituting for the offender in

<sup>31</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Podług nadziei. Odczyty, szkice, studia*, trans. S. Cichowicz, M. Łukasiewicz et al., Warszawa 1991, pp. 55–56, 83–85.

<sup>32</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Czas i opowieść*, vol. 3, op. cit., p. 354; P. Ricœur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, op. cit., pp. 33–34, 592.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. M. de Saint-Cheron, *Rozmowy z Emmanuelem Lévinasem*, trans. K. Kot, Warszawa 2008, pp. 29–31; E. Lévinas, P. Ricœur, *L'unicité humaine du pronom Je*, op. cit., p. 36.



the act of expiation.<sup>34</sup> Exaggerated separation of interiority involves, in Ricœur's opinion, excessive exteriorisation of Transcendence. And then the following question arises: "if interiority were indeed determined solely by the desire for retreat and closure, how could it ever hear a word addressed to it, which would seem so foreign to it that this word would be as nothing for an isolated existence?"<sup>35</sup> Hence the necessity to credit the reflective subjectivity with the capacity to receive, and then distinguish and recognise (acknowledge), so that it can, for instance, discriminate between the Other as a master or teacher and as an offender or tormentor, as well as accept the injunction as its own conviction.<sup>36</sup> This capacity to acknowledge the call or injunction coming from the Other is, in Ricœur's opinion, specially connected with his evocation of self-esteem in the recipient of the call or injunction, and by extension with a positive affective emotion, and with a possibility of prolonging the exchange of giving and receiving.<sup>37</sup> These remarks might be supplemented with yet another question: is the disinterestedness of self-sacrifice in substitution not *de facto* another name of freedom in Lévinas?<sup>38</sup> It seems then that while the author of *Totality and Infinity* accurately localises the point of divergence with Ricœur in the presence or lack of reciprocity in the described attitude to another man, the question posed by the French hermeneutical philosopher remains to be answered: whether pure disinterestedness not presupposes such summoning of the subjectivity for responsibility that the summoning would have something in common with the perspective of self-esteem. It is precisely in the condition of

<sup>34</sup> See P. Ricœur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, op. cit., pp. 558–566.

<sup>35</sup> P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, op. cit., p. 339.

<sup>36</sup> In Ricœur this point determines the peculiarity of conscience as a figure of otherness different than the otherness of another man: being enjoined as the structure of selfhood. See P. Ricœur, *Oneself as Another*, op. cit., p. 354. However, in individual practice it becomes highly problematic. Cf. M. I. Wallace, *The Irony of Selfhood in Paul Ricœur's Hermeneutic Philosophy*, in: *Between Suspicion and Sympathy...*, op. cit., pp. 168–170.

<sup>37</sup> See E. Lévinas, P. Ricœur, *L'unicité humaine du pronom Je*, op. cit., p. 37; P. Ricœur, *O sobie samym jako innym*, op. cit., p. 314.

<sup>38</sup> Of course, freedom that is proven in glorious, heroic deeds, in the dimension of supererogation.

being a hostage that Lévinas finds the highest dignity.<sup>39</sup> A separate and remarkable role in the controversy in question is played by the position of the third one, which in Ricœur's opinion does not give precedence to self-esteem or relationship with the Other, and which he identifies with the position of the speaker himself in his own work by Lévinas.<sup>40</sup> The whole controversy can actually be viewed as a polemical dispute over the foundational precedence of love (*agape*) or justice, and the place of reciprocity,<sup>41</sup> with regard for "distance inscribed within proximity."<sup>42</sup>

### **What is meant by sane subjectivity?**

#### **Application of Lévinasian and Ricœurian philosophy of man in metaclinical discussion of psychiatry**

In the context of both the concepts of "fragile" subjectivity, raising the issue of mental health seems legitimate. Lévinas himself suggests such a direction of reflection when he writes as follows: "The psyche is the form of a peculiar dephasing, a loosening up or unclamping of identity: the same prevented from coinciding with itself, at odds, torn up from its rest, between sleep and insomnia, panting, shivering. It is not an abdication of the same, now alienated and slave to the other, but an abnegation of oneself fully responsible for the other. This identity is brought out by responsibility and is at the service of the other. In the form of responsibility, the psyche in the soul is the other in me, a malady of identity, both accused and self, the same for the other, the same by the

<sup>39</sup> Cf. M. de Saint-Cheron, *Rozmowy z Emmanuelem Lévinasem*, op. cit., pp. 31–32.

<sup>40</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Autrement. Lecture d'Autrement qu'entre ou au-delà de l'essence d'Emmanuel Lévinas*, Paris 1997, pp. 32, 35–37; E. Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być...*, op. cit., pp. 260, 262; E. Lévinas, P. Ricœur, *L'unicité humaine du pronom Je*, op. cit., p. 37.

<sup>41</sup> See P. Ricœur, *Drogi rozpoznania. Wykłady Instytutu Nauk o Człowieku w Wiedniu*, trans. J. Margański, Kraków 2004, pp. 154–157, 266–268. For more on the controversy between Lévinas and Ricœur see, inter alia: J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., pp. 300–306; M. Drwięga, *Człowiek między dobrem a złem. Studia z etyki współczesnej*, Kraków 2012, pp. 61–70; J. Jakubowski, *Skończoność egzystencjalna*, op. cit., pp. 188–192; A. Warmbier, *Tożsamość, narracja i hermeneutyka siebie*, op. cit., pp. 319–333.

<sup>42</sup> P. Ricœur, *Drogi rozpoznania*, op. cit., p. 267.

other. [And further on in the endnote:] The soul is the other in me. The psyche, the-one-for-the-other, can be a possession and a psychosis; the soul is already a seed of folly.”<sup>43</sup> Therefore, the question of sanity can from this perspective be associated with “the self on the hither side of rest,” which for Lévinas is characterised by “impossibility to come back from all things and concern oneself only with oneself. It is to hold on to oneself while gnawing away at oneself.”<sup>44</sup> Then, the problematic in question here approaches the proposition once formulated by Kazimierz Dąbrowski, who defines mental health as “capacity for development directed towards versatile understanding, experiencing, discovering and creating an ever-higher hierarchy of reality and values, up to a specific individual and social ideal,”<sup>45</sup> where a substantial role is played by the processes of the so-called “positive disintegration.” This reference makes it possible to enhance the ambivalence of the open structure of subjectivity in the context of its well-being.

To conclude, let us take a closer look at some possible applications of the concepts in question. The phenomenon of schizophrenia, which has already produced a considerable amount of literature on the philosophy of psychiatry, appears to be a research field particularly suited to this purpose. It is sometimes referred to as damage done to the commonsensical, practical competence, a deviation from the natural attitude towards the world, an extreme or borderline case of human condition, alienation including signs of socialization anomalies, or a failure of the human world.<sup>46</sup> Below outlined are just two example approaches to disorders related to the well-being of human subjectivity in schizophrenia: one has recourse to the Lévinasian philosophy of man, and the other uses Ricœurian anthropology.

<sup>43</sup> E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., pp. 68, 191.

<sup>44</sup> E. Lévinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, op. cit., p. 114.

<sup>45</sup> K. Dąbrowski, *Co to jest zdrowie psychiczne?*, in: *Zdrowie psychiczne*, ed. K. Dąbrowski, Warszawa 1985, p. 29.

<sup>46</sup> Cf. A. Kapusta, *Szaleństwo i metoda. Granice rozumienia w filozofii i psychiatrii*, Lublin 2010, pp. 118–119, 145–146, 151–154, 286–303.

Following Antoni Kępiński,<sup>47</sup> Antoni Jarnuszkiewicz<sup>48</sup> notes that in the case in question, of particular significance is the problem of the «I» identity, and more precisely the boundaries of one's own identity and the crisis of its identification with reference to the demarcation between interiority and the surroundings (its "fracture" or "swelling"). The author distinguishes between the metaphysical «I», that is an elementary, non-intentional consciousness of the self and the Other, and the mental «I», that is intentional consciousness that is a manner of experiencing the metaphysical «I» (when it is inadequate, it becomes a psychological «I»). What is more, the metaphysical «I» can find itself in an ethical position, and hence be construed as a Lévinasian separation, or in an agathological position, where it corresponds to hospitality, proximity to the Other. In this approach, schizophrenia is a splitting of the psychological «I» (hence the mental «I» inadequate in relation to the metaphysical «I») from the metaphysical «I». Therefore, the Lévinasian anthropology serves to describe the three fundamental moments of the original metaphysical experience: 1) the separation of the «I» and the Other's absolute transcendence, 2) the hospitality of the «I» that enables proximity following from being chosen by Goodness,<sup>49</sup> and 3) the mediating presence of the Third, who, as Jarnuszkiewicz says, "liberates one from dialogue, and this liberation through triologue is in a sense a manifestation [...] of liberation from symbiotic relationships that would serve as aids of substantial existence."<sup>50</sup> Schizophrenogenic situations disturb, precisely at the level of the psychological «I», these moments of metaphysical experience, e.g. as a result of "over-entanglement," burdening with excessive responsibility, and consequently the child "is forcibly compelled to lose its individual consciousness, ethical identity, by confusing personal approval (an ethical coalition unrelated to family roles) with functional

<sup>47</sup> A. Kępiński, *Schizofrenia*, Warszawa 1981, pp. 191–218; cf. J. Tischner, *Myslenie według wartości*, Kraków 1982, pp. 404–412.

<sup>48</sup> A. Jarnuszkiewicz SJ, *Od systemu do etyki. Krytyka rozumu dialogicznego*, Kraków 2012, pp. 105–125.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. E. Lévinas, *Inaczej niż być...*, op. cit., p. 208.

<sup>50</sup> A. Jarnuszkiewicz SJ, *Od systemu do etyki*, op. cit., p. 116.

availability (instrumental fulfilment of the role).”<sup>51</sup> It is only the Third – and hence his therapeutic function – that can break up the symbiotic relational diad, which the «I» is entangled in, by helping the «I» discover the independence of his separated substantiality (of the metaphysical and agathological «I») from You in the relation of entanglement (releasing him from the psychological and axiological «I»).<sup>52</sup> Let us move on to the other one of the interpretations of the phenomenon of schizophrenia.

Giovanni Stanghellini and René Rosfort<sup>53</sup> present a very interesting application of the Ricœurian anthropology in the area of philosophical reflection on the problems of psychiatry.<sup>54</sup> In it, they discern an especially valuable approach to the intentional and internalising function of feelings (as opposed to the dynamism of objectivisation), which on these functional grounds stand at the interface between transcendence and immanence. This status that they are granted results from their reference to man’s pre-predicative, pre-reflective attitude towards the world, and so from their situation in the foundations of man’s belonging to the world, which is expressed in behaviour (e.g. inclinations) and the “fragile” sphere of emotion. Their close correlation with cognition also proves vital, and so we can speak about man’s emotional rationality. In this context the above-quoted authors claim that schizophrenics do not evince some special kind of bad mood such as sadness or anger, but rather a profound change in the very possibility of experiencing. They interpret schizophrenia as a mood (in the sense of existential feelings<sup>55</sup>) disorder, which above all consists in enfeeblement of the sense of belonging to the world and sharing in the effort of existence. However, this original feeling plays a foundational role in the formation of own selfhood, and in the relationship of incarnated subjectivity with the world. For it provides latent consciousness of own inner integration and reality,

<sup>51</sup> A. Jarnuszkiewicz SJ, *Od systemu do etyki*, op. cit., p. 117.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. A. Jarnuszkiewicz SJ, *Od systemu do etyki*, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>53</sup> G. Stanghellini, R. Rosfort, *Emotions and Personhood. Exploring Fragility – Making Sense of Vulnerability*, Oxford 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. A. Kapusta, *Szaleństwo i metoda*, op. cit., pp. 236–240.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. A. Kapusta, *Szaleństwo i metoda*, op. cit., pp. 276–282.

enabling a peculiar alignment with the outside world in a manner that proves contextually accurate, without deforming or distorting personal goals, values or identities. It is this original feeling that is threatened in schizophrenics. As a result, there appears an excessively rational form of existence, whereby one cannot see others as living subjects, but objectified, anonymous mechanisms external to one's own body and self.<sup>56</sup> As regards well-being or a lack thereof, the crucial thing is then feeling one's own «I», the capacity for, or otherwise difficulty with capturing one's unity and integrity. Embodiment and involvement in the world find their manifestations in the form of feelings and emotions. Hence, the Ricœurian hermeneutic anthropology proves to be particularly useful, emphasising the ontological disproportion indispensable to selfhood, and pre-reflective instability and conflictuality which constitute the selfhood. It brings to the fore the fragile tension which is forever intrinsic to the human identity in both the biological and personal dimension. This idea of conflictual inner integration, which applies to both mentally healthy and disturbed individuals, serves as a foundation for the briefly outlined dialectical model of mental pathology.

### Conclusion

The inquiries pursued here are helpful in appreciating the diagnostic significance of the selected anthropological views for metaclinical reflection in psychiatry. Besides, they indirectly point to the mutually corrective operation of the two approaches in philosophy of man. The Lévinasian anthropology proves accurate not only in respect of its radicalising move made in understanding of responsibility, at the cost of subjectivity's alienation, but also through its concept of the separation of the latter.<sup>57</sup> The Ricœurian anthropological position benefits from emphasising the role of the dimensions of existential belonging and emotionality in the human being-in-the-world. While these aspects found their

<sup>56</sup> Cf. G. Stanghellini, R. Rosfort, *Emotions and Personhood*, op. cit., pp. 11, 221–260.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., pp. 303–304.

place in this position already in the early stage of its development,<sup>58</sup> they were subject to declining exploration on the “detour” taken by the “late” Ricœur. Therefore, it is right to conclude that both the philosophical propositions reveal their diagnostic potential, as they are interpreted not only in accordance with their respective inherent chronological orders, but regressively as well. Perhaps both the philosophies of man display a mutually instructive value with regard to the very point of divergence, i.e. the corrective role of love (in Ricœur<sup>59</sup>) and justice (in Lévinas<sup>60</sup>).

## Abstract

### Fragile Subjectivity: About a Controversy on the Ground of Lévinas’ and Ricœur’s Philosophical Anthropology and Some of its Implications for the Understanding of Mental Health

The study aims to confront two concepts of fragile subjectivity: one by Emmanuel Lévinas and the other by Paul Ricœur. However, this is not the purpose in itself. Actually, the first step consists on the pointing out the similarities and divergences that exist between both approaches in dealing with the open and labile trait of human identity. This step further serves to highlight the discussion points which, due to the tension generated by the underlined incompatibilities, stimulate thinking and the search for mediation. To illustrate the fertility of this controversy, it is transferred to the area of philosophy of psychiatry, where an attempt is made to apply both anthropological positions to a philosophical interpretation of the essence of the phenomenon of schizophrenia. This interpretation of the pathogenesis of the chosen phenomenon allows, in turn, for a cautious conclusion to be drawn as to the described controversy between Lévinas and Ricœur.

## Keywords

fragile subjectivity, Lévinas, Ricœur, mental health, schizophrenia

<sup>58</sup> See P. Ricœur, *A l'école de la phénoménologie*, Paris 2004, pp. 315–331.

<sup>59</sup> P. Ricœur, *Miłość i sprawiedliwość*, trans. M. Drwiega, Kraków 2010, pp. 46–51.

<sup>60</sup> E. Lévinas, *Całość i nieskończoność*, op. cit., pp. 252–254, 361.

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