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**PERSON AS THE SOURCE OF VALUES IN COMMUNICATION.
BASED ON THE PHILOSOPHY OF PERSON
BY KAROL WOJTYŁA AND JÓZEF TISCHNER**

Abstract Person as the source of values in communication. Based on the philosophy of person by Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner. In my article I wanted to analyze the communication from the moral point of view. My ground to think about morality is Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner's thinking. I proposed the thesis that because of hard experiences of war and totalitarian system in the 20th century; because of nihilism and wrong understanding of human freedom; and because of media culture and a lack of authentic relationships between people; interpersonal communication is superficial and empty. In order to make communication creative and human, in order to restore its first meaning and lost deepness, I believe it is necessary to see the moral dimension of communication and redefine its fundamental structure from the point of view of the philosophy of the person. Thus, I asked the questions: Who communicates? What does one communicate for? What is the message? They lead to considering the act of communication in its fundamental structure.

Osoba jako źródło wartości w komunikacji. Na podstawie filozofii osoby Karola Wojtyły i Józefa Tischnera. W ramach artykułu analizuję komunikację z moralnego punktu widzenia. Fundamentem tych analiz jest filozofia Karola Wojtyły oraz Józefa Tischnera. W swojej refleksji proponuję założenie, że dwudziestowieczne doświadczenia wojny oraz totalitarnych systemów, w konsekwencji trudności w przeżywaniu wartości czy własnej wolności, a także wpływ mediów na kulturę czy brak autentycznych relacji międzysobowych to przyczyny sztuczności i pustki komunikacji międzysobowej. Aby przywrócić jej ludzkie i twórcze znaczenie, a także by znaleźć jej utracony wymiar, trzeba zauważyć jej moralny fundament i ponownie zdefiniować jej strukturę z punktu widzenia filozofii osoby. Dlatego w ramach swojego artykułu zadałam pytania: Kto komunikuje? Dlaczego

komunikuje? Czym jest komunikat? Uważam, że pytania te poprowadzą mnie do rozważenia komunikacji w jej najbardziej podstawowych strukturach.

Keywords communication, values, philosophy of person, Karol Wojtyła, Józef Tischner
komunikacja, wartości, filozofia osoby, Karol Wojtyła, Józef Tischner

I would like to reflect on morality in interpersonal communication. I would like to ask about the source of good and evil in words exchanged by people. How is it possible that words could carry moral power? Why can people not live without their cellphones in nowadays' world, but they do not know how to speak with others – especially with their relatives. I hope that these questions will help me confirm my thesis that proper moral communication occurs only when founded on understanding of the concept of person. I would like to show the problem of morality in human communication against the philosophical background of Polish 20th century philosophy: especially Karol Wojtyła's philosophy of person and Józef Tischner's philosophy of dialogue.

Human communication is an area which nowadays occupies much place in our life. Thinking about one's own experiences is already a kind of communication with oneself. Speaking to another means communicating something to somebody else. Finally, communication occurs through various media, especially the latest technology. Our capability of being with someone means sending or receiving some information. Moreover, this information affects us deeply. Therefore, what we feel, what we think, who we are depend on words. If this is true, taking responsibility for words belongs intrinsically to our moral life. It seems that this is the reason to philosophically think about morality in interpersonal communication.

I would like to start with presenting the essence of a human being in philosophy of man in 20th century, especially after World War II. I will try to point out that thinking about man was ruined because of the evil of the 20th century. And in some particular way this had an influence on the ways of human communication. Then I attempt to reflect on nowadays' condition of interpersonal communication, which is seemingly very technical, fast and superficial and happening as if beyond the person itself. Afterwards I present the main thoughts in the philosophy of Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner. Those three threads – 20th century thinking about man, difficulties in communicating with Another, and also the philosophy of Wojtyła and Tischner – spur me to search for morality in communication. Moreover, I would like to show that neither words are only signs nor communication is only an instrument to communicate. These are human abilities which let one build a very rich reality of the person.

1. THE HUMAN CONDITION IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHY

A contemporary way of thinking about human communication and values in interactions with others is strongly based on the experiences of 20th century evil. It means

that philosophy remembers the crisis of faith in God and man during World War II. The lack of values in human life was proclaimed much earlier by Frederick Nietzsche's claim: "Gott ist tot." But after the war many philosophical voices repeated: "unde malum?" Hans Jonas replied that evil is a consequence of human freedom. When the Almighty created man, He made a move, *cimcum*, which made room for human freedom.¹ And now man through his freedom has to return God His perfection. Unfortunately, people do not know how to be free. Although freedom is said to be a very specific and creative way of life, people cannot persevere in this state. They make wrong choices because of the crisis of values. They do not know what they should choose because God has died and nihilism rules. Jean-Paul Sartre would say that freedom is a curse because one has to choose, even if one does not want to. People cannot escape freedom. They have to choose, but they do not know what they should choose because there are no values. There is only nihilism in the world.²

In such a difficult situation one has to choose but nobody knows what they should choose because there are no values, the only value is human life. Martin Heidegger says that life is authentic only when man recognises it as "Sein zum Tode". Only when he realises that his life is inevitably *being-towards-death*, does he start to think about his life.³ Only then does he make right decisions. Only then does his life become real. But still in this context only life is a value. This conception tends to make our existence more aware of itself, but there is no reference to its transcendent aim. There is no reference to God. That is why life in itself is the value. In this way life becomes a paradox, because life is worth living but it heads towards death. There is no other possibility. Being is and with its very being asks how to be but it does not ask what to be for. So man still exists in the world deprived of values. But the worst is to come, when people find their primary values in matter. Karol Marks says that there is no spirit. Only matter exists and spirit may exist only as derived from matter. Thus, all importance is grounded in matter and its transformations.⁴ When this conception spread in society, people started dreaming about an ideal world without poverty. But the price of such dreams was too high. The promise of good life involved a reduction of man. Man was deprived of his spiritual life, because religion, culture, philosophy, law, etc. were only superstructures, whereas only matter and its transformation, work, was the basis.

The poor condition of human being after World War II manifested itself at every level of life: poverty, lack of faith, lack of hope, nihilism, a new shape of countries. All of these made it easy for people to adhere to any ideology which would promise some values and social welfare. This is why Marxism took over in many societies. Fortunately, there were a few people who revealed errors in such a material way of thinking and reducing man. One of them was French philosopher Emanuel Mounier who recognises in Marxism many chances for people to have better material life conditions, but, first of all, he sees in this ideological thinking much danger for man's values. He perceives that Marxism actually makes people much more technical, more material, and more sensitive

¹ Cf. H. Jonas, *Idea Boga po Auschwitz*, przekł. G. Sowiński, Kraków 2003, p. 45.

² Cf. J. P. Sartre, *Byt i nicność*, przeł. J. Kielbasa, Kraków 2007, pp. 539–540.

³ Cf. M. Heidegger, *Bycie i czas*, przeł. B. Baran, Warszawa 2008, p. 240.

⁴ Cf. K. Marks, *Manifest komunistyczny*, [in:] *Dzieła wybrane*, t. 1, Warszawa 1949, p. 42.

to their needs than hearts. Mounier witnessed the fall of man's nature during war and during nihilism afterwards. He observed how people, because of their empty beliefs, were drowning in conformism,⁵ how they were gradually drifting into sloppiness, how they treated themselves as objects, how they deprived themselves of human dimension. Mounier wanted to awaken people from this alienation and tried to restore the lost status of being a person to people. He wanted to point out that a person has to be free and only through contact with another can create reality, thanks to values that make man a person. Because the person in its essence is not a thing but a dynamic being who can create oneself through being. Being a person means continuously crossing the border of its existence. This dynamic path is directed towards another. Also towards God. That is why in one's specific state of life there must be some values, some important things, some aims above the material reality.

In Poland people missed freedom, while remembering war experiences and living under pressure of totalitarian Marxism. Despite the fact that struggle for freedom was arduous, when Communism was abolished, Poles could not live in free society. They could choose their values, but they were not able to. They could create their own life, but they were not capable of it. The axiological emptiness⁶ resulted from 20th century Nazism and Soviet totalitarian system having control even when they were seemingly gone, even in the times of freedom. Then, people were driven to despair not by evil but by the lack of anything which could constitute an aim or beginning in their minds, souls and hearts. Józef Tischner, a Polish philosopher, names this difficult condition of human being the crisis of human hope. He sees a link between these two realities: living without freedom and living in freedom which people cannot realise in their lives. He claims that people are afraid of freedom. Although they want to be free, they are afraid, so they are never able to be free. Such fear of freedom is even bigger than fear of violence.⁷ Therefore, the only thing they could do was to learn how to be free. It meant that they had to learn once more what values were and how to live in a world where one had to choose at every moment of their life.

Karol Wojtyła is another Polish philosopher who experienced World War II and Communism. These experiences juxtaposed with the new democratic reality were a source of confirmation of his belief that the most important value is the person. He created the concept of personalistic norm⁸ which tells us that because of love one is to treat another person always as the aim, never as a means to an aim. It seems to be very important especially today when many people see their freedom through primitive liberalism,⁹ which suggests that they can do anything they want without any limitation. Unfortunately, this conviction is also present in human communication where freedom of speech is understood as an ability and possibility of saying anything anytime anywhere without any moral responsibility.

⁵ Cf. E. Mounier, *Wprowadzenie do egzystencjalizmów*, tłum. E. Krasnowolska, Kraków 1964, p. 270.

⁶ Cf. J. Tischner, *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*, Kraków 1994, p. 199.

⁷ Cf. J. Tischner, *Nieszczęsny dar wolności*, Kraków 1996, p. 7.

⁸ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, Lublin 2001, p. 42.

⁹ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, Kraków 2005, p. 42.

2. MODERN CONDITION OF HUMAN COMMUNICATION

When we think of human communication nowadays, we imagine not only people who speak but also tools which are used by them during communicating like television, cellphones, etc. Marshall McLuhan says that the medium is the message.¹⁰ Modern human being knows that the same information can be presented in different ways, such as: orally, through television, radio or in newspapers. But, differences here do not mean that one of the media lies. To put it short, one specific medium shapes information into its own type. For example, people while speaking can present something with words, but television will add pictures. Newspapers can describe some event in a very exact way, but on the radio we can hear voices loaded with emotions which are involved in an event. Examples can be multiplied. Therefore, the point is that nowadays we have many types of media which generate many ways of communication. Modern people consider this as typical for our media culture but it has to be remembered that behind media there is some person who creates the message. It means that media depend on persons. In this sense, the medium is the message, and it should be stressed that media are extensions of human intellect. People who produce news in media are aware that information reaches other people. So we can generally say that communication through media is like interpersonal communication but it involves some medium. What is more, media seem to supersede other types of communication, and as communication through media is based on interpersonal communication, face-to-face communication should be well taken care of. In this sense, it could be said that every attempt at communication – no matter if there are some tools used or not, no matter if it occurs between two or more people – is always interpersonal communication. Unfortunately, the issue of the person seems to be forgotten in the process of modern communication and renounced by technical or pragmatic aspects of communication. This is my first conclusion, which, in my opinion, heralds nowadays' problem of interpersonal communication.

Secondly, our media culture is founded on information.¹¹ People are seemingly addicted to the flow of information. One has to know what weather will be tomorrow, what the political news is, what trend is in vogue, in eating, in music, etc. People crave to know today. What is more, when they know something new that others do not know, it appears even better. Information has become some incredible good. One can trade information and in this way earn a living. So, information seems to be merchandise which defines what is said in the society, what is thought about and what is important. This idea of agenda setting is created especially for emphasising the phenomenon of news released by media.¹² But, in my opinion, it can also be used for naming the impact that news have in micro-societies such as families, groups of colleagues at work, etc. Because of staying in some specific group, for example, family or some professional team, we can be expected to speak on some concrete topics. Moreover, each group has their own 'list' of trendy issues which they discuss. Consequently, information seems to take control over the whole act of communicating. The point is not with whom and how we

¹⁰ Cf. M. McLuhan, *Zrozumieć media. Przedłużenie człowieka*, przeł. N. Szczucka, Warszawa 2004, p. 45.

¹¹ Cf. M. Castells, *Spoleczeństwo sieci*, przekł. M. Marody, Warszawa 2010, p. 103.

¹² Cf. M. Mrozowski, *Media masowe. Władza, rozrywka i biznes*, Warszawa 2001, p. 383.

communicate, but rather what we communicate. News has become the most important aspect of communication between people.

Thirdly, we live hectic lives now. So, information as well has to be fast. Communication, from this point of view, is an exchange of various information that has to be instant but also rich.¹³ It does not matter if information is broadcast through television, radio, newspapers or orally. The receiver wants to know as much as possible from a short and quick text. So, the sender has to pack his message in a small and instant but also rich packet. This process can have a negative impact on human communication. Because an item which needs explanation, narration or simply some time to be absorbed, has to be processed into something short and fast. For example, world news on television may only last for less than thirty minutes. Daily newspapers are not read but browsed through by article titles, headlines and photo captions. Today's radio is not a medium with which we spend our time listening to it, but it is treated as a background noise. People's conversations are often reduced to exchanging SMS messages, etc. I would like to show with these examples that communication in nowadays' world is speedy. It is obviously understandable and natural in the modern media culture, but I would like to stress the influence it may have on the manner of human communication. I mean the fact that it makes communication very quick, superficial, and artificial, which does not support building true relationships among people but only teaches them how to put on various masks of a good sense of humour, sympathy, understanding, wisdom, etc. Thus, people actually do not speak with each other, do not meet anyone, but they trade information, wearing their masks.

This leads us to the fourth aspect of nowadays communication. I think about many techniques of communication. People learn how to present themselves. What they should say at a job interview, during an argument between lovers, in a reaction to naughty child's behaviour and so on. People are continuously following standards of communication, whilst every true human relationship is beyond any standards. People want to know how to communicate, but they do not want to know anything about themselves. They seem to be afraid of knowing their true faces, their faults, fears. They prefer to master an idealised type of communication and put on the mask of a perfect person. They are afraid of their own humanity. It reminds of master morality from Nietzsche's philosophy. People want to be masters of the world. They are afraid of human truth that sometimes everyone is weak, lost or in a bad mood. To sum up the fourth aspect I see in nowadays' communication, I would like to say that modern techniques of communication are destructive for authentic human being. What is more, they teach us how to build and present our image, but people do not learn how to communicate with one another.¹⁴

In accordance with what has been said so far, we can see the fifth aspect of modern communication that is: people tend to treat another person as an object and as a source of information, no matter what kind of relationship they are in. It could be any relationship at work, at home, in the street and so on. The most important point is that if one

¹³ Cf. J. Lohisse, *Przyszłość kultury zinfomatyzowanej*, [in:] *Antropologia słowa*, red. G. Godlewski, A. Mencwel, R. Sulima, Warszawa 2003, p. 657.

¹⁴ Cf. F. Schulz von Thun, *Sztuka rozmawiania. Analiza zaburzeń*, t. 1, przekł. P. Wolyga, Kraków 2007, p. 132.

sees another person only as a channel for information, it is far from treating them as they actually need to be treated. Then the person is like a thing which can be used. Such a process of using another person can be seen as posing a question which will make the receiver richer in information that they can use. So, the receiver does not actually form a question in order to know better or to talk with the encountered person, but in order to obtain some information which would create or enhance his own world. This egocentric view in interactions with another person generates specific interpersonal culture which destroys human relationships. In this way, people do not encounter others but only gain information. A person is not interested in another's world, emotions, thoughts or believes but only in some pieces of information. For example, when we meet some new person we do not ask about their dreams, plans, emotions or experiences. We are only used to asking about names, jobs or similar details. We look for information about the person among the many signs of another's dress code or lifestyle. All is done only to obtain information about them and to be able to capture them in our own terms. Then, we can feel safe. Obviously, I do not wish to say that obtaining information in the process of familiarization is not something natural. I would rather emphasise that modern people too often treat each other as a reservoir of messages, news but not as real persons with their history, feelings and needs.

To sum up, I would say that all five aspects of modern interpersonal communication are deeply based on media culture. Of course, these are a few aspects of modern communication, but, in my opinion, it is essential to show that the person as a subject is deeply in crisis as far as we talk about people's communication. Therefore, interpersonal communication seems to be a ground for media communication and it passes its own tools on to media communication. The latter would not be possible without the former. But this influence is also reversible. This means that media culture and media communication also affect interpersonal communication, which is meant now to be fast and short like journalistic communication, symbolical and technical like media. Last but far from least, this impact on interpersonal communication transforms people into information machines. This treatment of people as if they were objects provides many possibilities to encroach on the dignity of the person. The value of the person is covered and diminished by the value of a thing, of information. This and an additional lack of a valuable vision of man, because of the 20th century experiences, which have already been mentioned, inevitably lead to the manner of being which is against the person, against the person's being in the world as a special value. That is why, in my opinion, the value of the person are lost in communication.

3. PHILOSOPHICAL INSPIRATIONS FOR THE IDEA OF PERSONALISTIC COMMUNICATION BASED ON CHOSEN ELEMENTS OF KAROL WOJTYŁA AND JÓZEF TISCHNER'S THINKING

This crisis of the value of the person, which is seen in the tragic events of the 20th century and in the poor condition of human communication, could be overcome by

reflecting upon the person as the real subject. Who is the person? I propose to look for an answer in the philosophy of Wojtyła and Tischner.

Karol Wojtyła (1920–2005) began his philosophical path reading the mystical writings of St. John of the Cross. Then in a Thomistic spirit he studied Max Scheler's philosophy of values. He combined his entire philosophical work with his pastoral activity. Wojtyła's philosophical reflection was inspired by World War II experiences, losing his relatives, then living in Communistic Poland as a priest, and especially real life contact with people's problems in his priestly duties. He wrote a lot, not only on philosophical issues, but also regarding theological themes, especially as pope John Paul II. But in my article I would like to mention only his philosophical legacy. Generally his philosophy revolves around human action and morality. His greatest work it is *The Acting Person* and *Love and Responsibility*. I think that his philosophy is very valuable and universal because it treats of problems which are still relevant and motivates people to consider another person as an essential element of their being in the world.

I would like to focus in this article on Wojtyła's theory of act. Karol Wojtyła claims that the person is a special being in the world. The person has its own dignity because of being a child of God. It is characterized by rationality and freedom. Thus, the subject of morality is free and rational in their acts. In such an act the person is manifested. Wojtyła says that a concrete action reveals the person.¹⁵ This means that values which are realised during some action are manifested. The person appears through them. It is shown who one is, what one wants, what one's aim is and through which values one lives. Thus, a human act is the gate to the world of values. The person is to choose one of them. The person can also refuse to choose them but this also is a choice which generates being some kind of person. The person's morality is based on free choices of values. In this way, the person defines itself.¹⁶ When choosing good, the person becomes a good person. When preferring evil, the person is a bad one. When choosing honesty, the person is honest. And so on. In this way, the person's acts manifest the person, thanks to their freedom. All choices are defined by values, as human action is a choice of a value. Wojtyła says that in man's action the most important value is the value of the person.¹⁷ All other values should be submitted to this concrete value of the person. Thus, in an action directed towards another person, the most important matter should be the truth that man stands in front of another person, the highest value. That is the way, says Wojtyła, one should treat another person and one's act should be a sign of love.¹⁸ This principle should regulate human relationships, so that people let each other be persons with their freedom and dignity.

Karol Wojtyła in his philosophy claims that the person's freedom is her instinct. The person would not be herself if not free. It is her manner of being, which means that the person can decide about herself. She can also control herself and own herself. In order to decide about oneself, Wojtyła writes, the person depends on his I. In this process the person becomes himself during the struggle of the free I with the world of

¹⁵ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, Lublin 2000, p. 58.

¹⁶ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, op. cit., p. 426.

¹⁷ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, op. cit., p. 305.

¹⁸ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, op. cit., p. 42.

determined nature. Then, the free person makes a choice between necessary options and picks up some *modus vivendi*. Such freedom defines the person's morality, because she is free to choose between good and evil. She is not determined to be good or bad. She chooses to be a certain herself. When the person's I is concrete, then her acts of free will are directed towards something. So, the person has an ability to choose a concrete value. This does generate the process of taking possession of herself and having control of herself. Because only when the person's I is concrete and the person is sure to have his own ego, the person can be the master for his own I. Only then he is able to be the master of his own existence, not emotionally, but in a moral way. Wojtyła strongly stresses that freedom is the main aspect of being a person, but also categorically warns that being free has specific consequences – first of all, responsibilities towards another. It is not only freedom which is important, as primitive liberalism wants to have it. The person's freedom is directed towards another person. That is why in society freedom may transform a person from *homo socialis* into *homo communicans*, through which freedom can be manifested and actualised. Consequently, freedom in human communication is the freedom of speech. And because of this fact, it should entail morality.

Józef Tischner presents a very similar idea of the person and her freedom – the person is an embodiment of the value. His philosophy of drama describes a very special moment of the encounter between two people. Although his philosophy has a very distinct personalistic dimension, he was not a Thomist like Karol Wojtyła. Actually Tischner criticizes Thomism, because of its separation from real problems of modern human beings. He stresses that he does not criticize Christianity but one of its interpretation which does seem to be outdated in facing the concrete person nowadays. Neither does Tischner approve of nowadays' technical ethics that propose some rigid norms. People learn how to use those norms but they actually do not correspond to real problem of real men and women. That is why he strives first of all to understand man and his existential aches. According to Tischner, the person is a creature whose drama lies in being torn between good and evil. She does want good because of her goodwill, but, unfortunately, is weak and ultimately choses evil. Thus, the person always wants good but does not always manage to be good. However, this process is an evidence of freedom and, consequently, creates the person. That is why Tischner says that the person etymologically means creating one's I oneself – *per se*.¹⁹

Józef Tischner (1931–2000) started his philosophical adventure reading German philosophy in his seminary,²⁰ which inspired him to introduce this thought in Poland. So he popularized contemporary Western philosophy in periodical "Znak". As a priest, he confronted real people's problems, that's why he considered that philosophy should take them into consideration and should be close to people's life. Finally, he created the philosophy of drama which treats of the very special moment when a person encounters another person. He coined the term in his book the *Philosophy of Drama*. As far as he was able to influence the society, he published a lot and commented on the Polish situation of that time. In the spiritual way, Tischner helped Poles to gain freedom from Communism. He was even the chaplain of the Solidarity Movement and wrote the *Ethics*

¹⁹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, Poznań 2001, p. 14.

²⁰ Cf. W. Bonowicz, *Tischner*, Kraków 2001, p. 114.

of *Solidarity* to show what freedom means and what ethical norms should be respected. But perhaps his most important philosophical work was *The Controversy Over the Existence of Man*. It includes his thoughts based on his life experiences of evil during World War II, the evil of Communism and crisis of human's hope afterwards. In my opinion, his philosophy aids people in coping with their existential aches. It is also very important for understanding how the person's freedom should be used among others.

It was also Tischner's view that for a particular human being there are less or more important things in the world.²¹ That means that values do exist. The world is varied. People establish priorities. But it is not a sign yet that ethics and morality exist. Ethics comes with another human, with a person who stands close to us. Ethics etymologically also means finding a good place to develop oneself. In Tischner's opinion, this is possible only in front of another person, when we must take part in the experience of the encounter; when it is necessary to take some attitude, to choose some words which must be said or a gesture which must be performed. Tischner points out that in such circumstances morality comes from man's goodwill. It is always directed towards good, but, unfortunately, man is weak and even if he wants good, sometimes chooses evil. It is people's tragedy. It is a tragedy which unites itself with the lack of hope. This crisis of hope makes people live without values. It also makes people afraid of others and their freedom. As a result, people live in hiding-places. Like in Plato's cave they live among pictures which they can see on the front walls of their cave. And they are not brave enough to turn their heads to the sunlight to see the real life. Nor can they see the most important thing that is another man. Such living in conviction that all importance of one's life is not the other but creature comforts, a new car, looking good, an expensive house or a good job, provides reason to adopt a very technical modern ethics. That ethics draws our attention to human skills, but not his being, his human values, his existence and responsibility. This is why such ethics does not lead to the truth about the person.

From Tischner's point of view, neither norms nor technical ethics are proper to form the moral sense. Man can be moral only through his moral sense. When he encounters another person he has to understand who they are, what is their history, what they need. According to Tischner, human life is like a drama in which the stage is the place where he lives, acts, works, where he meets others. In Tischner's philosophy the most important matter is the encounter, which establishes special contact between people. The result of the encounter, says Tischner, could be some home, some friendship.²² Because during the encounter one of the persons asks, the other has to answer. The content of such special communication are never words or signs but values themselves. The person's tragedy is when one of her values is threatened. Then the answer during the encounter has to be some rescuing action to prevent losing the value. The encounter can also be an opportunity to create some new value, what value? – it depends on people who take part in the encounter. Thus, the encounter is an occasion to create some good or evil. In that way people become good or evil, honest or liars, brave or cowards, fair or unfair, etc. The philosophy of drama shows how people can create their lives thanks to other people;

²¹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, Kraków 2002, p. 497.

²² Cf. J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, Kraków 1998, p. 27.

how important another person is in the development of one's own person; at least: how important another human being is in one's becoming a moral being.

Both Wojtyła and Tischner see the person as a special being who is rational, free and full of goodwill. They never forget that man is also full of weakness but hopeful. Such reality of the person becomes morally dynamic when the person encounters another person. Then, I would like to say, the encounter opens up to communication through values.

4. MORALITY IN INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

I would like to start the final part of my reflections with pointing out that 20th century experiences have also had a huge influence on the condition of human communication. The following aspects have contributed greatly to the present miserable situation: firstly, nihilism which has taken control over human beliefs, secondly, a lack of ability to understand freedom properly, finally, living a life beyond values and, consequently, expressing oneself with no rules. So, at the end of the 20th century we can see man looking for his identity after traumatic experiences. In order to know who he is, there are questions to be asked once again: what is human nature? Why is there evil in the world? Does God exist? To put it short, values must be rediscovered and adopted.

Antoni Kępiński²³ says that in his psychotherapeutic practice he dealt mainly with war traumas.²⁴ Modern psychotherapists can even notice this influence a few generations after the actual conflict takes place. Therefore, I would like to point out that by the same token human ability to communicate may also be contaminated in the aftermath of 20th century traumas. In addition, there is a big impact of the technical media civilization, which has been already mentioned. I would like to recall here the fact that in nowadays' culture of information, the person is likely to be understood as an object in communication through which some information may be obtained. From this point of view, informaton seems to be the most important aspect of modern communication, which destroys the personalistic dimension of human contact. This influence could be seen in the lack of trust in interpersonal communication, the ease in allowing oneself to lie, difficulties in being authentic and, what is more: in misunderstanding one's own communicative reactions, fast and aggressive contact, nervous effort to communicate more information in the lesser amount of time, in very superficial relationships, etc. This state of human communication seems to deepen nowadays' human alienations because of its technical aspect, the lack of authentic relationships, the lack of reflection about the self and the meaning of life. And all frustrations caused by poor communication encourage the escape into superficial life focused on material sensations. In this way, the person who communicates becomes similarly to her messages—superficial and artificial. And this develops into a vicious circle. The only escape from such a situation is a reorganization of human communication. This may happen not thanks to technical improvements, but only through moral reflection. I think that this is the only method

²³ One of the most important Polish psychologists of the 20th century.

²⁴ Cf. J. Tischner, *Myslenie według wartości*, op. cit., p. 397.

which allows people to understand the consequences of their manner of communication and also helps them to achieve a real communication ethos. I believe that such reflection on communication will be a beginning to create new persons and new societies.

Reorganizing human communication means reflecting on its fundamental structure. I think, of course, about the traditional model of communication: the sender, the message and the receiver. But I would like to go a step further. Thinking of this communication structure I would rather ask about the sense of each element of this structure. That is why there is a need to ask: Who communicates? What does one communicate for? What is the message? From my point of view these basic questions ask, through their ontological and phenomenological aspects, for answers concerning the substance of communication. These questions, which must be posed in the context of the personalism of Wojtyła and Tischner, ask about person in communication, about her communicating ethos and about its content.

The problem which opens a philosophical reflection about communication is the question: who communicates? According to the philosophy of the person the communicative subject is the person – a free rational being who has the highest dignity in the created world.²⁵ Karol Wojtyła claims that the person is such a being who as a subject is in the closest contact with the outside world. He is also in the world because of his inner world.²⁶ In Tischner's thought we learn that man is in contact with outside values in the world and in this way builds himself as a special value – the value of the 'I'.²⁷ Because the person is, according to Tischner, an embodied value and, according to Wojtyła, the basic value, interpersonal communication is full of values for the reason that the person participates in it. Thus, the first step in order to communicate interpersonally is to recognize that both the receiver and the sender are persons.²⁸ This fundamental recognition generates all other values. Practically, this means that the person is aware of her ontological status, feels free in communicating and is responsible for values which are realized by her words, gestures, etc. The person is the source of morality in communication. The person's freedom lets values exist and the person's rationality lets values be known.²⁹ Moreover, the person is a special area where good and evil are at battle. That is why, the person is always in some tragedy, in which some values have to be saved or realized. Tischner says that the source of the person's tragedy is good will, because the person always wants more than he can do.³⁰ And the moral situation is always the situation of choice where morality sense is at work. Without this sense, man would be only one-dimensional and would choose between the useful and useless. In communication it would mean, for example, treating another person only as a source of information without opening to Another. It would mean contact without emotions, dependence, responsibility, necessity of being in truth. That is the reason why it is easier to speak with strangers rather than with someone close to one's heart; or convenient to

²⁵ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Filozof i papież. Wybór tekstów*, Warszawa 2009, p. 193.

²⁶ Cf. K. Wojtyła *Mężczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich*, Watykan 1980, p. 25.

²⁷ Cf. J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁸ Cf. J. Stewart, *Komunikacja interpersonalna: kontakt między osobami*, [in:] *Mosty zamiast murów*, tłum. J. Doktor, Warszawa 2010, p. 44.

²⁹ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Elementarz etyczny*, Lublin 1983, p. 32.

³⁰ Cf. J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, op. cit., p. 60.

send a message by cellphone rather than to speak to someone in the truth of the face. The person is demanding in communication. When a person appears, he demands a concrete response. He demands responsibility.³¹

From the ontological viewpoint, there are many types of closer and more distant communicative relationships, for example: between relatives or between people who do not know each other. We speak to our superior differently than to a friend. Different communicative relationships bind me with my neighbor and with a chance acquaintance or some stranger passed by in the street. And it is obvious that the type of communication depends on the kind of relationship. But in each case there is one thing which is the same: the personalistic relationship. Although there are different ways of realizing the personalistic norm, one thing is constant – we communicate with another person, who is also free, rational, has his own dignity and, finally, is values which demand actualization. To accept a person means to let her be.³² In the communicative sense this means letting him speak, show what he wants to express and hearing his words which create his world and represent his values. When one does not recognize the person, one does not let her be. When one does not recognize the person in a communicative situation, then one is not open to her reality, to what she represents, to what she wants to convey. Then, one does not recognize the personalistic value and treats the person as a means to obtain information. As a result, this is against her dignity and essence, because then the person is not the aim of one's act. The communication process is in such a case ritual, superficial and does not contribute to a personalistic relationship. It does not mean at all that all our communicative relationships have to be very carefully prepared and last very long. It rather means that by assuming an adequate attitude to the relationship and situation we let the value of the person be. Thus, for example, in our relationship with the husband or wife that means patient communication to create the common world with common values, aims, dreams, interests, etc. But in the case, for example, of a stranger whom we meet in the street and ask about the time, this could be one word followed by a smile. Such personal communication makes peoples relationships stronger and more creative.

When we know that the source of morality in communication is the person, then we have to reflect on their communicational aims. From Wojtyła's philosophy we learn that the idea of communication has been separated from its basic meaning. Nowadays it is connected with the sphere of communicating tools, especially with mass media, which are instruments of communication whereas the first meaning of communication, which is also the basic and most fundamental, is connected with the subjects of communication. The subjects are linked through the communion which is between them. So, the aim of communication is actually to achieve or to express the communion between people.³³ Such communion is characteristic only for the subjects' world, not for the objects. And in this way it describes ontologically and existentially the person. Thus, the person communicates because she wants to create a community with another person. The answer to the question what community is can be found in Tischner's philosophy. Community comes into being during the encounter. The encounter is a special kind of communication

³¹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, Kraków 1998, p. 119.

³² Cf. J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, op. cit., p. 395.

³³ Cf. Jan Paweł II, *Męzczyzną i niewiastą stworzył ich*, op. cit., p. 46.

when the person's tragedy is seen. A tragedy means some battle between good and evil takes place inside the person or there is a lack of some values, which is the reason for suffering. Another person is a source of ethical values. When a person encounters another person and notices the axiological dimension of this encounter, then axiological communication comes into being. They present their values; show their dreams, fears, history of their lives, etc. They agree what they are communicating about, what the aim of their encounter is. Tischner says that the result of such an encounter could be, for example, home.³⁴ So, during the encounter persons agree about their common values. They exchange some good, some evil, some kindness, some refusal, etc. Not every act of communication is an encounter and not every encounter relies on axiological communication, which is completed by creating new values. When a person does not want to see Another's tragedy, refuses to encounter Another. But in my opinion and from the communicative point of view, if an encounter does not touch the most fundamental values like faith, life as a hope and love, even if someone refuses, this still has a creative impact on the reality. There appear chances for other encounters, which could be meaningful. So, to sum up the reasons for communicating with another person, I would say that the person communicates, because she wants to create some community of persons relying on common values, ideas, work, spending free time or even the entire life together, etc.

The last question which should take us closer to the matter of morality in interpersonal communication is: What is the message? The message is about what is important in this concrete situation. Importance here means the values which must be realized. Generally, the most important values in communication are: the personal values of the person and the values of the situation. The personal values of the person, says Tischner, are these which are the most important among all values the person feels at the very moment.³⁵ The person lives with the awareness that these values are given to him and feels that he is called to realize or serve these values. They are the most important to the person and establish the hierarchy of other values, set priorities in the person's life. Thus, the person who is aware of her personal values during communication, expresses all her temporary priorities in the message and the truth about herself, but not literally. These values are shown in the kind of signs used, in all sorts of words spoken, in the type of attitude taken, in every expressed opinion, in each request which is made, etc. It is necessary to remember that, although personal values establish priorities in values experienced by the person – according to Wojtyła – the value of the person is what lets other values exist. Therefore, it is always an obligation to submit realized values in the act of communication to the value of the person.³⁶ Moreover, Wojtyła says that every action reveals the person.³⁷ And we must assume that action is constituted by every spoken word, gesture made, by any other movement of the person's will during the communication or a dynamic expression of her thoughts. These reveal the person. So, the message in communication is a concrete action which reveals the person.³⁸ The person's action

³⁴ Cf. J. Tischner, *Myslenie według wartości*, op. cit., p. 480.

³⁵ Cf. J. Tischner, *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*, op. cit., p. 122.

³⁶ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Miłość i odpowiedzialność*, op. cit., s. 176.

³⁷ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, op. cit., p. 58.

³⁸ Cf. K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn*, op. cit., p. 59.

is defined by a moral value. The person's actions are good or evil. The morality is the substance of a person's action which involves another person. In this context, thanks to the concrete values of actions, the person is a concrete being: good or evil. So, as it was said before that the message is a concrete action that defines the sender morally. This means that values which are involved in the message reveal the sender. Good words make the sender a good person. Analogically, evil words, an evil message make the sender an evil person. True information conveyed makes a person reliable, lies disclose a liar, etc. And even when this is obvious, it is worth confirming the power of words and values which give them this power.

To sum up, I have to stress that according to Karol Wojtyła and Józef Tischner morality is involved in communication because of the person who communicates. No matter what the relationship is during this communication, nor what the topic is, there are always values that are communicated. As far as it concerns the person, his aim leads to revealing his values to another person, which in turn creates a common reality. Practically, it is essential to remember that words which we use, gestures which we make, etc., are not morally neutral but, thanks to values that they represent, they have strong impact on another person. They are concrete deeds which have concrete results. They simply have a power to influence somebody's feelings, thoughts, plans, decisions, opinions, etc. That is why especially nowadays – in the mass media world – man has to be responsible for what and how he communicates, in order to realize good, give hope, destroy lies, promote the truth, etc.

In the end, in connection with the proposed thesis, I would like to stress once again that morality in communication is present thanks to the person and his ability to live in accordance with values. The awareness of morality in communication makes the person authentically human and creatively influences his life. A lack of such awareness contributes to the destruction of peoples' relationships, emotional suffering without any sense and living without personal development. So, it is worth remembering that the true source of man's ethical experiences is Another. Because to create and form oneself, it is necessary to find some place among people for oneself and the right manner of contact with them.³⁹ The right manner of contact with people means understanding the moral dimension of communication. This is the ethics of communication. This is the *ethos* of good co-existence with others.

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³⁹ Cf. J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości*, op. cit., p. 53.

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