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Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy on the Issue of Modernity

Anthropology within the horizon of truth and love

In celebrating the 40th anniversary of Karol Wojtyła's election as pope and in discussing the impact of the 27 years of his papacy on the modern world, one should remember that his personality-focussed philosophical observations, which solidified before he had become pope, i.e. when he was a professor of philosophy and a bishop at the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, permeated the teachings of this Polish pope deeply. In his seminal encyclical entitled *Redemptor hominis*, he stressed that the Gospel indicates the grand amazement at the value and dignity of man, and it presents a vision of the Church for which man is the main path.

He associated the Gospel with the basic dimensions of human existence and operation, which is why he spoke of the "Gospel of life", the "Gospel of family" and the "Gospel of work." Only through the contemplation of the face of Christ can one fully know themselves as Christ reveals man to man. John Paul II applied the image of humanity found in the Gospel to the questions and problems of contemporary man. Being a philosopher, he understood that at the base of the extensive area of culture, politics and economics, there lies the question about man, his essence, about his position in relation to other beings, and about the meaning of human actions. He believed that the personalist philosophy was key for the whole philosophy of human matters. He opposed any inklings of alienation, which he understood as the forgetting about the grandness and exceptionality of man and his superiority towards his own creations. In the introduction to *Osoba i czyn* [The Acting Person], he stressed the role of amazement in relation to a human being. To philosophically study a person means both to discover the truth about man, and to recover and creatively strengthen the proper place of man in the world. "That

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means to touch the human reality at the most appropriate point—at a point which is indicated by the human experience and from which man cannot withdraw without the sense of getting lost.”¹

Anthropology has a not only doctrinal dimension, but also a well pronounced existential component. Its purpose is not only to develop objective views on the human being, but also to know oneself and to apply respective care about one’s human whole. Wojtyła’s anthropological reflection followed the path which had been prepared in the European tradition in the pre-Christian era by Socrates, and by St. Augustine in Christian times. They were not the thinkers whom he quoted the most often; what was more important was the very method of their anthropological studies. Socrates’ care for the soul and Augustine’s prioritising wisdom over knowledge resulted from the fact that they had discovered the human subjectivity to be the determining factor of a human being.

The search for the truth about oneself leads to discovering one’s interior as the stead of subjective existence and, at the same time, for meeting other beings in the same manner. Augustine’s consideration of the restless heart is the path in which anthropology transcends the theological horizon. *Noverim Te noverim me!* Man cannot fully get to know himself without getting to know God. To know oneself consists not only of a cognitive approach to the objective state of affairs things but it mainly builds relationships between individuals, which emerge as love. Anthropology is the initiation into the human matter; an initiation in which the alethic and agapic aspects transcend one another because they constitute an indivisible whole. The spiritual exercise consisting of seeking the truth about oneself concludes in the act of experiencing love from the Creator and the Redeemer of man. John Paul II indicated not only that it was possible but actually existentially necessary to include the humanistic content of the Christian revelation in realistic anthropology, which, on the one hand, began with the question about man, a question similar to any other question about any other real being, and, on the other, with the question man poses to himself about the meaning of their existence.

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.²

1 K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn oraz inne studia antropologiczne*, Wydawnictwo Towarzystwa Naukowego KUL, Lublin 1994, p. 70 [Unless indicated otherwise, English quotations were translated from Polish].

2 John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 10, [in:] *Encykliki Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II*, Wydawnictwo Św. Stanisława B.M. Archidiecezji Krakowskiej, Kraków 1996, p. 15.

St. John Paul II emerged on the global scene as the pope of the Gospel of man, within which he developed the personalist philosophy, in such a historical moment which could be defined as the dusk of humanisms. More apocalyptic minds even prophesied an “anthropological catastrophe.” This pope, whose biography was marked by the outcomes of the evil of the totalitarian systems of Nazism and communism, saw with his own eyes the demonic violations of human beings as they were humiliated and deprived of their dignity. His appreciations of the value of a person resulted from his realisation of the presence of an upper and lower limit of humanity defined at the one extreme by holiness and heroism, and at the other by savagery. While never downplaying the extent of evil suffered by his generation, he managed to avoid the pessimism of the time. George Wiegel depicted him as an unrelenting defender of man, completely devoted to propagating the culture of human rights.³ Ferdinando Adornato wondered whether he was not “the last moralist-philosopher” of the West, who during a time of almost universal scepticism and relativism, indicated man’s innate grandness related to man’s transcendence.⁴ According to this representative of Italian liberalism, the pope caused an “anthropological tremor” by going against the weak thought which propagated the dusk of man, the end of history and the epidermal culture of the moment.

For John Paul II, Christianity, with its personalistic vision of man, did not lose in a struggle with history. Though many attempts were made to undermine and diminish the Christian faith, it could still inspire the creation of a better world. Moreover, when facing radically anti-Christian modernism, which stemmed from the rationalistic rejection of the supernatural, Christians should even more strongly consider the humanistic ideals rooted in the Gospel, which were fervently propagated when modernism was starting to develop, as their own. He noticed the fruit of goodness which emerged from the soil of the Enlightenment. According to the message of the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Christians should establish a constructive dialogue with post-Enlightenment humanity, whose principles developed on the basis of secularism secularisation. The defence of humanism should be the key motif of that dialogue.

Christians can engage with the modern world and enter into a constructive dialogue with it. Like the Good Samaritan, they can also come to the aid of suffering man, tending the wounds that he bears at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

3 Vide G. Weigel, “John Paul II as Defensor Hominis – Christian Humanism and the Gods that failed”, [in:] *Servo Veritatis. Materiały Międzynarodowej Konferencji dla uczczenia 25-lecia pontyfikatu Jego Świątobliwości Jana Pawła II. Uniwersytet Jagielloński 9–11 października 2003 r.*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, Kraków 2003, pp. 405–415.

4 Vide F. Adornato, “Karol Wojtyła: jedyny (ostatni?) filozof moralista naszego czasu”, trans. A. Wierzbicki, *Ethos* 2002, issue 3–4(59–60), pp. 40–53.

Care for the needy is incomparably more important than polemics and denunciations concerning, for example, the role of the Enlightenment in paving the way for the great historical catastrophes of the twentieth century. The spirit of the Gospel is seen primarily in this willingness to offer fraternal help to those in need.⁵

One should consider whether there exist any major philosophical arguments for Christians to engage in a “constructive dialogue” with people who belong to the traditions of the Enlightenment. Clearly, there have been numerous cases of mutual intellectual conflict between the people of Enlightenment and Christians. The era of the maturity of humankind was supposed to arrive, according to Immanuel Kant, along with the emergence of the self-sufficiency of the human reason, which abandoned any additional supports. Revelation and faith, so fundamental for Christian identity, were thus rejected as the possible sources of recognising the truth about man. Despite the fact that extreme Enlightenment anthropocentrism is not sustainable, and it cannot be integrated with Christianity, the Enlightenment introduced some important notions into anthropological thought. Even if those notions were not entirely original when it comes to the history of Christianity, they were undoubtedly expanded upon by modern thinkers, beginning with Descartes. One should add to those the notions of consciousness, freedom and the relativity of a human being. One can also find them as the central notions discussed in Wojtyła’s main philosophical work, i.e. *Osoba i czyn*. Significantly enough, this Catholic thinker, who became pope in the final quarter of the 20th century, decided to synthesise in his work the classic philosophy of being with the modern philosophy of a subject. He did so in his philosophical analyses of the topic of person.

What enabled this Catholic philosopher to creatively and effectively discuss modernism? To adequately answer the question, one must first discuss the very notion of modernism. The interpretation of modernism that was dominant until recently, to which post-modernism actually referred, though with some distance and irony, stated that modernism was a progressive emancipation of the human kind, and that was why its practical outcome was supposed to be atheism, which established a world without God, completely immanent, which guaranteed human autonomy and total casuality. That interpretation of modernism was challenged by Augusto Del Noce in his studies on modernity.⁶ Through the study of modern thought in terms of philosophical essence, he indicated that modernism consisted of three branches: rationalism, ontologism, and empiricism. According to Del Noce, modernism was not a unidirectional process leading to secularisation and atheism. He rather discussed it as a dispute between two (or actually three) anthro-

⁵ John Paul II, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, Wydawnictwo Znak, Kraków 2005, p. 114.

⁶ Vide A.M. Wierzbicki, *Filozofia a totalitaryzm. Augusta Del Nocego interpretacja moderny*, Wydawnictwo Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, Lublin 2005.

political approaches. All of those developed on the basis of Descartes' philosophy. The main dispute on man in modern thought falls along two lines: from Descartes to George W.F. Hegel, and from Descartes to Antonio Rosmini. The former was a rationalist option, while the latter developed existential-religious thinking. Both lines belonged to modernism, since their philosophies were practised within the anthropological paradigm. Therefore, the human experience is the starting point of modern philosophical discourse. A diverse, or even divergent, interpretation of experience was the reason why modernism became a field in which humanisms confronted each other: the so-called Christian humanism and lay humanism.

The personalist philosophy practised by Wojtyła was, due to its philosophical core, a continuation – and a kind of discovery of – the line of the modern philosophy of man which combined the analysis of subjectivity with the analysis of religious experience. What is worth mentioning is Wojtyła's interest in the early days of his intellectual work in the figure and works of St. John of the Cross. While preparing his doctoral dissertation at the Angelicum Roman university, the young Polish priest discovered, in an unconventional manner, humanism in the Spanish mystic: "The point is to find man in God and to mutually discover God in man."⁷ He expanded on the thought:

Therefore, one could discuss the real form of humanism in the works by St. John of the Cross as the union with God and the whole set of forces which serve him directly include the real humanistic content, is the matter of man. Thus, it is also subject to experience, it enables one to identify it and describe from the side of experience, and it demands explanation through cognition.⁸

It would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of St. John of the Cross' lesson in humanism for Wojtyła's style of thinking.⁹ Its importance far exceeded the period of his work on his doctoral dissertation. Though the personalistic analyses by the author of *Miłość i odpowiedzialność* *Love and Responsibility* and *Osoba i czyn* *The Acting Person* matched the tension between the key tendencies of the "anthropological turn" in philosophy, Wojtyła did not actually find and creatively expand on the modern religious humanism through historical studies. He was not a philosopher along the lines of Etienne Gilson, who discovered the philosophical actuality of St. Thomas Aquinas' thought through insightful and careful historical study of modernism. Wojtyła became the continuator and the restorer of modern

⁷ K. Wojtyła, "O humanizmie św. Jana od Krzyża", [in:] idem., *Świętego Jana od Krzyża nauka o wierze*, Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2000, p. 235.

⁸ Ibid., p. 242.

⁹ Vide R. Buttiglione, *Mysł Karola Wojtyły*, trans. J. Merecki SDS, Instytut Jana Pawła II KUL, Lublin 2010, pp. 82–93.

religious humanism through phenomenological explorations of human experiences. His studies of the works by St. John of the Cross enabled him to grasp the role of experience in the search of the truth on man, and they also revealed the presence of religious, deeply mystical humanism at the threshold of the modern era, before its later representatives too eagerly and unilaterally associated modernism with secularisation.

Subjectivity and consciousness

The notions of subjectivity and consciousness awareness constitute the leading issues of modern thought. One should discuss the turning point in the development of anthropology. We owe to the Christian thought the notion of person, which has been defined in metaphysical categories: *individua substantia* (Boethius), *incommunicabilis subsistentia* (St. Thomas Aquinas), *incomunicabilis existentia* (Richard of Saint Victor), indicating it is, as Fr. Tadeusz Styczeń used to say, “higher” and “different” among other beings. The Christian metaphysical traditions solidified the understanding of person as a subject of his/her their existence and actions (*suppositum*), yet that was an approach from the outside, within the cosmological perspective. What was noticed, then, was the highest ontological significance of the person and, at the same time, the person as the *suppositum* was considered among other beings. Allow me to quote the beautiful and apt observation by St. Thomas Aquinas: *persona est aliquid perfectissimum in tota natura, scilicet substantia*. Such an objectivistic approach seemed to meet the requirements of realism. Yet it is insufficient in relation to the reality of a person who gets to know themselves from the inside, being aware of their existence as the only and unique “I”. The modern philosophy of consciousness awareness approached that layer of human experience, in which man’s personal non-reducibility is revealed. Between the classic metaphysics of the person and the modern philosophy of consciousness awareness, one could, however, erect various theoretical barriers. It seemed that those anthropological paradigms were unreconcilable, that they were completely divergent due to their different starting points.¹⁰

10 Many authors discussed the importance of Wojtyła’s attempt at synthesising the philosophy of consciousness with the philosophy of a being; allow me to recall a few: J. Seifert, *Karol “Cardinal Wojtyła (Pope John Paul II) As Philosopher and The Cracow/Lublin School Of Philosophy”*, *Aletheia. An International Journal of Philosophy* 1981, vol. 2, pp. 130–199; R. Buttiglione, pp. 188–204; A. Półtawski, *Po co filozofować? Ingarden – Wojtyła – skąd i dokąd?*, Oficyna Naukowa, Warszawa 2011, pp. 237–257; J. Merecki, “Podmiotowość i transcendencja. Świadomość w filozofii Karola Wojtyły i Jana Pawła II teologii ciała”, *Ethos* 2013, issue 1(101), pp. 95–104; J.W. Gałkowski, *Szkice o filozofii Karola Wojtyły*, Instytut Jana Pawła II, Wydawnictwo Academicum, Lublin 2017, pp. 23–40.

In classic thought, among Thomists in particular, the ideological consequences of the philosophy of consciousness raised many reservations. Wojtyła introduced a division into "subjectivism" and "subjectivity".¹¹ Subjectivism emerges through the absolutisation of the awareness aspect, or, in other words, a part is considered as the whole, and thus subjectivism is an epistemological error. Since realism demands an appropriate approach to the being of a person, a realist cannot omit the fact that the awareness aspect indicates a direct link between the human "I" and one's self, nor that it is realised in the experience of one's subjectivity. Wojtyła explained it thus:

Consciousness is not a direct subject, yet it is of key importance for understanding the personal subjectivity of man. [...] There are two completely different dimensions: to be a subject (*suppositum*) and to experience oneself as a subject; in the latter dimension, one touches upon the actual reality of the human "I".¹²

It seems that a deeper phenomenological insight into the functions of consciousness is required. Within phenomenology, researchers, beginning with Edmund Husserl, began to assign it a cognitive function. Wojtyła did accept the relationship between consciousness and knowledge, yet he did not see consciousness itself participating in the cognitive act; it only fulfilled a reflective role. Thanks to it the recognising subject reflects his/her objective self-knowledge. That does not, however, exhaust its activities, as its other function consists of experiencing his/her own subjectivity. The author of *Osoba i czyn* *The Acting Person* referred to it as the reflective function, which internalised the human "I" as consciousness turns to the subject. Through the other function of consciousness, a person experiences his/her subjectivity and the casuality of his/her actions.

In his philosophy of person, Wojtyła seemed to reconcile the two cognitive tendencies, on the one hand ensuring the objectivisation of subjectivity, making it the "*suppositum*" specified within the unique human "I", stressing that a person is someone, and, on the other, ensuring that subjectivity was not reduced to solely objective categories.

However, considering all the various circumstances of human existence, one must always retain in that striving more place for "that which is non-reducible", it must be given as if were some advantage in the thinking on man, in theory and in practice. *L'irréductible* means, in fact, also all that which is invisible in man, which is entirely internal, and through which every human being is as if an eyewitness to himself, his humanity and his person.¹³

¹¹ Vide K. Wojtyła, *Osoba i...*, pp. 106–107.

¹² Idem., "Osoba: podmiot i wspólnota", [in:] *ibid.*, p. 382.

¹³ Idem., "Podmiotowość i to, co nieredukowalne w człowieku", [in:] *ibid.*, pp. 440–441.

The fact of considering the non-reducibility of a person also explains the more comprehensive meaning of the statement that man is the basic path of the Church. That applies to specific people: rooted in their consciousness, corporeality and history. Already during his presentations at the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican, Abp. Wojtyła displayed a deep understanding of the fact that in preaching the truth held by the Church, one cannot depart from the consciousness of the people to whom one speaks:

The problem is not to present truth which we all know far too well, but *how* we find it and how the world accepts it. A teacher who is a specialist in his area can teach that which he knows well by referring to the so-called “heuristic” method, thus enabling students to find the truth as if in themselves.¹⁴

The point is to create such conditions of communication for objective truth to be able to also become subjective truth.

Freedom in truth

The essence of the modern anthropological project is to assign being-based autonomy and the related creative power to man. In studying the notional streams which resulted in the formation of the modern social imaginary, Charles Taylor assigned major significance to the notion of freedom. It released social energies as a result of which instead of a *porous self* completely immersed in the life of a community and subordinate to the influence of cosmic forces, there emerged the *buffered self*, which became the leader in exclusive humanism.¹⁵ According to the interpretation, which to an extent resembled Hegel’s phenomenology of the spirit, freedom is the starting point for the historical process directed by the coincidence of ideals which form social imaginary. The explanation is correct if one considers the social dimension of consciousness, and intends to explain how “modern man” emerged as a being aware of his historical power, yet it is insufficient to understand why the notion of freedom reveals its value and may motivate people to engage in actions which imply the highest spiritual powers. Wojtyła’s book *The Acting Person Osoba i czyn* includes a precise answer to this question. He explained that freedom is not only an attribute of human actions, but it is also a property of a person, which is why they are capable of self-existence and causality. Thanks to freedom, man creates the world in which he lives, and creates himself as a subject maturing to his

¹⁴ R. Skrzypczak, *Karol Wojtyła na Soborze Watykańskim II. Zbiór wystąpień*, Centrum Myśli Jana Pawła II, Warszawa 2011, p. 286.

¹⁵ Vide Ch. Taylor, *A Secular Age*, The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts 2007, p. 26 and the following.

personal whole. Wojtyła thus found the anthropological roots of human activity in the world and showed that human activity also covers man's own being, as in his study he presented freedom as the foundation of morality and the self-fulfilment of a persons in their actions.

Freedom is inscribed in the deepest existential structure of person, it is based on the structures of self-possession and self- dominion, and it is reflected in self-determination. The fact that a person is the source of his/her decisions enables one to talk about vertical transcendence, which consists of freedom towards oneself. It is supplemented by horizontal transcendence, which defines the cognitive and volitive references to the world on the outside. Wojtyła stressed that

transcendence is somewhat of a middle name of a person. It is that which emphasises man's appropriate subjectivity. If subjectivity is revealed through self-determination, it is so because in self-determination the transcendent dimension of specifically human actions is expressed, which, at the same time, stops with a person as a subject, which cannot go past a person as mainly in a person it can find its *raison d'être* and meaning. Thus, casuality of a person emphasises the subjectivity they deserve—every time, in every action, choice or outcome, it somewhat extracts it from darkness and makes it a distinct “phenomenon” of human experience.¹⁶

Wojtyła's humanism could not be referred to as exclusive or immanent humanism; it should rather be termed as ethical humanism. Like Kant, he saw the personalistic norm as the basic moral norm, yet he justified it completely different way to Kant. Where in Kant's argumentation the categorical imperative requires one to treat a person as the end and not the means, being a consequence of the thesis on the autonomy of a person understood as the moral lawmaker, in Wojtyła's argumentation that same personalistic norm was read on the basis of the experiences of a person within himself/herself and others. Wojtyła's ethics was free of voluntarism. In its justification it referred to recognising the truth on the dignity of a person as a goodness which must be affirmed for its intrinsic value.

If one reads *Osoba i czyn The Acting Person*, one might be even surprised when anthropological analyses regarding freedom move towards ethical analyses. That surprise may be all the more justified considering the fact that at the beginning of the book Wojtyła stated that he engaged in anthropological studies suspending temporarily ethical problems, which meant that without losing significance they were left outside the focus of the analyses. Why, then, did Wojtyła include it in the very core of his discussion on freedom? He did so when analysing conscience, which is key to understanding personal transcendence, as it is in conscience that an freely connects with the cognised truth and establishes himself morally. The fact

¹⁶ K. Wojtyła, *Osoba: podmiot...*, pp. 285–386.

of recognising and accepting truth on the one hand engages the freedom of the subject and, on the other, gives meaning to freedom. According to Wojtyła, freedom in its basic meaning consists of the self-reliance a subject achieves through referring to truth.

The affirmation of truth means one's dependence on it without destroying the freedom and superiority of a person in relation to the world and themselves. Wojtyła argued that it is:

that dependence that makes will independent from objects and from their presentations while giving a person that superiority in relation to their own dynamism, which we defined as transcendence in action (vertical transcendence). A person is independent of the objects of their actions through a moment of truth, which they include in every authentic decision or choice.¹⁷

Fr. Tadeusz Styczeń, Wojtyła's student, concisely summarised the point of arrival of the analyses of his Master: "to be oneself is to govern oneself through truth."¹⁸

One cannot omit the fact that I govern myself through truth both when I had already recognised it through critical verification, and when I am only beginning to search for it by asking questions, sometimes expressing doubts regarding the views which are not subjectively convincing to me. In the latter case, I can fall back on an authority figure, support myself with their credibility, hoping that sooner or later the truth offered by them shall reveal itself to me in its objective obviousness. In each of those situations, conscience appears as the guard of the subjective sovereignty of a person. Freedom loses its ethical meaning outside truth becoming freedom outside of good and evil. In Wojtyła's vision of ethical humanism, a person's self-fulfilment in his/her own actions consists of seeking and affirming the truth about goodness; moreover, that means the truth about goodness, which is a person. It is humanism with dramatic qualities, as a person exercising his/her freedom may become fulfilled, but he/she may also foil[fail?] his/her fulfilment and in extreme cases, the most tragic ones, even destroy his/her moral character by becoming a morally bad person.

Karol Wojtyła's personalist philosophy exceeded the objectivity vs. subjectivity antinomy. His thought was a continuation of the anthropological turn initiated by the philosophers of modernism and thus it responded to the relativistic and subjectivistic bias of the turn. However, the correction of the anthropological turn

¹⁷ Idem., *Osoba i...*, p. 183.

¹⁸ T. Styczeń SDS, "Być sobą to przekraczać siebie", [in:] idem., *Świadek prawdy. O świętym Janie Pawle II - Uczeń, Dzieła Zebrane*, A.M. Wierzbicki (ed.), Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin 2015, vol. 6, p. 30 and the following.

was not introduced at the price of obscuring the subjectivity of a person for the benefit of an objective order, which exists independently of consciousness and the freedom of a subject. A person, as Fr. Styczeń expanded on Wojtyła's thought, is the witness and the holder of truth.¹⁹ Objective truth is morally binding only if the subject binds themselves with it, making it his/her truth which he/she himself/herself experience and understand.

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¹⁹ Idem., "Etyka jako antropologia normatywna", [in:] idem., *Wolność w prawdzie. Dzieła zebrane*, A.M. Wierzbicki (ed.), Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, Lublin: 2013, vol. 4, p. 340 and the following.

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Filozofia Karola Wojtyły wobec problemu moderny

Streszczenie

Specyfiką antropologii Karola Wojtyły jest synteza obiektywizmu i subiektywności, łączy on wątki aleteiczne i agapiczne. Akceptując nowożytny zwrot antropologiczny, z jednej strony, podejmuje w swych pracach próbę syntezy klasycznej filozofii bytu z filozofią świadomości, a z drugiej strony, dąży do korekty skrajnego antropocentryzmu myśli nowożytnej. Autor artykułu analizuje związek Wojtyły koncepcji świadomości i podmiotowości z personalistycznym stylem duszpasterstwa Jana Pawła II, głoszącego, że „człowiek jest podstawową drogą Kościoła”. Drugim filarem analizy jest pytanie o sens ludzkiej wolności. W myśli Wojtyły oraz w nauczaniu Jana Pawła II rozważania o wolności jako podstawowej właściwości bytu osoby łączą się z namysłem nad jej etycznym wymiarem.

Słowa kluczowe: personalizm, moderna, świadomość, podmiotowość, wolność, sumienie.

Karol Wojtyła's Philosophy on the Issue of Modernity

Summary

Karol Wojtyła's anthropology is characterised by a synthesis of objectivity and subjectivity, and his combination of alethic and agapic notions. By accepting the modern anthropological turn, on the one hand, he attempted in his works a synthesis of the classic philosophy of being with the philosophy of awareness, and, on the other, he strived to correct the extreme anthropocentrism of modern thought. The author of the article analysed the relationship between Wojtyła's concept of awareness and subjectivity with the personalistic style of John Paul II's ministry of "man as the basic path of the Church." The other pillar of the analysis is the question about the meaning of human freedom. In Wojtyła's thought and in the teachings of John Paul II, any discussion of freedom as the basic property of a personal being was combined with a reflection on its ethical dimension.

Keywords: personalism, modernism, awareness, subjectivity, freedom, conscience.

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