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recenzje i sprawozdania

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Evidence of Karol Wojtyła's thought formation as preserved in archival materials

It is obvious to anyone researching Karol Wojtyła's thought — and particularly his philosophical thought — that there are archival materials hand-penned by the author of *Person and Act*, or copied on his order. It is, therefore, all the more puzzling that no actual research into the archival materials has been undertaken more extensively to date¹. This means that so far Karol Wojtyła's thought has not been considered from the perspective of its formation. Let me then, at this point, put forth a thesis that use of the archival sources might shed some new and important light on the findings made by Wojtyła researchers so far. However, the thing is not to undermine the results obtained thus far, but to explore them further, and in many places to fine-tune them. Here, too, another thesis becomes revealed: Wojtyła's published works are, for the most part, versions that soften or nuance his original thought.

Given the fact that the present considerations are part of the discussion of the postdoctoral thesis by the author of *Person and Act*, I will only be

1 This kind of initiative has recently been undertaken by the John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow, the goal being to publish a critical edition of all of Karol Wojtyła's writings. This means using not only the published texts — though they serve as the main point of reference — but also the archived ones that can be delved into. For instance, the first volume to be published will contain a manuscript of the working translation of Max Scheler's 1921 work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik* (M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*, Halle a.[n] d.[er] S.[aale] 1921). Although it was known that Wojtyła had made such a translation for his own use, no effort was made to find this text — the text which sheds much light on Wojtyła's postdoctoral dissertation.

referring to the archival materials related to that work, even though the theses put forward can also be applied to all the other texts by the author in question. Not wishing to take individual passages out of context, I will only mention one terminological change that is repeated several hundred times, and will ultimately focus on discussing the ending of the postdoctoral dissertation, because there are two endings with different tenors — which is not a widely known fact.

Research material

The first edition of Wojtyła's postdoctoral dissertation was published in 1959². It was referred to by later editors who reissued this work³. However, we are most interested in the pre-1959 versions of the text. There are three such texts deposited in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow. The earliest one is dated 1953 — joint ref. no. AKKW⁴ CII-9/110 (hereinafter: M). If we take a closer look at the chronology of events in Wojtyła's life, we can surmise that the M version was the one that served as the basis for awarding the later pope his postdoctoral degree. At an extraordinary meeting of the Council of the Theological Faculty (30 November 1953), the dissertation in question was approved by unanimous vote. On 3 December 1953 Wojtyła delivered his postdoctoral lecture. In view of this, it is unlikely that another version of the postdoctoral dissertation was written between 3 December or 30 November and the end of 1953, which would have contained some

2 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Makska Schelera*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1959.

3 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Makska Schelera*, in: *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, eds. T. Styczeń, J.W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1991, p. 11–128 (Źródła i Monografie, 119; Człowiek i Moralność, 2); K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Makska Schelera*, in: *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2001, p. 11–128 (Źródła i Monografie, 119; Człowiek i Moralność, 2); K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Makska Schelera*, in: *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, consultation et comments M. Zięba OP, Katolicka Agencja Informacyjna, Hachette Livre Polska Collection, Warszawa 2008 (Kolekcja Dziel Jana Pawła II, 44).

4 AKKW means: Archiwum Kardynała Karola Wojtyły (Archive of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła).

improvements on the earlier version. We can therefore conclude that the notation “Kraków 1953” featuring on the first page of the M version conclusively proves that this is exactly the version of the dissertation submitted to the reviewers (prof. Stefan Swieżawski from the Catholic University of Lublin, Rev. Prof. Aleksander Usowicz from the Jagiellonian University, and Rev. Prof. Władysław Wicher also from the Jagiellonian University).

Apart from the M version, we have two other versions from 1954, which we will designate as M₁ (Ref. AKKW CII-9/110a) and M₂ (Ref. AKKW CII-9/110b). The M₂ version is certainly later than M₁, as it already includes the typewritten version of the corrections handwritten in the M₁ version. Visibly enough, the M₂ version served as the final basis for the first edition of 1959.

In further discussion, I will focus only on the differences between the M versions. It sounds mysterious. Well, we actually have two files with the same reference number (AKKW CII-9/110). Both contain an almost identical text of the postdoctoral dissertation⁵. The layout of the text on the pages of both the M versions proves that they were written simultaneously, i.e. one — which is less clear — is a carbon copy of the other. So as to avoid confusing the versions, let us introduce an additional differentiation into M and M(vI)⁶. In the M(vI) version, one ending of the dissertation is to be found on pages 152–162⁷. Characteristically, it was added (or actually substituted), as evidenced by the paper, which is the same throughout the M(vI) version except for pages 152–156. As we compare this kind of paper with the paper of the M version (where the two endings are preserved), we note that the ending in M(vI) is written on the same type of paper as M. It can therefore be concluded that M(vI) is the actual “version I”, since it required a change of the ending, which the later version did not. Thus, it seems fair to conclude that M(vI) is older than M.

5 Minor differences are concerned with linguistic correction, e.g. corrections related to inadequate carbon copying of the text.

6 M(vI) denotes: typescript “version I [original text: “wersja I”]”, where “version I” is a later addition by the archivist. This annotation appears on the title page.

7 Cf. AKKW CII-9/110, p. 152–162. Throughout the article I provide the numbers of the pages according to the author's original pagination.

However, in the M version we encounter another puzzle. A cursory review of this version reveals that the entirety (both the endings) is written on the same type of paper. There would be nothing strange about this, but why would Wojtyła have two endings? However, if we subject the paper to closer scrutiny, then it becomes clear that two different types of paper were used here as well. The entire work, including the ending, which we also find in M(vI) is written on the same type of paper. A different type of paper (also different from the types used in the M(vI) version) was used for the second (in the order they are arranged in the folder) ending and for the notes⁸. This means that the notes are the same in all the versions of the work⁹. This, however, does not mean that they are arranged in the same way in both the endings.

The base ending¹⁰ has three typewritten note numbers. The other endings have three notes, but only M2 has them typewritten. In the ending of M only the number of note 1 is typewritten. Note 2 is not indicated at all, and note 3 is added by hand. In the M1 version both note 2 and note 3 are annotated by hand.

Although the content of the notes in the ending does not change, the sentences (and entire paragraphs) in which they appear do change. Based on a comparison of the versions and the placement of the notes in them, the following inference can be made.

Due to the fact concerned with the different paper used in the M version on pages 152–175 (ending(b) and notes), and with the fact that the content of the notes is not changed, but in M note no. 2 disappears, and note no. 3 is added later by hand, it can be inferred that the ending(b) version was the one that actually came first. Below you will find (in the following order: M ending(b), M, M(vI), M1, M2) the typed pages with note no. 2. (in M and M(vI) the note is missing), which will make it easier for the reader to find his or her way around the versions of the text¹¹.

8 Cf. AKKW CII-9/110, p. 152–162 (ending), 163–175 (notes).

9 Versions M, M(vI), M1 have endnotes, while M2 has footnotes.

10 Hereinafter “ending(b)”.

11 The overview scans bear red circles in the places where the note reference is present or missing (versions M and M(vI)). When analyzing them, it should be noted that in the M, M(vI), M1

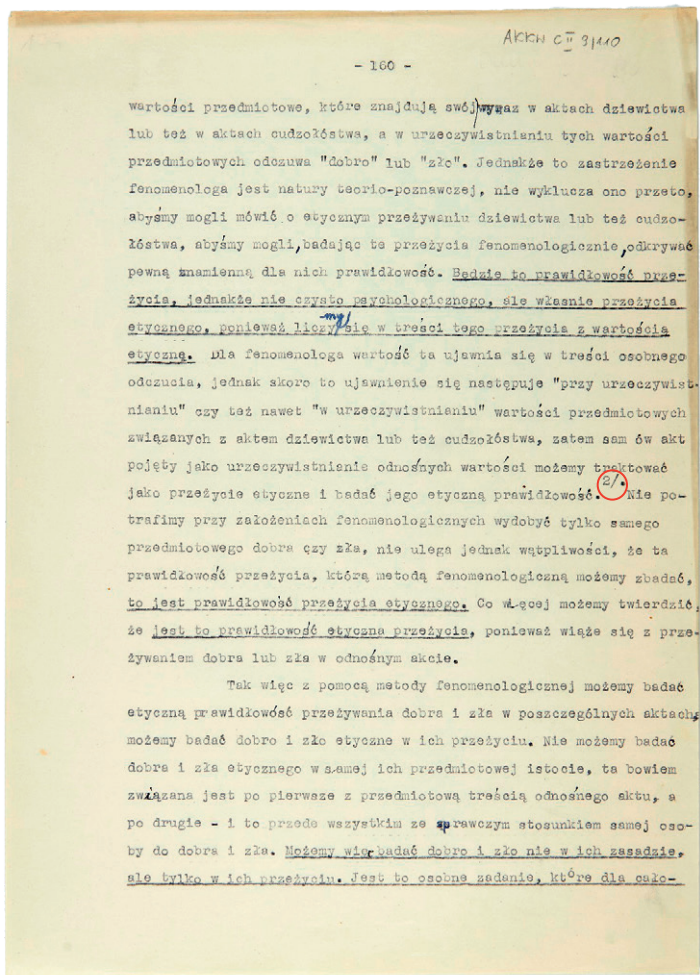


Fig. 1. Page 160 of the M version ending(b) with a reference to note no. 2 (Source: John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow).

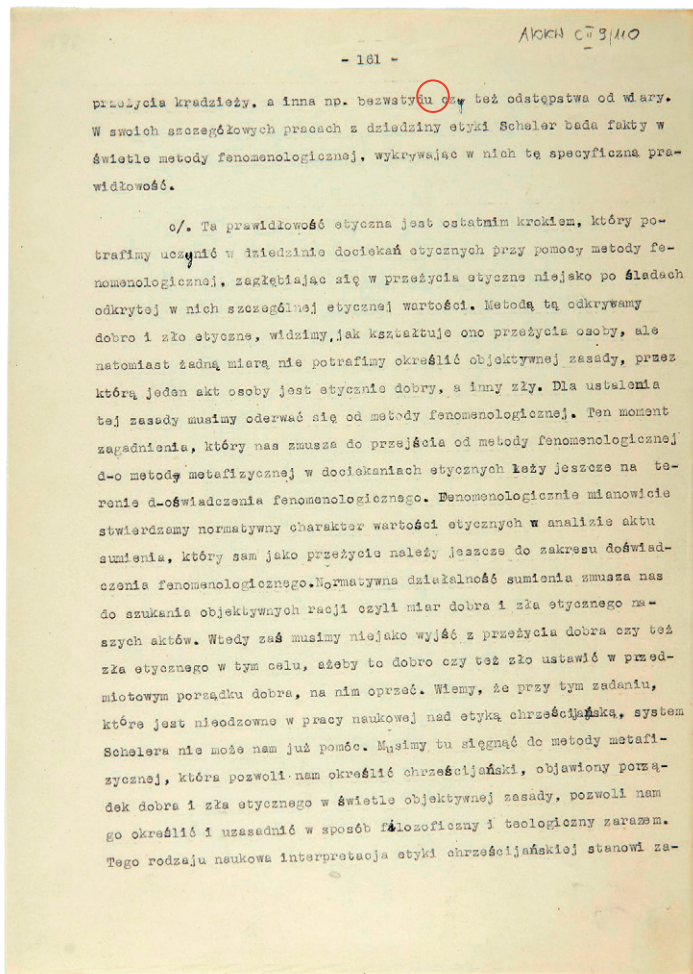


Fig. 2. Page 161 of the M version — no reference to note no. 2 (Source: John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow).

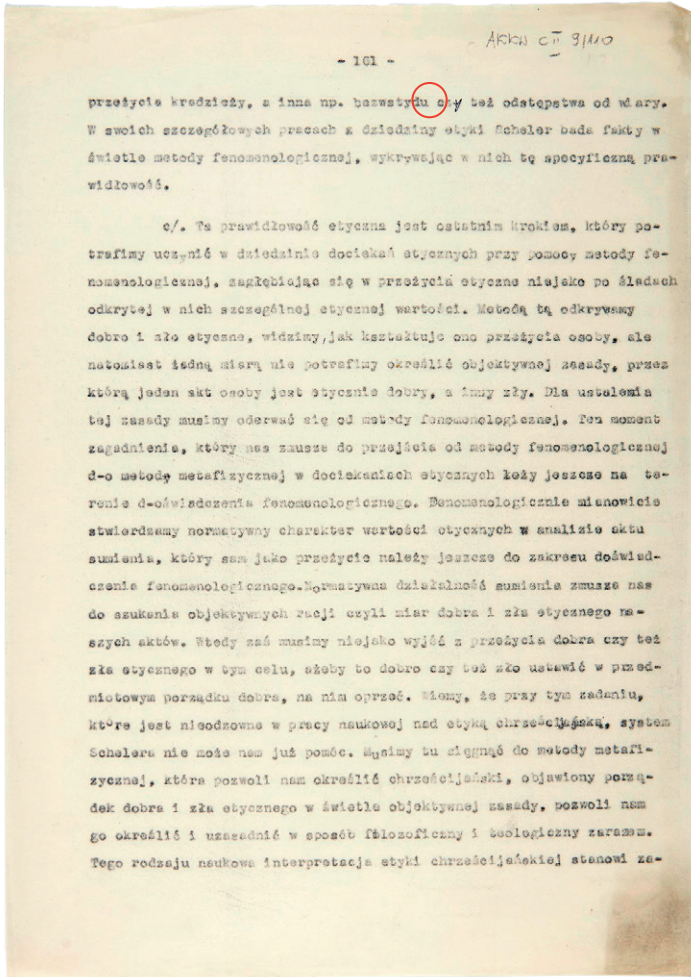


Fig. 3. Page 161 of the M(vI) version — no reference to note no. 2 (Source: John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow).

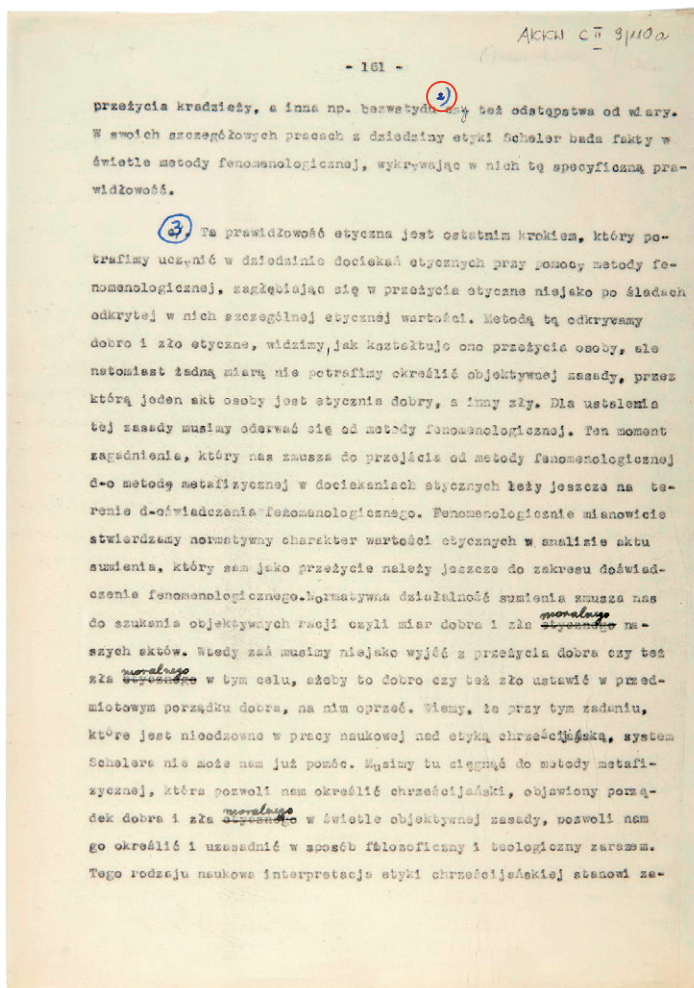


Fig. 4. Page 161 of the M1 version with a handwritten reference to note no. 2 (Source: John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow).

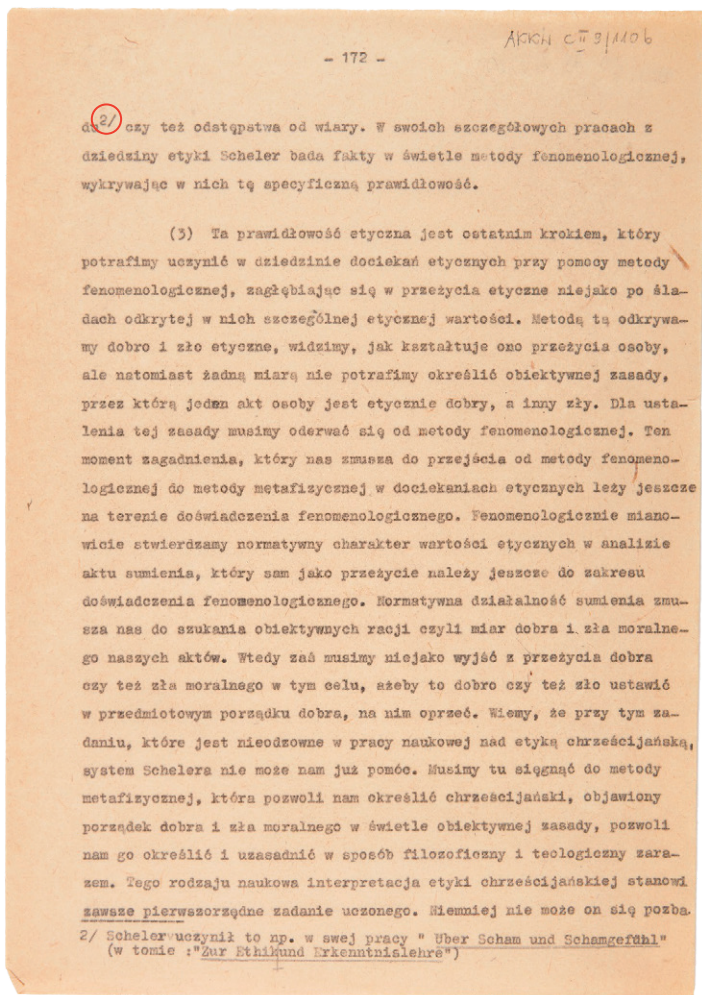


Fig. 5. Page 172 of the M2 version with a reference to note no. 2 (Source: John Paul II Institute of Intercultural Dialogue in Krakow).

Establishing which ending came first is important because of the thesis whereby Wojtyła, as a rule, softened or nuanced the versions of the work that were to be published (or later versions of the work)¹².

Let us proceed, then, to point out the differences between the endings. Due to the volume of the versions under comparison, we will adopt, as a method of presentation, pointing to important selected differences in content or significant differences in the “tenor” of the text, the ending(b) being a reference point. However, we will not be comparing successive paragraphs step by step, since the two versions of the ending are too different to do so sensibly without constantly comparing the full body of text. So we will point out, following the order of ending(b), selected moments from the earlier version and their equivalents (more nuanced and over-emphasized) in the later version.

Analysis of the ending

In the end, for the purposes of this study, five differences significantly affecting the tenor of the ending text have been distinguished. Of course, many more differences can be identified, but it was nevertheless necessary to do some sorting, and those indicated below seem to be the most relevant for the verification of the theses.

Difference no. 1 boils down to a change in emphasis placed on defining the very subject matter of the work undertaken in the postdoctoral dissertation. While the fundamental issue was in both cases defined by Wojtyła

and M2 versions the text is the same, while in the M ending(b) version the text to which the note was appended differs from the others.

¹² Of particular note here is one change that on 18 May 2022 at the conference *Karol Wojtyła in search of a new look at Christian ethics*. Discussion of the work *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera*, during a panel discussion Rev. Grzegorz Hołub remarked upon, pointing out that the very frequent change of the term “ethics” to the term “morality” (almost 500 changes) — in the M1 version these changes were made by Wojtyła by hand — was not about mellowing, but in fact sharpening of the original thought. One cannot but agree that that is nuancing of thought, and that this case indeed represents sharpening rather than mellowing. However, that is an exception, at the root of which lie various causes (for more on this subject see: K. Petryszak, “Etyka” a “moralność” — analiza zmiany terminów w maszynopisach pracy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły, “Logos i Ethos” 59 (2022) no. 1, s. 105–132).

in the same manner: “whether and to what extent Max Scheler’s ethical system is suitable for the interpretation of Christian ethics”¹³, the further addendum already presents two perspectives. In M(b) we read: “By posing the question in this way, we have chosen to examine the Schelerian system from a particular angle of view”¹⁴, while in M: “The question thus posed in the introduction determined the entire direction of inquiries in the part of the work proper”¹⁵. Although the difference may seem insignificant, analyzing the entire tenor of the two endings — which will become apparent once our analyses are complete — one can see a significant softening of perspective in the M version. One can say that the revised addition is nothing more than a certain embellishment — perhaps a required one, but an embellishment nonetheless — whose meaning is clear without exposing it in a separate sentence. For if — as Wojtyła was certainly aware — we pose a certain issue as a research problem, it follows that the way it is posed essentially determines the direction of further inquiry. Thus, there is nothing important in the addendum contained in M.

The M(b) version, on the other hand, seems to have a sharpened perspective. For we know that Wojtyła provides a serious critique of Scheler’s “ethical system”¹⁶, but also of phenomenology as a method that ultimately proves to be an insufficient way of doing philosophy in order to be able to develop a comprehensive view of the world or even to constitute ethics. This criticism, of course, comes from Thomism and the classical philosophy of

13 Original text: “czy i o ile system etyczny Maksza Schelera nadaje się do interpretacji etyki chrześcijańskiej”; M(b), p. 52; M, p. 152.

Since both versions are under the same reference and page numbers, I will not be using the reference number, but the notations M(b) (i.e. AKKW CII-9/100 ending(b)) and M with the indication of the pages.

14 Original text: “Stawiając zagadnienie w taki sposób, zdecydowaliśmy się na badanie systemu schelerowskiego pod szczególnym kątem widzenia”; M(b), p. 152.

15 Original text: “Tak postawione we wstępie zagadnienie zadecydowało o całym kierunku dociekań w części właściwej pracy”; M, p. 152.

16 The “ethical system” has been put in quotation marks, as it is the expression included in the versions of Wojtyła’s postdoctoral dissertation under discussion, but it is an inappropriate (or at least inaccurate) expression. For more on this subject see K. Petryszak, „Etyka” a „moralność” — analiza zmiany terminów w maszynopisach pracy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły, “Logos i Ethos” 59 (2022) no. 1, s. 105–132.

being. Therefore, it seems reasonable to understand the addendum in M(b) about “a particular angle of view” as simply an angle of critical viewing, coming from without, but also — at certain points in the analysis of Scheler’s philosophy — from within¹⁷.

And so the first difference lies primarily in the fact that Wojtyła abandons the emphasis on the “specificity” of his approach in favour of couching in a sentence the information that is already obvious to the reader. This can be seen as a softening of the emphasis presented in the ending.

Difference no. 2 — found in the same paragraph — bolsters the thesis about the softening of the tenor in the M version. This is evidenced by the fact that in the M(b) version Wojtyła explicitly points out: “This comparative critical study [...] in which by way of analysis”¹⁸, while in the M version he emphasizes only the fact that the study has been “analytical and comparative”¹⁹. In this case, unlike Difference 1, criticality of the approach is not necessarily inherent in the nature of the work²⁰, so mentioning it would be appropriate, especially because it would agree with the actual method and approach used in the work. However, Wojtyła — perhaps in a conciliatory spirit — tempers his thought not by depriving it of criticality, but by not mentioning it explicitly in the ending.

Difference no. 3 concerns the emphaticalness of the evaluation of Scheler’s system in relation to Christian ethics. In the M(b) version Wojtyła states:

Scheler, therefore, takes a completely different view of the very principle of his ethical personalism from the teaching of the revealed sources. The reason

17 For instance, showing that there can be no talk of any systemicity or normativity with the adoption of emotionalist assumptions, or more broadly: ones designating the subject as the ultimate touchstone of “objectivity”. One can see in this a meticulously conducted critique of the internal cohesiveness (or coherence) of Scheler’s views.

18 Original text: “Owo porównawcze badanie krytyczne [...], w której drogą analityczną”; M(b), p. 152.

19 Original text: “analityczno-porównawcze”; M, p. 152.

20 There is no shortage of uncritical apologetic works in science.

for this different account is primarily due to the phenomenological assumptions of the Schelerian system²¹.

The noteworthy thing is the categorical nature of Wojtyła's thesis whereby he points to a **completely different** approach to personalistic issues, which supposedly results not from the Schelerian approach itself, but rather from phenomenology as such, of which Scheler's philosophy is a variant.

The M version, on the other hand, contains information related to the issue at hand in two separate places. First comes a brief recapitulation of Scheler's view on the person and his relation to values, which Wojtyła concludes: "Such an approach to the person's relation to ethical values is afforded by phenomenology's epistemological assumptions"²². Several sentences further on, the author of *Person and Act* writes:

Thus, the fundamental truth of Christian ethics, which states that the human person is the author of the ethical good and evil of his acts, cannot be properly grasped and objectified with Scheler's system. This is a consequence of the phenomenological assumptions²³.

The M version also stresses the variant nature of Scheler's philosophy relative to phenomenology. However, the indication of the differences or even the impassable gulf separating Christian ethics from the phenomenological method is softened, and significantly so. For let us remember that originally Wojtyła points to a "completely different approach," while in the later version he adopts a conciliatory stance again, as it were, pointing no longer to the categorical "completeness," but to the sheer impossibility of

21 Original text: "Scheler zatem zupełnie inaczej ujmuje samą zasadę swego etycznego personalizmu niż nauka źródeł objawionych. Powodem tego innego ujęcia są w pierwszym rzędzie założenia fenomenologiczne schelerowskiego systemu"; M(b), p. 153.

22 Original text: "Na takie ujęcie stosunku osoby do wartości etycznych pozwalają fenomenologiczne założenia teorio-poznawcze"; M, p. 153.

23 Original text: "Tak więc podstawowa prawda etyki chrześcijańskiej, która głosi, że osoba ludzka jest sprawcą etycznego dobra i zła swoich aktów, nie daje się właściwie ująć i uprzedmiotwić przy pomocy systemu Schelera. Jest to następstwo założeń fenomenologicznych"; M, p. 153–154.

a “proper approach”²⁴ using Scheler’s system. This change is momentous, as it nevertheless opens up the possibility of applying phenomenology to the study of the subject of Wojtyła’s discussion — albeit somewhat more peripherally — which will be evidenced by further examples. They will also testify to the fact that Wojtyła, in the M version, was more favourably inclined towards phenomenology than in the formulations used originally.

Difference no. 4 lies in the different ways emphasis is laid with regard to ethos in Scheler’s philosophy. In the M(b) version Wojtyła states: “Thus, virtually all ethical life is in this [Scheler’s] system reduced to ethos”²⁵. And it is known that ethos is not universal, which would imply its immutability and metaphysical objectivity. The author of *Person and Act* was well aware of this²⁶, so without the risk of overinterpretation it can be pointed out that by formulating, in the conclusion of his discussion, the thesis of reducing the whole of ethical life to ethos, he thereby criticizes Scheler, accusing him of subjectivism or even ethical (or axiological) relativism²⁷.

In the M version, Wojtyła does not abandon the criticism indicated, but presents it in a different light. He points out as follows: “The phenomenological system allows us to grasp ethical value, but it does not lead us to

24 “Proper” is to be understood here as simply “read” (or cognized) in the fullness arising from cognized being itself.

25 Original text: “Tak więc, całe właściwie życie etyczne zostaje w tym systemie [Schelerowskim] sprowadzone do etosu”; M(b), p. 154.

26 As evidenced, for example, by the content of the subsection of his postdoctoral dissertation entitled “System Schelera jako próba etyki obiektywistycznej [Scheler’s system as an attempt at objectivist ethics]” — see: K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Makska Schelera*, in: *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, eds. T. Styczeń, J. W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1991, p. 56ff (Źródła i Monografie, 119; Człowiek i Moralność, 2).

27 In addition, the validity of such an understanding is evidenced by a passage found slightly further on: “Thus, [recognizing Scheler’s thought as justified] the basis of Christian ethics would be Jesus Christ’s ethical experience entailing, by way of imitation, different people’s ethical experiences under changing environmental and historical conditions. In this way, the tradition of experience would have to stand above any tradition of teaching” (original text: “A zatem [uznając za słuszną myśl Schelera] podstawą etyki chrześcijańskiej byłoby przeżycie etyczne Jezusa Chrystusa pociągające za sobą w drodze naśladowania przeżycie etyczne różnych ludzi w zmieniających się warunkach środowiskowych i historycznych. W ten sposób tradycja przeżycia musiałaby stanąć nad wszelką tradycją nauczania”; M(b), p. 154.

grasp the very sources of its existence, which are found precisely in a person's causality"²⁸ and — a page and a half further on — “The very essence of ethical life is [in Scheler] a person's ethos”²⁹. The second quotation is further explained (or elaborated) by Wojtyła not in the direction of criticism levelled from metaphysical objectivity, but coming from the comparison with the Gospel and the anthropology contained therein, which points to the causative rather than purely experiential (or receptive) character of the person in moral actions. It is only this anthropological vision that metaphysical objectivity is underlying. Ultimately, then, in terms of content, both endings offer substantively the same indications, but emphasize them differently. In the M(b) version it is criticism on the part of metaphysical objectivity that is underpinned by anthropology, while in the M version it is metaphysical objectivity that provides the necessary background for anthropological issues.

Moreover, in this context, another sentence from the M(b) version should be quoted to even more strongly emphasize the significance of the difference between ethos and ethics for Wojtyła: “whether ethic can be substituted for ethos”³⁰. Essentially, in the context of Wojtyła's postdoctoral dissertation as a whole it is a rhetorical question. However, posing the question, through the lens of the emphasized features and character of the ending in the M(b) version, all the better indicates the edge of criticism aimed at Scheler more acutely than we know from the M version and later editions.

Already at this point it should be noted that this change is an expression of a certain breakthrough that was evidently taking place in Wojtyła's philosophy in the 1950s. He turned from primarily metaphysical positions to anthropological ones (in the context of ethics, of course) with strong metaphysical underpinnings. One might venture a proposition that Wojtyła's

28 Original text: “System fenomenologiczny pozwala nam ująć wartość etyczną, ale nie prowadzi nas do ujęcia samych źródeł jej istnienia, które znajdują się właśnie w sprawczości osoby”; M, p. 154.

29 Original text: “Samą istotą życia etycznego jest [u Schelera] etos osoby”; M, p. 155.

30 Original text: “czy etosem można zastąpić etykę”; M(b), p. 154. In the M version such a question or even such a clearly stated alternative is absent.

anthropological concept matured in this period enough for him to leave the safe haven of Thomistic metaphysics and pursue his own anthropological direction based precisely on that metaphysics.

Difference no. 5 concerns the other one of the theses defended by Wojtyła³¹. Namely, the question is whether, despite its incompatibility with Christian ethics, Scheler's philosophy can be of any help in examining it. While Wojtyła gives an affirmative answer in both versions, he once again shifts the emphasis. In the M(b) version he writes:

We can therefore study good and evil not in their principle, but only in the way they are experienced. This is a separate task of great significance for the totality of ethical knowledge. We can agree that the significance is secondary³².

It is clear that in this passage Wojtyła takes the position of a metaphysicist who starts from the first philosophy in order to evaluate the possibilities of another philosophical position.

Wojtyła presents the issue in a slightly different way in the second version:

For the establishment of this principle [of ethical good and evil] we must break away from the phenomenological method. That moment of the issue which compels us to move from the phenomenological method to the metaphysical method in our ethical inquiries lies still within the domain of phenomenological experience. Thus, phenomenologically we affirm the

31 Namely: "Although the ethical system created by Max Scheler is not essentially suitable for interpreting Christian ethics, we can find it incidentally helpful in our scientific work on Christian ethics. This is because it makes it easier for us to analyze ethical facts on a phenomenal and experiential plane" [original text: "Jakkolwiek system etyczny stworzony przez Maksa Schelera nie nadaje się zasadniczo do interpretacji etyki chrześcijańskiej, to jednak może on nam ubocznie być pomocny przy pracy naukowej nad etyką chrześcijańską. Ułatwia on nam mianowicie analizę faktów etycznych na płaszczyźnie zjawiskowej i doświadczalnej"] (M, p. 158).

32 Original text: "Możemy więc badać dobro i zło nie w ich zasadzie, ale tylko w ich przeżyciu. Jest to osobne zadanie, które dla całokształtu wiedzy etycznej posiada wielkie znaczenie. Zgodzimy się na to, że jest to znaczenie wtórne"; M(b), p. 160–161.

normative character of ethical values in the analysis of the act of conscience, which itself as a lived experience still belongs to the field of phenomenological experience³³.

The subsequent paragraphs of the M version agree in principle substantively and in terms of the tenor and emphasis with the M(b) version. Nonetheless, it is significant that there is no indication in the M(b) version that the beginning of the path towards recognizing the objectivity and normativity of values still lies within the limits of phenomenological inquiry. Here Wojtyła invokes the issues concerned with the act of conscience. In fact, every inner act can be treated as a field of phenomenological experience. However, it does not appear from Wojtyła's work as a whole — nor does it from his later writings³⁴ — that such a transition from cognition of the content of experiences to the conclusion about the normativity of some of them is fully justified. The author of *Person and Act*, while referring to the objective role of conscience, seems to mix (or combine) philosophical orders for the sake of appreciating phenomenology. The role of conscience he presents is drawn from the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas on conscience. Thus, a fundamental question arises, which we will not consider here, but only signal it: whether the Thomasian (or Thomistically construed) act of conscience and its lived experience can be reconciled with the presuppositions of phenomenology, and whether — as Wojtyła suggested — it is contained within them³⁵. Thus, it can be seen that comparing the two versions of the ending opens one of the fundamental research problems concerning

33 Original text: “Dla ustalenia tej zasady [dobra i zła etycznego] musimy oderwać się od metody fenomenologicznej. Ten moment zagadnienia, który nas zmusza do przejścia od metody fenomenologicznej do metody metafizycznej w dociekaniach etycznych leży jeszcze na terenie doświadczenia fenomenologicznego. Fenomenologicznie mianowicie stwierdzamy normatywny charakter wartości etycznych w analizie aktu sumienia, który sam jako przeżycie należy jeszcze do zakresu doświadczenia fenomenologicznego”; M, p. 161.

34 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego Jana Pawła II, Lublin 2006, p. 26–38, 50–52, 59–61, 259–270 (*Źródła i Monografie*, 302; *Człowiek i Moralność*, 3).

35 For instance, by way of Étienne Gilson's principle of impersonal necessity (cf. E. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1950, Chapter XII).

Wojtyła's inclusion of phenomenology in his research and the justification of such inclusion.

As indicated above, one might mention at least several dozen differences between the discussed versions of the ending. However, we have limited ourselves to five, since the purpose of the article was only to outline the research perspective, and to point to some preliminary clues and hypotheses. Moreover, presenting and discussing all the differences would require a small monograph, while the examples selected and discussed above are sufficient to achieve the goals set here.

Conclusion

The aim of the present text is to provide a preliminary glimpse, primarily to researchers of Wojtyła's philosophy, of how many as yet undiscovered threads of the thought of the author of *Person and Act* remain hidden in the archival materials. The differences indicated also make it possible to follow the formation of the future pope's increasingly mature thought. The article's main thesis whereby Wojtyła's thought, in the most basic of the extant versions of the ending of his postdoctoral dissertation (M(b)), was less subdued and less nuanced seems to have been defended in light of the analyses presented.

Let us again emphasize that in the M(b) version, the author of *Person and Act* set out with a decidedly metaphysical position, and it was from this perspective that he examined Scheler's philosophy, which at the time perforce had to be evaluated as a useful, albeit at best an ancillary method of working on ethical issues. In the M version, on the other hand, he softens his position and takes a more positive view of phenomenology. Due to the nature of the text, we could not present any broader-viewpoint material that would unequivocally indicate that the ending in the M version is also more nuanced and more likely to adopt Scheler's viewpoint³⁶. This is not to say that Wojtyła adopts a phenomenological viewpoint. On the contrary,

36 In the sense that he tries to present the issue discussed in the main part of the postdoctoral dissertation precisely from the perspective of the phenomenological assumptions.

despite his later, even more significant appreciation of the phenomenological method — where the reason for this shift is itself an important issue to explore — Wojtyła is very clear about its place not only in the philosophical hierarchy, but also (perhaps more importantly for us) in his research method. Despite actually seeing significant research potential — especially in the M version — for the phenomenological method, Wojtyła indicates in both cases that it is a method only peripherally capable of providing answers to the questions that trouble him.

The differences in emphasis — especially evident in the last example — allow us to trace the beginnings of Wojtyła's turn towards a broader inclusion of phenomenology in his deliberations. One should not, however, forget that despite some search for justifications for the method used by, among others, Scheler, Wojtyła is ultimately willing to use it insofar as it stands in line with the method of metaphysical inquiry, i.e., in this case, Thomistic metaphysics.

The present article does not claim to unravel the issue regarding the “strength” of Wojtyła's affiliation with the users of the phenomenological method. It is only intended to indicate in this regard that the answer to a problem at least thus presented lies hidden at the very beginning of the philosophical path chosen by the author of *Person and Act*. Further studies of the differences between the two endings might bring more detailed solutions in this subject matter. It seems, however, that one should not limit oneself to the postdoctoral dissertation alone, since Wojtyła's entire philosophical output from the 1950s shows a certain tendency to use also some experimental psychology data rather than the phenomenological method *sensu stricto*. How much Wojtyła's approach to the practical use of phenomenology would change later on is a non-obvious question that requires further research — primarily based on archival materials that will allow us to trace Wojtyła's reasoning much more closely than the later editions show, and will also allow us to look at the way in which the ultimately publicized thought took shape, which the later editions do not allow. It is precisely the tracing of this formation of thought that is a prerequisite for posing relevant questions about Wojtyła's philosophy, at which the present article is one of the first attempts.

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Abstract

Evidence of Karol Wojtyła's thought formation as preserved in archival materials

The purpose of the present article is to present selected differences between two versions of the endings of Karol Wojtyła's postdoctoral dissertation "Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera". The endings are available in the archival materials deposited in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow. On the basis of the differences indicated, the author defends the thesis that in the later version of the ending Wojtyła softened and nuanced his attitude to Max Scheler's philosophy as well as to phenomenology as a research method. The article also takes up clues pointing to a change in philosophical attitude that took place in Karol Wojtyła's philosophy in the 1950s. This change shifts from a strictly metaphysical attitude — based on Thomistic metaphysics — to a strictly anthropological attitude. In the anthropological attitude, Wojtyła finds much greater application capabilities for the phenomenological method, but ultimately the results obtained through it depend on their compatibility with the metaphysical background of his philosophy.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, Thomism, phenomenology, postdoctoral dissertation, archival materials

Abstrakt

Dowody na formowanie się myśli Karola Wojtyły zachowane w materiałach archiwalnych

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest przedstawienie wybranych różnic pomiędzy dwiema wersjami zakończeń rozprawy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły pt. „Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera”. Zakończenia te są dostępne w materiałach archiwalnych przechowywanych w Archiwum Kurii Metropolitalnej w Krakowie. Na podstawie wskazanych różnic autor broni tezy, że w późniejszej wersji zakończenia Wojtyła złagodził i bardziej znuansował swoje podejście do filozofii Maksa Schelera oraz

do fenomenologii jako metody badawczej. Artykuł podejmuje również tropy wskazujące na zmianę nastawienia filozoficznego, która dokonała się w filozofii Karola Wojtyły w latach 50. Zmiana ta polegała na przejściu od nastawienia ściśle metafizycznego — opartego na metafizyce tomistycznej — do nastawienia ściśle antropologicznego. W nastawieniu antropologicznym Wojtyła znajduje znacznie większe możliwości zastosowania dla metody fenomenologicznej, ale ostatecznie wyniki uzyskane za jej pomocą zależą od ich zgodności z metafizycznym tłem jego filozofii.

Słowa kluczowe: Karol Wojtyła, tomizm, fenomenologia, habilitacja, materiały archiwalne

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What does moral theology expect from philosophical ethics?

The shortest answer to this question is that philosophical ethics should do *its* job. The problem, however, is that the perception of philosophical ethics by moral theology can vary, depending on the view of man's moral reality and on the perception of ethics as a separate discipline, different from moral theology.

One can immediately recognize the difference between philosophical ethics and moral theology by considering the definitions of the two. The term “ethics” is derived from the Greek word *ethos*, which means ‘a custom, a habitual way of acting a characteristic behavioral attribute or mind-set of a society or social group’. The Latin equivalent of this term is *mos*, or *moris*, from which the adjective *moralis* is derived. Hence, *ethics* and *that which is moral* are synonymous terms that are often used interchangeably. Therefore, ethics is referred to as the discipline or philosophy of determining the rightness or wrongness of human action. “Ethics is a theory of morality, i.e., a philosophical and normative science that justifies the obligation to do good”¹. Moral theology, in turn, is that part of theology that also deals with human action. Therefore, various definitions of moral theology, as they reveal its subject matter, speak of human action. However, it is viewed from a different perspective than the *natural* perspective specific to philosophy (ethics); it is human action viewed from a supernatural perspective — from

¹ J. de Finance, *Etica generale*, Roma 1997, p. 7; I. Mroczkowski, *Teologia moralna. Definicja, przedmiot, metoda*, Płock 2011, p. 27–28.

the perspective of Divine Revelation. An example of such a definition can be found in Pope St. John Paul II's encyclical *Veritatis splendor*:

Moral theology is a reflection concerned with «morality», with the good and the evil of human acts and of the person who performs them; in this sense it is accessible to all people. But it is also “theology”, inasmuch as it acknowledges that the origin and end of moral action are found in the One who “alone is good” and who, by giving himself to man in Christ, offers him the happiness of divine life².

The encounter between moral theology and ethics can be riddled with unfriendliness — of late mainly on the part of philosophy. However, it can also prove to be a place of fruitful exchange that can afford both sides of such an encounter some benefits, chiefly of an intellectual nature.

In more recent times (as the present conference focuses on this day and age), the most common form of unfriendliness on the part of philosophy towards theology has been its being closed to the transcendent dimension. Various philosophical currents do not recognize the existence of the transcendent reality, and therefore they find an encounter with theology meaningless. Under these conditions it is difficult to have any dialogue between philosophy and theology, let alone a fruitful one. The problem is that this kind of attitude is not an isolated phenomenon. A hostile attitude can be observed especially towards Christianity in general, and towards Catholicism in particular.

Although the converse (theology showing hostility towards philosophy) has sometimes occurred in history, there has long been a strong emphasis on dialogue, even with those who do not recognize God's existence. There is a reference here to the attitude adopted by the early Christians and their encounter with pagan philosophy, which was characterized by a cautious openness to humanist values, including philosophical values that antiquity had developed. This also applied to morality. The basis for

2 John Paul II, Encyclical *Veritatis splendor*, no. 29, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html (10.09.2022).

such an open attitude can be found in St. Paul's words in the Epistle to the Philippians: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things" (Phil 4:8). Such an attitude was also encouraged by St. Peter the Apostle in his First Epistle, in which he advised preparedness "to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope" (1 Pt 3:15). These two New Testament texts set the rules of conduct towards philosophy, including moral philosophy, or ethics. We are dealing here neither with an unreflective recognition of philosophical, (and therefore ethical) achievements, nor with praise, or even acceptance, of an approach that would be characterized by a "possessiveness" of theology towards philosophy, limiting it within its methodologically legitimate framework. The latter phenomenon is of particular interest to us, since it was polemicized against by Cracow-based professor Fr. Kazimierz Kłósak. This polemic was a reaction to Jacques Maritain's so-called *adequate philosophy*. Against the backdrop of the critique of Maritain's views, we learn the difference between philosophy and theology as separate fields of knowledge.

Maritain recognizes that philosophizing without references specific to theology is not possible. For if ethics wants to reflect the whole truth about human behaviour, it must take into account the fact that the world of human behaviour consists of supernatural reality, as well as natural.

If moral philosophy is to be a true practical discipline, a discipline equal to its object, that is if it is to guide concrete, actual, historical human action, i.e., action turned towards a supernatural goal and operating under the conditions of the fallen and redeemed human nature, while this goal and these conditions are known only to theology, then moral philosophy must take over these truths from theology, i.e., submit itself positively to them³.

3 K. Kłósak, *Maritainowa analiza stosunku filozofii moralnej do teologii*, „Collectanea Theologica” 19 (1938) no. 2, p. 177.

– as Kłósak relates Maritain’s position. It is precisely this subordination of philosophy to the rules specific to theology in the name of truth that Maritain calls “*adequate* philosophy”. Kłósak does not agree with such a position in philosophy. According to him, each type of sentence that we encounter in the discourse concerned with religion should retain its own specificity. Therefore, he reminds us what types of sentences we know concerning transcendent references. Accepting and/or expressing the content of Divine Revelation itself, where there is a limitation on the scope of reason’s interference, brings such an attitude closer to fideism. However, theology, in the proper sense of the word, is born “through the rational illumination of revealed truths”⁴. Philosophy, on the other hand, is a purely natural perspective (nonetheless recognizing the fact that these natural references do not constitute the totality of the surrounding reality), free of binding transcendent references, i.e. ones that give theological meaning to its statements.

Kłósak supplements this distinction between the *theological* and the *philosophical* by providing a summary of St. Thomas Aquinas’ concept of theology:

in contrast to natural theology, which through creatures comes to know God in His perfections common to Him and to creatures [...] supernatural theology, thanks to Revelation comes to know God first and foremost as He is in Himself, in His life exclusively His own, and not only from the aspect of His analogous likeness to creatures, which He possesses as their first cause [...] Theology deals with creation not as such, but insofar as Revelation speaks of it, or insofar as it enters into any relation with God as its origin and end [...]. Theology makes use of philosophical consideration to prove the *natural* truths that constitute the *praeambula fidei*, to better elucidate the truths of faith by pointing out in the natural order of things certain similarities to the supernatural reality, and finally to refute arguments against faith by showing their fallacy or non-necessity⁵.

4 K. Kłósak, *Maritainowa analiza stosunku filozofii moralnej do teologii*, p. 213.

5 K. Kłósak, *Maritainowa analiza stosunku filozofii moralnej do teologii*, p. 215–216.

This role of philosophy vis-à-vis theology (including ethics vis-à-vis moral theology) is confirmed in the encyclical *Fides et ratio* (no. 68). The encyclical details claims brought by ethics to moral theology. For this reason, it is worth quoting no. 68 in its entirety, because in some sense it answers the question posed in the title of this paper: “What does moral theology expect from philosophical ethics?”:

Moral theology has perhaps an even greater need of philosophy’s contribution. In the New Testament, human life is much less governed by prescriptions than in the Old Testament. Life in the Spirit leads believers to a freedom and responsibility which surpass the Law. Yet the Gospel and the Apostolic writings still set forth both general principles of Christian conduct and specific teachings and precepts. In order to apply these to the particular circumstances of individual and communal life, Christians must be able fully to engage their conscience and the power of their reason. In other words, moral theology requires a sound philosophical vision of human nature and society, as well as of the general principles of ethical decision-making⁶.

Commenting on no. 68 of *Fides et ratio*, Belgian Dominican Father Servais Theodore Pinckaers points out two important issues. The first one is the aforementioned structure of New Testament morality, which is based much less than the Old Covenant⁷ morality on detailed moral regulations and precepts. Therefore, it needs the support of philosophy, and especially, but not exclusively, moral philosophy. At play here is also philosophical reflection on human nature and society, and on the nature of freedom to which we are called in the Holy Spirit⁸.

The second issue that Pinckaers points out is the proper conception of morality indicated by moral philosophy, which is adopted by moral

6 John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*, no. 68, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html (10.09.2022).

7 The Author of this paper uses the term „Covenant” instead of the “Testament” (both mean the same) since Fr. Pinckaers uses the latter in his paper quoted here.

8 S.T. Pinckaers, *The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology*, in: *Faith and reason: the Notre dame symposium 1999*, ed. T.L. Smith, The Maritain Center, United States 1999, p. 10.

theology, which protects this theology from possible usurpation by human reason, which sometimes would like to take the place that Divine Revelation occupies in moral theology.

Let us first try to focus on the latter of these issues. The history of moral theology speaks of certain differences in views regarding morality, i.e. that which is most important in man's moral life — the main criterion for the rightness or wrongness of human conduct and its justification. Within the framework of moral theology, however, man's desire to know the truth and his desire to be able to fulfil God's revealed will as faithfully as possible came into play most often. This desire made it possible to see that not all visions of morality fully corresponded to what Divine Revelation conveys. This gave rise to a desire to better know and express the truth about a Christian's vocation and the resulting consequences for his conduct. This attitude also justifies the changes in the teaching of moral theology that we have seen over the course of its history. Pinckaers provides examples of certain philosophical concepts of morality and the effects they have had on moral theology. He also presents the philosophical concept that should be considered the most mature, while at the same time being the most faithful to the teachings of the New Testament.

There remain philosophical concepts that are difficult to reconcile with the moral message of the New Testament. Examples illustrating this would be the morality of obligations, as it refers to post-Tridentine theology textbooks, or the morality of duty and imperatives of the kind proposed by Kant. In both of these perspectives, few changes are made in relation to the Old Covenant, apart from new inspirations for long-established moral precepts. If it were correct,

[o]ne could conclude from this that the New Testament merely reasserts the moral teaching of the Decalogue, which is itself identified with the natural law, and that theology merely adds to moral teaching a few new sources of inspiration. As a result, morality principally becomes the concern of philosophy, and consequently the preferred name of the discipline becomes "ethics". Furthermore, the New Testament, such texts as the Sermon on the Mount in St. Matthew's Gospel and the apostolic catechesis in the St. Paul's letters, is

displaced from moral theology properly so called, and are relegated instead to the domain of spirituality⁹.

Pinckaers shows how the situation changes in seeing morality within the framework of moral theology when the moral philosophy on which we rely changes, and we introduce happiness and virtue ethics in place of duty ethics:

One's perspective and conclusions change, however, once one adopts the point of view of St. Thomas: in other words, the perspective changes completely once one adopts a morality of happiness and virtue that seeks excellence in action and in the moral agent himself, giving priority to interior acts, which form the virtues at the very root of one's personal actions. Once one views Christian morality from the perspective of the primary virtues, one immediately perceives the role played by theology with its virtues of faith, hope and charity¹⁰.

The examples presented here show the importance of not only moral theology referring to ethics, but also of referring to *appropriate* ethics. This appropriateness is also confirmed by attempts to create new theological approaches, whereby concepts that can by no means be reconciled with the content of Revelation are introduced in place of correct ethical approaches, i.e. those that are consistent with Revelation. By way of illustration, there is a tendency at certain Catholic universities to determine the moral value of an act primarily by its consequences. That is an instance of the so-called consequentialism, which is an attempt to transfer to Catholic theology the moral thinking inherent in utilitarianism, which is very popular in the Anglo-Saxon world¹¹. The moral value of an act, in this viewpoint, is not

9 S.T. Pinckaers, *The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology*, p. 10.

10 S.T. Pinckaers, *The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology*, p. 10.

11 The influence of utilitarianism as a way of thinking in ethics has to do not only with the supremacy of the Anglo-Saxon culture, but above all with the dominance of the United States in the economic, military, cultural and political spheres after the collapse of communism in Europe.

determined by its object, but by its positive and negative consequences, which are compared and balanced. The final balance, then (i.e. the proportion between good and bad consequences) is supposed to be the answer to the question of the moral permissibility of a given act. Hence, this trend is also sometimes referred to as proportionalism. The basic problem of this model is concerned with balancing consequences that do not have a common denominator, e.g. the value of human life vs economic cost, or human life vs the comfort of the members of a given family. Another of its problems is concerned with the balancing of consequences, or rather, the attempt at identifying all possible, and even peripheral consequences, i.e. not only those that are defined as direct, but also further consequences that nevertheless may have a significant impact on the moral value of what one does. Most important, however, is the effect of such “balancing”. For it turns out that within the framework of such reasoning one can, for example, agree to abortion, that is, accept as morally permissible¹² an act that is morally intrinsically evil (evil by virtue of its object), because it openly transgresses the Fifth Commandment of the Decalogue, for the reason that we are dealing with here — the killing of an innocent human being.

From these examples it follows that the philosophical ethics to which moral theology refers plays an important role in the moral evaluation of a human act and in the determination of moral duty. One can also see how important it is that this evaluation does not conflict with what Revelation says about the act in question. A dissonance found here serves as an indication that a given philosophical reasoning in the case of moral theology does not work, because it leads to conclusions that contradict what Divine Revelation says and what theology has said so far. In this context, it is easier to understand why St. Thomas Aquinas and his theological work still play

12 Sometimes in justifying an act like this, the categories of *good* — *evil* are not used at all, but in their stead there appear *right* and *wrong*. However, this is a kind of ploy, because ‘right’ in defining an act is here a *de facto* substitute for the term *good*, and ‘wrong’ — for the term *evil*. At the same time, it can be seen that the ethical reasoning proposed here eliminates from moral theology its most important category and also the criterion for judging a given act, i.e. moral good and evil.

a hugely significant role in moral theology. He is the one who made a successful synthesis of philosophical ethics and theology.

This is what makes studying the theology of St. Thomas so interesting. Thomas succeeded in constructing a theology that was in harmony with Greco-Roman philosophy and did so precisely in the area of morality. Our interest is deepened when we realize that Thomas offers us the completed version of a virtue morality inherited both from the Fathers of the Church and from ancient philosophy, while most modern philosophies and the sciences remain tied to a morality reduced to the level of imperatives and prohibitions¹³.

Although Aquinas' concept of moral theology, incorporating the earlier achievements of theology and ancient philosophy, still seems to be the most mature form of cooperation between the two fields of knowledge (philosophy and theology), it is not the only attempt of this kind. Apart from some clearly unsuccessful efforts (e.g., challenging the Magisterium of the Church in the form of the so-called New Moral Theology, or through events such as the Cologne Declaration of 1989), one can also see other attempts by moral theology to use ethics. Karol Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation is one such attempt, albeit one that ends with a statement about the impossibility of adapting Max Scheler's ethics to a theological interpretation of morality. All these attempts make it possible to see that there are certain conditions that an ethical position must meet in order to be used in moral theology, to better understand how morality functions, what moral duties exist, and why they are the way they are. Certain basic threshold requirements must be met by this ethics, e.g.: openness to transcendence and acceptance of certain fundamental truths derived from Divine Revelation, such as the truth of things, man as a person composed of a body and a spiritual soul, freedom of the human will, etc. On the other hand, the compatibility of the more specific claims of a given philosophical position with the truths of Revelation is not so much a condition for the possibility of their *cooperation* in the search for the truth concerning morality, as it is

13 S. T. Pinckaers, *The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology*, p. 12.

an effect of this *cooperation*. There is much optimism about the possibility of affirming such compatibility. If we assume that man sincerely desires to discover the truth as part of his philosophical search, then the fruits of his search will be no different from what we know about morality through Divine Revelation. After all, the object of cognition in both cases is one and the same, and only the tools of cognition (philosophy and theology, including their effectiveness) are sometimes different.

What does moral theology expect from philosophical ethics? It expects the latter to fulfil its task by being open to the content dealt with by moral theology; to preserve its identity, without wishing to replace or supplant the essential claims related to Divine Revelation, which are fundamental to moral theology; to reassert the certainty of cognition and to help rid it of errors in that which concerns man's moral behaviour.

A philosopher too can benefit from an encounter with theology. He learns more fully about the purpose and meaning of life, the meanings of good and evil, and happiness and suffering, as well as death and what comes after it, rather than relying solely on philosophical knowledge (based primarily on human experience). Thus, recalling Aquinas' *adagium* whereby *Gratia non tollit, sed perficit naturam*, one can say that moral theology does not nullify philosophy, but moves it towards its perfection¹⁴. And so it is still possible for moral theology and philosophical ethics to cooperate fruitfully, just as they have done over the centuries. For the purposes of this cooperation, another question could also be posed: what does ethics expect from moral theology?

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14 S. T. Pinckaers, *The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology*, p. 20.

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Abstract

What does moral theology expect from philosophical ethics?

The morality of the New Testament is different from the morality of the Old Testament. There is less specific guidance in the New Testament, and hence “more” human reason is needed to point to and justify particular (especially more specific) moral norms. Therefore, moral theology uses ethics to explain and justify moral norms. This is stated in no. 68 of the Encyclical Letter *Fides et ratio*. However, such ethics must meet certain basic requirements, e.g. compatibility with Revelation (not contradicting the truths contained therein). The problematics of the interdependence between moral theology and ethics have been addressed by many philosophers and moral theologians. Many textbooks on moral theology discuss the reference to philosophical ethics. Nevertheless, among the most representative authors for the discussion of the relationship between moral theology and ethics in the context of the debate over Karol Wojtyła’s habilitation dissertation are, on the part of philosophy, Kłósak, who was a professor at the Theological Faculty of the Jagiellonian University, where Wojtyła earned his habilitation degree; and Pinckaers, on the part of moral theology, who wrote a commentary on no. 68 of the Encyclical *Fides et ratio*, which was authored by John Paul II — Karol Wojtyła.

Keywords: moral theology, ethics, philosophy, St. Thomas, Pinckaers, Kłósak

Abstrakt

Czego oczekuje teologia moralna od etyki filozoficznej?

Moralność Nowego Testamentu różni się od moralności Starego Testamentu. W Nowym Testamencie jest mniej konkretnych wskazówek, stąd „więcej” ludzkiego rozumu jest potrzebne, aby wskazać i uzasadnić określone (szczególnie bardziej konkretne) normy moralne. Dlatego teologia moralna wykorzystuje etykę do wyjaśniania i uzasadniania norm moralnych. Wskazuje na to nr 68 encykliki *Fides et ratio*. Jednakże taka etyka musi spełniać pewne podstawowe wymagania, np. być zgodna z Objawieniem (nie sprzeczać się z prawdami w nim zawartymi). Problematykę współzależności między teologią moralną a etyką podejmowało wielu filozofów i teologów moralnych. W wielu podręcznikach z zakresu teologii moralnej pojawiają się odniesienia do etyki filozoficznej. Jednakże wśród najbardziej reprezentatywnych autorów w temacie dyskusji nad relacją między teologią moralną a etyką w kontekście debaty nad rozprawą habilitacyjną Karola Wojtyły znajdują się: ze strony filozofii, ks. Kazimierz Kłósak, który był profesorem na Wydziale Teologicznym Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, gdzie Wojtyła obronił swoją habilitację oraz ze strony teologii moralnej, S. T. Pinckaers, który napisał komentarz do punktu 68 encykliki *Fides et ratio*, której autorem jest Jan Paweł II — Karol Wojtyła.

Słowa kluczowe: teologia moralna, etyka, filozofia, św. Tomasz, Pinckaers, Kłósak

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Karol Wojtyła reads and interprets Max Scheler

Karol Wojtyła's encounter with Max Scheler's thought as expressed in the work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik*¹ [Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values] can certainly be regarded as a key milestone in the formation of his own philosophical position. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the particular "gateway" through which the future pope entered the world of philosophy was (1) the reading of Rev. Kazimierz Wais' course book entitled *Ontologia czyli metafizyka ogólna*² [Ontology, or General Metaphysics], which introduced him to the world of Thomistic philosophy, and, no less important, (2) the exploration of the mystical writings of St. John of the Cross, which sensitized him to the importance of human experience not only in the theology of spirituality, but also precisely in the philosophical approach. Here, however, we will focus on Scheler's thought itself and its influence on the formation of Wojtyła's philosophy. That philosophy — and this should be emphasized — is peculiar and creative, attempting to complement classical metaphysics with phenomenological analysis. And such a position, as Władysław Stróżewski wrote, "may be one of the most fruitful paths for the philosophy of our time"³.

1 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, Verlag von Max Niemeyer, Halle an der Saale 1921.

2 K. Wais, *Ontologia czyli metafizyka ogólna*, Tow. "Biblioteka Religijna" im. X. Arcybiskupa Bilczewskiego, Lwów 1926.

3 W. Stróżewski, *Doświadczenie i interpretacja*, in: *Servo Veritatis. Materiały sesji naukowej poświęconej myśli Karola Wojtyły — Jana Pawła II*. Uniwersytet Jagielloński, Kraków 16–17

⟨Hineinwachsen⟩

As we delve into the terminology of the German language, we can encounter the expression *Hineinwachsen* (literally, “to grow into something”). Among other things, this term can be used to describe the phenomenon of a human being’s personal development (“Hineinwachsen des Personseins selbst”⁴ — “growing up into a person”), and this meaning can help describe and characterize Wojtyła’s encounter with Scheler’s thought. The term appears once in Scheler (and also in Wojtyła) in the context of the principle of imitation⁵. Here, however, let’s try to look at it from a somewhat broader perspective, sticking, however, to its established meaning. Leaving aside the colloquial usage⁶, the use of the term *Hineinwachsen* in German can be reduced to three aspects: (1) “in etwas wachsen, sich durch Wachstum in etwas hinein ausdehnen” (“to grow into something, to develop into something through growth”); (2) “durch Älterwerden, im Laufe der Zeit, der Entwicklung in etwas (in einen neuen Zustand) hineinkommen” (“to enter into something (into some new state) by growing up, with the passage of time, through development”); and (3) “sich in etwas einleben, einarbeiten und damit völlig vertraut werden” (“to settle into something, work through something and become completely familiar/acquainted with it”)⁷.

Thus, the indicated meanings can be understood as certain stages of growth of both one’s personality and one’s knowledge, and skills. First, to “enter” into a given matter, by noticing and learning about it under different circumstances, drawing on different inspirations and sources. Then,

listopada 1984, ed. W. Stróżewski, Uniwersytet Jagielloński — Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, Warszawa–Kraków 1988, p. 280.

4 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, p. 604.

5 See M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, p. 604; K. Wojtyła, *Ewangeliczna zasada naśladowania. Nauka źródeł objawienia a system filozoficzny Maxa Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2001, p. 155 (Człowiek i Moralność, 2; Źródła i Monografie, 119).

6 That is “wachsen und schließlich hineinpassen” (“to grow up and eventually fit in” — e.g. into previously oversized clothes); see *Hineinwachsen*, in: *Duden. Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache in sechs Bänden*, ed. G. Drosdowski, vol. 3, Bibliographisches Institut, Mannheim etc. 1979, p. 1247.

7 See *Hineinwachsen*, p. 1247.

in retrospect, to get to know it more and more broadly and deeply. And finally, to get to know it at such a level that one can move freely within it, understand it, and be able to use it both reconstructively and creatively. Such is the three-stage process that, in our opinion, can be seen in the development of Wojtyła's philosophical research with regard to his encounter with Scheler's thought.

First inspirations

Wojtyła's encounter with Scheler's thought in 1951–1953, when the future pope was working on his habilitation thesis, had its own history. Wojtyła's first contact with the German philosopher's phenomenology most likely occurred at the beginning of his studies in 1938, for while he was a student of Polish studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, he attended additional lectures on the German schools of Christian ethics⁸.

In addition, it is worth mentioning at least three persons who may have contributed to Wojtyła's paying special attention to Scheler's thought and choosing his work as the basis for his habilitation-related research. These are: Rev. Ignacy Różycki, Jacek Woroniecki OP, and Roman Ingarden.

According to George Weigel, the choice of Scheler was motivated by a suggestion from Różycki, Wojtyła's master's thesis supervisor⁹. They may have discussed Scheler during their joint stay at 19 Kanonicza Street in Cracow, where Wojtyła shared an apartment with Różycki during his sabbatical (according to the register book entry of September 25, 1951)¹⁰, or earlier.

Wojtyła may also have been inspired by the research approach of Fr. Woroniecki, whom Wojtyła met in Rome while studying at the Angelicum (1946–1948). Woroniecki held on to the line of St. Thomas Aquinas, while at the same time deepening some elements of his ethics (e.g., the issue

8 See T. Szulc, *Pope John Paul II. The Biography*, Scribner, New York 1995, p. 89; *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, ed. by A. Boniecki, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2000, p. 43.

9 See G. Weigel, *Witness to Hope. The Biography of Pope John Paul II*, Harper Perennial, New York 2005, p. 125.

10 See *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 105.

of “causality”), and was interested in, among other things, the “ethics of values” in Scheler’s system¹¹.

Besides, one should bear in mind the (at least indirect) influence of the phenomenology of Ingarden, who, like Scheler, was a disciple of Edmund Husserl, the founder of modern phenomenology. Although Wojtyła did not come into direct contact with him until 1967–1970, as early as the turn of 1949–1950 — according to Edward Owoc’s memoirs — “Rev. Doctor [Karol Wojtyła] was interested in phenomenological philosophy, represented by prof. Roman Ingarden”¹².

One may also come across the opinion that Wojtyła’s interest in Scheler was strictly personal and caused by his fascination with the Jewish heritage within Christianity, and that, because the founder of phenomenology and Edith Stein, who collaborated with him, were of the same origin, the German philosopher also fell within the compass of his interest¹³.

Work on the habilitation thesis

In 1951 Wojtyła began work on his habilitation thesis entitled *Próba opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej według systemu Maksa Schelera* [An Attempt to Develop a Christian Ethics Based on Max Scheler’s System] (1953)¹⁴. After his graduate studies in Cracow doctoral studies in Rome, and pastoral ministry in the village of Niegowić near Cracow, and the St.

11 See K. Wojtyła, *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej. Na podstawie koncepcji św. Tomasza z Akwinu i Maksa Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 233; M. Mruszczyk, *Człowiek w “antropologii adekwatnej” Karola Wojtyły*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, Katowice 2010, p. 51, no. 199; T. Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, p. 143.

12 *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 106.

13 See T. Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, p. 182; M. Mruszczyk, *Człowiek w “antropologii adekwatnej” Karola Wojtyły*, p. 55.

14 See K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1959 (*Rozprawy Wydziału Filozoficznego*, 5); re-issued in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 11–128 (the indicated re-edition was used as a source in this work, and the references in the subsequent notes refer to this edition).

Florian parish in Cracow, Karol Wojtyła was granted, by Archbishop Eugeniusz Baziak, a two-year sabbatical (as of 1 September 1951), which he was to devote to work on his habilitation thesis. Wojtyła chose Scheler's ethical thought as his topic, especially his work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* [Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values. A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism] of 1916 (the first part of this work appeared in 1913). Wojtyła had a copy of the second, unaltered edition of Scheler's monograph (2. unveränd. Aufl., Verlag von Max Niemeyer, Halle an der Saale 1921), which to this day remains deposited at the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow, in the holdings of Cardinal Karol Wojtyła's reference library (ref. BKKW 84), with his underlining and annotations in the margins.

Wojtyła's thorough acquaintance with the text of *Der Formalismus* is also confirmed by a collection of his notes — recently found in the aforementioned archives — entitled *Problemy etyki wartości (jako materiał do pracy: "Schelerowska koncepcja podstaw etyki chrześcijańskiej")* [Problems of value ethics (as material for the work: "Scheler's Concept of the Foundations of Christian Ethics")] (ref. AKKW CII 24/232). It served as Wojtyła's working material for his habilitation thesis and consists of a set of 639 small manuscript pages (the so-called index cards). The first part (24 cards) includes a synopsis of the most important issues of Scheler's ethical concept, while the remaining part (615 cards) is a systematic attempt to translate the work under study. Page by page, Wojtyła tried to render in Polish the content of the German-language monograph. However, it should be clearly emphasized that this is typically working material; the translation is fragmentary in places and includes elements of interpretation.

Eventually, in the first half of 1953, Wojtyła finished writing his habilitation thesis¹⁵. The Theological Faculty at the Jagiellonian University asked Ingarden to review it, but — apparently as a result of pressure from

15 See *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 108.

the communist party — he could not comply with the request¹⁶. After all, in 1950–1956, the Polish student of Husserl was considered a representative of so-called idealist philosophy, and was banned from both teaching and publishing his own works¹⁷. However, Stefan Swieżawski of the Catholic University of Lublin accepted the request for review¹⁸. In addition, the reviewers of the future pope's dissertation were professors affiliated with the Jagiellonian University: Rev. Alexander Usowicz, the then head of the Department of Christian Philosophy, and Rev. Władysław Wicher. The procedures related to the completion of Karol Wojtyła's dissertation lasted from November 30 to December 3, 1953. On the final day, Wojtyła's habilitation lecture entitled *Analiza aktu wiary w świetle filozofii wartości* [An Analysis of the Act of Faith in the Light of the Philosophy of Values] took place, which, like the entire habilitation proceedings, was unanimously approved, and thus the decision was made to present the habilitation candidate for approval by the Minister of Higher Education as an associate professor of ethics and moral theology¹⁹. *Nota bene*, this was the last habilitation at the Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University before it was closed in 1954²⁰. Wojtyła was formally awarded the title of associate professor only in 1957 at the Catholic University of Lublin, since the Ministry of Education had previously refused to grant higher academic degrees to priests²¹. The dissertation was published two years later, in 1959.

Wojtyła's research into Scheler's ethical thought found expression not only in his habilitation thesis, but also in monographic lectures delivered at the Catholic University of Lublin: *Akt i przeżycie etyczne* [An Act and Ethical Lived Experience] (1954/1955)²², *Dobro i wartość* [The Good and

16 See S. Swieżawski, *W nowej rzeczywistości 1945–1965*, Redakcja Wydawnictw Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1991, p. 197.

17 See Z. Majewska, *Książeczka o Ingardenie. Szkic biograficzny*, Wydawnictwo UMCS, Lublin 1995, p. 71–72.

18 See S. Swieżawski, *W nowej rzeczywistości 1945–1965*, p. 197–198.

19 See *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 110–111.

20 See *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 118.

21 See *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły*, p. 131; T. Szulc, *Pope John Paul II*, p. 192.

22 See K. Wojtyła, *Akt i przeżycie etyczne*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2006 (Źródła

the Value] (1955/1956)²³, and *Zagadnienie normy i szczęścia* [The Problem of the Norm and Happiness] (1956/1957)²⁴, and in articles, inter alia: *System etyczny Maxa Schelera* [Max Scheler's Ethical System] (1953–1954)²⁵, in which Wojtyła presents and briefly discusses the main theses of his treatise, *Ewangeliczna zasada naśladowania. Nauka źródeł objawienia a system filozoficzny Maxa Schelera* [The Evangelical Principle of Emulation. The Study of the Sources of Revelation and Max Scheler's Philosophical System] (1957)²⁶, which is an elaboration of one of the thoughts contained in his habilitation thesis, and in still other works, especially the following two: *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera* [The Problem of Separation of a Lived Experience from An Act in Ethics Against the Backdrop of Kant's and Scheler's Views] (1955–1957)²⁷ and *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej. Na podstawie koncepcji św. Tomasza i Maxa Schelera* [On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm. On the Basis of the Concepts of St. Thomas and Max Scheler] (1959)²⁸. Significantly, all of these works and authors profoundly influenced the formation of Wojtyła's own philosophical position, most fully expressed in *Osoba i czyn* [Person and Act] (1969, 1985, 2000)²⁹.

i Monografie, 302; Człowiek i Moralność, 3), p. 19–73.

23 See K. Wojtyła, *Dobro i wartość*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 75–178.

24 See K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie normy i szczęścia*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 179–290.

25 See K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 129–145.

26 See K. Wojtyła, *Ewangeliczna zasada naśladowania*, p. 147–158.

27 See K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 159–180.

28 See K. Wojtyła, *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej*, p. 231–252.

29 See K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, in: K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn" oraz inne studia antropologiczne, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2000, p. 43–344 (Człowiek i Moralność, 4; Źródła i Monografie, 142); K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, transl. G. Ignatik, in: K. Wojtyła, "Person and Act" and Related Essays, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 2021, p. 93–416 (The English Critical Edition of the Works of Karol Wojtyła / John Paul II, 1).

Wojtyła's own philosophical conclusions

In the final part of his habilitation thesis, Wojtyła states:

Although the ethical system created by Scheler is not essentially suitable for scientific interpretation of Christian ethics, we can find it incidentally helpful in our scientific work on Christian ethics. This is because it makes it easier for us to analyze ethical facts on a phenomenal and experiential plane³⁰.

Wojtyła recognized and appreciated the cognitive value of applying the phenomenological method, the possibility of describing man's experiences, his axiological world, and through this obtaining new access to the immense wealth of his personal life. He had noticed this potential earlier, during the above-mentioned study of the writings of St. John of the Cross, using the analysis of the mystical experience of God to unveil and characterize the person himself³¹. Indeed, the descriptions provided by the mystics are peculiar phenomenological descriptions revealing man's personal relationship with God. It should be emphasized that, in examining these experiences, Wojtyła, did so from the perspective of Thomistic metaphysics. Years later, in a conversation with André Frossard, the future pope recalled a particular Copernican "revolution" brought about in him by reading Rev. Wais' textbook on general metaphysics³², which — as he put it — gave him a "new vision of the world"³³. He stressed that the world

30 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksxa Schelera*, p. 123; K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxxa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 142.

31 See K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie wiary w dziełach św. Jana od Krzyża*, transl. Leonard od Męki Pańskiej [J. Kowalówka], Wydawnictwo Ojców Karmelitów Bosych, Kraków 1990 (Jubileusz Czterechsetlecia Śmierci św. Jana od Krzyża 1591–1991, 1); in a slightly different translation: K. Wojtyła, *Świętego Jana od Krzyża nauka o wierze*, transl. K. Stawecka, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2000 (Człowiek i Moralność, 5; „Źródła i Monografie”, 200).

32 K. Wais, *Ontologia czyli metafizyka ogólna*, Tow. "Biblioteka Religijna" im. X. Arcybiskupa Bilczewskiego, Lwów 1926.

33 "By not afraid!". *André Frossard in conversation with Pope John Paul II*, transl. J.R. Foster, The Bodley Head, London 1984, p. 17.

of humanistic and philological-literary thought, in which he had previously lived intuitively and emotionally, was then confirmed and justified on the ground of the most profound and simple rationale³⁴.

Along with the gradual focusing of Wojtyła's attention on man-person, that "metaphysical terrain," delineated by Wais' coursebook, showing "the dimension of the being in which the personal subjectivity of man is realized," began to seem open to a potential "development" on the basis of experience³⁵. The material for this was provided by Wojtyła's "digging into" the text of Scheler's *Der Formalismus*.

Through these two "encounters" with Thomism and phenomenology, Wojtyła's philosophical position was crystallized, as was the postulate of a certain synthesis of, or integration between, metaphysics and phenomenology. Wojtyła wanted to use experience as a source of direct cognition, while not losing the perspective of a holistic view of reality. His goal was to avoid both the speculative derivation of anthropology and ethics from metaphysics, and the subjectivization of experience³⁶.

The Wadowice-born philosopher was aware of the deep rupture in modern philosophy regarding the conception of experience, which was either reduced to the "purely sensual" (phenomenalism, empiricism) or denied its cognitive value (*a priori* rationalism). Wojtyła noted that both in Scheler's thought and in the views of Immanuel Kant, which he critically analysed, experience is given vital importance, but these approaches are insufficient. In Kant, experience does not reach the essence of things, while in Scheler's phenomenology it does, but not the metaphysical essence of things, only the phenomenological essence. As Jerzy W. Gałkowski put it in his analysis, Wojtyła "would like to directly reach the cognized (i.e. experienced)

34 See "By not afraid!", p. 17.

35 See K. Wojtyła, *Subjectivity and "the Irreducible" in Man*, transl. G. Ignatik, in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act* and *Related Essays*, p. 539.

36 See K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 112–113; J. W. Gałkowski, *Pozycja filozoficzna kard. Karola Wojtyły. Referat na Międzynarodowy Kongres Filozoficzny. Rzym, wrzesień 1980*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 29 (1981) no. 2, p. 75–76, 80–81.

object, and to reach its «layer» in which he could grasp the very essence of things — the essence of which traditional metaphysics speaks³⁷.

According to Wojtyła, Scheler's concept lacks this realistic foundation, as the German philosopher focused almost exclusively on the emotional sphere and overlooked a person's causal sphere and all its consequences. And it is precisely a person's causality, as the later bishop of Rome stressed, that is the source of ethical value. Whereas Scheler claimed that "the person is a source of ethical value only because of [...] the special exuberance of his emotional nature"³⁸, Wojtyła absolutely could not agree with him. For he noted the disastrous consequences of this assumption for all of ethics and anthropology. A person then cannot realize values; he can only — as a passive subject — feel them. And if Christian ethics is based on the thesis that man is the agent of the ethical good and evil of his acts, and perfects himself through ethically positive values, while devaluing himself through negative ones (so-called ethical perfectionism), Scheler's concept is absolutely unacceptable to Wojtyła.

At the same time, however, Wojtyła discerned in Scheler an eminently positive aspect, namely, the very method of phenomenological analysis of ethical facts an experiential position in which the given experience of the human person is approached with its total content. We approach an ethical fact as an experience of value, that is, an experience that is intentionally directed toward value as its object content. Proceeding in this way — as Wojtyła noted — the phenomenologist can reach valid conclusions, especially ones instrumental in describing the special value of the person and discovering certain regularities of ethical experiences that may appear analogously in different cases³⁹.

By this method [that is, a phenomenological one] — as Wojtyła wrote — we discover ethical good and evil, we see how they shape a person's experience,

37 J. W. Gałkowski, *Pozycja filozoficzna kard. Karola Wojtyły*, p. 77.

38 K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie woli w analizie aktu etycznego*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 197.

39 See K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 143–145.

but, on the other hand, we can by no means determine the objective principle whereby one act of a person is ethically good and another is ethically bad⁴⁰.

And isn't that what ethics is all about? At this point, phenomenology must become a "phenomenology of real being," that is, it must enter the "metaphysical terrain". What is more:

Phenomenology — said Wojtyła as Pope John Paul II on March 22, 2003 to a delegation of the World Institute of Phenomenology in Hanover, USA — is primarily a style of thought, a relationship of the mind with reality whose essential and constitutive features it aims to grasp, avoiding prejudice and schematisms. I mean that — the Pope stressed, it is, as it were, an attitude of intellectual charity to the human being and the world, and for the believer, to God, the beginning and end of all things. To overcome the crisis of meaning which is characteristic of some sectors of modern thought, I insisted in the Encyclical *Fides et ratio* (cf. no. 83)⁴¹, on an openness to metaphysics, and phenomenology can make a significant contribution to this openness⁴².

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40 K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 144.

41 See: John Paul II, Encyclical *Fides et ratio* on the relationship between faith and reason, 14.09.1998, 83, in: John Paul II, *Encyclicals*, Carmel International Publishing House, Trivandrum 2005, p. 127–128.

42 John Paul II, "La fenomenologia è un atteggiamento di carità intellettuale verso l'uomo e il mondo e, per il credente, verso Dio, principio e fine di tutte le cose". *Alla delegazione dell'Istituto Mondiale di Fenomenologia di Hanover (Stati Uniti d'America)*, 22.03.2003, in: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. 26, 1 (2003), Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Città del Vaticano 2005, p. 357.

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Abstract

Karol Wojtyła reads and interprets Max Scheler

The present article addresses Karol Wojtyła’s “encounter” with Max Scheler’s thought, expressed mainly in his work “Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik” (Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values). Three stages can be clearly distinguished: (1) first inspirations, which came about in particular as a result of contact with Rev. Ignacy Różycki, Jacek Woroniecki OP,

and Roman Ingarden; (2) the duration of work on the habilitation thesis, which was based on Scheler's above-mentioned work; and (3) further application of the philosophical findings. Wojtyła concluded that Scheler's ethical system was unfit for scientific interpretation of Christian ethics. The reason was that the German philosopher focused almost exclusively on the emotional sphere and did not discern the person's causal sphere. In a case like this a person is incapable of realizing values, and can only feel them, as a passive subject. However, inasmuch as Christian ethics is based on the thesis whereby man is the agent of the ethical good and evil of his own acts, perfecting himself through ethically positive values, and devaluing himself through negative ones, Scheler's concept is absolutely unacceptable to Wojtyła. Still, Wojtyła discerned an eminently positive aspect in Scheler's approach, namely, the very method of the phenomenological analysis of ethical facts on the phenomenal and experiential levels. Moreover, by attempting a certain integration of classical metaphysics with phenomenological analysis, Wojtyła — in a peculiar and creative way — developed his own philosophical position.

Keywords: Wojtyła, Scheler, ethics, phenomenological method

Abstrakt

Karol Wojtyła czyta i interpretuje Maxa Schelera

Niniejszy artykuł porusza temat „spotkania” Karola Wojtyły z myślą Maks Schelera, wyrażoną głównie w jego pracy „Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik” (Formalizm w etyce i niematerialna etyka wartości). Można wyraźnie wyróżnić trzy etapy: (1) pierwsze inspiracje, które pojawiły się przede wszystkim dzięki spotkaniu z ks. Ignacym Różyckim, Jackiem Woronieckim OP i Romanem Ingardenem; (2) okres pracy nad rozprawą habilitacyjną, opartą na powyższej pracy Schelera; i (3) dalszą aplikację wypracowanych wniosków filozoficznych. Wojtyła doszedł do wniosku, że etyczny system Schelera nie nadaje się do naukowej interpretacji etyki chrześcijańskiej. Powodem było to, że niemiecki filozof skupiał się niemal wyłącznie na sferze emocjonalnej i nie dostrzegał sfery sprawczej osoby. W takim przypadku osoba nie jest zdolna do realizacji

wartości, a jedynie może je odczuwać jako bierny podmiot. Gdyż w kontekście etyki chrześcijańskiej opierającej się na tezie, według której człowiek jest sprawcą dobra i zła etycznego swoich własnych czynów, doskonaląc się poprzez wartości etycznie pozytywne i deprecjonując się poprzez negatywne, koncepcja Schelera jest absolutnie nieakceptowalna dla Wojtyły. Niemniej jednak, Wojtyła dostrzegł wyjątkowo pozytywny aspekt w podejściu Schelera, mianowicie samą metodę fenomenologicznej analizy faktów etycznych na płaszczyźnie zjawiskowej i doświadczalnej. Ponadto, poprzez próbę pewnej integracji klasycznej metafizyki z analizą fenomenologiczną, Wojtyła — w swoisty i twórczy sposób — rozwijał swoje własne stanowisko filozoficzne.

Słowa kluczowe: Wojtyła, Scheler, etyka, metoda fenomenologiczna

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Wojtyła's view on Kant's formalism and Scheler's material ethics of value, or the ethics of material duty

Analyzing Wojtyła's dissertation on Scheler, we can say without exaggeration that early on in his academic career Wojtyła revealed himself as someone who builds bridges (*Pontifex*), trying to preserve and combine in a coherent theory accurate readings of reality present in various philosophical concepts. It is probably no coincidence that in his later works Wojtyła repeatedly uses the conjunction “and” (rather than “or”) — “act and lived experience”, “love and responsibility”, “person and act”, which seems to result precisely from this effort to build bridges between different conceptions of ethics and different visions of the human person.

Scheler as a critic of Kant

In his habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła focuses on Scheler's major ethical work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik* — *Formalism in Ethics and the Material Ethics of Values*. As the title already indicates, Scheler's work is devoted to a discussion of the concept of ethics developed by Immanuel Kant. Apart from criticizing Kant's concept, the work contains a positive proposal to build ethics beginning with the experience of morality. The essence of Scheler's proposal can be expressed as follows: he contrasts Kant's formal ethics with the ethics of material values, which are cognized in an experience specific to ethics. Thus, in Scheler's concept, ethics acquired an empirical character, which, according to this German phenomenologist, was the condition for the legitimacy

of any cognition. As Scheler wrote: “All cognition is rooted in experience. Therefore, ethics, too, must be based on «experience»”¹. At the same time, it should be remembered that the epistemological assumptions Kant shares with David Hume in this case did not allow him to regard ethics as a discipline based on experience. However, Kant would not subscribe to Hume’s well-known assertion: “Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions” (*A Treatise of Human Nature*, II.3.3, 415); for he did not consider the realm of morality to be entirely subjective and removed from the guiding role of reason. For him, however, the objective and categorical character of morality does not flow from the cognition of „material values” given in experience, but from the fact that the moral imperative is given *a priori* to every rational being (he finds morality to be a „fact of reason” that is given independently of all experience). Moral norms, on the other hand, are formulated in the procedure of universalization of maxims of action, which is also purely formal — it is a kind of generalization of norms, which does not take their content, but their form as a starting point². In this way, the normativity of ethics is guaranteed, but at the same time its empiricity is rejected. Hence, we can say that in the case of Kant’s ethics, we are dealing with ethics that is normative, but not empirical.

It was this negation of the experiential character of ethics that prompted Scheler’s protest. In a sense, we can say that Scheler’s proposal is an exact reversal of Kant’s conception: Scheler defends the empirical character of ethics, but does not take into account its normative character; above all, he does not sufficiently consider the relation of the moral good to the person’s causality³.

1 “Jede Art von Erkenntnis wurzelt in Erfahrung. Und auch Ethik muss sich auf «Erfahrung» gründen” (M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, Francke Verlag, Bern 1954, p. 179).

2 On the procedure of formulating moral norms according to Kant, cf. J. M. Palacios, *Istota formalizmu etycznego*, “Roczniki Filozoficzne” (1997–1998) no. 2, p. 187–202.

3 We have already pointed out that this very point was the focus of Ingarden’s critique of Scheler’s concept. Here the great Polish phenomenologist’s assessment coincides with the criticism of Scheler developed by Wojtyła in his habilitation dissertation.

It must be remembered, of course, that the phenomenologists extend the concept of empiricism, which in the empiricism of Hume and his continuators was limited only to sense cognition. Thanks to this extension, moral experience can be recognized by them as a legitimate form of experience, i.e. direct cognitive contact with an object (in this case, value). However, there is something that is common to the concepts of Kant and Scheler, and which makes it possible to say that both of them — each in their own way — are in a certain sense continuators of Hume. This is because both believe that values are not the object of rational cognition. In other words: reason is blind to values.

But if this is the case, then can the empirical character of ethics be salvaged, and in what way? While Kant's answer is negative, Scheler answers this question positively: Yes, ethics has an empirical character (and, if it is to be a science, it must have such a character), but it is based neither on sense cognition nor on rational cognition. In his phenomenological analysis of moral experience, Scheler tries to show that values, along with their hierarchy, are given to a person in emotional experience. According to Scheler, emotions — like other cognitive acts — are intentional: they put us in direct contact with their objects — in this case, values.

Experience and moral duty

Such a conception of experience, however, raises some difficulties. The first one is the very understanding of intentionality, from which phenomenologists exclude the condition of existential transcendence of the object. The transcendental *epoché* of which phenomenologists speak amounts to reducing the object exclusively to its content given in the intentional act (to put it in the phenomenologese, exclusively to its *noema*), and thus to recognizing the existential transcendence of the object as an irrelevant condition. As Tadeusz Styczeń, a student and continuator of Wojtyła's ethical concept, writes:

In place of existential transcendence, a proposal is made of a transcendence that is allegedly guaranteed by the very structure of the cognitive act

itself, namely, intentionality [...] Well, by putting a clamp on the existential transcendence of the object of moral experience and experience in general, phenomenologists simply miss the very object of ethics, not to mention the fact that they remove — in our view — the very basis of the immediacy of experience, that is, the feature that they themselves have recognized as its indispensable condition⁴.

According to Styczeń, a moral duty that would not be real would lose its truly normative character, and thus would cease to bind us morally at all.

The second difficulty that Wojtyła points out is the very emotional character of moral experience itself (Wojtyła calls it the “emotionalist assumptions” of Scheler’s concept). For, in essence, emotions are a kind of response to values, and cannot be subjected to any norm in the sense that the subject cannot “command” himself to experience them. Emotions appear in the subject in a spontaneous manner, independent of his will. To use Wojtyła’s terminology from *Person and Act*, we can say that emotions belong to the domain of what “happens” in man and as such do not yet constitute his act in the strict sense (of rational and free choice). In this way, Scheler concludes that there is no place in ethics for the experience of duty, i.e. there is no place in ethics for that moment which, according to Kant, constitutes the very essence of moral experience. In one of his essays devoted to the comparison between Kant’s and Scheler’s concepts, Wojtyła writes:

In the name of values, Scheler steps forward to fight against the ethics of Kant, who detached man’s entire ethical life from values, from goods, and closed it in the noumenal sphere, subjecting it entirely to duty. Scheler goes so far as to reject duty in ethics in general as a fundamentally negative and destructive factor [...] Value and duty oppose each other and are mutually exclusive⁵.

4 T. Styczeń, *Problem możliwości etyki jako empirycznie uprawomocnionej i ogólnie ważnej teorii moralności. Studium metaetyczne*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1972, p. 117–118.

5 K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1991, p. 172.

It is because of the exclusion of the moment of duty from ethics, which is based on emotionalist assumptions, that Wojtyła concludes that Scheler's ethical system is unsuitable for scientific interpretation of the Christian ethics.

We do not want to enter here into a more detailed justification of this claim. Still, it is worth pointing out that Wojtyła's evaluation of Scheler's ethical system is not exclusively negative. It is true that the emotionalist presuppositions behind this system are considered by Wojtyła to be insufficient to give an account of the totality of moral experience, above all of the experience of moral duty given in conscience, and of the relationship between the duty experienced and the person's act, but this does not imply a rejection of the phenomenological method as such. In other words, according to Wojtyła, the emotionalist assumptions are not justified by a thorough description of the experience of morality, but follow from a pre-conceived concept of experience. In Wojtyła's view, it is the phenomenological method itself that leads us to go beyond these assumptions. Thus, confrontation with Scheler's ethical thought leads Wojtyła to develop his own concept of ethics, in which an important place is given to Kant's categorical imperative.

And so Wojtyła adds a positive thesis to the negative evaluation of Scheler's system.

Although the ethical system created by Max Scheler is not essentially suitable for interpreting the Christian ethics, we can find it incidentally helpful in our scientific work on the Christian ethics. This is because it makes it easier for us to analyze ethical facts on a phenomenal and experiential plane.

Towards empirical and normative ethics

As we can see, the negative evaluation of Scheler's system as a tool for the scientific interpretation of the Christian ethics, and — it should be added — the experience of morality as such, does not at all give rise to a negative evaluation of the phenomenological method in the analysis of moral facts. Moreover, Wojtyła proposes that this method should be applied even

more consistently than Scheler himself did. In his partly justified polemic with Kant, Scheler went too far in excluding the normative moment from the experience of morality, while the very phenomenological analysis of experience — above all, the judgments of conscience — shows that normativity is given in the originary experience of morality. This experience tells us that we are often faced with situations in which we do not emotionally experience the value that obliges us to take (or not to take) action. It happens — and these seem to be the most paradigmatic cases of moral action — that we act against those values that emotionally attract us. It is not the husband who abandons his wife because he has fallen in love with another woman who acts well, but the one who remains faithful to the marriage vows once made, even if he does not experience the same emotions during this period of his life that accompanied the making of the vows. To express this even more generally, the action of a person as a person is characterized precisely by the fact that he is able to pursue the values whose obliging power he recognizes independently of his desires and emotions (although it would naturally be better if he were supported in this pursuit by his emotions).

Therefore, Wojtyła fully shares Scheler's postulate whereby ethics should begin its analysis from experience. In his opinion, the limitation of Scheler's proposal lies in the fact that he did not fully utilize all the resources of the phenomenological method in revealing the entire richness of the lived experience of morality. Therefore, Wojtyła's own concept, the first foreshadowings of which can be found in his treatise on Scheler, could be described as an attempt to preserve in one coherent vision those aspects of moral experience that are present in both Kant and Scheler. One might say that Wojtyła does not consider Kant's and Scheler's concepts as disjunctive alternatives; rather, he thinks that it is possible to preserve elements of both of them in one coherent concept. Therefore, in the article cited above, Wojtyła states:

The totality [...] of the ethical experience contains not only value as an object content, but the normative moment in which values are ordered and set as

a task to be carried out. Such a task itself arising from the normal character of a lived ethical experience entails an obligation⁶.

It is not difficult to see that in the evaluation of Scheler's concept of ethics there are already evident some concepts that will be crucial in the philosophy of person developed by Wojtyła in his main anthropological work, i.e. *Person and Act*. The thing is, first and foremost, the concept of causative agency and, more generally, a person's act, which will become for Wojtyła a kind of window revealing to the philosopher's gaze the person's inner self. It is through the act that the person expresses who he is (*logos*) and at the same time fulfils himself (*ethos*). Of course, Scheler too analyzes the actions of a person. However, according to Wojtyła, in Scheler's analyses, the act is ultimately reduced to an intentional act, and is therefore not related to the person's causative agency, which leads (or does not lead) to his fulfilment. In other words, the metaphysical categories of act and potency are missing from Scheler's analyses. "The act of which Scheler speaks is not an act in the Aristotelian sense; it does not imply the actualization of potency"⁷. In an intentional act, a person refers to an object (although, as we pointed out above, the ontic status of this object is not entirely clear). In the case of an intentional act which is an emotional experience this object is value. The development of the idea of the intentional act was a valuable achievement of phenomenology in its polemic against subjectivism (it is worth noting that through this idea — through the agency of Franz Brentano — phenomenology revived an idea that was already present in medieval philosophy). Wojtyła fully shares the idea of the intentional act, but at the same time he is convinced that in the field of ethics, a person's act cannot be limited to an intentional act. An ethical act involves the entire person, all dimensions of the person, but above all it is an expression of what constitutes the core of a person's personal subjectivity, namely his

6 K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera*, p. 179.

7 K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera*, p. 171.

reason and will. According to Wojtyła, Scheler's concept lacks this very element. In his polemic with Kant, Scheler went too far, leaving out of sight that aspect of the truth about human action, which is present in the German philosopher. We can express this as follows: In the face of values, man is not only a subject of intentional acts, but he is also a subject of action.

In Wojtyła's opinion, Scheler's ethical system lacks an adequate analysis of human causative agency. Man realizes his personal subjectivity primarily when he is the cause of his actions. Besides the experiences of "something is happening in me" or "something is happening to me", there is the experience of the act in which a person experiences himself from within as the cause of his action. This experience can also be a subject of phenomenological description. Here Wojtyła corrects Scheler while still remaining in the field of phenomenology itself.

Moreover, in the second of his concluding remarks, Wojtyła states that the phenomenological method can be of great help in revealing what has remained somewhat overshadowed in the analyses of classical philosophy, i.e., to show not only *that*, but also *how* man is a person. Thus, we can say that already in Wojtyła's treatise on Scheler we have a foreshadowing of what would later become the hallmark of Wojtyła's concept realized in the study *Person and Act*: an attempt at combining realist metaphysics and realist phenomenology into one coherent whole.

Philosophy as trans-phenomenology

The attempt at linking metaphysics and phenomenology allows Wojtyła to introduce into anthropology the metaphysical categories present in Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy, which, however, thanks to the phenomenological method, gain their originary support in experience. For it is one thing to say that every act is a realization of the potency inscribed in a given being, and another thing to "peep", as it were, at the transition from potency to act in the case of one's own action. We can describe the transition from potency to act, because we experience such a transition in our inner selves. The same can be said with regard to the concept of cause. From the outside, we only observe a succession of events and its possible

regularity, but what it means to “be a cause” we learn from our inner experience of the act, since we experience ourselves as the efficient cause of our actions. This use of the phenomenological method leads to metaphysics, but it is a metaphysics that grows out of personal experience. It can be described — following an Italian expert on Wojtyła's philosophy — as “trans-phenomenology”. It is a phenomenology that, starting from what is directly given in experience, leads, as it were, to the threshold of realities that go beyond what is given in empirical knowledge and at the same time explain it⁸.

However, let's return for a moment to the critical evaluation of Scheler's ethics, in order to point to that moment in which, according to Wojtyła, the normativity of moral experience is born. The problem to which Wojtyła draws attention can be expressed thus: Even if we can agree with Scheler as to the fact that value is in an ordinary fashion given to us in the emotional experience, we must at the same time say that emotions alone do not yet determine what practical attitude I should adopt towards the emotionally experienced value. It can happen — and indeed it often does — that at the emotional level we feel a fascination with a value — and this may be a value that stands high in the objective hierarchy of values — which, for one reason or another, should not become the motive for our actions.

What then is the criterion by which we should be guided in our choices? We can already find the answer to this question in the study on Scheler, but in a deeper way Wojtyła presents it in his work *Person and Act*, especially in the second part entitled “The Transcendence of the Person in Act”. This entire work can be considered an illustration of how Wojtyła carries out his project of trans-phenomenology. In a nutshell, Wojtyła's answer to the question of the criterion according to which a person makes his decisions can be summarized as follows: An analysis of moral experience shows that our free and conscious decisions are not made on the basis of the emotional impact of the values we experience, but on the basis of the cognition

8 Cf. R. Buttiglione, *Mysł Karola Wojtyły*, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1996. A comparison of Wojtyła's philosophy with phenomenology can be found in the last chapter of this study.

that concerns their truthfulness. I feel an obligation to choose a value that I have come to know as a true value, and this involves not only emotion, but also reason. According to Wojtyła, it is here that we find the source of the normativity of moral experience and ethics, which is the rational reflection on this experience. What binds me in conscience is truth, the truth about the good, which I recognize and at the same time recognize as the truth that binds me morally. This is where the value-related moment of normativity, which Scheler left out of the field of attention, comes in. We cannot adequately describe moral experience by omitting the moment of the binding power of truth. Wojtyła writes:

For truthfulness is most closely coupled with morality. It is not only about the objective truthfulness of norms *in abstracto*, but also about the experience of this truthfulness, which is expressed in the conviction, or subjective certainty, that one or other norm indicates the true good [...] For duty is, as it were, a special degree of dynamization of the will in its proper relation to truth⁹.

According to Wojtyła, it is the moment of the “normative power of truth” as the source of ethics normativity that was not included in Scheler’s concept. At the same time, in *Person and Act* Wojtyła shows that normativity is not something imposed on a person from the outside, but is born inside of him, although it flows from the cognition of reality independent of the subject — it is already *in nuce* present in the very act of truth cognition. In this way, moral duty turns out to be an experiential expression of the person’s dependence on truth — in this sense it is a material duty (and not just a formal one, as it was for Kant).

Moral duty is an expression of the normative power of truth. Man as a person is an entity endowed with freedom — he is not dependent on the objects of his intentional acts (as is the case with animals). However, the freedom of a person is not complete independence. A person — and this is inherent in the dynamics of freedom itself, which is the freedom of

9 K. Wojtyła, “Osoba i czyn” oraz inne studia antropologiczne, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2020, p. 207, 209.

a rationally free being — spontaneously recognizes his dependence on the truth that he himself knows and recognizes. A simple thought experiment is enough to see the accuracy of this assertion. Let us try to deny, not to someone else, but to ourselves, a truth that we know with certainty. Unless we are suffering from some form of mental or moral illness (e.g. succumbing to the mechanism of self-deception), we immediately notice that this introduces a kind of discord, a contradiction, into our inner self: I myself am trying to deny what I myself recognize as true. On the other hand, it is, of course, true that we happen to deny a learned truth, for example, when such a negation brings us some benefit. However, if we do not feel good about it later, if we feel remorse, it means that earlier — in the accompanying reflection, called by classical philosophy reflection *in actu exercito* — we have already recognized ourselves morally “dependent” on this truth.

In this way, Wojtyła introduces into ethics the moment of normativity that Scheler omitted. However, this does not mean, of course, a return to Kant's apriorism. Since the phenomenological method allows Wojtyła to discover normativity within human experience, moral duty ceases to be an *a priori* form of practical rationality and becomes — if we choose to express it in Scheler's terminology — “material duty”. In this way, Wojtyła avoids the one-sidedness of both Kant's and Scheler's concepts: He presents material ethics of values (preserving Scheler's postulate), which is at the same time ethics of material duty (preserving that which is accurate in Kant's concept).

The problem of ethics necessarily refers us to the problem of man, to whom, according to Kant, all philosophical questions ultimately boil down. Scheler addressed the problem of man in his famous work *The Human Place in the Cosmos*. Wojtyła, too, after analyzing issues related to morality, recognized that they required a transition to anthropological issues, which he did primarily in his study *Person and Act*. Of course, the answer to the question of man is different for each of these three authors. Kant remains within the framework of transcendental idealism, while Scheler moves towards a kind of pantheism.

For Wojtyła, on the other hand, the problem of man is the starting point for a return to classical metaphysics. However, the categories of this

metaphysics are elaborated by starting from the experience of man, so that one could say that Wojtyła makes his own the great postulate of modern philosophy, that is, the postulate of starting from the experience of man, but at the same time he goes beyond anthropology at the end point. This could be expressed as follows: At the starting point the metaphysical problem is identical with the problem of man; in posing the question of being, man starts from his own experience, and his question is primarily about his own being. However, in order to answer the question of his own being, man must pose the question of being as such, that is, the metaphysical question.

According to Wojtyła, the only adequate answer to this question lies in radically posing the question of the existence of being, which finds its ultimate explanation in the Absolute. Although Wojtyła did not devote any separate study to the metaphysical question, some clues as to the direction such a study could take can be found in John Paul II's commentary on the first chapters of the Book of Genesis, which can be found in the catecheses delivered by the Pope in the first years of his pontificate (today we know that the commentary too was written before Wojtyła was elected to the See of Saint Peter).

John Paul II said:

The first account [...] of the creation of man contains hidden within itself a powerful metaphysical content. One should not forget that precisely this text in the Book of Genesis has become the source of the deepest inspirations for the thinkers who have sought to understand “being” and “existing” (perhaps only The Book of Exodus 3 can be compared with this text). In it man is also defined [...] in a way more metaphysical than physical¹⁰.

Of course, the Pope's reflections belong to a different literary genre than a philosophical treatise and go beyond the limits of purely rational analysis. However, I think that an attentive reader will find in them elements of the

¹⁰ Jan Paweł II, *Mężczyznę i niewiastę stworzył ich*, Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2008, p. 12.

philosophy of man developed by Wojtyła, to which the first step is the study on Max Scheler's ethics¹¹.

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Abstract

Wojtyła's view on Kant's formalism and Scheler's material ethics of value, or the ethics of material duty

The article presents the concept of ethics developed by Karol Wojtyła in his polemic against the ethical systems of Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler. Wojtyła negatively evaluates Scheler's system as a tool for scientific interpretation of the Christian ethics, and at the same time as a tool for interpreting the experience of

11 On the presence of Wojtyła's anthropology in the aforementioned catecheses by John Paul II, cf. J. Merecki, *L'antropologia filosofica nella teologia del corpo di Giovanni Paolo II*, Cantagalli, Siena 2015.

morality as such. However, he does not negatively evaluate the phenomenological method itself, which, in his opinion, is an indispensable tool in the analysis of moral facts. Moreover, Wojtyła proposes that this method should be applied even more consistently than Scheler himself did. This is because in his — partly justified — polemic with Kant, Scheler went too far in excluding the normative moment from the experience of morality. Wojtyła argues that the very phenomenological analysis of experience — above all, the judgments of conscience — shows that normativity is given in the originary experience of morality.

Keywords: morality, ethics, experience, moral duty

Abstrakt

Wojtyła wobec formalizmu Kanta i materialnej etyki wartości Schelera, czyli etyka powinności materialnej

Artykuł przedstawia koncepcję etyki opracowaną przez Karola Wojtyłę w jego polemice z systemami etycznymi Immanuela Kanta oraz Maksa Schelera. Wojtyła negatywnie ocenia system Schelera jako narzędzie do naukowej interpretacji etyki chrześcijańskiej, a zarazem jako narzędzie interpretacji doświadczenia moralności jako takiego. Nie ocenia jednak negatywnie samej metody fenomenologicznej, która w jego opinii stanowi niezbędne narzędzie w analizie faktów moralnych. Co więcej, Wojtyła postuluje, aby metodę tę stosować jeszcze bardziej konsekwentnie niż czynił to sam Scheler. W swojej częściowo uzasadnionej polemice z Kantem, Scheler posunął się bowiem zbyt daleko, wykluczając moment normatywny z doświadczenia moralności. Wojtyła stwierdził, że sama fenomenologiczna analiza doświadczenia — przede wszystkim sądów sumienia — pokazuje, że normatywność dana jest w źródłowym doświadczeniu moralności.

Słowa kluczowe: moralność, etyka, doświadczenie, powinność moralna

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Collegium Intermarium

The problem of personalism in Karol Wojtyła's debate with Max Scheler

As Aristotle pointed out¹, ethics is a “practical” science, and so it should help guide our conduct. Can Karol Wojtyła's ethics provide such help in solving the moral problems of modern times? Can his critique of Max Scheler serve as such help?

Karol Wojtyła is known as an ethicist, especially as a leading representative of “ethical personalism”, which is currently somewhat forgotten in ethical discourse, since it is no longer included in the common division of ethical positions², and is classified as a “deontological” theory³, alongside the ethics of Kant and Thomas Aquinas, which already raises insurmountable doubts as to the correctness of this classification. But “ethical personalism” is one of the three positions on the essence of morality, which is defined in relation to the special ontic-axiological position of the

1 See Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, transl. F.H. Peters, London 1906. Hence, Karol Wojtyła points out that the fundamental question of ethics is not an essential question (the question about the essence of morality, the question “What is moral good?”), but a practical question (“What is morally good?”). See K. Wojtyła, *Problem teorii moralności*, ed. B. Bejze, Warszawa 1969, p. 222 (W Nurcie Zagadnień Posoborowych, 3); cf. K. Wojtyła, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, Lublin–Rzym 1991, p. 65–66.

2 It is usually claimed that the main division of positions in ethics is between a teleological position, a deontological position and virtue ethics. Cf. G. E. M. Anscombe, *Modern Moral Philosophy*, “Philosophy” 33 (1958), p. 1–19; T. Pietrzykowski, *Etyczne problemy prawa*, Katowice 2005.

3 See A. M. Wierzbicki, *Osoba i moralność. Personalizm w etyce Karola Wojtyły i Tadeusza Stycznia*, Lublin 2021 (“Lubelska etyka personalistyczna jest etyką deontologiczną”, p. 248).

human person, as both the subject and the object of action⁴. This position resounded centrally in Wojtyła's work *Love and Responsibility*, as the so-called "personalist norm"⁵, but it has been present from the very beginning of his work in the field of ethics⁶, as I will try to demonstrate with regard to his habilitation dissertation on the ethics of Max Scheler⁷. We will also see that this reconstruction has important implications for discerning the situation of contemporary ethics, which in its mainstream has been following the path marked out by Scheler.

Personalism and moral value as the value of the human person as a person

It was Scheler himself who referred to his ethics — already in the title of his main work — as "ethical personalism"⁸, but, according to Wojtyła, the

4 See T. Styczeń, *ABC etyki*, Lublin 1981.

5 See K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, transl. H. T. Willetts, Ignatius Press, San Francisco 1981, p. 27 ("This elementary truth — that a person [...] may not be an instrument of action, [...] is therefore an inherent component of the natural moral order"); cf. K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 41 ("the personalistic principle and the personalistic norm [...] states that the person is the kind of good which does not admit of use and cannot be treated as an object of use and as such the means to an end. In its positive form the personalistic norm confirms this: the person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love"). This "love" is first and foremost "affirmation of the value of the person", i.e. "a proper attitude to the value of the person" (K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 121, 123). The value of the person represents "intrinsic value" (p. 133), i.e. the value "to which all others are secondary" (p. 133).

6 In my opinion, the view that it is only in *Love and Responsibility* that K. Wojtyła is a personalist is wrong, which is what A. Wierzbicki claims (A. M. Wierzbicki, *Osoba i moralność*, p. 26).

7 In keeping with the methodology of the current works on K. Wojtyła's work, I will only focus on his habilitation dissertation: *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera* [An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing Christian Ethics Premised on Max Scheler's System], Lublin 1959. Reprinted in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, Lublin 1991, p. 11–128 (Człowiek i Moralność, 2). The results presented in this work are contained in the author's own summary: *System etyczny Maxa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej* [Max Scheler's ethical system as a means of developing Christian ethics], in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 129–180 (Człowiek i Moralność, 2).

8 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, Halle 1921 (particularly the chapter: VI B4).

anthropological assumptions adopted preclude Scheler's consistent defence of the personalist position⁹. What is the understanding of "ethical personalism" here? Why is it excluded under Scheler's system?

Ethical personalism is defined by the German phenomenologist — and by Wojtyła — as a position that recognizes moral values as "personal values"¹⁰, i.e. values "that inhere only in the person as a subject"¹¹, which coincides with the tradition of classical ethics, which defines moral values as the values of man as man, i.e. the values of man's very essence¹².

Another element of "ethical personalism" is the recognition of the value of the person as higher than all other values¹³. For this reason, Scheler rejects various reductions of moral values to other, sub-personal values, which can be found, for example, in reducing moral values to vital values, or treating the moral value as a means to the good of society¹⁴. Therefore, the axiological superiority of the person — and by extension the superiority

9 K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera*, p. 133.

10 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 33 ("ethical values are inherently personal values"). Cf. K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera*, p. 132, 151.

11 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 39.

12 According to Aristotle "the proper excellence or [moral — M. Cz.] virtue of man will be the habit or trained faculty that makes a man good and makes him perform his function well" (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, II, 6, p. 44). Cf. S. Thomae Aquinatis, *Summa theologiae*, cura et studio P. Caramello, Torino 1963, I–II, q. 56, art. 3; K. Wojtyła, *Problem teorii moralności*, p. 233–234 ("moral good is that through which the human being as a person is good (is a good person), and moral evil is that through which the human being as a person is evil (is a bad person)". The very humanity of man "is the only key to understanding those [moral — M. Cz.] values and the only possible basis for their explication" (K. Wojtyła, *Problem teorii moralności*, p. 234). According to Wojtyła, "that which is meant by «man» as a human being — that is exactly contained in the concept of person. And therefore it seems particularly justified to reduce the moral value to man as a person. Moral good is that by which man as a person is good (he is a good person) — and moral evil is that by which man as a person is evil (he is a bad person). This formulation could be considered the basic claim of personalism in ethics" (p. 235). Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Problem doświadczenia w etyce*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne KUL" 17 (1969) no. 2, p. 20; K. Wojtyła, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, p. 31 ("The essence of «moralitas» lies in man as a human being becoming good or evil through the act he performs", p. 31).

13 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 39.

14 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Problem teorii moralności*, p. 244 ("no community — neither a state, nor a nation, nor a social class, nor even a family — wants to put itself in the position of the proper and substantialist subject of moral values in the place of the person").

of moral values as personal values — precludes any “instrumentalization” of the person, i.e. the reduction of *bonum morale* to some *bonum utile* or *bonum delectabile*, which, as is well known, troubles modern and contemporary ethics in particular. Thus, we have in Wojtyła’s habilitation dissertation those elements of ethical personalism that will later fully resound as the “personalistic norm”, the proper criterion for moral evaluation of human conduct.

The critique of Scheler’s ethics’ claim to “personalism” reveals another of its essential elements, which is the position of ethical objectivism, which, according to Wojtyła, Scheler failed to achieve¹⁵, because his system “is an «insufficient objectivism»”. This is because in Scheler, moral values (as well as all other elements of moral life, including duty, love, etc.) are reduced to the content of the lived experience. Meanwhile, in ethics, an objective criterion of moral good and evil must be defined — that is why ethics requires an analysis which Wojtyła called “metaphysical”¹⁶ — and in Scheler there can be no such objective criterion. The criterion of moral evaluation provided by him is only a determination of the conditions of moral experience and, in addition, an insufficient criterion¹⁷, as the simple examples used by Wojtyła show, because, by way of illustration, the moral obligation to care for health is justified in ways other than by merely referring to the position of health in the hierarchy of values. Scheler’s ethics cannot be considered objectivist, because in his system “it is a matter of man experiencing «good»”¹⁸, i.e. “good and evil as the content of lived experience”¹⁹,

15 According to Wojtyła, what we deal with in Scheler’s ethics is an “object-oriented tendency” whereby “the source of the ethical value of an act should be sought for in the object” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 13).

16 The thing is not about conducting, within the framework of ethics, analyses related to the realm of general metaphysics, i.e. analyses of being as being, but about analyses related to the realm of the philosophy of reality rather than the analysis of consciousness.

17 Roman Ingarden accused Scheler of the same thing (see R. Ingarden, *Wykłady z etyki*, Warszawa 1989).

18 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 93.

19 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 93–94.

and not of “the realization of ethical values”²⁰, i.e. “that the personal subject is the real author of ethical values, not that he merely feels them”²¹. It is primarily for this reason that Wojtyła excludes the recognition of Scheler's ethics as personalistic, which must be combined with ethical objectivism and realism.

Thus, Scheler diverges from the entire tradition of classical ethics, which recognizes the principle of realism²² — i.e. the obligation to reconcile the action taken with the real reality as interpreted by the human reason and thus binding the human will from within — as the supreme ethical precept²³. In his later works, Karol Wojtyła, as it were, derives the “principle of personalism” from the “principle of realism”, showing that the personalistic duty to affirm the non-instrumental value of the person is a particularization of precisely the principle of realism²⁴, which, however, was not usually expounded in the tradition of classical ethics²⁵. This is because an element the ontic-axiological reality, as read by the human reason, is the unique, superior axiological position of the human person, which excludes

20 K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera*, p. 139. In places he openly writes about “realist ethics” (p. 139).

21 K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maxa Schelera*, p. 140.

22 At the very beginning of *Love and Responsibility* Karol Wojtyła emphasizes the principle of realism: it is necessary “from the very first words to emphasize objectivism in this book, and with it realism” (K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 23).

23 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Elementarz etyczny*, Lublin 1986 [particularly the chapter: *Zasada realizmu*].

24 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, p. 84, 87. In the article *Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulaty*, Wojtyła claims that the lack of “an explication of the personalistic element [...] is a lack if only from the position of the law of nature and its traditional understanding”, and for this reason “this argumentation will be incomplete or even ONE-SIDED and PARTLY ERRONEOUS” [capitals — M. Cz.]. K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej. Refleksje i postulaty* [The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics. Reflections and Postulates], p. 18. I show the relationship of the principle of realism to the principle of personalism in: M. Czachorowski, *Osoba a natura. Ujęcie Karola Wojtyły*, in: *Wokół antropologii Karola Wojtyły*, eds. A. Maryniarczyk, P. Sulenta, T. Duma, Lublin 2016, p. 307–352.

25 See K. Wojtyła, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, p. 87. According to Wojtyła, the sexual ethics of Thomas Aquinas contains “implicit elements of the personalistic approach, but due to the lack of their explication they can sometimes arouse naturalistic associations or suspicions” (K. Wojtyła, *The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics*, p. 9).

his merely instrumental treatment, that is, it orders unconditional affirmation of his personal value.

As Wojtyła emphasizes, Scheler is led towards ethical subjectivism by the anti-substantialist, phenomenalist conception of “person” as pure consciousness, which was taken over from modernity²⁶. Wojtyła returns to this issue in his subsequent works, pointing out that the ethical consequences of the subjectivist conception of man/person is “situationism”²⁷. Today this term is rarely used, and it denotes an ethical theory that grants man the power to determine the boundary between good and evil. Underlying this thesis is a subjectivist conception of the person, because reducing it to the content of consciousness excludes the realistic postulate of aligning action with objective reality. Situationism, by attributing to man competence that he cannot possess as a contingent being, takes the field of morality beyond the personalistic level. Wojtyła points out that what we see in the German phenomenologist’s stance is a move beyond the position of personalism, since he recognized moral values as “a new kind of values that is essentially distinct, a kind of superhuman or “divine” values”²⁸, thereby moving to a position that can probably be termed one of the versions of “transhumanism”, which has been running through the history of philosophy since at least neoplatonism. This “superhumanity” is contained within a view of moral values in the typically modern assumption of Scheler’s anthropology, whereby a person is just a bundle of subjective lived experiences, as

26 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 28 (a person constitutes “a unity of variegated acts given entirely in a lived experience”). Here he understands situationism as granting to persons “the right to decide what is good and what is bad in their mutual relationship”, p. 11).

27 K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej*, p. 11–12. The issue of “situationism” is also addressed in *Love and Responsibility* (p. 119–120). Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Człowiek w polu odpowiedzialności*, p. 76 (situationism is a position whereby: “any objectification of what is subjective is impossible. [...] the subject would create good or evil outside any norms of morality. Situationism is also some new edition of autonomism — however, it goes much further when it comes to the negation of essential elements of ethics, anthropology, and indirectly human experience and morality”).

28 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 100; cf. M. Waldstein, *Three Kinds of Personalism: Kant, Scheler and John Paul II*, “Forum Teologiczne” 10 (2009), p. 151–171 (particularly p. 164).

a result of which he is attributed the power to determine the boundary between good and evil, thus granting him divine prerogatives. But here we have two possibilities: either the unattainable — for man as an accidental being — level of real divinity, or the level of... a demon (a kind of angelism). This issue is worth elaborating today, since throughout the entirety of the post-Kantian philosophy runs the thesis that man is “homo deus”²⁹, and this kind of transformation is supposed to be accommodated today by the technical advancements in biomedicine supported by digital technology, as announced by the modern current of transhumanism³⁰.

Personalism and emotionalism

In criticizing Scheler's claims to “ethical personalism”, however, Wojtyła places emphasis on that element of his concept of the person — and of morality — which he calls «emotionalism», which consists in “reducing the person to emotions”³¹, but — unlike other “emotionalists” — not sensual

29 Cf. Y. N. Harari, *Homo Deus. A Brief History of Tomorrow*, London 2017.

30 This was an opinion already held by Kant. See E. Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York 1950, p. 239 (“old Kant was beginning to suspect that he himself might be God: «God is not a being outside me, but merely a thought in me. God is the morally practical self-legislative reason. Therefore, only a God in me, about me, and over me»”).

31 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 85. Some of K. Wojtyła's statements might imply that also the phenomenological assumptions behind Scheler's philosophy lead him towards the position of ethical subjectivism. Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 56; p. 64: “There is no doubt that this insufficient objectivism is rooted in the phenomenological assumptions, and they are what makes “ethical values remain in an intentional and nevertheless subjective position”; p. 67 (“Phenomenology «cannot grasp and express the fact that the person is the agent»”). But the author's summary only points out that the phenomenological method does not “make it possible to determine the objective principle by which one act of a person is ethically good, while another is ethically bad” (K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny*, p. 144), because phenomenology states “the normative character of ethical values”, which “forces us, however, to seek objective reasons, that is, measures of the ethical good and evil of our acts”, i.e. to move to an analysis of the objective principle of moral good and evil. Then “we must, as it were, come out of the experience of ethical good or evil for the purpose of setting this good or evil in the objective order of good” (p. 144). He also points out that Scheler did not remain faithful to the phenomenological method, “he did not use all of its possibilities in the experiential study of ethical reality. Indeed, he abandoned it when examining the experience of conscience, succumbing to the influence of the emotionalist assumptions of his system”

feelings, but feelings considered by Scheler to be mental³². Why does this exclude ethical personalism?

The first reason for this, according to Wojtyła, is that emotionalism would exclude the efficacy of the person with regard to moral values³³, if the guiding role in moral life was to be exercised by some emotions. This is because the concept of person includes “personal efficacy”³⁴, which is absent from non-personal entities, and “efficacy” — as we find it elaborated in *Person and Act* — is the initiation of existence and the determination of the axiological-ontic content of one’s action³⁵. Two elements are therefore necessary for personal efficacy, which classical anthropology and ethics define as the contribution of reason and will, both essential to the person³⁶. One might get the impression that Wojtyła, in his accusation of Scheler’s “exclusion of efficacy”³⁷ (as manifested in various elements of his ethical-anthropological system), emphasizes the loss of will³⁸, because in Scheler

(p. 145). Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 126. According to Wojtyła, “the reasons for the intentional [...] character of moral values [...] must be sought in the epistemological assumptions of Scheler’s phenomenology, and especially in his emotionalist assumptions” (p. 69–70).

32 For classical philosophical anthropology, it is unacceptable to attribute a mental (spiritual) character to some feelings, because it blurs the distinction between acts of will and feelings (*appetitus sensitivus*).

33 “Personalistic assumptions prescribe the acceptance of this causative agency” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 70).

34 Sometimes Wojtyła speaks of the «practicality» of personalistic ethics (“the ideal of personal moral excellence has a practical character”, p. 65), i.e. “the human person is the agent of good and evil itself” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 66).

35 See K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Kraków 1985.

36 See K. Wojtyła, *Personalizm tomistyczny*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*, Kraków 1979, p. 430–441.

37 “as a result of the emotionalist assumptions, the act of will and its purely objective content are, as it were, lost in emotional experience” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 69). Most precisely, Wojtyła argues that “we cannot maintain that Scheler denied this causative agency”, but he got this causative agency “entangled and, as it were, lost in emotional experience” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 70).

38 In Scheler “the will only passively succumbs to the pull exerted on it by the emotional sphere” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 74 (there is “no active participation of the will”, because Scheler got the central sphere of a person’s life “separated from the will” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 76).

the person does not direct his actions, but is tossed around by inner dormant, spontaneous and emotional forces³⁹. In such a concept of the person, there is first a loss of the power of reason⁴⁰, i.e. a loss of recognition of the truth about good, without which there can be no question of directing one's moral action.

Does this diagnosis of Scheler's "ethical personalism" have relevance for contemporary ethical discourse?

Contemporary emotionalism in ethics

Max Scheler is a forgotten ethicist today, but "emotionalism" — in its various versions — has made itself at home in modern ethics, a manifestation of which can be seen in the rather frequent trouble with understanding Aristotle's ethics, since in the only Polish translation of *Nicomachean Ethics* to date, we, so to speak, struggle from page to page over the mysterious "passions" ("namiętności"). But how are we supposed to talk about "passions" with regard to, say, a wolf or an esteemed female friend who has just appeared in the doorway? It was Fr. Jacek Woroniecki who pointed out this defect in the translation, but until now we still have no new one⁴¹.

In contemporary ethics we have various currents and directions, but the central place is undoubtedly occupied by "posthumanist" postmodern ethics. Its representatives unanimously claim that ethical issues lie at the centre of their research⁴², which we can particularly see in "postmodern

39 Cf. T. Biesaga, *Karola Wojtyły krytyka koncepcji osoby Maxa Schelera*, "Logos i Ethos" 47 (2018) no. 1, p. 181–197.

40 "What we encounter in Scheler is a «primacy of emotion» because Scheler attributed to emotional experiences the greatest depth in man, and at the same time stated that these experiences reveal to us one of the elementary factors in the structure of the objective reality, i.e. value" (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 19). Hence, in Scheler, "representation [...] does not give wanting any bearings", as a result of which "these basic reins of a person's causative agency slip out of his hands" (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, p. 73).

41 See J. Woroniecki, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, t. 1–2, Lublin 1986.

42 See M. Czachorowski, *Ponowoczesność jako moralny rozwój?*, in: *Społeczno-humanistyczna wizja współczesnego świata*, ed. H. Czakowska, Bydgoszcz 2020.

ethics” of Z. Bauman⁴³. It converges with Scheler’s system as regards the assumed anti-substantialist concept of the person, i.e. reducing the person to a bundle of living experiences. The guiding principle of the procedure is to liberate the “principle of pleasure” from the demands of the “principle of realism”, i.e. to subject man to the spontaneous attraction of various pleasures. “The other” is merely a means serving one’s own consumption, who, however, is not to be reckoned with lest one’s own consumption be ruined⁴⁴.

We find the same kind of emotionalism in «ethics of sensitivity” by Richard Rorty⁴⁵, a neo-pragmatist who prefers to term his position — as well as that of postmodern philosophy as a whole — post-Nietzscheanism, or post-Darwinism, because, after all, Nietzsche’s premise is 19th century biology. Thus, Rorty proposes that one should read fiction (e.g., Uncle Tom’s Cabin) and by this means — rather than through morally impotent discourse — become sensitized to the suffering of the excluded and discriminated against. The same “emotionalism” can also be found in today’s fashionable “neuroethics”, based on the assumption that human action is necessarily controlled by brain processes, manifested in the form of experienced emotions⁴⁶.

43 See Z. Bauman, *Dwa szkice o moralności ponowoczesnej*, Warszawa 1994; cf. Z. Bauman, *Moralne obowiązki, etyczne zasady*, “Etyka” 27 (1994); Z. Bauman, *Etyka ponowoczesna*, transl. J. Bauman, J. Tokarska-Bakir, Warszawa 1996. For more on this subject see: G. Hołub, *Od antropologii do etyki postmodernistycznej: w stronę autentyczności czy dowolności?*, in: *W labiryntach wychowania. Wyzwania edukacyjne w ujęciu interdyscyplinarnym*, eds. B. Stańkowski, M. Szpringer, Kraków 2013, p. 29–44; cf. M. Czachorowski, *Mitologizacja moralności w posthumanistycznej etyce*, “Człowiek w Kulturze” 32 (2022) part 1, p. 89–117.

44 Cf. Z. Bauman, *Ciało i przemoc w obliczu ponowoczesności*, Toruń 1995, p. 67–109 (“Ponowoczesne przygody ciała”).

45 R. Rorty, *Etyka zasad a etyka wrażliwości*, “Teksty Drugie” (2002) no. 1–2, p. 51–63; cf. R. Rorty, *Etyka bez powszechnych powinności*, “Etyka” (1998) no. 31, p. 9–25.

46 See P.S. Churchland, *Moralność mózgu*, transl. M. Hohol, N. Marek, Kraków 2013.

Conclusion

I have shown that the core of ethical personalism can be found already in Karol Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation, and in his subsequent works it was only systemically specified and applied to various areas of ethical analysis, including sexual ethics, developed in *Love and Responsibility*. For Wojtyła, ethical personalism means a position on the essence of morality, which is defined in necessary connection with the personal, real ontic-axiological position of man — not only as the subject and agent of moral action, but also as its recipient — read by the human reason and capable of respect through the power of the human will. Nowhere, however, did the Author under discussion claim that his ethical personalism implies a rejection of the achievements of classical ethics, i.e. in the first place the ethics of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas. Wojtyła showed how this personalism is contained in their realist ethics — recognizing the principle of realism as the guiding principle of moral conduct — but in a way that requires full exposure, and which he himself specifically realized in his sexual ethics, showing, among other things, the personalistic meaning of the virtue of chastity⁴⁷.

In Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation — which is the focus of the discussion here — we find not only an apt critique of Scheler's claims to ethical personalism, but also an indirect critique of all those contemporary ethical positions which, like Scheler, exclude the causality of the human person in relation to moral values, recognizing submission to emotional spontaneity as the overriding principle of conduct, thus moving to positions of anti-personalism.

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47 See K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, p. 226; cf. p. 253.

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Abstract

The problem of personalism in Karol Wojtyła's debate with Max Scheler

The article shows that already in his habilitation dissertation on Max Scheler's ethics Karol Wojtyła defended the consistent ethical personalism, distorted by the German phenomenologist. However, the pertinent tying of moral values to the supreme, supra-instrumental value of the human person, involved its subjectivization, as a result of which Scheler's claims to ethical objectivism are unfounded. Besides, in a completely unfounded manner he considered spontaneous emotionality as the centre of the person, thereby losing the person's causative agency towards moral values, i.e. the central role of the human reason and free will in moral life, thus negating man's moral responsibility for his actions. This assessment of Scheler's ethics has relevance for discernment in contemporary posthumanist ethics, which — following Scheler's lead — attributes the guiding role in moral life to spontaneous emotions.

Keywords: ethics, Karol Wojtyła, Max Scheler, personalism, human person, objectivism, principle of realism, postmodernism, neuroethics

Abstrakt

Problem personalizmu w dyskusji Karola Wojtyła z Maksem Schelerem

Artykuł wykazuje, że już w pracy habilitacyjnej poświęconej etyce Maksa Schelera Karol Wojtyła bronił konsekwentnego personalizmu etycznego, wypaczonego przez niemieckiego fenomenologa. Trafne wiązanie wartości moralnych z nadrzędną, ponadinstrumentalną wartością osoby ludzkiej, wiązało się jednak z jej subiektywizacją, w wyniku czego roszczenia Schelera do obiektywizmu etycznego są bezpodstawne. Oprócz tego całkowicie bezpodstawnie uznał spontaniczną emocjonalność za centrum osoby, gubiąc w ten sposób sprawczość osoby wobec wartości moralnych, czyli centralną rolę ludzkiego rozumu i wolnej woli w życiu moralnym, zaprzepaszczając w ten sposób moralną odpowiedzialność człowieka za swoje czyny. Ta diagnoza etyki Schelera ma znaczenie dla rozeznania we współczesnej posthumanistycznej etyce, która — idąc tropem Schelera — rolę kierowniczą w życiu moralnym przypisuje spontanicznym emocjom.

Słowa kluczowe: etyka, Karol Wojtyła, Max Scheler, personalizm, osoba ludzka, obiektywizm, zasada realizmu, emocjonalizm, postmodernizm, neuroetyka

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Karol Wojtyła's dispute with Max Scheler over the concept and role of conscience in morality

Despite Karol Wojtyła's appreciation of the phenomenological method and Max Scheler's insightful description of emotional axiological experiences and, among them, the experiences of moral values, he evaluated the usefulness of his proposal for the approach to the Christian ethics negatively. In the concluding remarks of his habilitation dissertation he stated: "The ethical system constructed by Max Scheler is fundamentally unsuitable for the scientific interpretation of the Christian ethics"¹. He demonstrated that "the fundamental truth of the Christian ethics, which states that the human person is the agent of the ethical good and evil of his acts, cannot be properly grasped and objectified with Scheler's system"².

An ethical experience and ethical value

The difference between the two proposals for ethics turned out to be fundamental. In M. Scheler's ethics, such basic concepts as ethical experience, ethical value, moral duty and moral norm, or the norm of morality along

1 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, eds. T. Styczeń, J.W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1991, p. 119 (Źródła i Monografie, 119; Człowiek i Moralność, 2).

2 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera*, p. 120.

with the role of reason, conscience, will, freedom and with the view of the personal subject, are understood improperly, that is, too narrowly. In his critique of this tightening or omission of the basic elements of the Christian ethics, Wojtyła does not so much use Kant's ethics against Scheler's ethics, but, as it were, independently responds equally to formal apriorism and material apriorism, i.e. Kant's pure duty apriorism, and Scheler's pure value apriorism. He also critically addresses the phenomenological or transcendental ego in the philosophy of both the thinkers. Reaching directly to the understanding of ethics in the Christian tradition, and to the realist philosophy that shaped these understandings, Wojtyła aims to overcome idealism in favour of a realistic presentation of the person's fulfilment in and through the act, including the morally good act.

An ethical experience and ethical action are not, in his view, something merely theoretical or emotional, since they belong to the practical sphere. The mere act of reason or the act of feelings is insufficient, since in moral conduct we are also dealing with the involvement of the will, with normative acts of conscience, and with the realization of an act with transitive and non-transitive effects. It is an act fulfilled by a person that is the one in which we distinguish between good and evil, between a good act and a morally evil act. I consciously experience that I am the agent of the act, and therefore the evaluation of the act in the non-transitive aspect is an evaluation of myself as well. An order or prohibition of an act, as a dictate of conscience, precedes the choice of the goal and the means conducive to its realization. A norm — a precept, an obligation — absorbs moral values into itself, but at the same time it is something separate from them. A precept in relation to a value is something new, something stronger than the emotional experience of a value. An ethical experience is an experience that encompasses the richness of what takes place in a person before and after his act. One cannot exclude from an ethical experience the normative function of conscience, the duty or obligation to fulfil an act, along with the causative function of the will in making choices and carrying out an act. An ethical value cannot be narrowed down to the content of emotional acts, which include only one element of an ethical experience. There is more to an ethical experience and an ethical value than what Scheler presented by

limiting himself to describing the content of emotional axiological acts. On the basis of a phenomenological-eidetic description of the content of intentional, emotional experiences, it is impossible to grasp and understand the dynamics of personal causality, its origin, its real basis and its effects. The mere emotional experience of values, even with the experience of giving precedence to some values over others, is not causality; it is not recognition of an imperative of duty, it is not an imperative of conscience, it is not an act of will involving our freedom, it is not a person's fulfilment.

In general, Wojtyła does not conduct his critique with a view to showing that Scheler inaccurately described what is given in the intentional, emotional experiences of values, but revealing that these descriptions were narrowed down to the structure of these experiences; that he did not reach for what is given in the structure of a person's cognition and action, he did not embrace the entire ethical experience, which includes not only our emotional experience of values, but the causative agency of these acts and involvement of our cognition, our will and freedom, the imperatives of conscience and personal fulfilment. In other words, the emotional experience of values is something passive, narrow, detached from other experiences and facts occurring in the personal subject of morality.

The isolation of data in the experience of values also confirms Scheler's position that these values are indifferent to existence.

Scheler invariably asserts, writes Wojtyła, that "good" and "evil" appear whenever object values, previously learnt through intuition and emotion, are realized. There is no doubt that in view of such a statement by Scheler, we cannot regard moral values as the inner content of those acts in which the subject realizes other object values³.

Meanwhile, in the performance of an act, moral values intrinsically permeate the act, since the act is precisely ordered by virtue of its moral goodness.

3 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksxa Schelera*, p. 67.

Essentialism, in its approach to value, combined with a person's actualism, closes the way for Scheler to properly grasp the fact that the real personal subject is not only a subject of conscious and emotional sensations, but is also an agent of an act, which, as a morally good act, perfects the person.

For we use the term of ethical value to call that, writes Wojtyła, by which man as a human being, as a specific person, is simply good or evil⁴.

The fact that Scheler called the pursuit of personal values, ethical values, Pharisaism is due to his confusion of the pursuit of goodness with the experience of emotional satisfaction from being morally good. The experience of good as a goal, the imperative to pursue the good, is something different from my emotional satisfaction from being enriched by that good.

In the ethical lived experience, we are oriented towards good; in conscience it is ordered to us and, as it were, necessary for our fulfilment. In this orientation we experience the principle according to which we are called upon to perform the ordered act, we experience evaluation, i.e., the valuation of the intended or performed act, and finally we experience within ourselves the consequences of this act which conscience evaluates as good or bad, and by extension it also evaluates us. In an ethical experience thus understood and an ethical value thus understood, a real personal subject is revealed — the agent of the act who is a subject, but also an object enriched by the ethical value of a good act. After all, it is precisely being good that is fundamental to an ethical experience.

Conscience in an ethical experience

Scheler addresses the issue of conscience in his work *Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Werethik* in the context of overcoming delusion, relativism and subjectivism, and in the context of the search for

4 K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie woli w analizie aktu etycznego*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, p. 198 (Zródła i Monografie, 119; Człowiek i Moralność, 2).

objectivism in ethics. In this regard, he draws on August Comte's position concerned with the question of the freedom of conscience⁵. Comte ruled out basing morality on the freedom of individual conscience, since, in his opinion, this path leads to anarchy. Such a position was the result of his philosophical presumptions, in which he placed the previous view of conscience within the religious or religious-metaphysical era. In his opinion, it was necessary, in the name of the positivist era, to overcome or reject the approaches from bygone eras, and rely on the approaches developed by positive sciences. Within their framework, conscience was reduced to a psychological or sociological reality. For in the religious-metaphysical era, conscience was treated as the "voice of God" that speaks inside the individual man. According to Comte, an approach like this disappears with the transition from the theological and metaphysical era to the positivist one. From the position of positive science, conscience is neither the voice of God nor any objective norm stating the truth about good, but is an expression of social and cultural moral prohibitions. On top of this, as a subjective judgment of the individual, it leads to moral anarchy. Therefore, to establish a social order, positivists proposed a social contract and statutory law.

Max Scheler accepted the critique of conscience as the "voice of God" (*Stimme Gottes*)⁶. God cannot be wrong, but we have no way of knowing His judgments. The collapse of religious consciousness is also a collapse of such justification. Conscience can be interpreted as a manifestation of religious tradition, but it is not thereby an objective legitimate insight into what is right and wrong. There are people, Scheler argues, who do not experience the voice of conscience, or those in whom instinct impulses weaken or overcome it⁷. Therefore, it is necessary to reach out to other sources of cognition to correct the judgments of conscience that are imposed on us. This is because according to Scheler conscience is neither the voice of God

5 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, Verlag von Max Niemeyer, Halle 1916, p. 332.

6 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 335.

7 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 333.

nor a statement of objective values, but is a form of capitalization (*Ökonomisierungsform*) of religious norms and social authorities, norms internalized as one's own. Conscience expresses a psychological and social ethos. Thus, it cannot play an essential role in a person's objective morality. It can only determine what is subjectively good for me, but it cannot determine what is good in general, for others, for everyone. In order to achieve this, one must reach, within the insight into values, what is generally important for everyone⁸.

According to Scheler, both the idea of "species instinct" and the idea of "general species intellect" cannot be the basis of generally valid, universal values. Nor is this problem solved by Comte's appeal to exact sciences — mathematics, physics or biology. Therefore, in Scheler's opinion, Comte himself came to the conclusion that moral settlements are ultimately founded on feelings, in which we prefer some values to others⁹. In this regard Scheler opts for an emotional moral insight (*sittliche Einsicht*), which is obvious and available to every human being. The authority of this experience is radically different from the power (*Macht*) or violence (*Gewalt*) of dictates or prohibitions. Trust in it grows out of our direct, emotional insight into values. This authority has qualities of general validity that transcends our individual preferences¹⁰.

Besides the above statements and distortions of the view of conscience, Scheler treats it as a negative experience. It is not about our conduct being directed towards the good, but rather about a negative evaluation of evil. It is love, and not imperatives of conscience, that directs us towards the good. Conscience is neither love nor an ordinary, positive insight in value¹¹. According to Scheler, the so-called "good conscience" also boils down to this experience of "bad conscience", since a good conscience does not command us anything, but only prohibits, warns, judges and accuses. In this way, Scheler actually excluded conscience from a person's moral life.

8 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 337.

9 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 338.

10 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 339.

11 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, p. 334.

Scheler's negative attitude to conscience is connected with his negative attitude to moral duty as such, to the moral norm, imperative or command. This may stem from an extreme reaction to I. Kant's ethics of categorical imperatives, in which the world of values and even more so the emotional acts of experiencing values were relegated to the realm of egoistic sensations that destroy morality. In rehabilitating the role of feelings in morality, Scheler rejected injunctions, duties. It is not only the external injunction that destroys morality, but also the internal injunction in the form of moral duty or the imperative of conscience does so. Our emotional experiences, or our love cannot be enjoined. As regards the commandment of love we are outside morality. The commandment to love God and the neighbour cannot be enjoined.

Scheler finds wanting good, aiming for good, good as the goal of our striving to be Pharisaism, for in this striving we are concerned — in his opinion — with experiencing the satisfaction from a realized moral value. Thus, morality in Scheler's ethics is played out, as it were, passively in emotional experiences, in emotionally experienced love in the experience of following the model of the Master. Reason, or conscience does not motivate the will with the duty of goodness; we do not experience moral duties; we do not know why we should perform good acts and avoid evil ones. In this proposition, however, the mere intuitive emotional experience of values is quite passive, and it does not encompass the entire ethical dynamism. It does not follow that I should make a decision and perform a good act. In moral conduct, however, we know why we undertake an act; we distinguish the norms of logic and aesthetics from ethical norms, which by moral duty encourage our freedom and influence our performance of a good act. Love cannot be reduced to an emotional, passive experience and stripped of its effort of reason, will, or conscience to realize it in rationally prescribed good and right acts.

Conscience in a person's causality and fulfilment

The objections to Max Scheler's ethics, revealed by Karol Wojtyła in his habilitation dissertation, found their continuation both in the *Lublin*

*Lectures*¹² and in his seminal work *Person and Act*¹³. These objections were raised not only on the ethics plane, but also on the anthropology plane, as well as on the plane of ontology or metaphysics, which were absent in Scheler. On the one hand, they were analyses close to the philosophy of consciousness; on the other hand, they drew on the ontology of personal being, critically referring to both Kant's and Scheler's idealism.

All that Scheler omitted from his ethics, namely the fact that the person is an agent of his act, that conscience as the closest norm directs us to perform this act, that the will and our desire for this good are involved, that by self-determination the person becomes the cause of the occurrence of the act in question, resulted from narrowing the research perspective to the structure of emotional experiences of values. The structure of a person's cognition and action determines a broader, fuller perspective of ethical experience and its constituent elements. Within his presumptions, Scheler equated "wanting good" with "the emotional feeling that I am good". The latter excluded the former, because it reduced it to egoistic self-satisfaction, which Scheler called Pharisaism. Meanwhile, wanting good is about essential good, not my emotional satisfaction with it. In the act we focus on good as such. Moral value permeates our act, determining the goodness of the act in its moral aspect. The imperative of conscience, or moral obligation has its source not in subjective, emotional satisfaction, but in the goodness and rightness of the act in question, which is determined by objective truth. The norm, the imperative of conscience appeals to the person telling them that this good should be done and that it is our goal and duty.

In Scheler's view of the person as a unity of emotional experiences, as a subject of intentional value content, the real subject of action cannot be shown or explained. This is because the real personal being is capable not only of intentional emotional experiences, of reflecting on his acts of

12 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, eds. T. Styczeń, J. W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1986 (*Źródła i Monografie*, 120; *Człowiek i Moralność*, 3).

13 Cf. K. Wojtyła, "*Osoba i czyn*" oraz *inne studia antropologiczne*, eds. T. Styczeń, W. Chudy, J. W. Gałkowski, A. Rodziński, A. Szostek, Towarzystwo Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 1994.

consciousness, but also of making commitments to act, to fulfil himself. This capacity is explained by the potentiality of the nature of the human person. "If the human person, writes Wojtyła, were the so-called pure act, then there would be no possibility of any actualization in him"¹⁴. Thanks to potentiality, the dynamism of the personal being is directed towards real good, which, recognized, engages our will, becomes the goal of striving, imposes itself on us by the duty, or obligation to realize it. Classical metaphysics explained this by the accidentality and potentiality of the human nature. The unity of dynamisms in the person is not only a phenomenal unity, a unity of conscious acts, but the ontological unity of the conscious subject with the causative subject, with the subject who realizes personal fulfilment. These are not different subjects, but the same personal subject.

Conscience is an act of a personal subject. By formulating an injunction or prohibition before the act, and by making an evaluative judgment after the act, it reveals its rational dimension, and by binding our freedom with an obligation, it reveals its normative dimension. The categorical nature of the duty of conscience grows ontologically out of the necessity for personal development and excellence, and cognitively out of the fact that conscience, taking into account the moral goodness of my act, also takes into account whether I will become a good or evil person through the act. In his concept of conscience, Scheler focused on the second moment captured in an emotional experience, while ignoring the first one, in which conscience commands action because of the moral goodness of the act.

The measure of good, or the axiological goodness of an act permeates our actions, for it is something fundamental to personal fulfilment. In this way, the axiological and moral order becomes embedded within the ontological order, the practical order and the normative order. For the thing is about a person's fulfilment, which can only happen through the goodness of his act.

14 K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn" oraz inne studia antropologiczne, p. 198.

Moral values are so essential to the person, argues Wojtyła, that the person's true fulfilment is achieved not so much by the act itself, but by the moral goodness of that act¹⁵.

In this context, conscience is the guardian of a person's fulfilment through a good act. As the closest and autonomous norm, it attributes our freedom to the truth about good. In this way, it serves as the basis of a person's transcendence. The moment of self-dependence (self-mastery, self-possession, self-determination) is connected with the moment of a person's dependence on moral duty, on the normative truth. It is in conscience that our freedom in the two aforementioned moments is attributed to the truth about good. This attribution manifests itself in the form of moral duty. "Duty, writes Wojtyła, is the experiential form of dependence on the truth, to which a person's freedom is subject"¹⁶.

Conscience should not be identified — which is what Kant wanted — with the power of our freedom, our autonomy, which would aspire to establish norms for itself. "Conscience, writes Wojtyła, is not a legislator; it does not create norms on its own — rather, it finds them as if ready-made in the objective order of morality or law"¹⁷. It does not create such an order, but rather finds and discovers it. Nor is it a deduction of specific norms from abstract general norms, much less a deduction from the norms of statutory law. In discovering the moral order, it combines a sense of truthfulness, the goodness of an act, and rightness. It cannot be reduced to a habit of repeating the same judgments, as it is creative in formulating norms in specific situations. Such conditioning as *ratio recta*, *voluntas recta*, or wisdom, prudence or other forms of moral excellence, i.e., virtues, favour the functioning of a righteous conscience. Conversely, unintegrated inclinations and acquired vices hinder the functioning of a righteous conscience. However, this must not lead to its rejection, but on the contrary to a deeper concern for its proper functioning. For conscience, as *norma*

15 K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn" oraz inne studia antropologiczne, p. 197.

16 K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn" oraz inne studia antropologiczne, p. 199.

17 K. Wojtyła, "Osoba i czyn" oraz inne studia antropologiczne, p. 208.

normans, normalized our actions, but as *norma normata* it is shaped by the natural law, present in the nature of the human person, and ultimately is justified by the creative act of God.

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Abstract

Karol Wojtyła's dispute with Max Scheler over the concept and role of conscience in morality

The article, following Karol Wojtyła's study of Max Scheler's ethics in his habilitation dissertation, reveals the above-mentioned phenomenologist's overly narrow view of ethical experience and, for this reason, a narrow and erroneous account of conscience and its role in morality. Scheler's narrowing of his analyses of ethical experience down to the emotional experience of values and insight into their essence led, as a consequence, to the exclusion of the causality of the real subject of action, i.e. to the exclusion of the objective desire for good, which is an act of self-determination guided by the fact of moral duty and the categorical normativity of conscience. Scheler equated "wanting good" with "the emotional feeling that I am good". However, the emotional, passive experiencing of values alone is not the causation and performance of an act. The performance of an act is about good as such, permeated by value and moral duty along with the categorical imperative of conscience. The moral goodness of an act internally permeates the entire dynamism of its performance. The explanation for this kind of personal fulfilment in the act is the potentiality and realization of the nature of the human person. Thus, in the ethical experience, we are dealing not only with the emotional experience of value, but with the experience of moral duty, with the experience of the norm, including the one closest to us, that is, the imperative of conscience, with the involvement of our will towards the performance of a valuable and morally commanded act, as the apex of personal fulfilment.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, Max Scheler, conscience, value, duty, norm, causality, act, personal fulfilment

Abstrakt

Spór Karola Wojtyły z Maksem Schelerem o koncepcję i rolę sumienia w moralności

Artykuł, za przeprowadzonymi w swej habilitacji przez Karola Wojtyłę badaniami etyki Maks Schelera, ujawnia zbyt ciasne ujęcie przez wymienionego fenomenologa przeżycia etycznego i z tego powodu zbyt wąskie i błędne ujęcie sumienia oraz jego roli w moralności. Zacieśnienie przez Schelera swych analiz przeżycia etycznego do emocjonalnego przeżywania wartości i wglądu w ich istotę, prowadzi w konsekwencji do wykluczenia sprawczości realnego podmiotu działania, czyli do wykluczenia obiektywnego pragnienia dobra, które to pragnienie jest aktem samodeterminacji, kierowanej faktem powinności moralnej i kategoryczną normatywnością sumienia. Scheler utożsamiał „pragnienie dobra” z „emocjonalnym odczuciem, że jestem dobry”. Samo emocjonalne, pasywne przeżywanie wartości nie jest jednak sprawczością i realizacją czynu. W spełnianiu czynu chodzi o dobro jako takie, przeniknięte wartością i powinnością moralną wraz z kategorycznym nakazem sumienia. Dobroć moralna czynu przenika wewnątrznie cały dynamizm jego realizacji. Wyjaśnieniem tego rodzaju spełniania się osoby w czynie jest potencjalność i realizacja natury osoby ludzkiej. W przeżyciu etycznym mamy więc do czynienia nie tylko z emocjonalnym doświadczaniem wartości, ale także z przeżywaniem powinności moralnej, z przeżywaniem norm, w tym najbliższej nam, czyli nakazie sumienia, z zaangażowaniem naszej woli do realizacji wartościowego i moralnie nakazanego czynu, jako szczytowego spełniania się osoby.

Słowa kluczowe: Karol Wojtyła, Max Scheler, sumienie, wartość, powinność, norma, sprawczość, czyn, spełnianie się osoby

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An outline of the concept of duty in the ethics of Karol Wojtyła and Max Scheler

In lecture seven of his *Neuf leçons sur les notions premières de la philosophie morale*¹ Jacques Maritain juxtaposed two concepts — obligation and duty². He first pointed to the reference of obligation to the law, which requires duty, while duty does not necessarily entail obligation by law³.

1 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons sur les notions premières de la philosophie morale*, Les éditions Pierre Tequi, Paris 1951.

2 According to Maritain, duty is a sense of “paradoxical and mysterious” obligation “to do what conscience commands”, but which can be freely overruled. The objects of duty are morally valued facts, the reality of which is experienced in the choice of human conduct, i.e., presented and analyzed in the moral experience of doing good in accordance with duty and doing evil against it; cf. J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture five. Conscience is not part of the conceptual apparatus of moral theory, so Maritain did not define it, but he used the term when he presented duty as that which binds (obligates) the choosing and acting subject. The conception of conscience (*sumienie*) adopted by Maritain is close to the definition according to which it is “an act of practical reason, spontaneous and direct, of a normative character [...] in which the will decides to perform an act”; cf. *Mały słownik terminów i pojęć filozoficznych*, oprac. A. Podsiad, Z. Więckowski, Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, Warszawa 1983.

3 Duty (*powinność*) is „an obligation (*obowiązek*) understood as a fact originally given in the so-called moral experience, the correlate of which is the goodness of the act or *bonum honestum*”; cf. *Mały słownik terminów i pojęć filozoficznych*, p. 282. Obligation (*obowiązek*) is understood here as a consequence of a broader law, not only moral; cf. *The New Lexicon Webster’s Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, Lexicon Publications, New York 1991.

Duty in Jacques Maritain's personalism

Maritain distinguished between obligation towards and obligation concerning someone or something. He cited the example of the relationship of obligation towards between people. The symmetry of this relationship disappears when its elements (parts) are human and animal: the latter is not bound by an obligation relationship towards humans. At the same time, animals do not inherently⁴ have the right to fulfil any obligation regarding human: "we have an obligation towards certain beings, even though they do not have corresponding rights"⁵.

People are obligated to one other by the fundamental Christian duty of love (*caritas*), but it is not derived from any other law than the fundamental one, i.e., revealed in the commandment of love. That a person "has the right" to love means that a person "deserves" love by virtue of his innate dignity. He can be, however, denied one or other right codified in the statutory law, while the "duty of love" transcends that order towards the "Cause of being"⁶. Moral obligation is, therefore,

not first and foremost one towards having the right, but obligation *towards* the good [...] and above all an obligation to avoid that which is *evil*. I have a duty, I am obligated in conscience to do good and avoid evil⁷.

The obligation towards the good culminates in the personal "self-contained Good", and has its source in the Christian faith.

In the juxtaposition of conscious duty and faith, the reciprocal relationship of reason and will in human choices becomes apparent. In the order of reason, obligation towards the good takes precedence, while in the order

4 Maritain pointed to two ways of understanding the natural properties of human beings: (1) "natural with respect to instinct" and the biological provenance of beings, (2) *natural* to reason; see J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

5 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven. With reference to the contemporary discussion of the so-called animal rights, it is worth quoting Maritain's words preceding the quote, which expresses the correct observation that "if animals had rights, it would then be right to say that they also have obligations, but no one claims this".

6 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

7 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

of will, obligation towards God takes precedence. Moreover, “my obligation towards the good is rooted in my obligation towards God — because of His primary right to my love and obedience”⁸. Ultimately, however, the relationship of reason to will is complementary in its inner dynamism, as Étienne Gilson aptly put it:

the intellect and will include and move each other. One thing can move another because it constitutes its end. In this sense, the end moves that which achieves it, since it acts with a view to achieving it. So the intellect moves the will, because the good apprehended by the intellect is the object of the will and moves it as its end. [...] [O]ne thing moves another when it acts upon it and modifies its state. Thus, what alters a thing moves that which is altered; the mover moves the movable object, and in this sense the will moves the intellect⁹.

The will is free, i.e., it is not subject to any compulsion, nor are its choices (in the act of will) subject to necessity. Set in motion by the intellect, the will is not enslaved, for with this it shows an inclination towards its object — towards the good known by reason (*bonum conveniens apprehensum*): “just as what is natural is done by the inclination of a nature, so what is voluntary is done by the inclination of the will”¹⁰. In performance of an act of the will, it “is always free to will or not to will anything whatsoever”¹¹.

Consistently, a person’s freedom of action is not subject to either internal compulsion or external coercion. The complementarity of the influences of reason and will can only indicate a certain “internal” binding, which manifests itself in a sense of duty to do good and avoid evil.

In conscience, the sense of duty binds the doer of an act (the agent) to the (*metaphysical*) good. Maritain explained the unwillingness to be evil (when doing evil) in two ways: either theoretical — practical or practical-practical — i.e., because of either “an abstract and universal vision of

8 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

9 Cf. É. Gilson, *Thomism. The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, transl. L.K. Shook, A. Maurer, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Toronto 2002, p. 282.

10 É. Gilson, *Thomism*, p. 283.

11 É. Gilson, *Thomism*, p. 286.

the moral good”, or “a concrete and completely individualized vision of a choice”¹². In the latter case, there may appear a dominance of emotions, which in turn can make the desire for the specific (detailed) good contained in a morally evil act outweigh the unwillingness to be evil. Then the doer of such an act correctly recognizes the duty and is aware of the danger of moral destruction in the intentional committing evil. “Hence our freedom lies between good and evil”¹³.

In its most general form, moral obligation is expressed in the form of the universal injunction: “You *should* do good, you *should* avoid evil”¹⁴. Although this formulation resembles Immanuel Kant’s categorical imperative¹⁵, it has a different origin; it is not derived from a form of law, but is based “on an objective moral value: *good* and *evil*”¹⁶. The imperative of universal moral obligation does not directly point to the ultimate goal, which, when chosen correctly, becomes the full justification of this imperative¹⁷.

Moral obligation is indeed a form of reason, but in directing human action because of the notions of good and evil contained in it¹⁸. Subsequent acts of rational cognition of the natural law in will-guided efficacy specify (concretize) this most general precept, which in Maritain’s classification is a pilot-norm, and not simply a precept-norm. The pilot-norm (i.e., the formative norm) is “simply the form, or a measure, with which an act conforms when it is good”¹⁹.

Although moral obligation does not originate socially, social coercion spreads and reinforces it. It is also reinforced by the commandments conveyed in the Revelation, but in this form they have a supernatural origin — from the Divine Reason, from which the human reason is derived.

12 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

13 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

14 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

15 I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, ed. and transl. A. W. Wood, Yale University Press, New Haven 2002, p. 37.

16 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

17 The Catholic personalist identifies the ultimate goal with God: “Man’s *ultimate goal* is God”. It is attainable in both the natural and supernatural precept; cf. J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture five.

18 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture seven.

19 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture six.

Thus, they are a primary obligation for the believer. Therefore, moral obligation partly appears as an external coercion, above all when it helps turning back from the path of immoral conduct. When, on the other hand, “we are transformed by love and spontaneously want the good, which is in conformity with reason”, the internal factor, or faith, begins to play “a more important role than reason, and conformity to God’s love means more than conformity to reason”²⁰. And this definitely moves the ethics of Christian personalism away from Kant’s deontology, and in emphasizing the moment of love in it seems to bring it closer to the ethics of Max Scheler. It is for this reason, among others, that in his habilitation dissertation Karol Wojtyła dealt with the confrontation between Christian ethics and the ethics of the German phenomenologist²¹. In this article the Wojtyła’s interpretation of Scheler’s understanding of duty in his work *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus* will be discussed²².

The Kantian feature of Max Scheler’s conception of duty

Personalist Jacques Maritain undertook a critique of Immanuel Kant’s ethics with the aid of intellectual tools, and regarded the discovery of moral obligation as a cognitive effort of reason, parallel to the will to accept the moral principles conveyed in the Revelation²³. Phenomenologist Max Scheler, having denied Kant’s deductive-normative²⁴ and a-emotionalist ethics, focused on the pure experience of moral values, rejecting (in sharp contrast to Kant) any of their imperative function (from obligation, *aus*

20 J. Maritain, *Neufleçons*, lecture seven.

21 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera*, in: K. Wojtyła, *Dzieła filozoficzne*, t. 1, ed. J. Merecki, Instytut Dialogu Międzykulturowego im. Jana Pawła II, Kraków 2022.

22 The present work partially, i.e., as far as Wojtyła’s analysis makes it possible, exposes Scheler’s exploration of what — in his opinion — duty is. For this subject runs throughout Scheler’s extensive work in his critique of Kant’s ethics of obligation, conducted from the position of a phenomenologist.

23 J. Maritain, *Neufleçons*, lecture one.

24 In keeping with Maritain’s classification, see J. Maritain, *Neufleçons*, lecture one.

*Pflicht*²⁵)²⁶. Admittedly, the value discovered in a lived experience may occur “on the occasion of the act of volition”²⁷, but it does not automatically become its object. When it turns out to be the goal of the striving, it takes the form of an ideal duty (ideal ought, *idealen Sollen*), but in no way does it become an obligation to become realized (a real duty, a real ought, *realen Sollen*)²⁸, since it only signals that “the given object value should be realized” [518–519].

Despite the decisive departure from Kant’s deontology and the transfer of the source of values from the Kantian subject to their object, Scheler remained faithful — firstly — to that Kantian purity, in his work, of a lived value, while in Kant, of an obligation dictated by the practical reason, as well as — secondly — to the Kantian goodness of will alone²⁹. This formalization of ethics is still too strong to be compatible with Christian ethics immersed in human choices of the purpose and manner of performing an act, especially with its form in the Catholic personalism, as constructed on Thomism. Young Karol Wojtyła undertook a confrontation of the two ethics (i.e., Schelerian and Catholic) in his habilitation dissertation. And although, as expected, the result turned out to be negative for the possibility of their becoming close, the analysis of Scheler’s elaborate philosophy made it possible, among other things, to explore the process of experiencing duty.

Scheler’s understanding of moral obligation was similar — thirdly — to Kant’s, but in the face of the limitation of Kantian radicalism, he rejected it altogether. Here, duty understood as Kantian obligation generates rigidity (a kind of automatism) of choices and *a priori* elimination (negation) of their part, while Scheler’s experience of an ideal value “gives moral life an exclusively positive, creative character” [493–494]. The importance of the

25 I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 14–16.

26 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik. Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus*, Verlag von Hans Niemeyer, Halle 1921, p. 194–196.

27 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, 354. Hereafter, references to the line numbers in this text by Wojtyła will be placed only in the main text of the work in square brackets, here: [354].

28 Scheler’s views are presented here as interpreted by K. Wojtyła, given in: K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*. See M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 213–214.

29 I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 10.

moral power of the experience of values becomes paramount with regard to the quality, as well as to their realization in general.

Scheler described the process of recognizing values in experience, using the phenomenological method³⁰, and reconstructed the *a priori* hierarchy of values thus discovered³¹. Here, in the analysis of “an experience, in which a moral value becomes its object content [...] it can be experientially ascertained and investigated” [405–407]. Moreover, Scheler introduced criteria for hierarchizing sensation, to which corresponds an objectified hierarchy of object values, in an ascending material order: sensual, vital, spiritual, holy³². And with the ideal of the holy, in the Christian rite, Scheler — fourthly — recalled the Kantian ideal³³.

Scheler’s emphasis on the merely negative function of duty comes from reducing it to a rigid precept, which, in view of Scheler’s opposition to Kant, cannot be expressed by internal compulsion (not merely external coercion)³⁴, because when “under the pressure of orders we merely fulfil an obligation, then our moral life loses that style which Scheler wants to see in it, and acquires necessarily negative characteristics” [506–509]. It is the precept that causes the real duty, that sets the norm of human conduct. And Scheler ruled out this kind of precepts, because they essentially interfere with the emotional layer, in which experiences of values do not only found individual morality, but by virtue of the kind of these experiences they objectify morality.

The injunction always points to a real duty to the realization of the value it conveys in its content. Its function, therefore, according to Scheler, is negative³⁵, the injunction is morally evil [521–526]. For its very occurrence, as it were, undermines confidence in the positive role of the subject’s experience of this value as an ideal duty. But it is not only the real duty expressed by an injunction that raises a “«moral objection» in this case”.

30 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter II.A, IV.1.

31 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter II.B.3.

32 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter II.B.5.

33 I. Kant, *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, p. 57.

34 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 213.

35 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 214–215.

As such, an ideal duty always shares in the violation of the purity of ethical experience, since it is “the very experience of value and the attendant emotional «causality of attraction»” that is supposed to guide the will, in its — secondly as according to Kant — exclusively positive function³⁶. From all the perspective of Scheler’s ethics, however, a duty is an obstacle to the programmatic, radical disposal of the Kantian pure obligation³⁷.

Scheler excluded norms from ethics, but they, after all, in one form or another (e.g. as developed by Maritain³⁸) give direction to human action. The peculiar apriority — fifthly inherited from Kant — (derived solely from experience) of values, makes them indifferent to existence. Again — secondly after the Kantian fashion — the function of the will’s natural attraction to the good (reminiscent of the Hobbesian mechanism of appetite, but not parallel to aversion³⁹) all the more justifies the redundancy of the duty addressed to the doer of the act (the agent). Therefore, as Wojtyła emphasized [554–555], the primacy of ethos over ethics (as in Scheler’s conception)⁴⁰, unfortunately opens the way to sociological concepts of ethics⁴¹.

For ethos, as a set of moral ideals, to be modelled on in social life, is — in Scheler’s opinion — transmitted, as it were, from one person to another, when the experiencing of the world of ideal values (*idealen Wertwesen*) is shared between them. What remains, therefore, is either — as in Scheler’s case — the cognitive-emotional plane of value perception, or — as in

36 As Wojtyła aptly pointed out, with his rejection of duty, Scheler made static efficacy, or actually morally demobilized it: “rather let values not be realized than have them realized by injunction” [547–548]. Even when Scheler uniquely attributed to the injunction a positive role in inhibiting the subject’s tendency to perform the ideal duty expressed therein [526–527]; M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 217–218.

37 Here Wojtyła rightly noted the pointlessness of Scheler’s argument in his compulsive removal of duties since he had already in his ethics given values the status of their existence only in experience, independent of their material realization [541–548].

38 J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture six.

39 T. Hobbes, *Leviathan, or the Matter, Forme, & Power of a Common-Wealth Ecclesiastical and Civill*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1929, p. 46–48.

40 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter V.6, VI. B.5.

41 The error of sociology was addressed by Maritain in his considerations; see J. Maritain, *Neuf leçons*, lecture one.

sociologism — the reconstruction of the world of values on the basis of the analysis of social behaviour.

Scheler's experience of love vs. the commandment of love

What attracts the Christian ethicist to Max Scheler's ethics of ideal values is the love that results from the experience of values, and that is love for God, not just for the good⁴². Of course, the parallel opposition of love and hatred [564–565] must already at the outset arouse axiological vigilance in the Christian ethicist, for Christian ethics, unlike the Old Testament ethics, after all, gets rid of hatred and revenge for harm, leaving only justice. The introduction of the experience of hatred is unfortunately associated with Scheler's radical rejection of duty in connection with its content also expressed by prohibition. This is essentially a retreat from Christian ethics and a clear inconsistency with Scheler's declaration of the primacy of the ethos of Christian morality.

To what, then, is the Schelerian love reduced? The introduction to Scheler's theory of love does not raise much doubt at first. It can address the person-subject experiencing it⁴³, "making him the very object of the act of love" [633–634] and cause the experiencing of one's own ideal world of values. It is then a way to "make direct contact" with the ideal value of the experiencing subject, and at the same time leads to the world of "ideal duties insofar as these values are to be realized by the person" [641–643].

However, from the viewpoint of a Christian (especially a Catholic) — as Karol Wojtyła noted — the Schelerian function of love is incomplete, because it neglects the fact that the ideal discovered in the experience of a person's love for himself is given by God and necessary for salvation [652–657]. But the path to salvation leads through deeds (i.e., good human acts), and thus through the realization of the ideal⁴⁴. Besides — according to Scheler — it is "a person's ethical ideal that should serve as the basis for

42 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter V.6, VI.B.5.

43 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 510.

44 This was also emphasized by Maritain, as signalled by the considerations in the introduction to this article.

measuring (valuing) his deeds” [660–661], and not the norm or instance of the universal conscience, whose function Scheler limited to the negative (forbidding) one⁴⁵.

The Schelerian ideal of love is neither self-absorbed nor subjective. It is morally creative in the sense of disseminating ethos, since when experienced individually, it is imparted to the other person in the process of imitation. As a result of the intentional act of the loving person, the other, through experiencing the world of the former’s values, adopts the former’s ideal, and models himself on it⁴⁶. Again, in connection with the hierarchy of transmitted values, the pattern of the Schelerian ideal itself is hierarchical⁴⁷: a “gourmet-epicurean”, an “organizer” (leader), a “hero”, a “genius”, a “saint” [692–696].

Due to the above-mentioned individualization of experiencing the ideal of love, Scheler limited the action of the model of the divine person, despite the fact that he placed it at the top of the hierarchy of persons and that the human person makes contact with moral values which are religiously marked, but belong to the “superhuman” order. This contact, however, manifests itself in the hierarchy of forms of unity of spiritual values, especially in its highest figure of the saint. Contact with the divine person occurs in the experience of the idea of God, i.e., the value of the “infinitely holy”, but to do God’s will would be — in the light of Scheler’s ethics — to submit, however, to the imperative, while to act ethically it is necessary and sufficient to participate in the ideal of God⁴⁸. For Scheler, then, the commandment of love would not be the norm, because love is a “spontaneous act”. It would express “only the ethical regularity of love”, its supreme value and Christ’s pattern to follow [726–754].

The very act of experiencing love, as it were, according to Scheler, “makes one efficient” ethically, but this ethicality does not reach the real efficacy. No act, good or evil, can “manage to produce emotional experiences of happiness or despair of equal depth” [764–765]. Therefore, all sanctions,

45 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 330–332.

46 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 596–598.

47 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 599.

48 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 225–226.

including those dictated by remorse, offend the Schelerian “purified idea of God” [769]. After all, conscience triggers duties, and therefore has — according to Scheler⁴⁹ — a negative and forbidding, critical and warning function [2667–2668].

In his habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła defined Christian ethics as given in the Revelation (in Scripture and Tradition) and transmitted by the Church in the form of principles (norms) of moral conduct [811–817]. Thus, the Decalogue is binding and the fundamental commandment of love is an obligation for the Christian. And at the same time, in Scheler’s approach, love, which is the source of all ethical values, is in principle not to be translated into any real duty (in the form of a norm) in conduct (in deed, in an act). The Schelerian love, as an emotional-cognitive act, intention-wise orients a person towards the experience of values⁵⁰, i.e., to the person’s experience of the “ideal being of value” (*das ideale Wertwesen*) [1124]. This Schelerian ideal being of value is shaped in his own experience of self-love by the ideal world of values, thus discovered, which are the content of the ideal duties that morally shape the person. This “moment of ethical dynamization of the person with a moral task” [1161–1162] is revealed externally in the relationship of co-experiencing love with another person (the sharing of love as a result of its attractive force) in the process of the Schelerian imitation⁵¹ by the latter person of the pattern (of an ideal duty) set by the former.

Christ became, according to Scheler, the highest personal ideal, who, when imitated, opened up to humanity a new horizon of lived moral values, and above all love, creating the Schelerian ethos. The Christian ethicist, who Wojtyła was, cannot, however, make reducing the person of Christ to living out his personal pattern [1595–1670]. (Jacques Maritain also suggested that without reference to phenomenology.) Christ, in the Gospel message, was a pattern of realizing values in conduct, setting these values

49 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 333–334.

50 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, Chapter VI. B.4.

51 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 598–599.

for his disciples⁵². He even provided a new law — “a system of objectified moral values” [1656–1657], the observance of which (guided by reason and faith) is a duty, the fulfilment of which is necessary for salvation, to be united by love with God, to attain the ultimate goal.

The necessity of the connection of the experience of duty with the efficacy of the act

With its moral good or moral evil, not only does an act reveal the degree of moral perfection of the agent, but at the same time, as if in a feedback loop, perfects or destroys him morally [2156–2161]⁵³. On the other hand, the reason for Max Scheler’s rejection of the moral qualification of an act in assessing the moral perfection of a person lies in the ambiguous determination (which Karol Wojtyła rightly noted) of volition by the experience of an ideal value, so as to thereby avoid the transition to the realization of values. Wojtyła is right in claiming that the so-called Schelerian “presentation” of values by the subject to himself “only makes the subject aware of the direction of his striving” [2451–2452], and does not determine his goal. This Schelerian purely emotional experience of love does not allow it to be translated into striving for something, willing something, much less grasping the “moment of the person’s efficacy” [2503–2504], or allowing the will to actively participate in it. Moral values are only intentional in character. “They are not personal values in the real or practical sense [...]. «[T]hey appear in the person», and so they are personal in the intentional and «theoretical» sense” [2567–2571].

However, as Wojtyła further argued [2799–2810], Scheler’s tenuous grasp of the connection between value and volition, and even Scheler’s limitation of the function of conscience, are not yet decisive for the exclusion of

52 Wojtyła cited specific examples from the Gospels to illustrate the object content of the moral act, such as the Sermon on the Mount, the command to love one’s enemies, the presentation of the final judgment and others.

53 See the elaboration of the topic of the importance of duty in personal fulfillment in: K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, in: K. Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and *Related Essays*, transl. G. Ignatik, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D. C. 2021, Part 2, Chapter 4.

efficacy from ethics. It is, as it were, the programmatic anti-Kantian radical removal of duty and the reduction of ethics to ideal values, which is not necessarily associated with phenomenology itself.

Wojtyła’s “internal” critique of Scheler’s ethics without duty

Since on the basis of phenomenology alone it is impossible to provide a critical account of Max Scheler’s ethics (despite some of its contradictions and ambiguities pointed out by Karol Wojtyła), the comparative analysis of Christian and Schelerian ethics eventually took the form of a critique of the latter from the viewpoint of the former. Wojtyła, however, first summarized the “internal” critique of Scheler’s system. And the concept of duty became the pivotal point of the critique.

And here are the individual points of Wojtyła’s internal critique, some of which have already been foreshadowed in this article.

(1) The contradiction of the autonomy of ideal duty

The focus of ethics is both good and evil. Therefore the exclusion of duty on account of its negative function is unjustified. A person — according to Scheler — is supposed to experience values, it’s something that is exclusively positive. Scheler’s point was not only about

the duty concerned with “non-being” of the negative value itself, but also the moment when it is about the duty concerned with the “being” of the positive value. For then the sentence expressing the (ideal) duty contains a regard for the non-existence of the relevant positive value according to the principles of axiology; and the non-existence of the positive value itself (wherever it should be present) according to the principles of that axiology is already a negative value [2845–2851].

Hence, “the values expressing an ideal duty make sense only insofar as the relevant positive values do not exist, and therefore insofar as they contain a regard for the negative value” [2854–2857].

(2) Absence of volition to realize the real duty

Scheler understood the real duty as a more or general norm or an injunction. It has — in his opinion — an unambiguously negative function, since it is essentially preceded by a prohibition and therefore expresses a kind of intervention (prevention) against something negative. It is even morally evil, since it has the task — as presented earlier in this article — to force that which is intuitively good in the subjective inner experience, while suspecting that the subject is striving after a negative value, since “the «knowledge of feeling» already directly determines my volition which does not have to pass through any «I ought to»” [2883–2885]. Scheler’s focus on the emotional experience of value is disturbed by duty, since it points to the evaluation of the efficacy of an act (also negative), and this — in Scheler’s view — goes beyond his ethics and concerns submission to norms. Besides, Wojtyła, as in the previous point of the critique, claimed that

the very “non-being” of a negative value is already a positive value. Thus, according to the presuppositions of axiology, duty turns to a negative value due to the positive value, for it strives for [2908–2911].

(3) Absence of negativism of duty as the content of experience

Wojtyła went on to argue that one cannot see the negative function of duty when one treats it as the content of the experience of willing something, and thus the basis of efficacy (*a priori* ruled out by Scheler). If the subject’s experience is that he ought to want something, that something should be the object of his will, and if this thing is a good (and thus it is not a matter of obligation merely to avoid evil), then naturally “the will, guided by duty, turns to the good” [2925]. Only when — as in Scheler — one reduces the content of a person’s inner resolutions to his emotions, experiencing duty becomes associated with the feeling of certain evil, revealed by the command of a positive value in the face of the danger of the appearance of its opposite — the negative. This applies not only to real duty, but to ideal duty as well.

(4) Indifference of value to existence vs. the necessity of duty

The indifference of a Schelerian value to existence means that the appearance of a value has no significance outside of the subject's emotional-cognitive experience of the value. Since this is the case, the value cannot cause any necessity either internal or external, which is contained in duty. Otherwise, duty would force the demand for the emergence of a value as the goal of striving, the value would become the cause of real duty. And Scheler allowed only ideal duty as the content of experience, which is expressed by the "judgment of duty" in a purely emotional feeling (and not in a lived experience of the goal), with the aforementioned negative reference and without any translation into making the duty real. Given the focus on the emotional-cognitive experience of values and the exclusion of their realization, once again it becomes apparent that, as Wojtyła stressed, Scheler's ethical system is an ethos and not ethics [2997–3006].

(5) Exclusively emotional attractiveness of values

Since Scheler rejected the real duty and at the same time granted the ethical value a function of a certain "tendency to volition", it's nevertheless a certain orientation towards its realization⁵⁴, Wojtyła tried to answer the question of what this Schelerian realization would mean, if it does not lead to efficacy. Here, this tendency to volition turns out to be a phenomenon in the world of "love due to the fact that it yields to the emotional «causality of attraction» that values exert" [3034–3037]. It is the attraction of values that is the cause of the volition in experience and nothing else.

In Scheler's system, the ideal duty is burdened with the described negative experience in intentional feeling. All the more ruinous for the inner world of values is the real duty, which comes from within or from without. The latter is directly bringing pressure to bear on the subject, depriving him of free will. Scheler classified the commanding content of these external obligations and analyzed their destructive effect on morality, moral

54 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 217, 217–559.

experience⁵⁵. Wojtyła discussed these commands [3050–3074], and then confronted them with the commandments and evangelical counsels.

Absolutely suggestive command (order) i.e., without giving a direct rationale, or disregarding the agent, it orders something to be done. Thus, the doer performs the action “blindly” and submissively, i.e., he relies solely on the will of the order giver.

Pedagogical command (order) is issued in the form of a recommendation to do something for the sake of the suggested good (benefit) of the agent. He undertakes the action voluntarily, but the purpose comes from the order giver, not from his own “tendency to volition”.

Advice from a superior authority is a command to do something issued to a person who is in some kind of subordinate relationship with the adviser. Then, regardless of the good or benefit of the executor of the command, it is an imposition of someone else’s will, however institutionalized or authority-endowed will. This kind of obligation is, according to Scheler, contained, for example, in evangelical counsels.

Moral advice is to serve the person in enabling him to know what he ought to do. It does not recommend anything, possibly limiting itself to guidelines (proposals) for the technical performance of an act.

Each of the aforementioned forms of obligation communication is a violation of the cognition of values in their individual experience due to greater or lesser interference in the will of others. For Scheler otherwise rightly — as Wojtyła stressed — emphasized the subject’s cognition of values.

Wojtyła’s critique of Scheler’s system from the viewpoint of Christian ethics

Since Max Scheler actually rejected the communication of duty given in the evangelical counsels⁵⁶, Karol Wojtyła undertook a critique of Scheler’s ethics strictly from the position of Christian ethics [3089–3297], in line

55 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 206–208.

56 M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus*, p. 208.

with Jacques Maritain's reflections on duty, evoked at the beginning of this article. Wojtyła answered the questions he posed to himself: first, whether a Christian who follows the advice and precepts of the Gospel message is at risk of losing or at least limiting moral experiences; second, whether a Christian who follows the advice or precept actually acts "blindly".

First, Wojtyła analyzed the understanding of what an order is. And, like Maritain, he concluded that a command need not be an absolute enforcement of the will of the order giver⁵⁷. It needs to be understood much more broadly as, admittedly, an expression of the will of the order giver, but without preventing independent cognition of the legitimacy of the goals signalled in it in the light of values. Identification of the value of the goal allows for its experience and its possible voluntary realization. The communication of duty would thus be similar to a pedagogical order.

When a duty is given in the form of "advice from a superior authority", as in the Decalogue, the will of the adherent to such advice need not be limited at all. For he has previously, out of goodwill, placed his trust in the authority and, convinced of the authority's orientation towards the recognized (also in experience) and accepted (true) good, finds in compliance with the precept his individual participation in that good. He then feels himself to be the subject (the agent) and a responsible one for that matter, rather than a pawn or a "blind" executor.

If then a faithful Church member recognizes the authority of the Revelation and Tradition, then his conduct is subordinated to the norms (precepts, prohibitions, recommendations, counsels) given in the Revelation and interpreted in the Church teaching. In this way, he will fulfil the ultimate goal of his earthly life, he will find salvation: "the moral teaching of Jesus Christ is the true revealed legislation" [3136–3137]. It cannot be understood simply as Schelerian commands and counsels. This is because they do not limit the faithful neither in their independent (rational and emotional) cognition of values, nor in the free undertaking of an act realizing them. Besides, the divine "order giver" does not impose his will, but is

57 See St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, English Dominican Province, <https://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu>, 1–2, 17, 1 (21.02.23).

the source of all moral good, [...] the highest moral standard is the perfection of the Divine Being, [...] the will of God is above all the source of moral order [3147–3151].

In quoted phrases from the Gospels in the form of imperative sentences, Wojtyła showed that they are not imperatives in Scheler's sense: they are general and addressed to the human person in general, expressing rather than which Scheler considers ideal duties, resulting from the living out of values, in the form of tendencies to be realized under various circumstances. What distinguishes them from the discovery of the Schelerian values is that their verbal message contains, as it were, clear objective values. They, in turn in individual perception (e.g. in experience) transform into real duties, that will be implemented or not, according to will of the potential agent.

“[L]inking moral values with the good of the supernatural order [as in Maritain — T. G.] acts as a motive” [3218–3219], and it only directs the attention of the possible realizer of values, and does not compel him to do so. Here, from the entire evangelical perspective of the doctrine of good and evil, an individual man is to find his own path of moral perfection, in the free realization of the, as it were, internal command, flowing from conscience, as, e.g., under the influence of Maritain's pilot-norm. On the other hand — as Wojtyła rightly emphasized — Scheler treated the oracle of conscience on a par with the external command and all its negative consequences for the Schelerian conception of morality.

In fact, duty turns to a positive value that does not yet exist, or to a negative value that does exist. But this return of duty can only be reflected as a certain “evil” in the intentional experience. In the will it will always be a return to the good. [3252–3256].

In the Christian ethics, moral man realizes the object good (object value), and not only — as in Scheler — experiences and feels it intentionally. In order to help man learn and experience values, and translate them into

moral action, the Revelation is given, also in the form of commandments and counsels.

At the end of his reflections on duties, Wojtyła noted the invincible legacy of Immanuel Kant's philosophy in Scheler's ethics, that was also pointed out in at the beginning of this article. Wojtyła writes that

[w]hile Kant tied the very morality of the human act to the experience of obligation, teaching that a given human act is moral insofar as in it duty is fulfilled out of obligation, i.e., on the basis of the one and only moral feeling: the feeling of respect for the law and obligation, Scheler ties morality to the experience of values alone. And in both systems, the morality of acts itself is linked to the particular character of experience, while the Christian ethics links the moral character of experiences to the efficacy relationship of the human person to objective moral values, to good and evil [3289–3297].

Conclusion

As Max Scheler removed duty from ethics in favour of experiencing values, he downplayed the function of conscience in moral improvement. Karol Wojtyła, as a Christian ethicist could not accept this, like Jacques Maritain though not directly in relation to Scheler. In his work *Person and Act*, Wojtyła referred to the function of conscience as creating “the normative reality within the person”⁵⁸. And so he linked it to duty. A person performs an act freely, determining himself by and in it. Freedom, in turn, is dependent on truth understood transcendently, and truth, in the form of the true good (good in truth) of the act, is contained in conscience. In turn, the goodness of an act is expressed in duty. Therefore, “[d]uty is the experiential form of dependence on truth”⁵⁹. This creates a normative reality that is of primary importance for morality and ethics, though not only for them:

58 K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 258.

59 K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 258.

A sort of affiliation of the normative order comes into view, on the one hand, with respect to the world of transcendentals and, on the other hand, with respect to the multidirectional action of man⁶⁰.

The coupling of truth and duty is by no means an abstraction, because — and here appears an echo of Scheler's cognitive-emotional approach to moral values — the veracity of a norm is an object of experience as well. And the depth of this experience is directly proportional to the power of the duty to fulfil the right norm, flowing from obedience to the verdicts of conscience. After all, in purely theoretical considerations, wrong norms could also be justified⁶¹.

In a reliable analysis of duty, it is necessary to determine the transition of value into (real) duty. Wojtyła was aware of this, but also of the complexity of the solution to a problem thus posed. That is why he only adumbrated it in *Person and Act*⁶². He recalled the negativism of duty, which imposes itself (as in the Decalogue), and is raised by Scheler, when the transition is expressed by prohibition. After all, that is not the only or most important form of this transition. And here, in line to some extent with Scheler, he pointed to the commandment of love as the most perfect and complete form of the transition of the value of love into duty. While for Scheler the mere experience of the value of love is morally perfecting, as if automatically attracting the good, for Wojtyła “[t]he most perfect and most complete example of evoking duty by value in the positive way is and will certainly remain the evangelical commandment «You shall love»”. So, “value evokes duty by its essential content and the force of attraction connected with that content”, but both “come up to the threshold of the person, which is the threshold of the truthfulness of the good, the truthfulness whence duty begins”⁶³. This threshold, in turn, reaches transcendence and thus allows it to have its share in the human act.

60 K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 259.

61 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 266.

62 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 268–269.

63 K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 269.

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Abstract

An outline of the concept of duty in the ethics of Karol Wojtyła and Max Scheler

On the basis of the analysis of the text of Karol Wojtyła's habilitation dissertation, and the concept of ethics by Max Scheler reconstructed in the text, the understanding of duty („ought”, *das Sollen*) in both authors is presented, and the need to introduce duty into the system of ethics is discussed. Scheler's phenomenological approach focuses on the feeling of moral values, which are legitimized by moral improvement and, at the same time, excluded by duty. Wojtyła's Catholic

personalism requires the realization of values in act, and hence translating them into duty. Types of duty communication in the form of commandments and evangelical counsels are discussed, which do not limit the freedom of the will. Wojtyła's arguments against the Schelerian system from the standpoint of the Christian ethics are presented, exposing the morality of human efficacy, in which the key role is played by the objectification of values and the participation of conscience.

Keywords: Kant's ethics, Maritain's personalism, cognitive-emotional experience of values, commandment of love

Abstrakt

Zarys znaczenia powinności w etyce Karola Wojtyły i etyce Maksa Schelera

Na podstawie analizy tekstu rozprawy habilitacyjnej Karola Wojtyły i zrekonstruowanej w niej koncepcji etyki Maksa Schelera przedstawia się rozumienie powinności u obu autorów oraz dyskutuje się potrzebę wprowadzenia powinności do systemu etyki. Fenomenologiczne podejście Schelera jest skupione na przeżyciu wartości moralnych, które legitymuje doskonalenie moralne i jednocześnie wyklucza powinność. Personalizm katolicki Wojtyły wymaga zaś urzeczywistnienia wartości w czynie, a więc przełożenia ich na powinność. Omawia się rodzaje przekazu powinności w postaci przykazań i rad ewangelicznych, które nie ograniczają wolności woli. Przybliża się argumenty Wojtyłowej krytyki systemu Schelera z pozycji etyki chrześcijańskiej, eksponujące moralność ludzkiego sprawstwa, w której kluczową rolę odgrywa uprzedmiotowienie wartości i udział w tym sumienia.

Słowa kluczowe: etyka Kanta, personalizm Maritaina, przeżycie poznawczo-emocjonalne wartości, przykazanie miłości

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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 Wojtyłie 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

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A lived experience or a reason? From an ethics debate to contemporary culture

Discussions about what originates human action and determines its shape have been going on for a long time. In medieval philosophy, these took the form of a dispute over what comes first in initiating action: rational reasons or stirrings of the will. Nowadays, this debate has been enriched by the discovery of the role of emotions and feelings. For instance, it finds its strong articulation in the ethics of Max Scheler, which provokes Karol Wojtyła's critical assessment. The question of what has a significant impact on the act becomes more complex. The dispute between the Polish thinker and the German philosopher over these fundamental questions reveals that the issue under consideration is relevant, though not limited to, morality and ethics. It seems to be reflected also in other spheres of human life, where man manifests activity, in the form of an act undertaken. Therefore, the deliberations typical of ethics have the potential to be applied to a broader culture understood as a set of intentional human actions and creations.

In the present deliberations, we will follow the trajectory set by Karol Wojtyła's dispute with Max Scheler. First, however, we will consider for what purpose theology, including moral theology, needs philosophy. We will then outline the essence of Wojtyła's debate with Scheler in order to point to the issue that is of fundamental interest to us in these reflections. In the subsequent section we will show how the dispute between the two thinkers is topical within the wider culture, what its consequences are and what solutions can be proposed, modelled on the discussion between these two philosophers. In general terms, the purpose of this article is not

to analyse in detail the rather complex dispute between the two thinkers (this has already been done in other publications), but to address the fundamental issue that constitutes it, and to think through some of the implications that flow from it.

Karol Wojtyła in search of an articulation for Christian morality

One may wonder why Wojtyła undertook the rather difficult task of identifying how the innovative way of thinking about ethics developed by Max Scheler could support Christian ethics¹. After all, Christianity has its own moral message and it is reasonably comprehensible to every man without having to refer to any philosophical system. For instance, a reading of the gospel reveals certain indications of a moral nature, and these are understandable even to a person with no special philosophical training. The following question may be raised in this connection: why explain that which is reasonably accessible by referring to that which is difficult and requires considerable cognitive and mental effort? Consistently, one might also ask whether theology is not enough to understand the message of the gospel; and it has, after all, been developed for a very long time.

There are a couple of answers to these questions. Firstly, since Christian antiquity there has been a tendency to put the Judeo-Christian revelation in the terms developed by Greek and later Latin philosophy. In the early days of Christianity, this was usually, though not exclusively, an inculturating endeavour: to make the thought formulated in the Middle East lucid to the educated people of the civilised world, which had its epicentre in Europe, that is, in Greece and Rome. However, a second, deeper level of this endeavour was already revealing itself: the Greek and Roman cultures focused on reason, as it were, streamlining the human reason to such an extent that it possessed the capacity for a deeper understanding of man and

¹ K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures and Works on Max Scheler*, transl. G. Ignatik, A. Lopez, Washington DC 2023.

his life²; and this cannot be ignored or overlooked in religious transmission. The very fact that the terms specific to Greek philosophy appear in the writings of St. John and St. Paul shows that right from the dawn of Christianity there was already an awareness of the need for such a dialogue³.

This brings us to a third possible answer. If Christianity and its moral message is to have a universal dimension — and this is an integral aspiration of this doctrine — it must speak in a language understandable to man as man⁴. Philosophy, which is a work based on reason, formulates such a language, or at least aspires to do so, and thus provides conceptual tools that expand the field of understanding even of religious content. This does not, of course, mean reducing Christianity to philosophy, but it does mean that Christianity must also make use of the achievements inherent in philosophy.

2 By way of illustration, one can point to St. Justin, who as a Christian believer appreciated the immense wealth of Greek philosophy. In his *Dialogues* he explicitly states: “Philosophy is a very great possession and very precious in the eyes of God. Those who have applied their mind to philosophy are truly sacred”. St. Justin, *Dialogue of Justin, Philosopher and Martyr, with Trypho, a Jew*, in: *Writings of Justin Martyr*, eds. A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, Houston 2014, 11, 1–2, p. 149. In such pre-Christian thinkers as Socrates Justin saw the presence of certain elements typical of Christianity; he put this in his theory *Logos spermatikos* (seeds of the Word), which he defined, for example, as follows: “all the right principles that philosophers and lawgivers have discovered and expressed they owe to whatever of the Word they have found and contemplated in part (*karta meros*)”. See St. Justin, *The Second Apology of Justin for the Christians Addressed to the Roman Senate*, in: *Writings of Justin Martyr*, II, X, 1–3, p. 123.

3 Pope Benedict XVI emphasised this fact and strongly opposed the so-called de-Hellenisation of Christianity, as a demand to reject elements of Greek thought in Catholic theology. For the Christian message was formed on the basis of not only the Old Testament culture, but also the Greek culture, including Greek philosophy. The Pope pointed out, for example in his Regensburg speech in 2006, that one can see a clear analogy and closeness between the biblical message and Greek philosophy when it comes to, say, the rationality of God. The key term is the notion of *logos*. See Benedict XVI, *Faith, Reason and the University Memories and Reflections*, Regensburg Lecture, 12 September 2006, <https://familyofsites.bishopsconference.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2019/07/BXVI-2006-Regensburg-address.pdf> (19.05.2023).

4 Alasdair MacIntyre claims: “If religion is to propound a set of rules or a set of goals successfully, it must do so by showing that to live in the light of such rules and goals will be productive of what men can independently judge to be good”. A. MacIntyre, *A Short History of Ethics*, London 1998, p. 73.

A fourth answer to the question about the role of philosophy in Christianity directs our gaze to the need to develop a coherent and rationally well-grounded foundation for Christian ethics. Besides the revelation itself, there is also much of what can be discovered by reason alone, according to the principle that “grace builds on nature”, which follows from the profound conviction that nature too — its structure and meaning — is the work of God. And while no philosophy is privileged when viewed from a Christian position, certain philosophy schools may offer a better approach to this rational basis for the expression of the revealed content than others. In general, theology, including moral theology, needs philosophy.

Wojtyła’s discussion with Scheler can be tentatively seen as an encounter between theology and philosophy, between a theologian and a philosopher, inspired by the search for a rational grounding for Christian ethics. This tentative character is evidenced, by way of example, by formal premises: Wojtyła’s habilitation dissertation containing a discussion with Scheler was written with theological inspiration, within a university unit focused on theological research (Faculty of Theology at the Jagiellonian University). However, a further dimension to this dispute became apparent relatively quickly. It concerns man, the human person, and the framing of his action in a quite fundamental dimension, i.e., one that can be of interest to every human being, and not only to a Christian believer. Christian morality is based on these authentically human quests, and needs them as part of the special response it provides, which essentially flows from the religious revelation.

Ethical dispute — a dispute over the foundation of action

Karol Wojtyła’s debate with Max Scheler is multi-faceted. One of the central issues here is the dispute over the role of a lived experience and a reason in the structure of moral action. What is the starting point for providing an answer to the moral appeal directed at the human person? Is it the very lived experience of an axiological quality called ‘value’ or a rational reason in which the value experienced is only one of the elements? Values are given to humans in a way directly, intuitively as part of an experience

marked by strong emotional experiences. Scheler is essentially in favour of the former scenario: the value carries sufficient power to pull the subject into action. It becomes, in a way, a causative element that has the power to move the human person and induce him to act. It evokes a kind of spontaneous reaction and, in a way, a “push” for more. Values can be realised to varying degrees; it can be said that, first and foremost, they open up a positive, even unlimited field for man to realise the appeal contained in them; consequently, values are unlikely to impose barriers or limitations. Hence, following a higher value gives rise to a certain sense of enrichment, fulfilment and spiritual satisfaction in the human person.

Max Scheler does not deny a person’s causative agency in the process of value realisation; however, this agency is fundamentally dominated by the axiological content (and attraction) of values⁵. A person can be said to be so overcome by the attraction of the value that he succumbs to its pull. Consequently, nothing and no one has to order its realisation: in a way, it is a natural process for the person. Here, Scheler saw a fundamental field for a type of ethics devoid of negativity, where negativity for him meant the absence of a relevant value and the subsequent imperative to realise it. The German philosopher finds logic to be of fundamental importance: from a lived experience to action. The emotional sphere thus plays a fundamental role here, where values emerge, where their reception takes place and where the inclination to act is formed.

Wojtyła critically views and evaluates the German philosopher’s position. He finds it to be inadequate as regards formation of mature moral action. A lived experience of a value is important, but it is not enough. The axiological experience moves the person, and contains an extraordinary force motivating one to undertake a specific act. Wojtyła was aware that this finding was undoubtedly a great discovery and therefore might contribute to the formation of a new view of moral action. However, without the participation of reason, it can be misguided and even inadequate. A person has to visualise, and to some extent objectivise the lived value

5 M. Scheler, *Fromalism in Ethics and Non-Fromal Ethics of Value*, transl. M.S. Frings, R.L. Funk, Evanston 1973.

in order for it to become the object of rational evaluation. Only then can a certain “confusion” in following values be avoided: for the person accepts and is guided by these values as a primarily rational being.

Wojtyła points to two scenarios that allow Scheler’s simple pattern to be challenged. Firstly, the values given in a lived experience, sometimes in a very intense lived experience, may not be the starting point for responsible action. This is because objectivising them reveals that following them would be inappropriate in the long run for the individual or for a community of individuals. In other words: I experience the value intensely and feel a great inclination to realise it, but at the same time I know that I have to distance myself from it; otherwise it will ruin something important in my life. Secondly, there are values that are not given in a lived experience, or are poorly experienced, but their importance is great. It may turn out that understanding them will give rise to the need, or even necessity to realise them, despite the lack of a strong axiological experience and attendant emotional incentive⁶. Hence, the sheer strength of a lived experience and axiological attraction cannot be decisive factors. The assistance of reason and rational discernment are necessary to ensure that action is not only a response to value, but that it is an adequate and wise response.

For Wojtyła, there is another important moment that involves the engagement of reason: the value lived and objectivised allows for the person’s full commitment, i.e. his mature decision. A person’s adequate efficacy is possible only when the value is subjected to a broader assessment — an assessment that is made in the light of something more than what is given as part of the lived experience. Here, the thinker speaks of the necessity of a reference to the truth, and consequently of the “moment of dependence

6 In his later work *Person and Act*, Wojtyła would justify this conviction as follows: “A man who would rely only and exclusively on the course of his sensations and feelings in his relation to values would leave himself somehow in the orbit of what merely happened in him and would not be fully capable of self-determination. Self-determination and the self-governance connected with it sometimes require action in the name of the ‘naked’ truth about the good, action in the name of the value that is not felt. At times it even requires action against provisional feelings”. See K. Wojtyła, *“Person and Act” and Related Essays*, transl. G. Ignatik, Washington DC 2021, p. 345.

on the truth”, i.e., a statement of the extent to which the emotional experience is permeated by the truth⁷. The lived experience alone does not have the capacity to effectuate such discernment, for this lies within the competence of reason. That which is, at best, found within the emotional reception, is what Scheler refers to as preference (placing one value above another).

Besides, it is important to consider a certain asymmetry between the height of values, within the hierarchy of values (which Scheler discusses), and the emotional response. The latter — by virtue of innate dispositions — may result in an excess or deficiency of lived experience. Imagine individuals who have a weak scale of lived experiences, and, on the other hand, individuals with a very intense emotional life. Therefore, trusting the lived experience dynamics alone is risky⁸. Karol Wojtyła is convinced that the person is above all a rational being. And although he needs experience and a lived experience, his action is essentially resolved on the basis of rational reasons.

Cultural implications

Connecting morality and ethics to an experience was an important step in moving away from strictly rationalistic patterns: speculative and deductive ones. Constructing ethics on a lived experience given to each individual emphasised the importance of this activity in the life of the individual, and even its attractiveness. However, the condition was that this lived experience be part of discernment and reflection, i.e., it is not left as the main and decisive factor. Fulfilling this condition was based on the preservation

7 Wojtyła expresses this when he formulates the postulate whereby “we must take into consideration the degree to which sensibility is permeated by truthfulness”. K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act and Related Essays*, p. 345.

8 Some type of emotional intuition that accompanies lived experiences may also come into play. Even if such power actually exists, it has not been cognised enough, and it is not clear what it is about. Hence, for instance, it is difficult to defend the proposition whereby through the experience of emotions something is learnt; and even when this occurs, the knowledge thus gained is obvious only to the individual concerned and cannot be intersubjectively communicated.

of proportionate rational reflection and the human person's ability to act on its judgements. However, there is no denying that this condition is not easy to satisfy. Well, in addition to the axiological experience, which is supremely positive, appealing and peculiarly energising, patient and sometimes even arduous intellectual work must be done on what is given here. Moreover, it is the latter instance that is ultimately decisive for a person's action, rather than the former — reason rather than the lived experience. This may give rise to a desire to “take shortcuts” and get rid of that which is difficult, and what may end up being detrimental to the content of the original experience.

Max Scheler assumed the existence of a hierarchy of values independent of the person in their structure; the person, in a way, discovers these values and allows himself to be drawn to them. Today, this part of the thinking can be very problematic for modern man, who may perceive in such an attitude the presence of an overarching structure over which he has no control, and which may appear as a threat to his freedom. In the face of subjectivistic, individualistic and relativistic tendencies, values are in danger of being severely oversimplified in regard to their understanding and, by extension, deformed. And so as a value here will be regarded that which an individual prefers without deeper justification, most often in accordance with the dictates of consumption and hedonistic culture. The degeneration (or displacement) of the content of values, especially higher ones, will be accompanied by the fact that that which will remain will be only an emotional experience. Unwillingness to engage reason, or to discern values will only intensify the reliance on the so-called “truth of values”, and consequently on the “truth of feelings”. But are we dealing with truth as truth here?

Intellectual weakness, unwillingness to make an intellectual effort can leave a person in a whirlpool of emotion; it can even lead to a kind of entrapment in emotion. There are many reasons for this. The culture of retreat from truth, its denial or the insistence that there is only the truth of the individual, a truth unavailable for extra-subjective verification, may also be responsible for this. The category of truth, especially objective and

universal truth, has long been challenged by many philosophers⁹. And this challenging is quintessential to the marginalisation of reason and its role in human life and action. If there is no truth that transcends my life and my condition, then the only truth is what I experience; many a time this means even something more — the truth is what I feel.

Nowadays, this has to do with the predominant model of education, where a radical change in traditional requirements has led to increasing enfeeblement of reason. It is enough to realise that quite a lot of people, even with formal education, have problems with cause-and-effect thinking: they cannot, for example, determine what is the cause and what is the effect of certain processes and events; they confuse one with the other. To a large extent, this is related to a drop in reading, especially of major literary and scientific works, or to a change in its form. Experts on the subject stress that reading short reports not only prevents a mature encounter with ideas and values, but also changes the profile of the mind. This comes to be expressed in the development of the ability to concentrate only on short passages, and many at the same time, and only for a short time. For example, Mark Bauerlein in his book *The Dumbest Generation Grows up. From Stupefied Youth to Dangerous Adults* compares the mental profile of a literature professor brought up in the traditional paradigm with that of young students. Bauerlein presents an interesting juxtaposition: “the professor processes” in one way; the sophomores “process” in another. He was tied to the printed page; they scanned screens. He was single-tasked; they multi-tasked. He read a sole text in leaner sequence; they jumped around, clicked on links, kept twelve tabs open on the desktop”¹⁰. This generation

9 We speak about the so-called post-truth culture, where subjective narratives dominated by individual feelings, preferences and opinions take the place of truth. By way of illustration, the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary recently announced that the most popular term in 2016 was ‘post-truth’. What is more, it was added that post-truth should be understood as “relating to or denoting circumstances in which objective facts are less influential in shaping public opinion than appeals to emotions and personal belief”. *Word of the Year 2016*, <http://en.oxforddictionary.com/word-of-the-year-2016> (17.05.2023).

10 M. Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation Grows Up. From Stupefied Youth to Dangerous Adults*, Washington DC 2022, p. 16–17.

seem to be thinking in many dimensions simultaneously¹¹. But do they think, or do they merely receive stimuli which, although containing some superficial rational content, are essentially organised around sensations?

Already ancient philosophers were convinced that reason is naturally directed towards acquisition of truth; in other words, truth is the primary object of reason. This belief, however, can be ideologically shattered by making an *a priori* assumption that truth does not exist, or that it is unattainable. Then, naturally, truth is not sought any more, and reason becomes an instrument merely subordinated to other powers, and thus becomes something secondary. For efficacy to be preserved, the weakening of the function of reason can at the same time be combined with strengthening of the will: a strong will will compensate for the lack of cognition. However, it will then be inspired and even motivated not by ideas, but precisely by lived experiences.

In Max Scheler, all this took the form along the following lines: a person can rationally objectivise a value, but only secondarily; and this does not fundamentally affect the realisation of that value. In Karol Wojtyła, on the other hand, the objectivisation of values by means of reason is necessary before the intention to act is formulated and then addressed to the will. A value can partly be seen as an efficient cause. However, discerning what it leads to, i.e., discovering the horizon of the final cause, is the work of reason or — the person who uses reason. It is reason that discovers, learns and evaluates the purpose that is suggested in the pull, in the attraction of value. It is then reason that addresses the rationally formulated intention to the will, and not a feeling or a sensation. It seems that the contemporary marginalisation of the strong version of reason may give rise to an error that confines itself to the pattern: experience — will — action; instead of promoting the pattern: experience — reason — will — action (act).

11 M. Bauerlein, *The Dumbest Generation Grows Up*, p. 17.

Conclusion

The contemporary dispute, like Wojtyła's dispute with Scheler, is a dispute about man and the fundamental dimension of his action. However, it does not have to end with one side being declared the winner and the other the loser. This is because it may lead to a dialogue in which the arguments of both the debating parties find recognition, at least in certain respects. After all, it is about searching for a balance between the lived experience and a rational reason, and consequently about the formulation of a synthesis between the two. It may be helpful in this regard to refer to the mature and integrated human person, to the ethically brave man as Aristotle would say (Greek *spoudaios* — a serious person)¹². In someone like this, the synthesis finds practical realisation, and the task of philosophers is to cognitively extract and adequately describe this regularity.

There is nothing wrong about assuming an experience as the starting point for ethics; on the contrary, it seems to be a necessary step. However, it is important to maintain symmetry and recognise that the role of reason is also of the essence here. This synthesis can take the form of an experience that seeks a reason and tools to critically evaluate its content through reason. Karol Wojtyła confesses that he himself followed a similar logic in his life¹³. However, in order to pursue this path, one should recognise that it is necessary to adopt the strong version of reason, i.e., one that “reads” reality and is able to establish its basic principles. It is necessary, therefore, to have a constant reference to truth as a certain fundamental state of affairs that metaphysics captures. In Wojtyła, in his major work *Person and Act*, there is an important construction — the “context of truth”. According to this notion, the human person does not only address the object of cognition in the process of coming to a decision, but is indeed related to the context of

12 In Aristotle we find the notion of the brave man as a certain model of the individual acting according to reason; although it can be assumed that what is meant here is simply an internally, personalitywise integrated human individual, where the roles of feelings and reason are properly balanced. Aristotle, *Ethica Nicomachea*, ed. J. Bywater, Oxford 1984, 1098a 8–15. In history, by way of illustration, we can point to such figures as Socrates, Jesus Christ or Mahatma Gandhi.

13 A. Frossard, *Do Not Be Afraid! John Paul II Speaks out on his Life, his Beliefs, and his Inspiring Vision for Humanity*, transl. J. R. Foster, New York 1984, p. 18.

truth. Only the ability to use metaphysical reason, with a clearly specified category of truth, can help to ensure that the lived experience does not take precedence over the person and that other unfavourable states associated with the overgrowth of the emotional sphere, such as the emotionalisation of consciousness, to which Wojtyła himself devoted considerable attention, do not occur¹⁴.

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14 K. Wojtyła, *“Person and Act” and Related Essays*, p. 82–86.

Abstract

A lived experience or a reason? From an ethics debate to contemporary culture

Karol Wojtyła's debate with Max Scheler is multi-faceted. One of the central issues here is the dispute over the role of a lived experience and a reason in the structure of moral action. What is the starting point for providing an answer to the moral appeal directed at the human person? Is it a lived experience of an axiological quality called 'value' or a rational reason in which the value experienced is only one of the elements? Scheler is essentially in favour of the former scenario: the value carries sufficient power to pull the subject into action. And while his efficacy does not completely disappear here, it is fundamentally dominated by the axiological content (and attraction) of the value. Wojtyła takes a critical view of the German philosopher's position, and states its inadequacy in the formation of mature moral action. A lived experience of a value is important, but it is not enough. The axiological experience moves the person, and contains an extraordinary force motivating one to undertake a specific act. However, without the participation of reason, it can be misguided and even inadequate. A person has to visualise, and to some extent objectivise the lived value for it to become the object of rational evaluation. Wojtyła's dispute with Scheler is not just a marginal discussion between two European thinkers, within the hermetic philosophical debate of the 20th century. Indeed, it is part of the perennial questions as to what morality is, what role it plays in human life, and to what extent human beings influence the realisation of moral good and evil. The debate can also be a kind of lens affording a better view of the essence of contemporary disputes concerning both morality and culture. The diminishing and marginalisation of reason (especially in the strong, metaphysical version) in various spheres of life is striking. The tension between the culture of feeling and the culture of thinking is discernible and must prompt a debate. Karol Wojtyła shows what shape such a debate could take, and that it could be enriching for the entirety of contemporary culture.

Keywords: moral action, rational reason, experience of value, Max Scheler, Karol Wojtyła

Abstrakt

Przeżycie czy racja? Od debaty etycznej do kultury współczesnej

Debata Karola Wojtyły z Maksem Schelerem jest wielowątkowa. Jednak jedną z centralnych kwestii jest spór o rolę przeżycia i racji w strukturze działania moralnego. Co jest punktem wyjścia do dania odpowiedzi na apel moralny skierowany do osoby ludzkiej? Czy jest to przeżycie jakości aksjologicznej zwanej wartością czy racja rozumowa, w której wartość doświadczona jest tylko jednym z elementów? Scheler opowiada się zasadniczo za pierwszym scenariuszem: wartość niesie ze sobą wystarczającą moc pociągania podmiotu do działania. I choć nie znika tu całkowicie jego sprawczość, to jednak jest ona zasadniczo zdominowana przez treść (i atrakcję) aksjologiczną wartości. Wojtyła ocenia krytycznie to stanowisko niemieckiego filozofa i stwierdza jego niewystarczalność w formowaniu dojrzałego działania moralnego. Przeżywanie wartości jest ważne, ale niewystarczające. Doświadczenie aksjologiczne porusza osobę i zawiera w sobie niezwykłą siłę motywującą do podjęcia określonego czynu. Jednak bez udziału rozumu, może być nietrafione, a nawet nieadekwatne. Osoba musi zobrazować sobie, poniekąd zobjektywizować przeżywaną wartość, aby stała się ona przedmiotem oceny racjonalnej. Spór Wojtyły z Schelerem nie jest tylko marginalną dyskusją pomiędzy dwoma myślicielami europejskimi, w obrębie hermetycznej debaty filozoficznej XX stulecia. W istocie wpisuje się on w odwieczne pytania, czym jest moralność, jaką rolę pełni w życiu człowieka i na ile człowiek ma wpływ na realizację dobra i zła moralnego. Debata ta również może być swoistym szkłem kontaktowym, przez które lepiej widać istotę współczesnych sporów, tak w obrębie moralności, jak i kultury. Osłabienie i marginalizacja rozumu (szczególnie w wersji mocnej, metafizycznej) w różnych sferach życia jest uderzająca. Napięcie pomiędzy kulturą odczuwania a kulturą myślenia jest dostrzegalne i musi skłaniać do debaty. Karol Wojtyła pokazuje, jak mógłby wyglądać kształt takiej debaty i że mogłaby ona być ubogająca dla całej kultury współczesnej.

Słowa kluczowe: działanie moralne, racja rozumowa, doświadczenie wartości, Max Scheler, Karol Wojtyła

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Moral theology in search of a method: metaphysics or phenomenology?

Our deliberations on the subject indicated in the title of this article, which will take place on the basis of an analysis of an early work of Karol Wojtyła, his 1953 habilitation dissertation entitled *An Evaluation of the Possibility of Constructing Christian Ethics Premised on Max Scheler's System*, will begin with some general and introductory remarks¹. They can be encapsulated in three theses. *Primo*, Revelation (theology) needs philosophy. *Secundo*, Revelation (theology) is always in search of an appropriate philosophy. *Tertio*, Revelation contains criteria for evaluating the philosophy on which it is based. Let us briefly try to substantiate these three theses.

As regards the first thesis, it may be helpful to reflect on the definition of faith that we find in St. Augustine: *cogitare cum assensione*². Faith is “thinking with assent”, because it is an activity of the human reason and an invitation for the human rational subject to dialogue with God. This dialogical character of faith is highlighted by the word *assensio*, i.e., assent, adherence, which describes the activity of the will and human freedom. Faith, then, is not just reasoning, an activity of reason alone (*cogitare*), but an activity engaged in by the entire human being in which the human

1 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera*, Lublin 1953.

2 Augustine, *De praedestinatione Sanctorum* II, 5, in: *Sancti Aurelii Augustini [...] opera omnia*, t. 10/1, Parisiis 1865, p. 964 (Patrologia Latina. Cursus Completus, 44); cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, 2, 1, <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/>.

decision to enter into an interpersonal relationship with God is important³. Indeed, supernatural grace — the light of faith (*lumen fidei*), as traditional theology puts it — is necessary for Christian faith to arise, but this additional light, according to the basic paradigm describing the relationship between nature and grace: grace does not destroy nature, but perfects it (*gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit*)⁴, means building on the foundation of the natural activity of reason. Therefore, theology is not concerned with proving the principle of non-contradiction, the existence of an immortal soul or the real existence of the world. Man's theological reflection is formed on the basis of the natural convictions of his reason and the contents of his thinking about God, himself and all reality (*cogitare*)⁵.

The history of theology shows how theology has constantly searched among various philosophical concepts for one onto which a Christian interpretation can be superimposed, that "addition" of grace referred to in the previous paragraph. The various traditions and narratives of the Old Testament drew on the ancient image of the world, believed to be true at the time, and on various myths and legends, reinterpreting them to convey the mystery of the God who revealed himself to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. By way of illustration, the Greek writings of the Old Testament (Book of Wisdom, Book of Proverbs) attempt a reconciliation between the Jewish idea of law — the Torah as God's greatest gift — and the idea of wisdom, so important in the Greek world⁶. St. John the Evangelist uses the Stoic idea

3 For more on this subject see J. Kupczak, *O egzystencjalnym i poznawczym ujęciu wiary w teologii św. Tomasza z Akwinu*, in: *W prostocie prawdy, w pokorze miłości. Studia i materiały dedykowane ks. prof. Janowi Walowi*, Kraków 2008, p. 333–342.

4 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, 1, 8 ad 2.

5 As John Paul II wrote almost half a century later in his encyclical *Fides et ratio*: "Faith is in a sense an «exercise of thought»; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith, which are in any case attained by way of free and informed choice" (n. 43).

6 This is what John Paul II wrote about the Wisdom Books in his encyclical *Fides et ratio*: "What is striking about these biblical texts, if they are read without prejudice, is that they embody not only the faith of Israel, but also the treasury of cultures and civilizations which have long vanished. As if by special design, the voices of Egypt and Mesopotamia sound again and certain features common to the cultures of the ancient Near East come to life in these pages which are so singularly rich in deep intuition" (n. 16).

of the Divine Logos in the prologue to his Gospel; Ambrose uses the Greek model of the cardinal virtues to construct Christian ethics; and Augustine draws on neo-Platonism. Thomas Aquinas founds theology on Aristotelianism, and the transcendental Thomism in the 20th century—besides relying on the work of Aquinas—attempts to use the critical philosophy of Immanuel Kant (and, in part, of Martin Heidegger) to articulate the mysteries of faith⁷.

If we think of the various examples of the use of philosophy as a mental foundation for the interpretation of Revelation (some of which we have pointed out above), in each of these cases Revelation contains internal criteria for assessing whether a given philosophy can serve to convey the contents of faith. As a classic example, we can point to the way in which Thomas Aquinas modified, or “purified” Aristotle’s philosophy. Aquinas knew that particularly three elements of the Stagirite’s theodicy were irreconcilable with the Christian doctrine of faith: the divinity of stars, multiple prime movers, and the eternity of the world and motion⁸. Therefore, each of these three elements gets either rejected by Thomas (this is the case with the divinity of stars and the multiple prime movers), or reinterpreted (as for the eternity of the world, Thomas argues that neither the eternity nor the beginning of the world can be proved philosophically; it is possible to accept such a thesis by faith alone)⁹.

In light of the three introductory remarks above, the history of theology thus appears as a history of the assimilation of particular elements of certain philosophical theories (of greater or lesser importance) and their integration into a system of theological thinking. The purpose of such

7 Ultimately, this relationship of philosophy and theology is theologically founded on the relationship between creation and salvation. And this is what John Paul II writes about this in his encyclical *Fides et ratio*: This truth, which God reveals to us in Jesus Christ, is not opposed to the truths which philosophy perceives. On the contrary, the two modes of knowledge lead to truth in all its fullness. The unity of truth is a fundamental premise of human reasoning, as the principle of non-contradiction makes clear. Revelation renders this unity certain, showing that the God of creation is also the God of salvation history” (n. 34).

8 Cf. T. J. White, *Wisdom in the Face of Modernity. A Study of Thomistic Natural Theology*, Ave Maria 2016, p. 122–126.

9 Cf. T. J. White, *Wisdom In The Face Of Modernity*, p. 76.

assimilation and integration is to speak of God in the context of the truth about all reality, about all that exists. The truth emerges as a key criterion for evaluating every philosophical claim to see if it is useful for theology. Importantly, it is noteworthy that the truth of philosophical statements also becomes a criterion for evaluating theological statements¹⁰.

Karol Wojtyła in search of a philosophy appropriate for Christian ethics

The reason for Wojtyła's interest in Max Scheler's phenomenology was to see if Scheler's philosophical anthropology and ethics might be used for contemporary interpretation of the New Testament theological ethics. Therefore, in his habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła intends to do something very similar to what Aquinas did with Aristotle. The idea is to show in which elements the philosophy studied can serve to interpret and convey the mysteries of faith to contemporary man, and which elements must be rejected, purified, or modified.

The task of researching the thought of Max Scheler was suggested to Karol Wojtyła by his Cracow-based lecturer in dogmatic theology, Fr. Ignacy Różycki¹¹. The context of this important suggestion, which so significantly influenced the future Pope's life, was that in the 20th century Scheler was seen by many Catholic intellectuals as a potential ally in the confrontation with the frequently anti-Catholic and anti-Christian intellectual climate of the age. As a 14-year-old boy, fascinated above all by the Catholic liturgy, Scheler converted to Christianity from Judaism and was baptised in the Catholic Church. Later on, in his mature period, he wrote positively about the importance of religion, the Church and priesthood, as well as monastic life and virtue. Scheler's phenomenology received

¹⁰ The deliberation on the hermeneutic circle indicated here in the relationship between philosophy and theology must be suspended at this point, as it would take us off at a tangent and away from the original subject of this text. Undoubtedly, John Paul II's 1998 encyclical *Fides et ratio* serves as a valuable source for further reflection on this subject.

¹¹ Cf. G. H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of his Thought and Action*, New York 1981, p. 115.

a friendly welcome in Catholic intellectual circles primarily because of his opposition to Kantianism. This is how Harvard University historian George Huntston Williams describes that: “All Catholic neo-Thomists would have a fundamental disposition to oppose Kant and his reasoned system that denied the possibility of the direct access of the mind to the ontic reality in Aristotelian-Thomist thought and, above all, undermined the objective and therefore binding character of revealed moral instruction. Scheler could, therefore, in the realm of ethics, no less than in epistemology, anthropology, and metaphysics, be regarded as a prestigious ally [...] in reasserting, by virtue of a new methodological analysis, the moral values of eternal philosophy”¹².

The present text does not aim to detail the analysis performed by Wojtyła in his habilitation dissertation; the author has done so elsewhere¹³. For the purposes of this text, it is important to present Wojtyła’s final conclusions and the way they were substantiated. The concluding thesis of Wojtyła’s reflections in his habilitation dissertation is negative: Max Scheler’s philosophy cannot be used to interpret the theological ethics of the New Testament. This negative judgement flows from Wojtyła’s conviction of the fundamental incompatibility of the assumptions behind Scheler’s philosophy with the Christian worldview, or to put it more simply: from the fundamental errors in the Schelerian anthropology and ethics. Wojtyła points to four such fundamental errors. *Primo*, because of the phenomenological nature of his analysis, Scheler describes man not as a substance or the subject of his actions, but solely as a unity of feelings and various experiences. Hence, Scheler is unable to explain how human actions are subjectified in the person, and how ethical values of acts and of the subject himself depend on human efficient agency¹⁴. *Secundo*, Scheler’s idea

12 G.H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II*, p. 124.

13 Cf. J. Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty. The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*, Washington DC 2000, p. 10–24.

14 “Scheler reduces the essence of a person’s life to feelings, and the ethical life to the affective experience of values while at the same time completely excluding the person’s efficient agency” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, p. 81). Three years later, in the *Lublin Lectures*, Wojtyła reiterated this criticism of the Schelerian anthropology: “According to Scheler, phenomenological

to oppose Immanuel Kant's formalism in his ethics of material values was the reason why the German phenomenologist decided to radically exclude the concept of duty from his ethics. This resulted in a deformation of the ethical experience of the person, as well as in a false approach to the human conscience¹⁵. In realist ethics, the experience of ethical duty is an important part of the subjective encounter with a moral value, although not, of course, in the way Immanuel Kant presented it. *Tertio*, Scheler's negative assessment of the moral imperative cannot be reconciled with the positive approach to the commandment and the law in biblical ethics¹⁶. *Quarto*, emotional anthropology leads Scheler to present love primarily as a feeling, which is incompatible with the New Testament ethics, where *agape* is objective in nature: "If you love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15)¹⁷.

On the usefulness of the phenomenological method for ethical deliberations

In the concluding remarks of his habilitation dissertation, after passing a negative judgement on the usefulness of the Schelerian ethics for the interpretation of Christian ethics, Wojtyła nevertheless concludes that Scheler's phenomenological method may be very useful for Christian ethics. Ethical facts, after all, form the content of the subject's inner experience; the ethicist, therefore, needs an appropriate method to describe and analyse them. According to Wojtyła, psychology cannot be the source of

principles do not allow us to analyse the person as an efficient cause, but only as a unity of acts. Therefore, the person does not realise anything, but only feels the values that flow through him in different directions [...] Neither acts nor values have their origin in the person as an efficient cause. At this point, Scheler's phenomenology loses all the dynamism of the human person, who for him is only a passive subject of feelings, and not an active cause of his own actions" (K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, Lublin 1986, p. 32–33). Scheler's emotionalist anthropology means that he can be considered a forerunner of post-modern thought, in line with how this current of thought is described by Alasdair MacIntyre in his now classic work: *Dziedzictwo cnoty. Studium z teorii moralności*, transl. A. Chmielewski, Warszawa 1996.

15 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, p. 75–86.

16 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, p. 86–90.

17 K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, p. 91–97.

such a method because *ex principio* it is not interested in the normative and axiological dimension of the patient's ethical lived experience. George Williams accurately points out the reasons why it was in Scheler's phenomenological method that Wojtyła saw a useful tool for his own ethical and anthropological analyses: "Scheler himself, against the psychologies of his day, asserted that the proper means for experimental research into ethically lived experiences is not introspection and the psychiatrist's analysis of unconscious, hereditary, environmental, or idiosyncratic psychic drives and rationalizations, but rather the phenomenological approach without presuppositions, which, alone, of the disciplines, perhaps, takes up the lived experience of a person in its wholeness and the wholeness of the person himself"¹⁸.

Wojtyła agrees with Scheler that an ethical fact consists in experiencing the value, which is directed intentionally towards the value. Therefore, the phenomenological method can be used to analyse a Christian's lived experience, the essence of which lies in accepting in faith the ethical principles of the Christian Revelation. Nevertheless, according to Wojtyła, the usefulness of the phenomenological method thus understood is limited. It can describe the human experience of lived values, but it cannot define an objective principle by which a human act is morally good or bad. For, in order to define this principle, ethical values must be placed in a non-experiential and non-phenomenal order of objective goods, which is only possible in a metaphysical analysis. As Williams rightly concludes: "A Catholic ethicist may be phenomenological in his methodology but not a phenomenologist, for a consistent or exclusive phenomenology would impose the postulate that ethical value reveals itself only in the lived experience of a person when he acts in the moral realm [...] But Catholic ethicists may be encouraged to go further with the method than Scheler himself"¹⁹. It was about this usefulness, but also about the limitations of the phenomenological

18 G. H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II*, p. 136.

19 G. H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II*, p. 138.

method that John Paul II would write 40 years later, in the encyclical *Fides et ratio*: “from phenomenon to foundation”²⁰.

Wojtyła’s further methodological and metaphysical findings in the process of constructing an adequate description of the ethically acting subject

Karol Wojtyła would continue his search for an adequate description of the acting subject in his lectures, which he would undertake at the Catholic University of Lublin from 1953 onwards, and of which his book is a record: *Lublin Lectures*²¹. It is in these lectures that Wojtyła continues the line of thought he began in his habilitation dissertation: confronting the insight into meta-ethical problems, which comes from phenomenology, and the ultimate explanation that can only be of a metaphysical nature. Hence, in the title of each of the four monographic Lublin Lectures, one of the two terms is taken from classical metaphysics: act, good, *eudaimonia*, love; and the other from the philosophy of consciousness *sensu largo*: lived experience, value, norm, responsibility: “The act and the ethical lived experience”, “The good and the value”, and “The problem of norm and happiness”, “Love

20 John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*, n. 83. Canadian philosopher Kenneth Schmitz aptly described the reasons for Wojtyła’s turn to metaphysics: “[...] Wojtyła turns to metaphysics, not out of piety toward to a venerable tradition, but in order to retrieve the reality of act and in order to give to act the primary role within the entirety of the ethical life as it is lived and experienced. I venture to say that Wojtyła is not a metaphysician by calling, and that he is challenged immediately by the practical issues of life. Still, he too hungers after the truth of the way things are, and in order to give a more adequate account of the ethical life, this «ethicist of act» calls upon the metaphysics of being and its anthropology to explain how the human person emerges from being a passive subject of experiences to become a responsible agent of moral actions” (K. L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama. The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC 1993, p. 44–45). Elsewhere in Schmitz’s excellent study we read: “Metaphysics, then, is not simply complementary to ethical analysis; neither is it merely supportive of that analysis. Metaphysics is necessary and intrinsic to ethical analysis, if we are to give a thorough account of what ethical experience and ethical life are” (K. L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, p. 56–57).

21 With much validity, Professor Kenneth L. Schmitz pointed out in the 1990s that Wojtyła’s early writings: his habilitation dissertation and the Lublin Lectures, are unduly underestimated by Wojtyła scholars (cf. K. L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama*, p. 41).

and responsibility”²². The place where Wojtyła makes a mature methodological synthesis of phenomenological description and metaphysical explanation is precisely his most famous philosophical book: *Love and Responsibility* — a transcript of his final monographic lecture in the Lublin Lectures series.

There is not enough room here to analyse in more depth the interpenetration of phenomenology and metaphysics in Wojtyła’s thought; we can only indicate some places where such interpenetration and complementarity takes place. The first Lublin Lecture serves as a particularly interesting example of this methodological synthesis: “The act and the ethical lived experience”; in it, Wojtyła adds, as it were, some final conclusions to his habilitation dissertation, and continues the analysis begun there. At the beginning of this lecture, Wojtyła returns to the question already addressed in his habilitation dissertation — the one of the most fundamental relevance to ethics: what is the essence of moral values? In order to find an answer to this question, Wojtyła begins with a historical analysis: he takes a closer look at the ethical systems of two thinkers essential for understanding the modern era, Immanuel Kant (1723–1804) and Max Scheler (1874–1928). The analysis of the thought of these two ethicists leads to the thesis that neither of them has explained how a person becomes morally good or bad through his actions. Moreover, Wojtyła shows that the source of this shortcoming is an even more fundamental error: the failure to show what human freedom — the agency of the subject — consists in. The main problem — from the point of view of the questions posed by the Cracow-based thinker — is therefore the absence of an adequate approach to the human will in the philosophers under investigation. In Kant, in a manner analogous to ancient Greek ethical intellectualism, the will seems to be merely a part of the deliberating reason; in Scheler, who in opposition to Kant emphasises the role of emotion in human life, the will seems to be some form of emotional response to values²³.

22 This parallel thinking with the categories of metaphysics and phenomenology was to be very evident in K. Wojtyła’s philosophical *opus magnum* — the 1969 book entitled *Person and Act*.

23 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 57–57.

In order to find a more adequate description of free will, Wojtyła turns to the metaphysical anthropology of Thomas Aquinas. In the Thomistic view of the will as rational appetite (*appetitus rationalis*), which by nature turns towards everything that reason recognises as good, Wojtyła sees the key to explaining the ethical consequences of the person's agency. In human decisions, the will thus appears as a rational power which, on the one hand, possesses its own independence, which constitutes human freedom (*motio quoad exercitum*), and, on the other hand, acts properly and in accordance with its nature when it cooperates with reason (*motio quoad specificationem*). In such a description, the will shows its true character as a rational power (*appetitus rationalis*)²⁴. In the *Lublin Lectures* we read: "The will, by performing its act in accordance with the rational reason of the good, thereby itself becomes good in the ethical sense. If, on the other hand, it performs an act contrary to the rational reason of the good, it thereby becomes evil in the ethical sense. This becoming of the will is the very core of ethical human acts. The content of becoming is ethical value itself, which, in view of the above presuppositions, is nothing other than the particular realisation of that *rationalitas naturae* by which the individual substantial being is a person. Then, in turn, it is not difficult to grasp that the person himself too, through this act of will, becomes good or bad in an ethical sense"²⁵.

The essence of man's becoming morally good or bad is what happens in the human will (which desires the good) in its relation to reason (which seeks the truth). Ethical values concern the ontological and not just experiential dimension of the human will. The basic tool to explain this ontological becoming of man through the becoming of the will is, according to Wojtyła, the Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of potency and act. This is what, fifteen years later, he wrote on the subject in his book *Person and Act*: "So far we do not know another conception or language that would render the dynamic essence of change and all changes taking place in any being, except for this one conception and this one language with which we were

24 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 67–72.

25 K. Wojtyła, *Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 69–70.

endowed by the philosophy of *potentia* — *actus*. Every dynamism taking place in any being can be adequately grasped on the basis of this conception and with the help of this language. We must use these when we grasp the dynamism proper to man”²⁶.

Before moving on to the concluding remarks, let us point out one more metaphysical finding of Wojtyła’s that allowed him to complement the phenomenological insight with an understanding that refers to the most fundamental principles. This finding comes from the above-mentioned fourth “Lublin Lecture”, which was delivered in the academic year 1957–1958, and then formed the basis of Wojtyła’s most widely known book of the pre-pontifical period: *Love and Responsibility*. The central part of the book is a comprehensive — metaphysical, psychological and ethical — analysis of love. However, it is the metaphysics of love — based on the classical Platonic distinction between the four types of love: attraction, desire, goodwill, and friendship — that is the key to understanding the essence of human love²⁷.

The theme of love indubitably links Wojtyła’s lecture *Love and Responsibility* with his habilitation dissertation, since love is one of the important themes in Max Scheler’s philosophy; it was Scheler’s focus on the meaning of love that inspired many Christian and Catholic thinkers to take an interest in the Schelerian phenomenology. Nevertheless, Wojtyła critiques Scheler’s understanding of love because of its emotivist character²⁸. For Scheler, love is merely a feeling to which the subject should submit; given such an understanding of love, it is difficult to understand, say, the following words

26 K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, transl. G. Ignatik, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington DC 2021, p. 166. A few pages further on, with regard to the philosophical justification of the ethical becoming of the person Wojtyła writes as follows: “At this point, phenomenology seems to enter most boldly into metaphysics and to most need metaphysics, for the phenomena themselves adequately make a thing manifest but are not adequately explained” (K. Wojtyła, *Person and Act*, p. 172).

27 K. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, transl. H. T. Willetts, San Francisco 1981, p. 73–95. A more detailed analysis of each of the four forms of love can be found in: R. Buttiglione, *Mysł Karola Wojtyły*, transl. J. Merecki, Lublin 1996, p. 151–160; J. Kupczak, *W stronę wolności. Szkice o antropologii Karola Wojtyły*, Kraków 1999, p. 79–88; J. Woroniecki OP, *Katolicka etyka wychowawcza*, t. 2/1, Lublin 1995, p. 196–206.

28 Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, p. 91–98.

of Christ: “Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me” (John 14:21).

In the lecture *Love and Responsibility* Wojtyła makes a necessary metaphysical correction to the understanding of love in Scheler’s phenomenology. The correction consists in retaining the phenomenological description of human lived experience and experience, but at the same time supplementing it with a metaphysical explanation. Wojtyła emphasises that in order to understand human love (both natural and supernatural), also from the point of view of its personal uniqueness, it needs to be set within the most fundamental principles of that which exists. Like any other being, man seeks to preserve his own existence, which is the object of the love of attraction (*amor complacentiae*). Like any other being, man behaves according to his nature and seeks his good, which is the object of the love of desire (*amor concupiscentiae*). In the case of persons: human beings, angels and God, this search for the good has a peculiar character — it turns out that the good we seek is the other person — concern for him or her is the content of *benevolent love* (*amor benevolentiae*), and striving for unity with him or her is the object of the love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) and betrothed love, with which Wojtyła completes the classical metaphysical fourfold division of love. Through betrothed love, one becomes a gift for the other person. The value of this metaphysical approach to love lies in seeing that human love of ecstasy, sacrifice and self-sacrifice is typically a personal expression of the search for oneself, the search for the fulfilment of who the person is — a human, angelic and the Divine one²⁹.

“From phenomenon to foundation”. Final remarks

A careful reading of the subsequent works of Karol Wojtyła/Jan Paul II leads to a surprising conclusion. The reader will note that the subsequent development of this thought is not so much a retreat from what has been

29 The realism of the metaphysical approach to love shows its importance in the discussion of the subject of disinterested love (cf. J. Pieper, *On love*, transl. R. and C. Winston, in: J. Pieper, *Faith, Hope, Love*, San Francisco 2012, p. 207–281.

said before, but rather an elaboration and supplementation of it. The evidence of the veracity of this hermeneutical method in the reading of Wojtyła is provided by comparing the above analyses with the content of one of the most important documents of John Paul II's pontificate, the 1998 encyclical *Fides et ratio*.

John Paul II notes that “one of the most significant aspects of our current situation [...] is the «crisis of meaning»”³⁰. In view of the aspectuality and fragmentation of human knowledge, the wisdom question about the meaning of human life and reality as a whole seems too ambitious and impossible to be tackled. At the same time, in the face of this scepticism of the contemporary times, philosophy cannot give up the question of meaning because — as the Second Vatican Council emphasises — that is the nature of human reason: “For his intelligence is not confined to observable data alone (*intellegentia enim non ad sola phaenomena coarctatur*), but can with genuine certitude attain to reality itself as knowable, though in consequence of sin that certitude is partly obscured and weakened”³¹.

The need for a wisdom philosophy that inquires about meaning, points to the need for a metaphysical philosophy: “the need for a philosophy of genuinely metaphysical range, capable, that is, of transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth. [...] metaphysics should not be seen as an alternative to anthropology, since it is metaphysics which makes it possible to ground the concept of personal dignity in virtue of their spiritual nature. In a special way, the person constitutes a privileged locus for the encounter with being, and hence with metaphysical enquiry. Wherever men and women discover a call to the absolute and transcendent, the metaphysical dimension of reality opens up before them [...] We face a great challenge at the end of this millennium to move from phenomenon to foundation, a step as necessary as it is urgent. We cannot stop short at experience alone; even if experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality thinking must

30 John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*, n. 81.

31 Second Vatican Council, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, n. 15.

penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises. Therefore, a philosophy which shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of Revelation. [...] If I insist so strongly on the metaphysical element, it is because I am convinced that it is the path to be taken in order to move beyond the crisis pervading large sectors of philosophy at the moment, and thus to correct certain mistaken modes of behaviour now widespread in our society”³².

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³² John Paul II, Encyclical letter *Fides et ratio*, n. 83.

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Abstract

Moral theology in search of a method: metaphysics or phenomenology?

The link between faith and reason, theology and philosophy is neither external nor accidental; the word *logos* in the name of theology rather indicates the internal connection between the two kinds of cognition. Karol Wojtyła — John Paul II is one of the few theologians of the 20th century who was proficient in the use of two philosophical languages and methods: the metaphysical and the phenomenological one. The article shows how, in his early work — the 1953 habilitation dissertation, Wojtyła reflects on the usefulness of metaphysics and phenomenology for the ethical analysis of the acting subject — crucial for both philosophical ethics and moral theology.

Keywords: philosophical ethics, phenomenology, metaphysics, reason, moral theology, faith

Abstrakt

Teologia moralna w poszukiwaniu metody: metafizyka czy fenomenologia?

Związek pomiędzy wiarą a rozumem, teologią a filozofią nie ma charakteru zewnętrzny i akcydentalny; słowo „logos” w nazwie teologii wskazuje raczej na wewnętrzny związek tych dwóch rodzajów poznania. Karol Wojtyła — Jan Paweł II jest jednym z nielicznych teologów dwudziestego wieku, który w sposób biegły potrafił posługiwać się dwoma filozoficznymi językami i metodami: metafizyczną i fenomenologiczną. Artykuł pokazuje, jak w swoim wczesnym dziele, rozprawie habilitacyjnej z 1953 roku, Wojtyła dokonuje refleksji na temat przydatności metafizyki i fenomenologii do etycznej analizy działającego podmiotu — kluczowej zarówno dla etyki filozoficznej, jak też dla teologii moralnej.

Słowa kluczowe: etyka filozoficzna, fenomenologia, metafizyka, rozum, teologia moralna, wiara

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Roman Ingarden and Karol Wojtyła's Reading of Max Scheler

In 1964 Helen Michejda wondered whether “Ingarden’s *a priori* categories may be used to explain and possibly correct the lack of clarity and inconsistency in Whitehead’s thought”¹. However, she came to the conclusion that without Ingarden’s solutions in the field of metaphysics, in many places the task would be either difficult or even impossible to carry out². It is well known that Ingarden did not present his metaphysical views, though in the last years of his life, he was inclined to reflect on the metaphysics of man and the metaphysics of values. We do not know whether he came to any broader metaphysical conclusions.

Nevertheless, the above two areas of study that, according to Andrzej Póltawski, are “Ingarden’s metaphysical testament”³, support our thesis that as regards philosophical anthropology and axiology, Ingarden’s philosophy needs supplementing or even revising. Therefore, adapting the above idea by Michejda, we advance the following thesis that we will argue for and defend: it is possible to explain, complement, and correct Roman Ingarden’s philosophy (philosophical anthropology and axiology) with that of Karol Wojtyła’s.

1 Originally: “aprioryczne kategorie Ingardena mogą służyć do wyjaśnienia i ewentualnego skorygowania niejasności i niekonsekwencji myśli Whiteheada” (H. Michejda, *Whitehead i Ingarden*, in: *Szkice filozoficzne. Romanowi Ingardenowi w darze*, eds. I. Dąbska et al., Warszawa-Kraków 1964, p. 6).

2 H. Michejda, *Whitehead i Ingarden*, s. 9–10.

3 A. Póltawski, *Metafizyczny testament Romana Ingardena*, in: *W kręgu myśli Romana Ingardena*, ed. A. Węgrzecki, Kraków 2011, p. 13–24.

My thesis is not entirely new as the literature on the subject has already put forward the following problems:

1. Ingarden's anthropology and axiology need clarifying and complementing⁴.
2. In these two areas Ingarden's solutions are at least partially complementary to Karol Wojtyła's philosophy or Thomistic philosophy⁵.
3. Ingarden's philosophical anthropology and axiology should be further developed⁶.

However, apart from indicating these problems, there have been no attempts to go beyond certain postulates or valuable comparisons between a positive part of Ingarden's thought and Karol Wojtyła's or that of Mieczysław Albert Krąpiec⁷. These juxtapositions are a rich source of in-

4 See e.g. P. Duchliński, *Tomistyczna krytyka aksjologii fenomenologicznej*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej. Aksjologia Romana Ingardena i jego uczniów*, ed. P. Duchliński, Kraków 2005, p. 292; A. Półtawski, *Człowiek a wartości według Romana Ingardena*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 18; A. Półtawski, *Metafizyczny testament Romana Ingardena*, p. 15, 19; A. Półtawski, *Romana Ingardena droga ku personalistycznej metafizyce*, in: *Metafizyka*, vol. 1, eds. S. Janacek, A. Starościc, Lublin 2017, p. 183–184, 186.

5 See e.g. A. Bator, *Intencjonalność sztuki w filozofii Romana Ingardena i Mieczysława Alberta Krąpca*, Wrocław 1999, p. 14, 118, 203; J. Galarowicz, *Etyka intelektualnego wnuka Romana Ingardena*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 118; J. Galarowicz, *Roman Ingarden. Etyka wartości*, Kraków 2020, p. 85, 146, 153; J. Galarowicz, *W drodze do etyki odpowiedzialności*, vol. 2: *Ukryty blask dobra. Antropologiczno-aksjologiczne podstawy etyki Romana Ingardena*, Kraków 1998, p. 75, 90, 216; C. Karwot, *Romana Ingardena koncepcja człowieka (Studium z metafizyki człowieka)*, Kraków 2011, p. 116; N. Lubnicki, *Sylwetka filozoficzna Romana Ingardena*, in: *Fenomenologia Romana Ingardena*, ed. J. Kuczyński, wydanie specjalne "Studiów Filozoficznych", Warszawa 1972, p. 99; M. Maciejczak, *Od epistemologii do personalizmu — filozofia Andrzeja Półtawskiego*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 148; A. Półtawski, *Realizm fenomenologii. Husserl — Ingarden — Stein — Wojtyła*, Toruń 2001, p. 78; D. Radziechowski, *"Jestem siłą na skraju dwóch światów". Przyczynek do antropologii i filozofii kultury Romana Ingardena*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 303; D. Radziechowski, *Filozoficzna koncepcja kultury Romana Ingardena i Karola Wojtyły. Studium analityczno-krytyczne*, Kraków 2021, p. 318; W. Stróżewski, *O swoistości sposobu istnienia człowieka*, in: *Roman Ingarden a filozofia naszego czasu*, ed. A. Węgrzecki, Kraków 1995, p. 129; W. Stróżewski, *Wartość jako sposób istnienia*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 28; A. Węgrzecki, *Antropologiczna perspektywa etyki Romana Ingardena*, in: *Dziedzictwo etyki współczesnej*, p. 31, 40.

6 This thesis is present in the majority of works cited above (footnotes 4, 5).

7 See e.g. D. Radziechowski, *Filozoficzna koncepcja kultury Romana Ingardena i Karola Wojtyły*, op. cit.; A. Bator, *Intencjonalność sztuki w filozofii Romana Ingardena i Mieczysława*

formation for further attempts to develop Ingarden's anthropological and axiological thought. We will argue that one of the possible starting points is to compare Ingarden's and Wojtyła's critiques of Max Scheler's ethics and find their "common ground".

My paper has the following structure:

- indicating the position of Scheler's philosophy in our research perspective and justifying this perspective;
- analyzing Ingarden's critical arguments against Scheler's ethics and anthropology;
- analyzing Wojtyła's critical arguments against Scheler's ethics and anthropology;
- Summarizing the results of our analysis. A conclusion and research perspectives.

Max Scheler's standpoint and a justification for our research perspective

In our perspective, Scheler's philosophy, and more precisely his ethical system, plays a secondary role. It is not of interest to us from a substantive point of view, but merely as a point of reference for its critiques⁸. However, the subject Scheler referred to became the framework for the encounter of Ingarden and Wojtyła who, while formulating their critical arguments, did not discuss them with each other, nor did they inspire one another in any other way. Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that with his philosophy,

Alberta Krąpcza, op. cit. One can also come across references to the comparisons of Wojtyła and Ingarden's critiques of Max Scheler's philosophy. However, they are merely allusions, and the issue has not been elaborated on as yet. See e.g. J. Galarowicz, *W drodze do etyki odpowiedzialności*, p. 90. Jan Galarowicz indicates that both Wojtyła and Ingarden criticized Scheler for his view on the powerlessness of the human spirit. Tadeusz Biesaga alluded to Wojtyła's critique of particular problems in Scheler's philosophy in *Karola Wojtyły krytyka koncepcji osoby Maxa Schelera*, "Logos i Ethos" 47 (2018) no. 1, p. 181–197.

⁸ Therefore, to those who study Scheler's philosophy, our analysis will be of no use or, at most, only marginally indicate certain difficulties that Scheler encountered.

Scheler unwittingly contributed to an intellectual encounter between Ingarden and Wojtyła⁹.

In the final part of this paper, I will compare Ingarden's and Wojtyła's critical arguments of Scheler's theses. We find this juxtaposition (and its conclusions) to be legitimate as critiques often — and this is the case here — contain categories and ideas regarded by their authors to be true and fundamental. By analyzing and collecting such notions, it will be possible to identify “the common ground” between the two, seemingly so different, philosophers. We consider finding this common ground to be crucial for further developing and revising Ingarden's philosophy, his anthropology, and axiology (axiosphere)¹⁰ in particular.

In my analysis, I have used the following sources. In the case of Roman Ingarden, these are the so-called Lviv lectures¹¹. Of course, Ingarden referred to Scheler in many other works, both directly (e.g. in his Krakow lectures)¹² and indirectly, e.g. in his essay *O naturze ludzkiej*¹³.

However, it is only in the Lviv lectures that he broadly, yet quite precisely and systematically critiqued Scheler's ethics and, partially, anthropology¹⁴.

9 There is yet another *quasi*-argument for juxtaposing the two Polish philosophers and choosing Scheler's philosophy as their “venue” (though we treat it more as a curiosity bordering on counterfactual history). We may conjecture what Ingarden would have written in his review of Wojtyła's habilitation thesis. Had the communists not suspended Ingarden in his academic activity, he would have been a perfect reviewer of Wojtyła's work on Scheler. However, Wojtyła defended his thesis at the end of 1953 (though, for political reasons, the communist authorities did not consider this sufficient to confer a degree) and Ingarden returned to his academic work only after the Polish thaw, i.e., three years later.

10 See A. Borońska, *Aksjmosfera w rozważaniach Romana Ingardena*, in: *Spór o istnienie świata. W 40. rocznicę śmierci Romana Ingardena*, ed. W. Słomski, p. 127–143.

11 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, in: R. Ingarden, *Wykłady z etyki*, Warszawa 1989, p. 9–117.

12 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady krakowskie*, in: R. Ingarden, *Wykłady z etyki*, p. 119–401.

13 R. Ingarden, *O naturze ludzkiej*, in: R. Ingarden, *Książeczka o człowieku*, Kraków 1972, p. 23 (par. 4.).

14 It should be noted that also in his essay on responsibility (see R. Ingarden, *O odpowiedzialności i jej podstawach ontycznych*, in: R. Ingarden, *Książeczka o człowieku*, p. 126), Ingarden points to remarks relevant to our topic in relation to Scheler, which would coincide with Wojtyła's remarks. However, we cannot, within the framework of the article, overextend the texts under analysis, especially since the indicated essay is ambiguous from the side of philosophical anthropology — so it would require clarification, which would require a separate paper.

We need to note that Ingarden's later comments on Scheler (i.e., after the Lviv lectures) are basically consistent with his critique made in Lviv in 1931. While studying his critical remarks, we do not want to examine Ingarden's positive ideas regarding axiology or an ethical system that, ultimately, he did not devise. We do not mean to say that these are trivial issues. We merely do not intend to include them in our argumentation as we want to focus on the similarities present in the critiques, and not the similarities evident in their positive statements in ethics, axiology, and anthropology. Even though comparing Ingarden and Wojtyła's positive programs is undoubtedly valuable, in this article we find it irrelevant. Also, until now, such attempts have not borne satisfying results that would contribute to developing Ingarden's ethical, axiological, and anthropological thought.

In the case of Wojtyła, there are more systematically compiled written sources available. However, they are narrower thematically and examined from a different methodological perspective. A broader critique of Scheler that included both what Wojtyła valued in his ethics and what he found to be its flaws, was part of Wojtyła's lectures in Lublin¹⁵. As regards the thematic scope of interest to us, the content of these sources is consistent with critical remarks regarding Scheler's philosophy that one can find in other philosophical works by Wojtyła from the 1950s¹⁶.

15 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, transl. by H. McDonald, Lublin–Roma 2020.

16 Above all, these are: K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maxa Schelera*, Lublin 1959 (in part. *Tezy końcowe*); K. Wojtyła, *Ewangeliczna zasada naśladowania. Nauka źródeł Objawienia a system filozoficzny Maxa Schelera*, "Ateneum Kapłańskie" 55 (1957) issue 1, p. 57–67; K. Wojtyła, *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej (w oparciu o koncepcję św. Tomasza z Akwinu oraz Maksa Schelera)*, "Roczniki Teologiczno-Kanoniczne" 6 (1959) issue 1–2, p. 99–124; K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia od aktu w etyce na tle poglądów Kanta i Schelera (Studium)*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 5 (1955–1957) issue 3, p. 113–140; K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Maksa Schelera jako środek do opracowania etyki chrześcijańskiej*, "Polonia Sacra" 6 (1935–1954) issue 2–4, p. 143–161; K. Wojtyła, *W poszukiwaniu podstaw perfekcyjizmu w etyce*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 5 (1955–1957) issue 4, p. 303–317 (in part. p. 309 et seq.); K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie woli w analizie aktu etycznego*, "Roczniki Filozoficzne" 5 (1955–1957) issue 1, p. 111–135. See also the unpublished text by K. Wojtyła, *Nauka św. Tomasza z Akwinu o miłości (Referat wygłoszony w KUL, na akademii ku czci św. Tomasza 7.III.1954)* in the Archives of the Metropolitan Curia in Krakow, reference number:

Ingarden's critical remarks

We shall present Ingarden's critical remarks according to their division in his works, i.e., the order of the lectures he delivered. Ingarden discussed Scheler's views in lectures IX to XX that he delivered from 20th February 1931 to the 7th May 1932.

Lecture IX was a general introduction to Scheler's axiology. Ingarden obviously classifies Scheler as a representative of idealism and objectivism in axiology or, broadly, in ethics¹⁷. Moreover, the following statement is worth mentioning as it is consistent with Wojtyła's views:

Theories that relativize ethical values are usually put forward in order to show that so-called "objective" ethics, i.e., to be more precise, a system of legitimate and universally binding ethical norms, is impossible. Therefore, it is crucial for normative ethics to prove that relativistic theories of values in general, and ethical values in particular, are wrong¹⁸.

In lecture IX, Ingarden also states indirectly that according to Scheler values exist in an ideal way¹⁹, which he repeats in the next lecture²⁰. While attempting to determine the way values exist and placing them between intentional and real modes of being (his ontology did not allow for a specific mode of existence), Ingarden necessarily rejected the standpoint that values can exist ideally.

AKKW CII-3/59-AKKW CII-3/59c. In this text, Wojtyła compares the teaching of St. Thomas Aquinas with Scheler's views and expresses various critical remarks regarding the latter. Even though *Wykłady lubelskie* are our main point of reference, we give a list of other works by Wojtyła as they correspond with each other. In the case of Ingarden we could follow suit. However, his criticism of Scheler is not laid out in his works clearly enough to make it possible for us to refer to it without additional analysis and explanation of the context.

17 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 51.

18 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 51.

19 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 51. He directly speaks of it in lecture XV: "Scheler distinguishes a) values as ideal qualities, i.e., something that exists ideally, b) values executed in goods, that is those that exist in a real manner" (p. 70).

20 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 53, 54 (lecture X).

However, Adam Węgrzecki, an expert in Scheler's philosophy, disagrees with the interpretation that to Scheler values exist in an ideal manner²¹. As we have already said, we do not intend to discuss Scheler's philosophy. However, Węgrzecki's opinion confirms Ingarden's repeated objection to Scheler's philosophy that it is vague and based on imprecise terms.

It is only in lecture XI that Ingarden clearly formulates his charges against Scheler:

1. Scheler's is either unclear or inconsistent as regards the meaning of the term "a substrate of a value"²².
2. Scheler does not put forward arguments to prove his thesis that values differ from emotional states or from volitional-appetitive urges²³.

In the case of "substrate of values" Ingarden says that Scheler does not define this term precisely, which leads to the two mutually exclusive "solutions": either a value is a property of things (which Scheler rejects) or, as Ingarden puts it:

the relation between a valuable thing and a value remains unclear. Moreover, it is difficult to grasp why a thing is valuable if a value does not appertain to it and is merely a kind of ideal quality²⁴.

The above remark is important as it does not refer only to Scheler's system nor is it merely a methodological allusion. When we look at the whole lecture, we can notice that Ingarden seems to leave the field of ontology, still unspecified by him at that time, and enters the area of metaphysics. This is analogous to the situation in the essays that make up his *Książeczkę*

21 A. Węgrzecki, *O absolutności wartości etycznych i estetycznych*, in: *Fenomenologia Romana Ingardena*, p. 422.

22 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 55. These statements are based on the following excerpts: M. Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, in: *Jahrbuch für Philosophie und phänomenologische Forschung* Hrsg. E. Husserl, Bd. 2, Halle a.d.S. 1916, p. 40.

23 Ingarden was also against identifying values with such states or attitudes. Nonetheless, he claims that Scheler's views are groundless. R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 56.

24 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 55.

o człowieku. This is also the basis of Póltawski's thesis about "Ingarden's metaphysical testament"²⁵.

Objection 2. is part of a broader, already mentioned, critical remark that in the subject area of specific interest to us Scheler was imprecise and unclear.

In lecture XII, apart from minor remarks about the lack of examples or minor ambiguities that can be explained, there are no critical remarks.

However, Ingarden's critique can be found in lecture XIII. Here again, he emphasizes the insufficient explanation of what is meant by "greater" or "lesser" in the case of values²⁶; also, what is the status of and what kind of acts are those that Scheler calls "*das Vorziehen* (I prefer this than that)"²⁷.

There are two reasons for the above remarks. First, it is simply a lack of clarity of Scheler's viewpoint. The second refers to the actual existence of values that are hierarchical. In his lectures (IX–XX), Ingarden never enters the field of ontology. Let us then move slightly with Ingarden toward metaphysics.

Ingarden makes a remark that is of interest to us:

By personal values Scheler means all values that appertain directly to a person. On the other hand, values of things appertain to tangible goods (Scheler overlooks the difference between the broader and the narrower understanding of "good")²⁸.

We can see above that the good and values are differentiated and that the good itself varies. We shall not attempt to define the problem of good in Ingarden's philosophy. However, in the perspective of Ingarden and Wojtyła's philosophies, the distinction Ingarden makes is important to us.

In lecture XIV, Ingarden develops his critique of the ambiguities of the hierarchy of values that Scheler proposes, or to be more precise, of the principle that governs the position of values in this hierarchy. He explicitly

25 A. Póltawski, *Metafizyczny testament Romana Ingardena*, op. cit.

26 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 63–64.

27 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 64.

28 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 64–65.

states that “*all these* statements about the ‘superiority’ or ‘inferiority’ of one group of values in relation to another are unclear and inaccurate”²⁹.

It is similar in the case of lecture XV. However, here Ingarden also discusses the problem of the existence of values. On the basis of the whole lecture, one may conclude what he means by actual existence. What is more, he remarks that depending on existential solutions (ideal existence, real existence, or both), the optics regarding the realization of values (that is the optics regarding an ethical act) change. This is important to us in light of the critique made twenty years later by Wojtyła.

In lecture XVI, Ingarden indicates difficulties related to the solution adopted both by George Edward Moore and, independently, by Scheler as regards the term “good” — they consider it to be a quality that is absolutely simple and, as such, indefinable³⁰. Ingarden does not perceive Moore’s approach as problematic, for the British analytical philosopher merely says that so far all attempts to define the term have failed, and he does not draw any positive conclusions from it. Scheler, on the other hand, claims that even though it is impossible to define the term “good”, its designatum, that is “the value quality of ‘good’ can be grasped in direct a priori cognition”³¹. Even though Ingarden does not say it explicitly, it is clear that he wants to point to the problematic character of Scheler’s approach. For if I do not know what “good” means, how can I claim that I have found the designatum of this term or of its derivative? Ingarden continues his critique in this direction in lecture XVII³². However, he does not add anything important enough for us, therefore, we will not discuss it.

Lectures XVIII, XIX and XX are in principle entirely devoted to criticism of Scheler. We shall elaborate on two critical remarks that are relevant. Ingarden asks about the scope of the terms “appertaining” and “revealing itself” in relation to values and being, i.e., does a value reveal itself in a thing or does it appertain to it? Ingarden rejects the possibility that these two expressions are equivalent. Nevertheless, he claims that they may

29 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 66.

30 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 73–74.

31 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 74.

32 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 75–77.

intersect³³. Here practical and metaphysical layers of Ingarden's critique manifest themselves as he elaborates on problems related to ethical life, i.e., to actual ethical acts and good that is executed (Scheler does not determine their definition, mode of manifesting themselves, or appertaining to things).

Nor does Scheler determine the foundations of practical ethical choices. Ingarden remarks that if we accept Scheler's understanding of the process or act of executing values, it is possible to interpret it in such a way that the scope of ethical acts is highly narrowed or they are almost unfeasible³⁴. Moreover, Ingarden spots a difficulty related to this unclarity (which Wojtyła elaborated on): cognizing values does not have to be rational according to Scheler. However, Ingarden does not point to emotional cognition (which Wojtyła precisely does), but says that what we have here are *Scheler's statements that are somewhat unclear*.

Ingarden does not mean simply unclarity and possible misunderstanding that may arise, but ethics as practical philosophy, that is a human being in a real world. Ingarden, as if, underlines our conclusion, and states that it is exactly the problem of actual ethical choices and actual experience of values that is, due to theoretical vagueness, "Scheler's weakest point"³⁵.

In a broader perspective, the above objections reveal a general flaw of Scheler's ethical system (of which Ingarden implicitly speaks in lecture XX)³⁶: Scheler creates a "theory" of ethical actions determining the *a priori* conditions of its realization. Ingarden claims that ethical actions would be almost impossible under such conditions. For Scheler does not begin with a fact, but with structures that are to *a priori* condition our future acts.

To sum up, Ingarden's main criticism of Scheler refers to:

- difficulties regarding definitions and terms;
- existential status of values;

33 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 78.

34 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 79–80, 81–82.

35 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 82.

36 R. Ingarden, *Wykłady lwowskie*, p. 83–84.

- translating problems 1. and 2. into practice, i.e., the lack of clarity regarding ethical acts³⁷;
- the very possibility of performing ethical acts by real people.

Wojtyła's critical remarks

Let us now turn to Wojtyła who raises three fundamental objections to Scheler's ethics, axiology, and anthropology. According to the author of *Person and Act*, Scheler does not begin with the actual ethical act. Wojtyła thus comments on this:

Now, here the phenomenologist comes forth with a qualification which would seem either to place man's real ethical life entirely beyond the competence of his system, or else would lead to a revision of precisely this concrete presupposition of the system. Namely, Scheler holds that the efficacy of the person cannot be affirmed on the basis of phenomenological experience³⁸.

When we compare this quotation from *Wykłady lubelskie* with the conclusions that Wojtyła drew in his habilitation thesis, it is clear that Scheler's phenomenology as a method and system seems unsuitable for examining ethical acts and can only **marginally** be used in ethical studies³⁹, as it

37 It is obvious that for Ingarden the foundations of practical ethics were: 1. Theoretical ethics and 2. Normative ethics. On their basis he even made drafts of certain positive solutions. However, we think it a bit exaggerated to argue that "he managed to develop an outline of theoretical ethics and normative ethics" (P. Duchliński, *Epistemologiczne i ontologiczne założenia wypowiedzi normatywnych w etyce teoretycznej Romana Ingardena. Analiza semiotyczno-fenomenologiczna*, in: *Oblicza doświadczenia aksjologicznego. Studia i rozprawy*, eds. P. Duchliński, G. Hołub, Kraków 2011, p. 265). On the other hand, one can refer to a scathing, though not unjustifiable, critique by Andrzej Niemczuk that can be summarized as follows: Ingarden never solved problems to which he pointed in his text *Czego nie wiemy o wartościach* [What we do not know about values] (see. A. Niemczuk, *Ingardenowska koncepcja wartości: analiza i krytyka*, in: *Spór o Ingardena. W setną rocznicę urodzin*, ed. J. Dębowski, Lublin 1994, p. 125–138; R. Ingarden, *Czego nie wiemy o wartościach*, in: R. Ingarden, *Przeżycie, dzieło wartość*, Kraków 1966, p. 83–127). In this paper, however, we are interested in Ingarden's remarks regarding practical ethics.

38 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 52.

39 We think that special attention should be paid to this "marginality" as there are some who think that *according to Wojtyła, a phenomenological method is an indispensable tool in*

opens one up to the experience of values. Wojtyła adds that “Thus, however, the conception gives the lie to experience instead of taking experience into account and serving the interpretation of experience”⁴⁰. This inability to see a person’s efficacy in the ethical act seems to be the main objection to Scheler’s proposal⁴¹. In Wojtyła’s eyes, this flaw discredits it as far as further ethical studies are concerned.

Wojtyła also says that Scheler should not be accused of intentional reductionism that results from e.g. phenomenological assumptions. Nevertheless, what Scheler does postulate is separating “the ethical experience”, i.e., a problem from the field of the psychology of values — from “the ethical act”⁴².

Another fundamental objection to Scheler’s ethics, an objection that supports what we have just said, is a value’s indifference to existence⁴³. When we bear in mind the metaphysics that Wojtyła adopts, this metaphysical difficulty makes it impossible for him to treat Scheler’s system as applicable to ethical studies. His system is therefore reduced to a theory of values. Also, it makes it impossible to derive a norm of conduct from it, which leads us to the third main objection: the lack of a normative system

the philosophical inquiry (A. Póltawski, *Po co filozofować? Ingarden — Wojtyła — skąd i dokąd?*, Warszawa 2011, p. 190). Wojtyła explicitly stated that Scheler’s ethical system based on the phenomenological method may indeed be useful in ethical studies (of both Christian ethics and ethics in general). However, “it can only **marginally** [underlined] be used in developing research on Christian ethics” (K. Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera*, in: *Karol Wojtyła. Zagadnienie podmiotu moralności*, ed. T. Styczeń et al., Lublin 1991, p. 123; K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie woli w analizie aktu etycznego*, p. 135). In principle, Wojtyła does not speak of methods of philosophical inquiry in general. However, if we were to point to tools he would find indispensable in such an inquiry, it would be methods of Thomism, not phenomenology. The juxtaposition of the views of St. Thomas and Scheler in Wojtyła’s texts proves our point (esp. see *ibid.*, p. 134; K. Wojtyła, *Nauka św. Tomasza z Akwinu o miłości*, part 4. subpt. a-b).

40 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 54. See also: K. Wojtyła, *W poszukiwaniu podstaw perfekcjonizmu w etyce*, p. 312.

41 See more of this argumentation in: K. Wojtyła, *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej*, p.114–115; K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia w etyce*, p. 125 et seq.; K. Wojtyła, *Zagadnienie woli w analizie aktu etycznego*, p. 119, 132.

42 See K. Wojtyła, *Problem oderwania przeżycia w etyce*, p. 125 et seq.

43 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 367–368.

makes it impossible to issue sensible statements about ethical acts. Relying on the experience of values does not — and cannot — lead to norms. And Scheler makes no such claims. However, he argues that values demand to be executed, which does not translate into the existence or the shaping of norms⁴⁴.

Wojtyła proceeds to analyze in detail the above difficulties and shows on what planes they occur:

a) The conception of *materiale Werte* constitutes an explicit attempt to restore the objective character of the philosophy of the good, but this is a timid objectivism that remains within the boundaries of the theory of cognition without passing over to the positions of the philosophy of being. b) Hand in hand with this weak objectivism goes the intentionalism of Scheler's philosophy of value, which upon closer investigation turns out to be a certain form of idealism. In this case, the primary concern is not the irreducibility of values to "things", but rather indifference to existence. On this account, values are irreducible to being. c) From the point of view of ethics, the weakest point of Scheler's system is the complete divorce of values, of the good, from truth. The purely emotionalistic intuitionism precludes the person's rational, efficacious and creative role in the formation of the morality of his actions⁴⁵.

Summing up Wojtyła's critical remarks, we should note that in principle they belong only to the philosophy of being and to the practice of the ethical life of a person.

Apart from the above critical arguments, Wojtyła directed more remarks against Scheler's ethics and anthropology. However, a detailed examination of this issue would require a separate study. For the purposes of this paper, the above arguments suffice.

44 See more of this argumentation in: K. Wojtyła, *Ewangeliczna zasada naśladowania*, p. 64–66; K. Wojtyła, *O metafizycznej i fenomenologicznej podstawie normy moralnej*, p. 114, 116–117, 124; K. Wojtyła, *System etyczny Makska Schelera*, p. 160–161.

45 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 367–368.

Summary of both critiques and conclusions

Let us recall the four critical issues that Ingarden raises against Scheler:

- difficulties regarding definitions and terms;
- existential status of values;
- translating problems 1. and 2. into practice, i.e., lack of clarity regarding ethical acts;
- the very possibility of performing ethical acts by real people.

As we can see, Ingarden and Wojtyła raise similar issues that Scheler's philosophy must encounter if it is to be the basis of examining actual ethical acts or building a system of norms. It is worth underlying that what Ingarden has in mind is a real, actual human being. In places where Ingarden could not find solutions to terminological problems in Scheler, Wojtyła tried to explain them; in this regard it would be difficult to find similarities in their critiques.

The second similarity between Ingarden and Wojtyła's critiques refers to the metaphysics of values. Wojtyła raises the following objection:

The conception of *materiale Werte* constitutes an explicit attempt to restore the objective character of the philosophy of the good, but this is a timid objectivism that remains within the boundaries of the theory of cognition without passing over to the positions of the philosophy of being⁴⁶.

Interestingly, it is at the same time an objection to Ingarden who drew from the axiologies of Max Scheler and Nicolai Hartmann and is also considered to be a representative of the materialistic philosophy of values. However, Ingarden himself saw this part of his philosophy to be problematic.

Due to our perspective, we could show a similar or sometimes even identical direction and scope of these two critiques. This allows us, in line with Étienne Gilson's principle of impersonal necessity⁴⁷, to draw conclusions regarding similarities in the philosophies or views on reality of these

46 K. Wojtyła, *The Lublin Lectures. Wykłady lubelskie*, p. 367.

47 I have discussed this principle in: K. Petryszak, *The Perspective of Archival Discoveries in the Study of Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy*, "The Person and the Challenges. The Journal of

two philosophers. We do not want to settle ultimately if it is possible to show similarities and, if so, of what kind. We think that certain tensions noticeable in Ingarden's essays on anthropology and axiology mean that he might have noticed the insufficiency of his ontology and phenomenology as regards man and values. Consequently, he perceived more than he could explain in the world with his methodological framework. His intuitions in this regard could be consistent with the outlook on reality that Wojtyła displayed in his work and life. Alas, due to Ingarden's death, his inquiry would come to a halt. It is, therefore, our duty to further develop the challenges that he left behind. My objective in this paper has been to show one of the possible starting points of such research. It is with Wojtyła's philosophy that we can attempt to supplement (which has already been suggested by scholars of Ingarden and Wojtyła) and correct issues (anthropological in particular) that Ingarden left incomplete.

As regards a future research perspective, it is important that Wojtyła created a complete anthropology, while Ingarden's is an outline with a few crucial issues that remain vague⁴⁸. The anthropological clarifications, i.e., those regarding the metaphysics of man and metaphysics in general, will make it possible to attempt to complement and correct Ingarden's ethics, axiology, and anthropology.

In the above juxtaposition of these two philosophers, it is clear that not simply a comparison of their critiques of Scheler is legitimate. Their common ground, seen in the context of the whole philosophical thought of Ingarden and Wojtyła, gives hope that with the ethics, axiology (or agathology), and anthropology of the latter, we can complement Ingarden's philosophy, elevating it from the cold and static realms of ontology to the world of living, dynamic beings.

Theology, Education, Canon Law and Social Studies Inspired by Pope John Paul II" 13 (2023) no. 2, p. 122–126.

48 It is worth mentioning that some scholars perceive Ingarden as a continuator of the post-Cartesian tradition, while others think that he overcomes this tradition. Zob. np. J. Ciszewska, *Osoba ludzka a świat wartości w filozofii Romana Ingardena*, in: *W kręgu filozofii Romana Ingardena*, eds. W. Stróżewski, A. Węgrzecki, Warszawa–Kraków 1995, p. 185.

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Abstract

Roman Ingarden and Karol Wojtyła's reading of Max Scheler

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the criticism that Roman Ingarden and Karol Wojtyła made of the ethical system proposed by Max Scheler. On the basis of the indicated similarities in the two critiques, the article defends the thesis that the anthropological and ethical solutions proposed by Wojtyła can complement or develop the anthropology proposed by Ingarden.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, Roman Ingarden, Max Scheler, ethics, anthropology, philosophy of man, phenomenology

Abstrakt

Odczytanie Maksa Schelera przez Romana Ingardena i Karola Wojtyłę

Celem artykułu jest analiza krytyki Romana Ingardena i Karola Wojtyły wobec systemu etycznego zaproponowanego przez Maksa Schelera. Na podstawie wskazanych podobieństw w obu krytykach artykuł broni tezy, że zaproponowane przez Wojtyłę rozwiązania antropologiczne i etyczne mogą uzupełniać lub rozwijać antropologię proponowaną przez Ingardena.

Słowa kluczowe: Karol Wojtyła, Roman Ingarden, Max Scheler, etyka, antropologia, filozofia człowieka, fenomenologia

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