



Keith A. Houde

Karol Wojtyła’s “Thomistic Personalism”: Philosophical Foundations for a Psychology of the Person

The contemporary field of psychology appears to be fragmented in theory, research, and practice, with a paucity of truly integrative thinkers.¹ Psychology is thus in search of a unifying paradigm and in need of a synthesizing founder. A robust psychology would necessarily include a unifying theory (anthropology), standard research methodologies (epistemology), and genuinely beneficial practice applications (ethics). Existing approaches seem inadequate to the task and incommensurate with the reality of human persons. Something more is needed.

Keith A. Houde, Ave Maria University FL, USA
keith.houde@avemaria.edu • ORCID: 0000-0002-0978-3692

This article is a revised version of a paper originally presented to the Society for Thomistic Personalism at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Catholic Philosophical Association in Minneapolis, MN, USA.

¹ William James, *Psychology (Briefer Course)* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910), 468; Edna Heidebreder, *Seven Psychologies* (New York: Appleton-Century, 1933), 425–426; George A. Miller, “The Constitutive Problem of Psychology,” in *A Century of Psychology as a Science*, eds. Sigmund Koch and David E. Leary (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985), 42; Ludy T. Benjamin, “American Psychology’s Struggles with its Curriculum: Should a Thousand Flowers Bloom?”, *American Psychologist* 56, no. 9 (September 2001): 735.



The premise of this article is that Karol Wojtyła's seminal essay, "Thomistic Personalism,"² presents an integral theory of the human person that may serve as the foundation for an authentically personalist psychology.³ Within the context of a succinct history of theological anthropology and philosophical psychology, Wojtyła here portrayed an integrated anthropology incorporating metaphysics and phenomenology, a comprehensive epistemology, and a practical ethics for human life and love. He also appeared to consider the rudiments of each of the four dimensions of a personality theory identified by philosopher of science Joseph Rychlak: structure, motivation, development, and personality.⁴ Wojtyła thus offered an outline of a comprehensive psychology of persons with significant implications for the theory, research, and practice of psychology.

At the outset, it could seem that Wojtyła himself might dispute the presence within this essay of all these elements which might be relevant to psychology:

Personalism is not primarily a theory of the person or a theoretical science of the person. Its meaning is largely practical and ethical: it is concerned with the person as a subject and an object of activity... And so in this sketch I will draw largely upon the practical philosophy

² Karol Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, tr. Theresa Sandok (1961; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 165–175.

³ For an overview of personalist philosophy, including specific consideration of Polish personalism, see Juan Manuel Burgos, *An Introduction to Personalism*, tr. R. T. Allen (2012; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018). For further consideration of Polish integral personalism, see Tomasz Duma, "Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy (Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec)," *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 2 (April–June 2016): 365–390. For a summary of major themes within Wojtyła's personalism, see John F. Crosby, *The Personalism of John Paul II* (Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Press, 2019).

⁴ Joseph F. Rychlak, "Introduction: A Framework for the Study of Personality," in *Introduction to Personality and Psychotherapy*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981), 31.

and ethics of St. Thomas and also of those students of his who extracted the doctrine of personalism from St. Thomas' works.⁵

Yet it is important to note that Wojtyła indicated that personalism alone does not provide a theory or science of the person but emphasizes practical ethics. The proposition of the present paper is that Wojtyła's "Thomistic personalism" as a whole offers a broader approach within which we can discern the outline of a personalist psychology incorporating all three of these elements – theory, research, and practice – that could serve as a remedy for many of the historical and contemporary shortcomings of the field of psychology.

The present analysis will seek to systematically discern and describe the outline of a personalist psychology inherent within Wojtyła's foundational essay under the auspices of theory (anthropology), research (epistemology), and practice (ethics), incorporating Rychlak's categories of structure, motivation, development, and personality.⁶ As appropriate, effort will be made to integrate further elements of the remarkably consistent body of thought evident within Wojtyła's theological, philosophical, and literary writings. By way of disclaimer, please note that this analysis is offered by a clinical psychologist and historian of psychology who has some theological training, but who necessarily remains a perennial student of philosophy.

Research (Epistemology): Four Ways of Knowing

Although Wojtyła indicated that personalism is "not primarily... a theoretical science of the person,"⁷ in conversation with both Thomism

⁵ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 165 [emphasis added].

⁶ Rychlak, "Introduction: A Framework for the Study of Personality," 31.

⁷ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 165.

and modern philosophy, he proffered a robust range of research methodologies or ways of knowing.

Within the context of a discussion on St. Thomas's concept of the person and a personal God, Wojtyła recognized the value of both "theological speculation" which "has its entire basis in revelation, in the scriptures and tradition," and "philosophical reflection" which is "based on an analysis of reality accessible to human reason itself."⁸ Within the context of a brief historical survey of philosophical anthropologies, he also appeared to recognize the value of both introspection and observation as ways of knowing: "Consciousness is an object of inner experience, of introspection, whereas the body, like all other bodies in the natural world, is accessible to observation and external experience."⁹ Wojtyła thus offered an elegant and succinct summary of four complementary approaches and methods of understanding the human person: revelation (theology), reason (philosophy), observation (natural science/empiricism), and introspection (human science/phenomenology). As Aquinas resolved the epistemological debate between faith and reason, so did Wojtyła reconcile any merely apparent methodological conflict between pre-modern theology and philosophy, modern science, and postmodern phenomenology.¹⁰ All ways of knowing are valuable in pursuit of the unity of truth.¹¹

⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 167.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰ For further information on methodological considerations within Wojtyła's thought, see Juan Manuel Burgos, "The Method of Karol Wojtyła: A Way Between Phenomenology, Personalism and Metaphysics," in *Analecta Husserliana* Vol. 104, *Phenomenology and Existentialism in the Twentieth Century: Book 2. Fruition—Cross-Pollination—Dissemination*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: Springer, 2009), 107–129.

¹¹ Cf. John Paul II, *Ex corde Ecclesiae* (*Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities*) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990), sec. 46, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html; John Paul II, *Fides et ratio* (*Encyclical Letter on the Relationship Between Faith and Reason*) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998), sec. 16, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html.

Theory (Anthropology): Four Dimensions of the Person

Wojtyła wrote that “personalism is not primarily a theory of the person.”¹² Although personalism itself may not provide a specific theory of the person, from the broader perspective of Thomistic personalism, Wojtyła dedicated much of his essay toward outlining an integrative philosophical psychology and theological anthropology.

The present analysis of Wojtyła’s anthropology and theory of the person follows the dimensions of human nature provided by philosophical psychologist Joseph Rychlak, who described four components or constructs necessarily addressed by any personality theory: structural, motivational, time-perspective, and individual differences.¹³ For clarity, these dimensions are here restated as structure, motivation, development, and personality, with an effort to describe them more fully (see TABLE 1). Although perhaps going beyond Rych-

ASPECT	DESCRIPTION	SUMMARY
Structure	structure, essence, nature; aspects, capacities; parts/whole	What is our nature?
Motivation	motives; instincts, drives, desires; needs, meanings, callings	Why do we act?
Development	aspects; ages, stages, tasks; contexts, influences	When/where/how do we change?
Personality	individuality, types/styles; temperament, personality, character	Who do we become?

TABLE 1: Rychlak’s Dimensions of Personality Theory

¹² Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 165.

¹³ Rychlak, “Introduction: A Framework for the Study of Personality,” 31.

lak, these dimensions might also be described, respectively, as being, action, becoming, and actualization.

There is a necessary progression and overlap here, where each subsequent dimension builds upon previous dimensions: Human nature is the foundation for motivated action. Human motivation is the basis of growth and development. Human development culminates in human personality and character.

An initial attempt to summarize the framework of Wojtyła's Thomistic personalist psychology in accord with Rychlak's categories is offered (see TABLE 2), recognizing potential limitations in correspondence between philosophical and psychological language. The categories and content are based primarily on the "Thomistic Personalism" essay, yet these are supplemented when necessary with material from other writings of Wojtyła.

STRUCTURE (BEING)

In response to the philosophical/psychological question regarding human nature, Wojtyła directly spoke of the "structure of the human person."¹⁴ To explain the structure of human nature, Wojtyła turned first to the *Summa* of St. Thomas, which he described as "the most comprehensive analysis possible of the human soul."¹⁵

Beginning with the definition of Boethius, Wojtyła joined Aquinas in recognizing that "the human being is an individual (individua substantia) of a rational nature."¹⁶ This individual is a person: "The human person is... an individual of a rational nature."¹⁷ Building upon this foundation, we can identify three interwoven themes related to Wojtyła's understanding of the structure of human nature (described by

¹⁴ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 168.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 167.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 168.

STRUCTURE	MOTIVATION	DEVELOPMENT	PERSONALITY
"structure of the human person" (p. 168)	"activity of the person" (p. 171)	"development of the person" (p. 169)	"shaping the human personality" (p. 169)
<p>PERSON (BEING) <i>Persona</i> "uniqueness of the human person" (p.168) <i>Suppositum</i> "The person is a subsistent subject of existence and action" (p. 167) <i>Compositum humanum</i> "substantial whole" (p. 169) <i>Hylomorphism</i> "Spiritual soul... is the substantial form of the body" (p. 168)</p>	<p>ACTION "the human being is the master of his or her own actions" (p. 170)</p>	<p>BECOMING "the human person is actualized" (p. 168) "to perfect the human being" (p. 169)</p>	<p>ACTUALIZATION "shift from personality in the metaphysical sense to personality in the psychological sense" (p. 168) "the whole psychological and moral personality takes shape" (p.168) "uniqueness of the human person" (p. 168)</p>
<p>Human Body Sensory faculties Cognitive</p>	(Beauty)	[Ontological Personhood]	Metaphysical Personality
Appetitive	Sensory love		
<p>Human Soul Spiritual faculties ReasonThought (Consciousness)</p>	<p>Knowledge Self-knowledge Creativity (Truth)</p>	[Psychological Personhood]	Psychological Personality
<p>Free Will/Freedom (Self-Consciousness)</p>	<p>Mastery Self-mastery Morality (Goodness) Spiritual love (Love, Justice)</p>	[Ethical Personhood]	Moral Personality (Good or Evil)

TABLE 2: Wojtyła's Psychology of the Person

specific Latin terms): unique person (*persona*), subsistent subject (*suppositum*), and substantial whole (*compositum humanum* and hylo-morphism).

UNIQUE PERSON (*PERSONA*)

As an “individual” substance of a rational nature, each human being is a unique person (*persona*). In this regard, the human person may be understood as individual and concrete, unique and unrepeatable, and full of richness and perfection.

1. The human person is an individual and specific member of the human species. With Thomas, Wojtyła described both the nature of human beings in general (the species) and the nature of each concrete, specific, human person (the individual), with an emphasis on the latter: “The person in St. Thomas’ view is always a concrete being, one in which the potentiality proper to a rational nature is realized.”¹⁸ “The human being is always an individual within the human species.”¹⁹

2. One of Wojtyła’s signature personalist teachings as Pope John Paul II was that each human person is a “unique unrepeatable human reality.”²⁰ The substantial unity of spiritual soul and corporeal body within the human being is the basis of the structure and uniqueness of the person: “This fact is of basic importance for understanding the whole uniqueness of the human person, as well as for explaining the structure of the human person.”²¹ The human person is unique in origin and unique in end.

¹⁸ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 171.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁰ John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis* (*Encyclical Letter The Redeemer of Man*) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979), sec. 13, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html.

²¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168.

3. The human person represents "something more" among the world of creatures. With Thomas, Wojtyła recognized the human person as the perfection of creation: "St. Thomas takes precisely this occasion to assert that in the created world the person is the highest perfection: the person is *perfectissimum ens*."²² Wojtyła had previously expressed this quite clearly:

The term "person" has been coined to signify that a man cannot wholly be contained within the concept "individual member of the species," but that there is something more to him, a particular richness and perfection in the manner of his being, which can only be brought out by the use of the word "person."²³

The human person is perfect in potential for perfection in actuality.

SUBSISTENT SUBJECT (*SUPPOSITUM*)

As an individual "substance" of a rational nature, each human person is a subsistent subject. With Aquinas, and contrary to modern subjectivism, Wojtyła spoke against absolutizing the subjective element of human nature as an entity unto itself: "A rational nature does not possess its own subsistence as a nature, but subsists in a person. The person is a subsistent subject of existence and action—which can in no way be said of a rational nature."²⁴ Human rationality and human subjectivity do not exist independently from the human person as a subsistent subject.²⁵ Wojtyła

²² *Ibid.*, 167.

²³ Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, tr. H. T. Willetts (1960; New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981; repr., San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 22. Cf. Karol Wojtyła, "Human Development," in *The Way to Christ: Spiritual Exercises*, tr. Leslie Wearne, 87–95 (1972; New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1984), 90.

²⁴ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 167.

²⁵ For further consideration of the distinction between person and subject, see Peter Emmanuel A. Mara, "Understanding Man as a Subject and a Person: A Wojtylan Personalistic Interpretation of the Human Being," *Kritikē* 1, no. 1 (June 2007): 86–95.

elsewhere incorporated the Thomistic term *suppositum* to refer to the subsistent nature of the human person: “As we know, the objectivity of the conception of the human being as a being itself required the postulate that the human being is 1) a separate *suppositum* (a subject of existence and action) and 2) a person (*persona*).”²⁶

SUBSTANTIAL WHOLE (*COMPOSITUM HUMANUM*)

As an individual substance of a “rational nature,” each human person is a substantial whole. Wojtyła, after Aquinas, spoke of the human being as “*compositum humanum*,”²⁷ a human composite who is a “substantial whole”²⁸ of spiritual and corporeal aspects: “Human beings are intellectual-sensory, spiritual-material composites.”²⁹ The essential structure of human nature is a composition of body and soul.

With Aquinas, Wojtyła acknowledged *hylomorphism* as the basis of human nature: “In his treatise on the human being, on the other hand, he adopts a hylomorphic view, that is, he regards the human being as a composition of matter and form.”³⁰ The spiritual soul is the life principle of the material body and the basis of its rationality: “What is peculiar to the human person, however, is that this person has a rational nature only because of a spiritual soul, which is the substantial form of the body.”³¹ This spiritual, rational soul defines the human being as a person: “This is a rational soul (*anima rationalis*), the principle and source of the whole spirituality of the human being, and, therefore, also that by virtue of which the human being may properly

²⁶ Karol Wojtyła, “Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, tr. Theresa Sandok, 209–217 (1975/1988; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 212.

²⁷ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 168.

³¹ *Ibid.*

be ascribed the character of a person."³² The rational soul is the principle of the human being's life and activity.

Wojtyła's recourse to the comprehensive analysis of St. Thomas included consideration of the faculties of the soul, both sensory and spiritual: "The human soul is the principle of the life and activity of the human being; it operates, in turn, through the mediation of faculties."³³

1. The material, corporeal, human body is characterized by sensory faculties or capabilities. These include simple cognitive functions and emotional functions.

The sensory faculties, related to the body, include both cognitive faculties and appetitive faculties: "As the substantial form of the body, the soul also has, in addition to spiritual faculties, faculties that are intrinsically dependent on matter. These are primarily sensory faculties, both cognitive and appetitive."³⁴

Wojtyła had previously offered profound personalistic insights into the appetites or emotions of the human person:

The emotional-affective overtones or states which are so important a part of man's entire inner life have as a rule either a positive or a negative colouring, contain, so to speak, either a positive or a negative charge. A positive charge is pleasure and a negative charge is pain. Pleasure appears in different guises or shades – depending on the emotional-affective experiences with which it is connected. It may be either sensual satisfaction, or emotional contentment, or a profound, a total joy. Pain also depends on the character of the emotional-affective experiences which have caused it and appears in many forms, varieties and nuances: as sensual disgust, or emotional discontent, or a deep sadness.³⁵

³² *Ibid.*

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 32.

Transcending reductionistic understandings of merely hedonistic motives (pleasure and pain) within human nature, Wojtyła noted that emotion touches and moves the person at various levels of human experience, including sensual satisfaction or disgust at the level of the body, emotional contentment or discontent at the level of the emotions, and profound joy or sadness at the deepest level or core of the person.

2. The immaterial, rational, human soul operates through the mediation of spiritual faculties or capabilities. This includes classical consideration of reason and free will, with additional contemporary consideration of consciousness and self-consciousness.

The spiritual faculties, related directly to the soul, include reason (thought) and free will (freedom): “The human soul is a spiritual substance, whose natural properties are reason and freedom... The faculties that express and actualize the soul’s spirituality, and thus the human being’s spirituality, are reason and free will.”³⁶ Elsewhere, Wojtyła recognized that human freedom is an essential characteristic of the human person: “Self-determination—or, in other words, freedom—is not limited to the accidental dimension, but belongs to the substantial dimension of the person: it is the person’s freedom, and not just the will’s freedom, although it is undeniably the person’s freedom through the will.”³⁷

In another penetrating insight into the structure of the human person, Wojtyła had previously provided this parallel description: “Psychology,... the science of the soul, endeavours to lay bare the structure and the foundation of man’s inner life... The most significant

³⁶ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168.

³⁷ Karol Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, tr. Theresa Sandok, 187–195 (1974/1981; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 190. For further consideration of personal freedom and efficient causality, see Jarosław Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 142–152.

characteristics of that inner life are the sense of truth and the sense of freedom.”³⁸ Wojtyła subsequently considered the central importance of conscience within the structure of the human person.³⁹

Thus far in our consideration of the structure of the human person, we have mainly summarized Wojtyła's incorporation of St. Thomas, with some personalist elaborations. However, it is at this juncture that Wojtyła suggested some shortcomings in the analysis of St. Thomas and introduced his own signature insights, particularly on the relationship between objective human being and subjective human consciousness.⁴⁰ He specifically considered the importance of consciousness and self-consciousness within human nature.

With Thomas, and contrary to modern subjectivism, Wojtyła recognized that consciousness does not constitute the essence of the person: “According to St. Thomas, consciousness and self-consciousness are something derivative, a kind of fruit of the rational nature that subsists in the person, a nature crystalized in a unitary rational and free being, and not something subsistent in themselves.”⁴¹ As a subsistent subject, the person has a disposition to consciousness and self-consciousness: “For St. Thomas, the person is, of course, a subject—a very distinctive subject of existence and activity—because the person has subsistence in a rational nature, and this is what makes the person capable of consciousness and self-consciousness. St. Thomas, however, mainly presents this disposition of the human person to consciousness and self-consciousness.”⁴²

For Wojtyła, however, the human being is imbued with a consciousness that must be fully considered. Wojtyła appeared to restate

³⁸ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 114–115.

³⁹ Karol Wojtyła, “Human Development,” in *The Way to Christ: Spiritual Exercises*, tr. Leslie Wearne, 87–95 (1972; New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1984), 90–91, 94.

⁴⁰ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 169.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 170.

⁴² *Ibid.*

Aquinas and to elaborate, incorporating his own characteristic thought: “If consciousness and self-consciousness characterize the person, then they do so only in the accidental order, as derived from the rational nature on the basis of which the person acts.”⁴³ Consciousness is related to reason: “The person acts consciously because the person is rational.”⁴⁴ Self-consciousness is related to freedom: “Self-consciousness, in turn, is connected with freedom, which is actualized in the activity of the will. Through the will, the human being is the master of his or her own actions, and self-consciousness in a special way reflects this mastery over actions.”⁴⁵

Wojtyła then offered what may be his strongest critique of Aquinas vis-à-vis the potential contributions and concerns of modern philosophy and psychology: “We can see here how very objectivistic St. Thomas’ view of the person is. It almost seems as though there is no place in it for an analysis of consciousness and self-consciousness as totally unique manifestations of the person as a subject.”⁴⁶ Although Thomas provided objective categories describing aspects of human nature, he did not sufficiently provide room for consideration of the unique subjectivity of each individual human person:

On the other hand, when it comes to analyzing consciousness and self-consciousness—which is what chiefly interested modern philosophy and psychology—there seems to be no place for it in St. Thomas’ objectivistic view of reality. In any case, that in which the person’s subjectivity is most apparent is presented by St. Thomas in an exclusively—or almost exclusively—objective way.⁴⁷

⁴³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 170.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

Without here using the term, Wojtyła suggested that Thomism could benefit from the encounter with phenomenology, properly understood:

He shows us the particular faculties, both spiritual and sensory, thanks to which the whole of human consciousness and self-consciousness—the human personality in the psychological and moral sense—takes shape, but that is also where he stops. Thus St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experiences of the person.⁴⁸

MOTIVATION (ACTION)

In response to the philosophical/psychological question regarding human action, Wojtyła's theory of human motivation is discerned within his consideration of the "activity of the person."⁴⁹

Human structure implies human motivation. That of which we are made points us toward that for which we are made. Faculties imply function and purpose; however, this is not merely formal function, but rather human action.

Wojtyła here highlighted the necessary relationship between human being and human action: "The person is a subsistent subject of existence and action."⁵⁰ We have already considered his description of the human *suppositum* as "a subject of existence and action."⁵¹ Elsewhere, he spoke of "the comprehensive experience of the human being and human action."⁵²

⁴⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 170–171.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 167.

⁵¹ Wojtyła, "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being," 212.

⁵² Wojtyła, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," 191.

The relationship between human existence and action is the relationship between person and action. Anticipating the title of his future philosophical treatise, *Person and Act*,⁵³ Wojtyła's anthropology in the essay under consideration presented a profound relationship between person and action: "Through the will, the human being is the master of his or her own actions, and self-consciousness in a special way reflects this mastery over actions."⁵⁴

The human motives and meanings that emerge from Wojtyła's thought appear to include knowledge and creativity, mastery and morality, sensory love and spiritual love. These are interspersed with implicit motives to attain the transcendental values of truth, goodness, beauty, justice, and love.

KNOWLEDGE AND CREATIVITY

Human persons are made for rational knowledge and creative action. Consistent with Aristotle's recognition that "all men by nature need to know," Wojtyła followed St. Thomas in his recognition that "the potentiality proper to a rational nature is realized... by means of thought."⁵⁵ He recognized the difficulty of presenting "the complete Thomistic analysis of thought in all its psychological and logical dimensions," and focused here only on that in thought which is "most characteristic for the person."⁵⁶ In this regard, he indicated that "thought is the basis of the creativity in which we express ourselves as persons."⁵⁷ Such

⁵³ Karol Wojtyła, *"Person and Act" and Related Essays*, tr. Grzegorz Ignatik (1969; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2021). For further analysis of Wojtyła's philosophical psychology within this major work, see Miguel Acosta and Adrian J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding "Person and Act"* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

⁵⁴ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 170.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 172.

truly human creativity is the foundation of civilization: "Human thought has a creative character; it is the basis of creativity and the source of culture."⁵⁸

Human creativity does not mean subjective idealism, becoming lost in one's own head, but rather knowledge and mastery of an objective reality: "This does not mean that by thinking we create a world of ideas and judgments separate from and independent of reality. Quite the contrary."⁵⁹ Human beings are motivated to know and master the real world: "Human thought has a very realistic and objective character. It is also, however, the basis for deriving new truths from existing reality and for controlling reality. We gain mastery of reality by coming to know it more and more thoroughly."⁶⁰

Human beings are by their very nature called to create not only without, but also to create within: "Something similar can be said of our self-knowledge: the better we know ourselves—our possibilities, capabilities, and talents—the more we are able to derive from ourselves and the more we are able to create, making use of the raw material we find in ourselves."⁶¹ Human persons, as rational beings, are not merely consumers of resources, but contributors to creation: "We are by nature creators, not just consumers. We are creators because we think. And because our thought (our rational nature) is also the basis of our personalities, one could say that we are creators because we are persons."⁶²

The human person is expressed in action, and human rationality is expressed in human creativity: "Creativity is realized in action. When we act in a manner proper to a person, we always create something: we

⁵⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 171.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² *Ibid.*

create something either outside ourselves in the surrounding world or within ourselves—or outside and within ourselves at the same time.”⁶³ Human creativity is a definitive sign of the person: “Creating as derived from thinking is so characteristic of a person that it is always an infallible sign of a person, a proof of a person’s existence or presence.”⁶⁴ Human creativity is a sign of the person’s similarity to the divine Creator: “In creating, we also fill the external world around us with our own thought and being. There is a certain similarity here between ourselves and God, for the whole of creation is an expression of God’s own thought and being.”⁶⁵

MASTERY AND MORALITY

Human persons are made for self-mastery and moral action. As the human capability for thought is the basis of creativity in action, the human capability for freedom of will is the basis of morality in action: “Although thought is the basis of the creativity in which we express ourselves as persons, this creativity neither ends nor culminates in thought. That which is most characteristic of a person, that in which a person (at least in the natural order) is most fully and properly realized, is morality.”⁶⁶ Rational thought merely sets the stage for the moral freedom of the human actor: “Morality is not the most strictly connected with thought; thought is merely a condition of morality. Directly, however, morality is connected with freedom, and therefore with the will.”⁶⁷

As rational knowledge is capable of discerning truth, so moral freedom is capable of actively realizing goodness: “Morality, therefore, pre-

⁶³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 171.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

supposes knowledge, the truth concerning the good, but it is realized by willing, by choice, by decision.”⁶⁸ For human persons, moral freedom is related to self-mastery: “Thanks to our will, we are masters of ourselves and of our actions, but because of this the value of these actions of our will qualifies our whole person positively or negatively.”⁶⁹

The human capability for self-mastery and moral action directly relate to the formation of human personality and to ethical values, which will be considered further below.

SENSORY LOVE AND SPIRITUAL LOVE

Human persons are made for love. We are deeply motivated towards love. We come from relationship, and we are made for relationship. We are both “a subject and object of love.”⁷⁰ Later, in his first papal encyclical, John Paul II made this profound statement regarding the human necessity for love:

Man cannot live without love. He remains a being that is incomprehensible for himself, his life is senseless, if love is not revealed to him, if he does not encounter love, if he does not experience it and make it his own, if he does not participate intimately in it.⁷¹

Wojtyła, with Aquinas, recognized that love is a unifying force within creation itself: “According to St. Thomas, love is basically a certain natural force that draws together and unites everything in existence.”⁷²

As a composite of body and soul, human beings are characterized by both sensory love, at the level of the body, and spiritual love, at the level

⁶⁸ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, sec. 10.

⁷² Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172.

of the soul: “On the level of sensory beings, this love corresponds to the nature of such beings. This is also true on the level of persons—persons are capable of spiritual love.”⁷³ The human being is characterized by sensory love but also by that “something more” that characterizes the human person: “Although human beings are intellectual-sensory, spiritual-material composites, as a result of which energies of sensory love also operate in them, the love proper to human beings is spiritual love.”⁷⁴ Wojtyła previously made a similar distinction between love in the physical, natural order and love in the personal, moral order.⁷⁵

The human motivation for love is directed both toward God and other persons. Aquinas emphasized the vertical relationship of love between God and human persons; Wojtyła elaborated on the horizontal relationship of love between human persons: “This relation between human persons goes in a horizontal direction. Theology, however, which is the terrain proper to St. Thomas’ reflections, shows us this relation in the vertical direction: between God and people.”⁷⁶ Wojtyła thus perceived in Aquinas the roots of personalism: “Christianity involves an extremely personalistic understanding of religion, and St. Thomas presents a profound interpretation of this understanding.”⁷⁷

The human motivation for love also implies a motivation to love properly, in accord with morality and ethics: “Love in St. Thomas’ view is, on the one hand, a kind of need of nature, and, on the other, a demand and even an ideal of morality.”⁷⁸ The love of persons

⁷³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁷⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 96–97; cf. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, tr. Michael M. Waldstein (1979–1984; Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006), 63:3, 105:2, 5.

⁷⁶ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 173.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

requires a veritable genuflection of sensory love before the sacredness of personal love: "True love, the kind of love of others worthy of a human person, is that in which our sensory energies and desires are subordinated to a basic understanding of the true worth of the object of our love."⁷⁹ Wojtyła elsewhere advocated a proper humility of the body before the greatness of the other person.⁸⁰

This is the juncture of human motivation with human values. What we are made for implies how we should live, in accord with the transtemporal values of the person: "Such values include truth, goodness, and beauty, as well as justice and love."⁸¹ As so eloquently presented in Wojtyła's play, *The Jeweler's Shop*, beauty perceived by the senses necessarily gives way to truth perceived by the mind: "This made me think that beauty accessible to the senses can be a difficult gift or a dangerous one;... and so, gradually, I learned to value beauty accessible to the mind, that is to say, truth."⁸²

DEVELOPMENT (BECOMING)

In response to the philosophical/psychological question regarding change over time, Wojtyła spoke directly about the "development of the person."⁸³

Human structure and motivation set the stage for human development. That of which and for which we are made guide our formation through life toward our vocation. Human being in action is related to becoming whom we are called to become.

The structure of the human person enables and enacts the development of the person:

⁷⁹ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 173.

⁸⁰ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 172.

⁸¹ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 175.

⁸² Karol Wojtyła, *The Jeweler's Shop* (Playscript), tr. Boleslaw Taborski (1960; San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992), 25.

⁸³ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 169.

According to St. Thomas, all the faculties of the human soul work to perfect the human being, and so they all contribute to the development of the person.⁸⁴

Human being and ethical action are necessarily related to formation and development. Wojtyła elsewhere asserted that the meaning of human morality cannot be understood apart from “the categories of being and becoming: *esse* and *feri*.”⁸⁵ Human action and human development are interrelated. As subsequently stated by Wojtyła: “Action accompanies becoming; moreover, action is organically linked to becoming.”⁸⁶

“Becoming,” as described here, conveys a sense of actualization as a verb, as a process *en route* toward actualization as a noun, as a state of perfection (or perfidy). Human development is the process whereby “the human person is actualized,”⁸⁷ with the formative goal “to perfect the human being.”⁸⁸

Although Wojtyła presents the topic of human development and actualization within this essay, he is here short on specifics. We need to turn elsewhere to get a further sense of his understanding of human development.

Development of persons

Within *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła, almost in passing, offered a profound outline of the development of human personhood: “A child, even an unborn child, cannot be denied personality in its most objective ontological sense, although it is true that it has yet to acquire,

⁸⁴ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 169.

⁸⁵ Karol Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Theory of Morality,” in *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, tr. Theresa Sandok, 129–161 (1969; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 159.

⁸⁶ Wojtyła, “The Personal Structure of Self-Determination,” 191.

⁸⁷ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 169.

step by step, many of the traits which will make it psychologically and ethically a distinct personality".⁸⁹

Within this passage, in accord with an intellectual style of continually walking around a problem at ever deeper levels,⁹⁰ Wojtyła introduced a uniquely personalist theory of human development based upon a recurring tripartite analysis evident within his thought: metaphysical, psychological, and ethical.⁹¹ To extrapolate, human development may be understood to occur at each of these three levels. Metaphysically and ontologically, a human being has essential value as a person beginning at the moment of conception. Psychologically, a person becomes aware of existential personhood in the moment of encountering love, such as that of the mutual gaze between mother and newborn child. Ethically, a human being attains maturity and perfection in the moment of reciprocal love and sincere gift of self to another, such as that between husband and wife in marriage.

Person in development

Within a retreat talk presented as a university chaplain to college students, aptly titled "Human Development," Wojtyła provided an outline of developmental ages and stages:

When we describe the person, we see him in development, and normally we begin at the beginning, so that we can give an outline of the history of each individual: as infant, small child, schoolchild, student, then as adult, parent, professional person, in full possession of his capacities, and, finally, in old age.⁹²

⁸⁹ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 26 [emphasis added].

⁹⁰ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999), 38.

⁹¹ Cf. Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 73–74, which offers a tripartite analysis of love as metaphysical, psychological, and ethical.

⁹² Wojtyła, "Human Development," 89.

Wojtyła also outlined some of the aspects or tasks of human development, including a description of physical development, psychological development (involving senses and emotions), cognitive development (involving thought, intellect, reason), and personal development (involving free will and conscience).⁹³ Regarding the deeper aspects and hidden sources of the person in development, Wojtyła highlighted the centrality of conscience:

The person is in fact conscience; and if we do not grasp this central factor of conscience it is impossible to examine or discuss human development. The conscience provides the basis for the definitive structure and defines me as that unique and unrepeatable self or 'I'.⁹⁴

Community and eternity

Relevant to contextual influences upon human development, Wojtyła here considered “the relation of the person to society and of society to the person.”⁹⁵ The developmental significance of human relationship is evident within the most intimately related community of marriage and family, as well as within the broader social community: “Personalism is very much at the basis of all conjugal and family morality.”⁹⁶ “People are social beings, and so they have an innate tendency not only to form interpersonal relationships but also to create societies and communities.”⁹⁷

Regarding temporal aspects of human development, Wojtyła also pondered the person in relation to eternity:

The person as such is destined to live on forever. The eternity of the person is strictly connected with the spirituality of the rational nature in

⁹³ Wojtyła, “Human Development,” 87–95.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 90–91.

⁹⁵ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 173.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

which the person subsists. That which is spiritual cannot undergo disintegration, destruction, or death.⁹⁸

Wojtyła thereby expanded the typically considered limits of the human lifespan to include the full range from conception to eternal life:

The truth of the immortality of the soul is simultaneously the truth of the indestructibility of the person.⁹⁹

The significance of all of this is the ultimate human hope to enter into the mystery of the "beatific vision."¹⁰⁰

PERSONALITY (ACTUALIZATION)

In response to the philosophical/psychological question regarding teleology and actualization, Wojtyła spoke of "shaping the human personality."¹⁰¹ The formation of each human person toward their ultimate personality is related to the individuality and "uniqueness of the person."¹⁰² The human person is unique in origin and unique in end.

Based upon the foundation of human structure and motivation, human development is directed toward human personality. The person in action develops through the lifespan toward his or her purpose or end. Human being in action is related to becoming whom we are called to become in actuality.

The structure of the human person as a body-soul unity enables and enacts the shaping of human personality: "This union must, therefore,

⁹⁷ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 173–174.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 174–175; cf. Wojtyła, "Human Development," 91–92.

⁹⁹ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 175.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 168.

also play a special role in shaping the human personality.”¹⁰³ The person in action is actualized toward perfection.

“Actualization,” as described here, conveys a sense of actualization as a noun, as a state of perfection (or perfidy). Human personality is the destination or end result of the process of human development whereby “the human person is actualized,”¹⁰⁴ with the formative goal “to perfect the human being.”¹⁰⁵ The human person is perfect in potential for perfection in actuality.

Wojtyła elsewhere made a similar point regarding the vocation of each individual human person to perfection:

In the natural order, it is oriented towards self perfection, towards the attainment of an ever greater fullness of existence—which is, of course, always the existence of some concrete ‘I’.¹⁰⁶

Shaping of persons

Within the formation or shaping of persons, Wojtyła appeared to present his characteristic tripartite analysis in relation to personality, distinguishing between metaphysical personality, psychological personality, and moral personality.

Within the context of recognizing varying anthropological viewpoints among Thomistic theologians, Wojtyła described a change of emphasis from consideration of abstract humanity to concrete personhood:

In this way, the point of view of our reflections will shift from personality in the metaphysical sense to personality in the psychological sense.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 169.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 168.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

¹⁰⁶ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 97.

¹⁰⁷ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 168 [emphasis added].

Within this perspective, Wojtyła indicated that the spiritual faculties of the soul (reason and will) facilitate the actualization of the person:

They are also the principal means... whereby the human person is actualized; based on their activity, the whole psychological and moral personality take shape.¹⁰⁸

He further recognized that both the spiritual and the sensory faculties facilitate the shaping of personality:

These faculties, as belonging to the concrete human being, are likewise found in the person and contribute in their own way to the shaping of the psychological and moral personality.¹⁰⁹

Consistent with his previous tripartite analysis of human development (and human love), note here the apparent progression of a similar tripartite analysis in consideration of metaphysical (or ontological) personality, psychological personality, and moral (or ethical) personality.

Good or evil

Even though all persons are called to perfection and moral goodness, human freedom based upon truth may be exercised for either good or evil:

The point is to will a true good. Such an act of will makes us good human beings. To be morally good, we must not only will something good, but we must also will it in a good way. If we will it in a bad way, we ourselves will become morally bad.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 168 [emphasis added].

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 168–169 [emphasis added].

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 172.

The way in which the human person directs freedom and self-mastery in action determines whether one will become, in personality and character, a good person or an evil person:

Morality, therefore, presupposes knowledge, the truth concerning the good, but it is realized by willing, by choice, by decision. In this way, not only does our will become good or evil, but our whole person also becomes good or evil. Thanks to our will, we are masters of ourselves and of our actions, but because of this the value of these actions of our will qualifies our whole person positively or negatively.¹¹¹

Wojtyła elsewhere reflected that the drama of human life takes place on the inner stage of the tension between good and evil, “in this particular ‘drama’ of human interiority, which is the ‘drama of good and evil’ that occurs in acts and, through the acts, in the person.”¹¹² Each existing human being might thus become a good person or an evil person: “In other words, moral good is that through which the human being as a human being becomes and is good, and moral evil that through which the human being as a human being becomes and is evil.”¹¹³

Wojtyła’s reflections on the relationship between human personality and human morality led him to suggest further exploration within a

¹¹¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172.

¹¹² Wojtyła, “*Person and Act*” and *Related Essays*, 149. Cf. Wojtyła, “Human Development,” 92–93; Karol Wojtyła, “The Intentional Act and the Human Act, that is, Act and Experience,” in *Analecta Husserliana* Vol. 5, *The Crisis of Culture: Steps to Reopen the Phenomenological Investigation of Man*, ed. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, 269–280 (1974; Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976), 275. This formative existential drama is further considered within Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 75–77.

¹¹³ Wojtyła, “The Problem of the Theory of Morality,” 159.

field of study which he described as personalist aretology, that is, the study of virtue and vice through the lens of personalism:

Then, it would become evident how this gift of self, which man can and should make in order to fully find himself, is realized through particular virtues and through each of them. It would also become evident how this gift of the person is ruined and frustrated through man's particular vices and sins. It would be a new and perhaps more personalistic grasp of entire aretology.¹¹⁴

Practice (Ethics): Four Ethical Principles

Although personalism is not primarily a theory nor a theoretical science of the person, Wojtyła contended that "its meaning is largely practical and ethical: it is concerned with the person as a subject and an object of activity."¹¹⁵ Wojtyła here used the expression "practical and ethical" to refer to the moral action of human persons rather than to professional practice applications within psychology; however, the former does have clear implications for the latter. It is worth recalling that Wojtyła's own professional practice incorporated his pastoral ministry as priest, university chaplain, and bishop.

Although Wojtyła within this essay does not give us much in the way of specific practical applications to professional or pastoral practice, he does present foundational ethical principles upon which such a practice might be built. With regard to psychotherapy, Wojtyła elsewhere emphasized the necessity for human health of an authentic psychology of the person:

¹¹⁴ Karol Wojtyła, "On the Meaning of Spousal Love," in *Love and Responsibility*, tr. Grzegorz Ignatik, 273–294 (1974; Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013), 284.

¹¹⁵ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 165.

There are obviously illnesses in which the help of a specialist... is necessary, but the advice given by such specialists must take into account the totality of human aims, and above all the integral, personalistic concept of man. For there are times when the doctor's advice is just what turns the patient into a neurotic, in that it blatantly contradicts the real nature of man.¹¹⁶

Based upon our nature as a body-soul composite with faculties of sensation, emotion, reason, and will; actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge/creativity, morality/mastery, and love of God and neighbor; becoming persons in development; and shaping personality toward actualization, certain important questions arise: How do we live? How do we act? How do we respond to our vocation to attain our proper end? From the answers that Wojtyła offered in this essay, it is possible to discern at least four interrelated ethical principles related to freedom for morality, freedom for love, personal good and common good, and transtemporal values.

FREEDOM FOR MORALITY

We have already considered Wojtyła's indication that willing a true good makes us "morally good," and that even willing something good in a bad way makes us "morally bad."¹¹⁷ Moral decision-making requires knowledge of the truth about the good: "Morality, therefore, presupposes knowledge, the truth concerning the good, but it is realized by willing, by choice, by decision."¹¹⁸ In this regard, freedom is not its own end, but it exists to serve a higher moral purpose:

Freedom for freedom's sake has no justification in the Thomistic view of the cosmos: freedom exists for the sake of morality and, together with

¹¹⁶ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 287.

¹¹⁷ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 172.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

morality, for the sake of a higher spiritual law and order of existence—the kind of order that most strictly corresponds to rational beings, which are persons.¹¹⁹

The truth about the good is the truth about love. Truth and love are recurring themes within the thought of Wojtyła.¹²⁰

FREEDOM FOR LOVE (PERSONALISTIC PRINCIPLE AND LAW OF THE GIFT)

Wojtyła elaborated on this higher purpose of human freedom as related to true human love: “True love, the kind of love of others worthy of a human person, is that in which our sensory energies and desires are subordinated to a basic understanding of the true worth of the object of our love.”¹²¹ Such a love involves mutual sharing of persons which values the good of each person as well as the good of their union:

Love brings about the union of persons and their harmonious coexistence. Love makes it possible for people mutually to enjoy the good that each person is, as well as the good comprised by their union, which love itself engenders. This is the good of spiritual harmony and peace. In this atmosphere, a kind of mutual sharing of self becomes possible, which leads to a deepening on both sides. Hence, the whole of human coexistence should be based on love.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172. For more on the relationship between subjective human freedom and objective moral truth in Wojtyła’s personalism, see Petar Popović, “Securing the Foundations: Karol Wojtyła’s Thomistic Personalism in Dialogue with Natural Law Theory,” *Nova et Vetera* 16, no. 1 (2018): 231–257; Paweł Tarasiewicz, “The Common Sense Personalism of St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła),” *Studia Gilsoniana* 3, supplement (2014): 619–634.

¹²⁰ John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 19:3, 4.

¹²¹ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 173.

¹²² *Ibid.*

Wojtyła here articulated a personalistic principle which seems to be inscribed within the nature of persons and interwoven within the fabric of society: “The evangelical counsel to love one’s neighbor is a thoroughly personalistic principle.”¹²³ This ethical principle is the foundation of marriage, family, and society:

Personalism is very much at the basis of all conjugal and family morality; it explains the meaning and points to the means of education and self-education, all of which is based on a deep understanding of the value of the person, as well as on an understanding of love, whose proper object and subject is the person.¹²⁴

In contrast to a utilitarian ethic, this is the same personalistic norm that Wojtyła had previously formulated so clearly within *Love and Responsibility*:

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... The person is a good towards which the only proper and adequate attitude is love.¹²⁵

Thus, for Wojtyła, the natural corollary to the ethical statement that “freedom exists for the sake of morality”¹²⁶ is that “freedom exists for the sake of love.”¹²⁷ Within *The Jeweler’s Shop*, we hear that freedom is the wellspring of love: “And in all this—love, which springs from freedom, as water springs from an oblique rift in the earth.”¹²⁸ The point is most directly and clearly stated within *Love and Responsi-*

¹²³ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 173.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 41.

¹²⁶ Wojtyła, “Thomistic Personalism,” 172.

¹²⁷ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 135.

¹²⁸ Wojtyła, *The Jeweler’s Shop*, 38.

bility: "Love consists of a commitment which limits one's freedom." "Freedom exists for the sake of love." "Man longs for love more than for freedom—freedom is the means and love the end."¹²⁹ This truth is eloquently echoed within *Radiation of Fatherhood*: "For love denies freedom of will to him who loves—Love liberates him from the freedom that would be terrible to have for its own sake."¹³⁰

The ethical extension of the personalistic principle, related to both freedom and love, is the law of the gift of self-possession and self-donation:

From what man is as a person, that is, a being that possesses itself and governs itself, follows that he can "give himself," he can make himself a gift for others, without thereby violating his ontic status. The "law of the gift" is inscribed, so to speak, in the very being of the person.¹³¹

Within an understanding of human development and human personality, the purpose of self-perfection is the gift of self to another: "We have already stated that this self-perfection proceeds side by side and step by step with love. The fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in selfgiving [*sic*], in making one's inalienable and non-transferable 'I' into someone else's property."¹³²

PERSONAL GOOD AND COMMON GOOD

As an individual within the species, that is, as a person within society, social morality requires a rapprochement between the individual good of the person and the common good of society: "The basic question

¹²⁹ Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 135–136.

¹³⁰ Karol Wojtyła, "Radiation of Fatherhood," in *The Collected Plays and Writings on Theater*, tr. Boleslaw Taborski, 331–364 (1964/1979; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 355.

¹³¹ Wojtyła, "On the Meaning of Spousal Love," 281.

¹³² Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility*, 97.

that must be resolved in social morality is how to create a system of relations between the individual and society that results in the fullest possible correlation between the person's true good and the common good that society naturally seeks."¹³³

Within the error of individualism, "persons may easily place their own individual good above the common good of the collectivity, attempting to subordinate the collectivity to themselves and use it for their individual good."¹³⁴ Within the error of totalitarianism, "society, in aiming at the alleged good of the whole, may attempt to subordinate persons to itself in such a way that the true good of persons is excluded and they themselves fall prey to the collectivity."¹³⁵ Wojtyła recognized that within modern times, this latter error "has borne the worst possible fruit."¹³⁶

Although the person may be required to sacrifice for the common good, social morality must always respect the good of the person:

In contrast, Thomistic personalism maintains that the person should be subordinate to society in all that is indispensable for the realization of the common good, but that the true common good never threatens the good of the person, even though it may demand considerable sacrifice of a person.¹³⁷

TRANSTEMPORAL VALUES

Related to the eternal destiny of the human person are the timeless values, the transcendentals derived from Aquinas:

The values by which the person as such lives are by nature transtemporal, and even atemporal. Such values include truth, goodness, and beau-

¹³³ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 174.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

ty, as well as justice and love, and, in general, all the values by which the person as such continually lives.¹³⁸

Conclusion

In his elegant essay on "Thomistic Personalism," Karol Wojtyła presented an integral theory of the human person that may serve as the foundation for an authentically personalist psychology. Although not formally trained as a personality psychologist or clinical psychologist, he was nonetheless a remarkable philosophical psychologist, theological anthropologist, and pastor of the person. With characteristic humility, Wojtyła recognized that the present essay is only the start of a necessarily larger and lengthier conversation: "This will, of course, be only a sketch or an outline of the problem, which obviously lends itself to an extensive treatment."¹³⁹ As a seminal thinker who often introduced potentially fruitful areas for further study (e.g., human development, personalist aretology, "theology of the body"),¹⁴⁰ he has provided us here with the starting point for much beneficial further work. Although personalism alone may not provide us with a complete theory, science, and praxis of the person, Wojtyła's creative synthesis of Thomism and personalism appears to offer the rudiments of a comprehensive psychology of the person.

Wojtyła's "Thomistic Personalism" offers much. It is seminal, yet not complete. Although it provides much insight into theory of the person, a fine survey of research methods for knowing the person, and a profound ethic upon which to base psychological formation and practice, it offers

¹³⁸ Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," 175.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 165.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Wojtyła, "Human Development," 90; Wojtyła, "On the Meaning of Spousal Love," 284; John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, 133:1.

few specifics with regard to practical psychological application. It is, after all, only a sketch or outline. It may be up to us to complete the picture.

Wojtyła's "Thomistic Personalism" offers a refreshing perspective to the fragmented field of psychology. It presents "something more" that appears adequate to the task of psychological theory, research, and practice. Perhaps here psychology has found its unifying paradigm. Perhaps here psychology has identified its synthesizing founder.



Karol Wojtyła's "Thomistic Personalism": Philosophical Foundations for a Psychology of the Person

SUMMARY

Karol Wojtyła's seminal essay, "Thomistic Personalism," presents an integral theory of the human person that may serve as the foundation for an authentically personalist psychology. Relevant to the contemporary field of psychology, which appears fragmented and in search of a unifying paradigm, Wojtyła considered theory (anthropology), research (epistemology), and practice (ethics). In terms of research, he identified four complementary methods of understanding the human person: revelation (theology), reason (philosophy), observation (empiricism), and introspection (experience). In terms of theory, Wojtyła addressed the rudiments of Rychlak's four dimensions of a personality theory: structure, motivation, development, and personality. In terms of practice, he described four guiding ethical principles: freedom for morality, freedom for love, personal good and common good, and transtemporal values. Wojtyła thus offered an outline for the project of a comprehensive psychology of persons with significant implications for the theory, research, and practice of psychology.

Keywords: Karol Wojtyła, John Paul II, Thomism, personalism, personalist psychology

REFERENCES

- Acosta, Miguel, and Adrian J. Reimers. *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding "Person and Act."* Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016.
- Benjamin, Ludy T., Jr. "American Psychology's Struggles with its Curriculum: Should a Thousand Flowers Bloom?," *American Psychologist* 56, no. 9 (September 2001): 735–742.
- Burgos, Juan Manuel. *An Introduction to Personalism*. 2012. Translated by R. T. Allen. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018.
- Burgos, Juan Manuel. "The Method of Karol Wojtyła: A Way Between Phenomenology, Personalism and Metaphysics." In *Analecta Husserliana* Vol. 104, *Phenomenology and Existentialism in the Twentieth Century: Book 2. Fruition—Cross-Pollination—Dissemination*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, 107–129. Dordrecht: Springer, 2009. https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-90-481-2979-9_6
- Crosby, John F. *The Personalism of John Paul II*. Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Press, 2019.
- Duma, Tomasz. "Personalism in the Lublin School of Philosophy (Card. Karol Wojtyła, Fr. Mieczysław A. Krąpiec)." *Studia Gilsoniana* 5, no. 2 (April–June 2016): 365–390. <http://gilsonsociety.com/files/365-390-Duma.pdf>
- Heidbreder, Edna. *Seven Psychologies*. New York: Appleton-Century, 1933.
- James, William. *Psychology (Briefer course)*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1910. First published 1892.
- John Paul II. *Ex corde Ecclesiae (Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1990. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_constitutions/documents/hf_jp-ii_apc_15081990_ex-corde-ecclesiae.html
- John Paul II. *Familiaris consortio (Apostolic Exhortation On the Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1981. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html

- John Paul II. *Fides et ratio (Encyclical Letter on the Relationship Between Faith and Reason)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1998. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html
- John Paul II. *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*. 1979–1984. Translated by Michael M. Waldstein. Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 2006.
- John Paul II. *Redemptor hominis (Encyclical Letter The Redeemer of Man)*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1979. https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html
- Kupczak, Jarosław. *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000.
- Mara, Peter Emmanuel A. “Understanding Man as a Subject and a Person: A Wojtylan Personalistic Interpretation of the Human Being.” *Kritikē* 1, no. 1 (June 2007): 86–95.
- Miller, George A. “The Constitutive Problem of Psychology.” In *A Century of Psychology as Science*, edited by Sigmund Koch and David E. Leary, 40–45. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1985.
- Popović, Petar. “Securing the Foundations: Karol Wojtyła’s Thomistic Personalism in Dialogue with Natural Law Theory.” *Nova et Vetera* 16, no. 1 (2018): 231–257.
- Rychlak, Joseph F. “Introduction: A Framework for the Study of Personality.” In *Introduction to Personality and Psychotherapy*, 2nd ed., 1–36. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1981.
- Schmitz, Kenneth L. *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993.
- Tarasiewicz, Paweł. “The Common Sense Personalism of St. John Paul II (Karol Wojtyła).” *Studia Gilsoniana* 3, supplement (2014): 619–634. <http://gilsonociety.com/files/619-634-Tarasiewicz.pdf>

- Weigel, George. *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II*. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1999.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "Human Development." 1972. In *The Way to Christ: Spiritual Exercises*, translated by Leslie Wearne, 87–95. New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1984.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "The Intentional Act and the Human Act, that is, Act and Experience." 1974. In *Analecta Husserliana Vol. 5, The Crisis of Culture: Steps to Reopen the Phenomenological Investigation of Man*, edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka, 269–280. Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1976.
- Wojtyła, Karol. *The Jeweler's Shop* (Play script). 1960. Translated by Boleslaw Taborski. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1992.
- Wojtyła, Karol. *Love and Responsibility*. 1960. Translated by H. T. Willetts, first published in English 1981 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux (New York). Reprint, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "On the Meaning of Spousal Love." 1974. In *Love and Responsibility*, translated by Grzegorz Ignatik, 273–294. Boston: Pauline Books & Media, 2013.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "*Person and Act*" and Related Essays. 1969. Translated by Grzegorz Ignatik. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2021.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination." 1974/1981. In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, 187–195. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "The Problem of the Theory of Morality." 1969. In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, 129–161. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "Radiation of Fatherhood." 1964/1979. In *The Collected Plays and Writings on Theater*, translated by Boleslaw Taborski, 331–364. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987.
- Wojtyła, Karol. "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in the Human Being." 1975/1988. In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, 209–217. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.

Wojtyła, Karol. "Thomistic Personalism." 1961. In *Person and Community: Selected Essays*, translated by Theresa Sandok, 165–175. New York: Peter Lang, 1993.