

Piotr Stanisław Mazur

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6399-8133>

Ignatianum Academy in Cracow

From experience to a method. The significance of Karol Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation in the development of his concept of philosophical cognition of man

When analysing the views of Karol Wojtyła, it is easy to see that throughout his scholarly, but not exclusively scholarly activity, he paid particular attention to experience. In his view, valuable knowledge should be sought in experience, but at the same time it is necessary to define more precisely what kind of experience is meant here¹. Experience plays a key role both in the analysis of most of the specific problems of ethics and anthropology in particular, and in his overall approach to philosophy. In Wojtyła's intellectual development one can see continuity of interest in the problem of the role of experience in philosophical cognition, and at the same time a gradual evolution of views: from the postulate of including experience in cognition in the initial phase of practising philosophy (*Considerations on the Essence of Man* — 1949, *On the Humanism of St. John of the Cross* — 1951), to a critical analysis of Scheler's concept based on "phenomenological experience", contained in the "Lublin lectures" (1954–1957) and in his habilitation dissertation, to his own proposal for an analysis of experience and the transition from experience to a system (*Person and Act* — 1969)². Wojtyła's evaluation of Scheler's ethical system in his habilitation dissertation (1959)

1 K. Wojtyła, *Problem doświadczenia w etyce*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 17 (1969) 2, p. 6.

2 Andrzej Póltawski points out that Wojtyła's turn "towards lived experiences, towards inner experience" had an anthropological orientation, ultimately serving to help understand who man is. See A. Póltawski, *Filozoficzna droga Karola Wojtyły*, "Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 41 (2013) 1, p. 6.

represents an important step towards the development of a model of cognition based on both the phenomenological and the metaphysical method, which he applied in *Person and Act*. While analysing Scheler's ethical system, the future pope formulated more general conclusions regarding the role of inner experience and the phenomenological method in philosophical cognition, especially cognition of man. And these constitute the subject of this article.

Wojtyła's attitude towards experience

The problem concerned with the necessity of referring to empirical foundations in the study of man and his activity, especially in the moral sphere, resounded strongly throughout Karol Wojtyła's scientific activity. Already in the script *Considerations on the Essence of Man*, first published in 1949, in which he explicated the philosophical (Thomistic) and theological conception of man, he pointed out the importance of inner experience. Advocating cognitive realism, he emphasised that cognition reaches reality, including that of the human being, and manifests itself in experience. Man is the closest object of experiential cognition, and the object he knows best. "Thus each of us has a certain experiential knowledge of man through his own self and, besides that, through comparative observation of other people"³. Likewise, in the article *On the humanism of St. John of the Cross*, he stated that: "Experimental research must discover him [man] in a new way to redress the method adopted. It needs to discover him more thoroughly and fully. This principle ought to be agreed to. [...] man is perhaps the only object that we experience from the outside as well as from the

3 K. Wojtyła, *Rozważania o istocie człowieka/Considerations on the Essence of Man*, transl. J. Grondelski, Lublin–Roma 2016, p. 21. The question of the reciprocal relationship between inner and outer experience was developed by Wojtyła in *Person and Act*, cf. G. Hołub, P. S. Mazur, *The Experience of Human Being in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła*, "Filosofija. Sociologija" 28 (2017) 1, p. 73–83.

inside. Such a dual field of experience immediately demands an extension of the scope of research. Natural assumptions are not enough here”⁴.

This orientation towards the need to take into account the whole of human experience in the analysis of morality and man found expression in the “Lublin lectures”⁵, and in his habilitation dissertation published a decade later (1959), entitled *An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing Christian Ethics Premised on Max Scheler's System*. Significantly, although in his view Scheler's ethical system is generally unsuitable for the construction of Christian ethics (thesis 1)⁶, at the same time it can be helpful in scholarly work on Christian ethics, since it facilitates analysis of ethical facts from the experience side (thesis 2)⁷. And he immediately went on to explain: “Our intention is to study ethical facts in an experiential way, for we find that, as a special variety of human experiences, they constitute the object of inner experience”⁸.

The analysis of Scheler's thought consolidated Wojtyła's conviction that there was a need to complement ethics and classical anthropology with a more insightful analysis of inner experience than had hitherto been the case⁹. The key was to be phenomenological cognition, which provides direct contact with the object. It is therefore no wonder that, influenced

4 K. Wojtyła, *O humanizmie św. Jana od Krzyża*, “Znak” 6 (1951) 1, p. 6–20. Cited after the reprint under the same title in: *Ku jedności świata. Wybór artykułów z miesięcznika “Znak” w 60. rocznicę powstania pisma*, ed. M. Bardel, Kraków 2006, p. 92.

5 The issue of the relationship between ethics and experience was raised by Wojtyła in the very first words of his lecture on the ethical act and experience, where he states that the ethical act concerns a specific totality of experience that is universal and all-human in character. K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, Lublin 2006, p. 21.

6 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksxa Schelera*, Lublin 1959, p. 118.

7 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 122.

8 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 122. One might surmise that Wojtyła's interest in inner experience arose from the considerable discrepancy between the image of man given in everyday experience, on which Thomism is based, and the scientific image which has a reductionist and naturalistic bias.

9 On Wojtyła's concept of the complementation of Thomistic anthropology by first-person experience see P.S. Mazur, *Wojtyła and Krąpiec. Two Ways of Re-empowering Thomistic Anthropology*, “Roczniki Filozoficzne” 71 (2023) 1, p. 273–288.

by Scheler, Wojtyła undertook the project of combining in cognition of man the Thomistic philosophy of being and the phenomenological philosophy of consciousness¹⁰. Scheler's thought was an important point of reference for Wojtyła and helped him develop cognitive tools needed to analyse experience. At any rate, it was in his habilitation dissertation that Wojtyła had already clearly outlined his own research programme, which was "the study of ethical facts from the experience side". He realised this programme in *Person and Act*, published in 1968. "The wealth and diversity of experience, so to speak, provoke the mind, so that it tries to grasp the already-understood reality of the person and act in the most comprehensive way and to explain this reality most fully. This, however, can be accomplished only by way of an increasingly deep entry into experience, into its content. Thanks to this, the person and act are in a sense brought out of darkness. Standing before the mind that cognizes them, they appear more and more fully and more and more comprehensively"¹¹. For Wojtyła, the question of approaching experience as closely as possible in order to grasp as fully as possible its content is a necessary element of philosophical and theological cognition of reality, whether it is an act, man, the world or God. Thus, Ślipko is right in claiming that in Wojtyła's work "phenomenological experience" is the key to philosophical cognition¹².

According to Gałkowski, although Wojtyła considered it necessary to refer to phenomenological experience, at the same time he considered it insufficient for cognition of man:

In his [Wojtyła's] analysis, in this work, of the problem of experience in the philosophy of, among others, Kant, and in phenomenology, Card. K. Wojtyła writes that although experience is given much attention by Kant and Scheler, their views do not suffice. For Kant, experience does not penetrate to the essence of things; in phenomenology (e.g. particularly in Scheler), experience

10 T. Ślipko, *The Concept of Value in the Ethical Thought of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła*, "Forum Philosophicum" 1 (2006), p. 8.

11 K. Wojtyła, *"Person and Act" and Related Essays*, trans. G. Ignatik, Washington DC 2021, p. 108–109.

12 T. Ślipko, *The Concept of Value in the Ethical Thought*, p. 9.

does penetrate to the essence of things, although it is to the phenomenological, not the metaphysical aspect of the essence. Both the one and the other were unsatisfactory for K. Wojtyła, who wanted to penetrate immediately to the object of knowledge (i.e. experience), and to the very essences of things, to the essence which was spoken of by traditional metaphysics¹³.

Even if we are talking about Wojtyła's final concept, in his habilitation dissertation he goes beyond a simple analysis and critique of Scheler's concept and his analysis of the experience of human morality. There is no doubt that he understands perfectly well the significance of phenomenological experience, but he is also aware of "the incommensurateness of experience with its object, the complexity of that experience, inextricably linked with the understanding of what is experienced"¹⁴.

The problem of the object of experience

According to Wojtyła, an important way of knowing man and his various activities is to analyse the lived experiences that constitute the object of inner experience. In the habilitation dissertation, these lived experiences are mainly explored to the extent necessary for critical evaluation of Scheler's concept. In doing so, Wojtyła does not limit himself to a passive account of the German philosopher's findings on the path of phenomenological cognition of the content of lived experiences. He himself takes into account a variety of emotional lived experiences (love, hate) and emotional-cognitive ones in general, as well as specific lived experiences such as the experience of wanting, the moral experience, the experience of duty, of value, of obligation, of the good, of grief, of justice, the lived experience of the idea of God, the religious experience. All these lived experiences are experiences of the person, but also the person as the subject of these lived

13 J.W. Gałkowski, *The Place of Thomism in the Anthropology of K. Wojtyła*, "Angelicum" 65 (1988) 2, p. 183.

14 F.W. Bednarski, *Wzbogacenie metaetyki tomistycznej w rozprawach kard. K. Wojtyły*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 28 (1980) 2, p. 28.

experiences is given cognitively to himself precisely from the experiential side. “Therefore, the person is given to his own cognition and to the cognition of every other person exclusively in the lived experience, precisely as a unity of acts, which are also given exclusively in the lived experience. A person experiences himself directly, or rather: co-experiences himself in every act lived. Apart from the lived experience, neither acts nor the person can be objectified by any concept, e.g. a metaphysical concept of substance; still less can he be identified with any layer of the psycho-physical structure of man; for Scheler, he is psycho-physically indifferent. Among the acts that a person experiences, and in which he always co-experiences himself, a special and essential role is played by those intentional acts that turn towards objective values”¹⁵.

For Wojtyła, next to the immediacy of diverse lived experiences, it is also important that the person is the subject of the lived experience¹⁶. Noteworthy, Wojtyła does not share Scheler’s proposed actualist concept of the person, which reduces him to a system of acts. Instead, he advocates directing cognition towards an analysis of precisely the experiential, and therefore actualist, side of man’s personal life. He is particularly close to Scheler’s concept of the phenomenological description of lived experiences and, along with them, self-knowledge. For the Polish philosopher, the lived experience sphere is the empirical key to knowledge of man and his moral life, although in his habilitation dissertation this can be fully perceived in the context of knowledge of his later work rather than what he explicitly propounds.

It is not only those lived experiences and contents of experience which Scheler undertakes to analyse that became the focus of Wojtyła’s interest. Many a time does Wojtyła’s monograph address the problem of the experience of agency, including the agency of moral acts, which Scheler overlooks. According to the German philosopher, “the person is not the efficient cause of his acts; they only «appear» in him. Much less, therefore, can he act as an efficient cause of the moral good or evil of these acts.

¹⁵ K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 34.

¹⁶ T. Slipko, *The Concept of Value in the Ethical Thought*, p. 9.

They too only «appear» in him as in the proper subject (*Träger*)¹⁷. For Wojtyła, it is important not only that this personal agency is indicated by Christian ethics, but above all that it is manifested by experience in the form of a lived experience of obligation given in the act of conscience. “For we find it in the content of the lived experience, and specifically in the fact that the conviction about the good obliges one to realise it, while the conviction about the evil obliges one not to realise it. Since all this is given directly in the content of the lived experience, it is precisely by means of phenomenological analysis that we can extract from this content of the lived experience the causative relation to the moral good and evil”¹⁸. And he goes on to add: “Only the value which becomes the object of real obligation for a person is realised by that person by means of causative agency. A person is the true agent of that good which is contained in its realisation (or of evil if the value itself is negative)”¹⁹.

Obligation, therefore, is an experientially manifested “inner compulsion”, in which the subject experiences his agency with regard to the value realised. What is more, in the act of conscience he also discovers the normative nature of ethical values. In order to emphasise this very experiential character of the person's agency, of the obligation and normative character of ethical values, as well as of the act of conscience in which they are revealed, Wojtyła states that they are all the object of phenomenological experience²⁰. And if they are the object of phenomenological experience, then they also require, at least at some stage of their cognition, a phenomenological approach. Incidentally, it is noteworthy that, according to Wojtyła, Christian ethics is also predicated on the experiential view of these contents, and thus, in its own proper way, refers to phenomenological experience.

The juxtaposition of Scheler's system and Christian ethics allowed Wojtyła to see what Scheler, in his phenomenological analyses of moral

17 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 63.

18 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 78.

19 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 90.

20 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 119.

experiences, omitted or interpreted in a way at variance with experience. In Wojtyła's opinion, the fundamental reason for the erroneous approach to the contents of lived experiences was the epistemological and methodological assumptions behind the German philosopher's system — his programmatic "phenomenological and emotionalist bent", which did not allow him to objectify the person's causative relation to the moral good and evil. If one considers how much space the problems of agency, obligation, conscience or the normativity of ethical values occupy in *Person and Act*, one may venture to say that this absence of their analysis in Scheler's concept challenged Wojtyła to examine them in depth and to define their interrelationship. Moreover, in *Person and Act*, Wojtyła placed the problem of agency at the centre of his analyses by means of, among other things, a reference to the principle of *operari sequitur esse*²¹ and the two foremost triads of the entire study: (1) I can — I don't have to — I want to, and (2) self-possession — self-governance — self-determination. It would be impossible to move from action to the subject if the action did not reveal a mode of existence, if the subject were not the authentic agent of his acts, and if the act (action) were not the mode of formation of his freedom and morality. Each of these aspects is given to man precisely in the experiential form, making him a witness to the personal life taking place in and through him.

The problem of the mode of experience analysis

For Wojtyła, as for Scheler, experience plays a key role in human cognition. It is difficult to say to what extent he shares the German philosopher's conviction that all scientific cognition and all science is based on experience, because there are different types of science and not all science is oriented towards analysing the content of experience. Nevertheless, wherever Wojtyła makes an effort at philosophical cognition he reaches out as far as possible to both inner and outer experience. In his habilitation dissertation he makes the unambiguous declaration that "our intention is to study

²¹ P.S. Mazur, *The Principle Operari Sequitur Esse in Karol Wojtyła's Study of Person and Act*, "The Thomist" 86 (2022), p. 119–137.

ethical facts in an experiential way”²². The proper way to scientifically investigate the content of inner experience is the phenomenological method. “[...] the scientific interpretation of Christian ethics is always the primary task for the scholar. Nevertheless, he cannot deprive himself of the great advantages that the phenomenological method brings to his work. It gives ethical works that mark of experience, bringing them closer to the lived experiences of a specific human being, allowing ethical life to be studied from the perspective of its manifestations. With all this it still fulfils a secondary and merely auxiliary role”²³.

Wojtyła shares Scheler's position that ethical facts should be studied in an experiential way, accessed by the phenomenological analysis of inner experiences. In doing so, the phenomenological approach to inner experience is different from the psychological approach, which, using the method of introspection, ignores their external conditions in man's lived experiences. As regards the analysis of ethical lived experiences, this is to overlook the entire axiological-normative aspect²⁴. Meanwhile, phenomenological experience seeks to capture the human person's lived experience with all its essential content and its determinants. As Bednarski notes, “this experience does not identify with introspection, which is limited to «pure» mental facts or phenomena, without directly capturing the values given in these lived experiences. The phenomenological method makes it possible to extract and objectify in a scientific way these values, given in and inseparable from emotional lived experiences”²⁵. The phenomenological method ties cognition to the individual subject's experience, but at the same time ties human cognition to the objective determinants of that experience. Although the context of Wojtyła's statement directly concerns the experience of values, he immediately seeks to universalise his view of

22 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 122. One might surmise that Wojtyła's interest in inner experience arose from the considerable discrepancy between the image of man given in everyday experience, on which Thomism is based, and the scientific image which has a reductionist and naturalistic bias.

23 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 124.

24 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 123.

25 F. Bednarski, *Wzbogacenie metaetyki tomistycznej w rozprawach kard. K. Wojtyły*, p. 27.

the importance of the phenomenological approach to experience, pointing out that: “Phenomenological experience [...] takes into account not the lived experience detached from its content — from the value — but the lived experience together with the value, which is the essential content element of human experiences. In this way, phenomenological experience allows us to approach the value itself in a direct, insightful manner, thus providing us with an «objective *a priori*» (*materiales a priori*). It is objective because of the content of the insight; it is «*a priori*» because of the direct, intuitive nature of cognition”²⁶. Even when properly applied, the phenomenological method does not guard against cognitive errors, as Scheler’s own thought shows. However, its approach to experience, which is oriented towards what is directly and intuitively available, makes it possible to link cognition to objective determinants.

Phenomenological cognition is oriented towards capturing the essence of the object given in experience. “If we take as our object of inquiry the believer’s moral lived experience, which arises in him from the ethical principles of Christian revelation, then this inquiry enables us to penetrate into the Christian ethical values, to discover their essence in the lived experience and to ascertain their specific distinction in comparison with non-Christian ethical values, as well as the limits of their similarity in relation to those values”²⁷. Capturing the essence of a given lived experience is one of the elements of that which Wojtyła calls ‘phenomenological experience.’ This cognition also makes it possible to capture the essential distinctiveness of some lived experiences in relation to others, which may mean that, in addition to simple perception (insight) and description of the content of inner states, more complex cognitive processes occur in phenomenological experience which, for example, through comparison, make it possible to bring out the specificity of some lived experience in the light of others. “And by way of illustration, if we take the objective act of virginity or chastity on the one hand, and the objective act of adultery on the other, and examine these acts experientially as two moral lived experiences, we find

26 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 7–8.

27 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 123.

that the element which in each of them constitutes the essential distinctiveness of the lived experience is a moral value, which is positive in the former and negative in the latter. All other factors of this lived experience do not constitute its essential distinctiveness as a moral lived experience — only this element of moral value. And so when with the help of phenomenological experience we approach and study this value, then we are indeed experientially studying a moral lived experience. We can also apply this method of experiential investigation to Christian ethics”²⁸. Noteworthy, Wojtyła does not limit the application of the phenomenological method, since it can include everything that, as the lived experience, constitutes the content of inner experience. Furthermore, he does not specify what the manner, phases or results of phenomenological cognition should be. He does not develop these issues more fully until in *Person and Act*, where he indicates that the task of phenomenological reduction is not to diminish or limit experience, but rather a cognitive process of bringing it out more and more fully. Delving into the content of the experience, interpreting and understanding it is a way of exploiting it²⁹.

For Wojtyła, the phenomenological method makes sense insofar as it brings cognition closer to experience. As Bednarski rightly observes, “in the application of the phenomenological method, Card. Wojtyła did not follow Scheler or Husserl uncritically. Rather, one might say that he developed his own phenomenological method based on realism as well as objectivism, and in line with the empirical approach of St. Thomas Aquinas to ethical issues. He thus relied on experience as direct contact between the cognising mind and the cognised object. He was aware of the incommensurateness of experience with its object, of the complexity of that experience, inextricably linked with the understanding of that which is experienced”³⁰. Wojtyła’s approach is thus clear: it is experience that verifies the usefulness of the method, not the method that verifies experience, and wherever it fails in approaching experience it needs to be modified.

28 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 123.

29 K. Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and *Related Essays*, p. 109.

30 F. Bednarski, *Wzbogacenie metaetyki tomistycznej w rozprawach kard. K. Wojtyły*, p. 28.

The problem of using the phenomenological method

Although Scheler demonstrated the significance of the phenomenological method, “he himself in his system did not make use of all the method’s possibilities in the experiential investigation of moral reality. This is because he abandoned it when examining the lived experience of conscience, succumbing to the influence of the emotionalist assumptions of his system”³¹. The fault, therefore, does not lie in the method itself, but in the assumptions and conditions accompanying its use. It is these that influence what experience contents are taken into account and how they are then interpreted. “We conclude, therefore, that phenomenological assumptions alone should not completely prevent Scheler from discovering the person’s causative relation to moral values”³². And if cognitive errors or distortions do occur, they are due to epistemological, ontological or methodological assumptions additional to the phenomenological method. The phenomenological approach to experience is thus not completely separated from the context of cognition, but remains coupled to the entire system. An example of this is precisely Scheler’s concept, in which certain experience data are omitted. This means, however, that the phenomenological method alone is not sufficient for appropriate cognition of man, or the content of his personal life. Like most methods, it is not immune to errors arising not only from a certain inadequacy or incompleteness of cognition, but it is also not immune to capturing the content of experience in complete isolation from what comes from outside experience. It thus demands a kind of control, which is linked not only to the stabilisation of experience and its interpersonalisation, as he had already proposed in *Considerations on the Essence of Man*, but also to the necessity of its objectification by reference to outer experience, which he pointed out in *Person and Act*³³. This is why he uses the phenomenological method in this study as a complement to the metaphysical method.

31 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 125.

32 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 78.

33 On how outer experience can be objectivised see G. Hołub, P.S. Mazur, *The Experience of Human Being in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła*, p. 73–83.

In spite of his criticism of Scheler's concept, Wojtyła draws attention to the usefulness of the ethical and — which should also be added — anthropological analyses he performs. This usefulness lies not only in what concretely follows from the German philosopher's analyses, but also in how it relates to experience. Wojtyła can discern the benefits of the philosophical application of the phenomenological method to analysing experience, and is convinced that one should turn to this method in order to deepen the understanding of ethical or philosophical issues in the classical tradition. To the extent that ethics or philosophy wish to make use of the contents of inner experience, the phenomenological method becomes a necessary aspect or rather stage of cognition. For Wojtyła, this method is cognitively neutral in the sense that it does not modify cognition, but facilitates access to the contents of inner experience. By itself, it does not bring into experience assumptions that distort the process of cognition or its results. The greater the degree to which philosophical cognition is to be based on experience, the more useful the phenomenological method is. Besides, this method imparts a scientific character to cognition, although not in the sense understood in exact sciences based on induction. It is a type of cognition that makes it possible, in experiential states, to distinguish and characterise individual contents from the essential side. According to Wojtyła, because of its relation to human experience and what it allows to be grasped from experience, the phenomenological method is irreplaceable. At the same time, it does not allow us to cover all the contents and problems of Christian ethics, or philosophy in general. That is why it does not replace the metaphysical method or other methods of philosophical cognition. The study of the contents of inner experience requires recourse to this method, also whenever we are dealing with a ready-made system, concerning not only human action or the human being himself. Wojtyła is convinced that the phenomenological method can thus be combined with at least some existing methods of philosophical cognition. In his habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła does not yet show how the phenomenological and metaphysical methods should be used at the same time, but he clearly sees the need to use different methods of cognition, the possibility of complementing metaphysical cognition by using the phenomenological

method, and even more — he emphasises the indispensability of the phenomenological method in pursuing philosophy because of its relation to experience. A fuller understanding of this interdependence of the methods and the way they are applied to cognition is provided by Wojtyła in *Person and Act*, where he uses the phenomenological method to complement the analyses, or to illustrate ready-made metaphysical solutions. At any rate, it is already apparent from the habilitation dissertation that the phenomenological method is applicable to the whole range of anthropological research in which inner experience is analysed.

In our time, the positive result of complementing metaphysical analyses with phenomenological descriptions can be taken for granted, but this was not obvious at the time when Wojtyła wrote his habilitation dissertation. And if it is obvious today, it is because Wojtyła and other philosophers of his time showed the way in which phenomenological analyses of lived experiences given in first-person experience should be combined with metaphysical analyses focused on explaining reality. There is no doubt that the reflection on Scheler's concept, together with the errors that Wojtyła saw in it, constituted a milestone in the Polish philosopher's development of the concept of complementing the metaphysical method with the phenomenological method or — as some claim — developing his own version of the phenomenological method.

Conclusion

On the basis of the analyses performed, several conclusions can be drawn about the importance of Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation in defining the role of experience in philosophising.

1. His habilitation dissertation, together with the "Lublin lectures", provides an important link between *Considerations on the Essence of Man* and *Person and Act* in the development of Wojtyła's reflection on the role of experience in cognition of man, and in philosophising in general.

2. The habilitation dissertation demonstrates the necessity of taking into account experience, especially inner experience in the knowledge of man and his personal life.

3. The habilitation dissertation emphasises the indispensability of the phenomenological method and, at the same time, the insufficiency and limitation of this method in the comprehensive cognition of man and his personal life.

4. The analysis of the habilitation dissertation allows one to better understand why Wojtyła reached for the phenomenological method in *Person and Act*, and why he used it in the way he did, combining it with the metaphysical method.

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Abstract

From experience to a method. The significance of Karol Wojtyła’s habilitation dissertation in the development of his concept of philosophical cognition of man

The purpose of the article is to show the significance of Wojtyła’s habilitation dissertation in the development of his concept of philosophical cognition of man. His assessment of the usefulness of Scheler’s ethical system for Christian ethics occupies an intermediate position between the demand to take into account first-person experience in cognition in his initial phase of practising philosophy and the proposal to use the phenomenological method to analyse this experience, and the transition from experience to a system, contained in “Person and Act”. In his habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła analysed the question of man’s inner experience, emphasising its significance for ethics and anthropology. A proper approach to this experience is possible through the phenomenological method. The analysis of Scheler’s system allowed Wojtyła to conclude that although the use of the phenomenological method is necessary in philosophical cognition, it is not sufficient. This method does not cover everything that experience brings. It should also be applied appropriately so that the essential contents of experience are not overlooked. He showed a concrete manner of application of this method to philosophical cognition, and of the combination of this method with the metaphysical method in “Person and Act”.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, Wojtyła’s habilitation, Scheler and Wojtyła, experience, experience in anthropology, phenomenological experience, phenomenological method

Abstrakt

Od doświadczenia do metody. Znaczenie rozprawy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły w rozwoju jego koncepcji filozoficznego poznania człowieka

Celem artykułu jest pokazanie znaczenia rozprawy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły w rozwoju jego koncepcji filozoficznego poznania człowieka. Dokonana przez niego ocena przydatności systemu etycznego Schelera dla etyki chrześcijańskiej zajmuje miejsce pośrednie między postulatem uwzględnienia doświadczenia pierwszoosobowego w poznaniu w początkowej fazie uprawiania przez niego filozofii, a propozycją wykorzystania metody fenomenologicznej do analizy tego doświadczenia i przejścia od doświadczenia do systemu zawartego w „Osobie i czynie”. Wojtyła w swojej rozprawie habilitacyjnej poddał analizie kwestię doświadczenia wewnętrznego człowieka, podkreślając jego znaczenie dla etyki i antropologii. Właściwe ujęcie tego doświadczenia jest możliwe dzięki metodzie fenomenologicznej. Analiza systemu Schelera pozwoliła Wojtyłe stwierdzić, że chociaż posłużenie się metodą fenomenologiczną jest konieczne w filozoficznym poznaniu, to zarazem nie jest wystarczające. Metoda ta nie ujmuje wszystkiego, co niesie ze sobą doświadczenie. Powinna być ona także odpowiednio stosowana, aby nie pomijać istotnych treści doświadczenia. Natomiast konkretny sposób zastosowania tej metody do filozoficznego poznania i łączenia tej metody z metodą metafizyczną pokazał w „Osobie i czynie”.

Słowa kluczowe: Karol Wojtyła, Max Scheler, etyka chrześcijańska, doświadczenie wewnętrzne, metoda fenomenologiczna

